KANATA

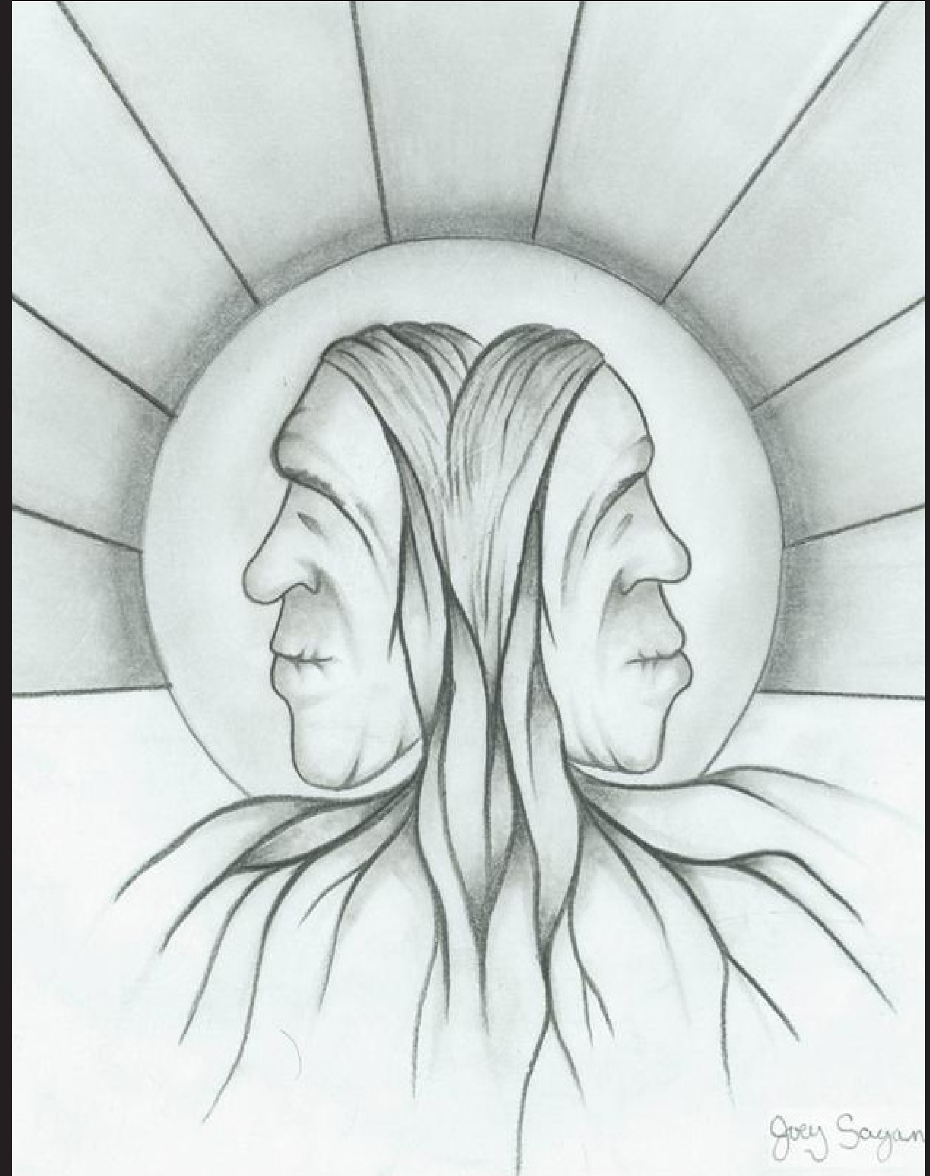
VOL. 1

KANATA

Vol. 1 2009

KANATA

VOLUME 1



MCGILL UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF NORTH AMERICA

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KANATA

MGILL UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF NORTH AMERICA

VOLUME 1   APRIL 2009

McGILL UNIVERSITY
MONTREAL, QUEBEC

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Acknowledgements

Faculty & Scholarly: Support and Advisors
Kathryn Muller, Donna-Lee Smith, Ronald Niezen, Michael Doxtater, Michael Loft, Luke Moreau, Marianne Stenbaek, Waneek Horn-Miller, Lynn Fletcher, Niigenwedom J. Sinclair, John Galaty, Norman Gull, Ebba Olofson, Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier

Organisational Support
McGill Institute for the Study of Canada (MISC); First Peoples House (FPH); Borderless Worlds Volunteers (McGill Chapter), BWV; McGill University Joint Senate Board Subcommittee on First Peoples' Equity (JSBSC-FPE); Anthropology Students Association (ASA); Dean of Arts Development Fund; Principal Everett's Fund;

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Editor's Note
'All in a Name'

Replanting the heritage tree

A
Igonkin
Assiniboine
AthapaskanBeaver
BellaCoolaBeothuk
BlackfootCarrierCaughnawaga
CayugaChilkatChilcotin
ChipewyanCreeCrowDelewareDogrib
EskimoFlatheadFoxGrosVentreHaida
HareHuronIllinoisIroquoisKickapoo
KitwancoolKootneyKoskimoKutchinKwakiutl
LakeLilloetMaleciteMalouinMenomineeMetis
MiamiMicmacMississaugaMohawkMohicanMontagnais
MuskogeeNahaniNaskapiNeutralNicolaNipissingNootka
OjibwayOkannaganOneidaOnondaga
OttawaPequotPetunPiegan
PotawatomieSalishSacreeSauk
SaulteauxSekaniSenecaShawnee
ShoshoniShuswapSiouxSlaveStoney
SusquehannaTagis
HTah
Itan
Thom
Pson
TlinkitTsetsautTsimshhianTuscororaWinnebago WayndotYellowkn
ifeZuni

By Wayne Keon, Ojibway writer and poet

KANATA is a bi-annual publication in the shape and form of an interdisciplinary academic journal that is student-run. The journal is a material manifestation of the interest of McGill students in topics that greatly affect contemporary North American politics, popular culture, law, education, economics, and much more.

KANATA was created as a channel and vessel from which a community will grow for students studying topics affecting and related to Indigenous Peoples of North America. The journal will serve as the focal point from which "native-newcomer" relations will be better understood and improved. By emphasising a sense of community, we hope KANATA will also enable students to discuss and discover the ways in which their knowledge is manifested and can be applied outside of the classroom.

The name for the Journal was proposed by members of the Joint Senate on First Peoples of McGill University and was chosen because of its resonance with the mandate of the journal. *Kanata*, is the Mohawk word for 'village' and McGill University is on Mohawk Land. *Kanata* is also the word used by the St. Lawrence Iroquois who encountered Jacques Cartier and his men and which is now understood to be the origin for the name of the country of Canada. The concept of a village is especially appropriate for this journal as the emphasis is on a shared history, a shared present, and to inform a shared future for Natives and Newcomers alike. The cover art for this first volume of KANATA, is entitled *Mammutaui* and is the work of Joey Saganash, who works at the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal. *Mammutaui*, according to the artist, is a 'symbol of togetherness'.

We hope that our vision will be shared and that it will come to bear the fruits of our labour.

Sincerely,
Pamela Fillion

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Guest Editorial

Inks of Knowledge, Permanence, and Collectivity

Niigonwedom James Sinclair

The People looked around them
and they saw Black People, Chicano People,
Asian People, many White People and others
who were kept poor by American wealth and power.
The People saw that these People
who were not rich and powerful shared
a common life with them.
The People realized they must share
their history with them.
"We shall tell you of our struggles," they said.
"We are all the People of this land.
We were created out of the forces
of earth and sky, the stars and the water.
We must make sure that the balance of the Earth be kept.
There is no other way.
We must struggle for our lives.
We must take great care with each other.
We must share our concern with each other.
Nothing is separate from us.
We are all one body of People.
We must struggle to share our human lives with each
other.
We must fight against those forces
which will take our humanity from us.
We must ensure that life continues.
We must be responsible to that life.
With that humanity and the strength
which comes from our shared responsibility
for this life, the People shall continue." (23)
-Simon Ortiz, The People Shall Continue

I've always hated pencils and erasers.

I was first forced in grade two to use them, in handwriting class.

"We use pencils and erasers because we're just learning, and practice makes perfect. This way, we can get rid of mistakes and keep the page clean," my teacher said.

I loved pens, in all their ink-filled permanency. Black. Blue.

I loved pens, in all their ink-filled permanency. Black. Blue. Red. Even though I was told not to, every chance I got I filled my scribbler with blots, strokes and smudges. Let the page be messy, I thought. Full of my beautiful, consistent, every-few-second mistakes. My errors made my occasional successes *that* much sweeter.

Even if I did get a D.

Now that I'm grown up, I continue to see pencils and erasers everywhere. And though people are still learning, – and hopefully all of this practice is leading somewhere (I've given up on perfection) – erasing and keeping the page clean has resulted in some dangerous consequences and conclusions.

For one example, take Frances Widdowson and Albert Howard's recently-published Disrobing the Aboriginal Industry: The Deception Behind Indigenous Cultural Preservation (McGill-Queen's UP, 2008). In it, Widdowson and Howard attempt to resurrect widely discredited and blatantly Eurocentric anthropological theories of human "cultural evolution" (first suggested by Edward Tylor and "refined" by Lewis Henry Morgan) along progressivist lines to make arguments that Native societies were "savage," "neolithic" and "barbaric," while Europeans were simply at a more complex and advanced "stage of cultural development" (11). This is evidenced in Aboriginal peoples, at first contact, never having "writing," the "alphabet," and "complex government institutions and legal systems" (12). It is the embracing of these "undeveloped" cultures, still steeped in "obsolete features," that results in today's Aboriginal peoples having "undisciplined work habits, tribal forms of political identification, animistic beliefs, and difficulties in developing abstract reasoning" (13). In their parameters – where European historical "development" is the linchpin of all value, complexity, and "civilization" – Widdowson and Howard, of course, ignore that although Native communities never had European-based alphabets and governing structures, they did have intricate signification systems (see: Anishinaabeg petroglyphs, Mayan codices, or Iroquois wampum), multidimensional governing institutions (like the Five Nations Confederacy, clans/totems, and the "red" and "white" Muskogee Creek town councils), and diverse legal systems (embedded in such principles as reciprocity, mediation, and responsibility), worthy and meritorious on their own terms.[1]

If Widdowson and Howard were simply practicing their Eurocentrism in their scribblers, they should be allowed to think and write whatever they want. But instead they attempt to influence the rest of us by employing their 'findings' to make baffling governmental recommendations, devise a reductionist history, and "solve aboriginal problems." Although they claim to be attacking the "Aboriginal Industry" (lawyers, consultants, anthropologists and Native peoples themselves) and "a self-serving agenda" (9), it is clear the authors are most interested in

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Canadian policy. In subsequent chapters, the authors: call Native land claims processes delusional, anti-Canadian, and illogical (resulting in further marginalization and isolation from "productivity"); declare that the current "accommodation(s)" of "aboriginal practices and beliefs" in the Canadian justice system "actually attempts to prevent justice from being served"; and pronounce Aboriginal traditional "knowledge," "spirituality" and "medicine" anti-scientific, "quackery," and a pack of "lies" (82-3, 98-9, 104-5, 132, 176-7, 180, 183, 237, 239-40).[2] They also make similarly arcane claims in regards to Aboriginal claims for child welfare, health care, education, and environmental management.

Everyone, Widdowson and Howard argue, must get beyond the "distortions" that "aboriginal problems were caused by the destruction of viable and 'sovereign nations' during European conquest" and heed "objective" research (like theirs) that "proves" that Aboriginal cultures remain "undeveloped" and have little worth in today world (49-65). They celebrate and defend "the residential school system" as one policy that necessarily facilitated a "civilizing" process where "components of [a] relatively simple culture" were "discarded" and a "more complex" one can enter (25).[3] The "fact" is, the authors claim, "'obliterating' various traditions is essential to human survival. Conservation of obsolete customs deters development, and cultural evolution is the process that overcomes these obstacles… the "loss" of many cultural attributes is necessary for humans to thrive as a species in an increasingly interconnected and complex global system" (25). Then, in perhaps the most ironic moment of the book, Widdowson and Howard invoke John Lennon's "Imagine" to "dream" of a time when Native values based in "tribalism," "kinship relations" and "difference" are eliminated so "we can become a global tribe and the 'world can live as one'" (259-64).[4]

With pencil and eraser firmly in hand, and backed by a large mainstream university press, Widdowson and Howard have composed an all-too familiar song of assimilation in the name of "progress." Their one-dimensional politics, historicism, and century-old arguments are known well by First Nations peoples, communities, and nations who continue to endure ongoing attacks on their personal, communal, and national sovereignties. The notion that this type of myopia is precisely why the current climate exists and perpetuates itself – not to mention that the authors' "dream" of *more of the same* – is nowhere in their lead markings. The truth that, like their western counterparts, expansive Indigenous intellectual systems, languages, governments, and cultures change, grow, and adjust, and *just might* have valuable contributions to "human survival" "development" and the "interconnected and complex global system"[5] is lost to their rubber erasers.

And if these ideas stopped here, I might too. These authors' view of Indigenous peoples, their relationship with Canada, and the ways they should "develop," are endorsed by scholars such as Tom Flanagan (author of First Nations? Second Thoughts, McGill-Queens UP, 2000), political think-tanks such as the Frontier Centre for Public Policy, and national Globe and Mail columnist Margaret Wente. Their vision is also strikingly mirrored by many practices and policies of the federal governing Conservatives and Prime Minister Stephen Harper. For example, take the now-eleven year 2% cap on social, education, and economic funding for Native governments and their reserves, the refusal on September 13, 2007 to ratify the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the renege of the 2005 Kelowna Accord – an agreement between the federal government and all major Native organizations that was supposed to broker a wave of Indigenous self-determination, economic self-sufficiency and a "new" relationship with Canada – with virtually nothing put in its place.

Or, most recently in February 2009, the moves by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to radically change post-secondary funding for First Nations students. Essentially, if followed, what has been historically claimed and affirmed as a treaty right by both Canada and First Nations will become a loan-based, provincially-run program. INAC's "official" explanation: Native students can learn "fiscal responsibility" by taking out loans, "value" education more, and colleges and universities "are not" in "the original wording" of the treaties. The change in policy directives has expectedly been met with tremendous backlash.

There are other similarly discursive examples in other arenas.

Go to any major department or new-age store. There you'll find air-freshners, souvenirs, and toys dressed up in colourfully painted, plastic and chicken-feathered headdresses, dream catchers, and smudge kits, with complete instructions on how "real" Indians use them. Like static, archaic, and empty relics, these items are easily explained, objectified, and (most importantly) cheap. Erased are the historical, intellectual, and political significance of these items – while treated as if legal, governmental, and social contexts and ownerships can be extracted, removed, or fixed in a tragic, disappearing past. Put in their place are ridiculous notions of authenticity – as if Native expressions and ideas haven't changed in centuries.

Want others? Try the reality that there are no federally-recognized Indigenous language rights in Canada, while French and English enjoy protection, support, and money in all of their "official status" glory. Consider the fact that when Indigenous peoples defend their claims to territories and land they are labeled in the media and the public as illegal "squatters" interested in "anarchy" and "violence" (see: Oka, Caledonia, and protests against the Vancouver-Whistler 2010 Olympic construction projects). Think about how most ordinary Canadians don't know that they are standing on treaty land *right now*, all of us benefit from treaties, and each of us have ongoing responsibilities to uphold obligations as parts of

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these agreements.

I state all of this to show that Widdowson and Howard, while egregious in their claims, are not alone. One-sided stories, erasure, and a landscape free of Native claims of sovereignty, land, and historical contributions still make up the bulk of North American culture. It's simply the norm. When people speak up and insist on Canada's messy marks being raised, discussed, and recognized, they are cast away as 'separatists,' 'angry' and accused of perpetuating 'falsehoods' and 'delusions' – often to avoid responsibly and ethically engaging with their ideas. Then attempts are made to clean up the page, as Native peoples and their allies are ironically asked: "Why can't you just be happy that Canada allows you to live, speak, and be free?"

Some change is happening. For all of the myopia and self-imposed ignorance embedded in these discourses, there is also responsible, ethical, and well-researched scholarship – most of which is provocative, rich, and multi-layered in its complex and diverse treatment of Indigenous peoples, communities, issues. Work produced by Native scholars in Canada such as Cheryl Suzack, Daniel Heath Justice, Deanna Reder, Kristina Fagan, John Borrows, Emma Laroque, Olive Dickason, Neal McLeod, Bonita Lawrence, Glen Coulthard, Chris Anderson, Jo-Ann Episkenew, Paul DePasquale, Linc Kesler, David Newhouse and Leanne Simpson (just to name a few) and non-Natives such as J. Edward Chamberlain, Peter Kulchyski, Arthur Ray, Daniel Francis, Sam McKegney, Margery Fee, Gordon Johnston, Keavy Martin, Daniel Morley Johnson, Renate Eigenbrod, and countless others are models we should aspire to as responsible scholars and ethical researchers. Their work proves that all Canadians can partake in, learn from, and engage with Indigenous histories, practices, and intellectualism to make the spaces we share meaningful, respectful, and beneficial for all. Change is slow, but it's happening.

With all ideas, practices, and policies – ones we agree with and ones we don't – Native Studies scholars must thoroughly interrogate and question their underlying claims, use reputable evidence to support our own, and always encourage honest and informed dialogues and debates among thinkers of diverse political and ideological opinions. Of course, this will result in spirited discussion, for these issues are about our collective futures and relationships as Native peoples, Canadians, immigrants – and sometimes all three. We must therefore adopt, both personally and in veins of our scholarship, a principle of respectful inter-responsibility embodied in the notion that we are ultimately neighbours, colleagues, and partners in this shared space called Turtle Island, or North America. We must also remind ourselves, and others, that Native nations and Canada, both historically and today, are more interrelated, interconnected, and reliant on another than people tend to remember, recall, and conceptualize. "We are a metis civilization," as John Ralston Saul writes in A Fair Country: Telling Truths about Canada, a people influenced by over five centuries of contact, influence, and growth with one another, and "[t]his influencing, this shaping is deep within us" (3).

And there's something else we can do.

Use our pens.

Rather, we can perceive the world and, in the ink of that knowledge, express our thoughts. We can speak of the beautiful ugliness in the history of this land. Insist on the permanency of Indigenous homes here. Reflect upon all of the nations and treaties that make up these spaces. Theorize Indigenous, settler, and Canadian intellectual histories, while recognizing that each have specific, rich, and important epistemologies, contributions, and histories that can dialogue. Sing about our interactive experiences, and ultimately learn from one another. Share stories, reflect, and listen – always listen.

And we can – perhaps most of all – make, accept, and cherish the messy blots, strokes, and smudges of our experiences on this earth, on these streets, in this life. Insist on this – even if it seems difficult, strenuous, and stressful – because this changes the world. Years of resistance and courage in the face of erasure, for example, is what made the Indian Residential School Apology on June 11, 2008 happen.

No matter how many professors, politicians, and citizens say that Aboriginal peoples, communities, nations are simple, static, and "dying," as long as we do these things Indigenous futures – and in turn our collective diversity, interests in equality, and inter-relationships with one another – will be ensured. I guarantee it.

This work is crucial.

A good place to see this happening, I hope, is in the pages of this aptly-named journal, KANATA, which I had the privilege of encouraging from afar, providing guidance to, and witnessing the birth of. I am excited and encouraged by the leadership and bravery these students have shown in wanting their formative ideas on Indigenous knowledges, politics, and history to be disseminated. Audiences who read these articles and opinions, I hope, will hold them to the same standards and expectations we would demand of all scholars in the field of Native Studies, as well as be mindful of their specific contexts, experiences, and trajectories. Overall, I expect the complex, diverse, and inspirational voices and visions hosted here will simply refuse to be simplified, reduced, and erased by oppressive ideological forces, while ultimately contributing to the growth of opinions, theories, and ideas of Indigenous intellectualism on this continent. I'm looking forward to reading them in all of their multifaceted growth.

These emerging writings, I trust, will become present-day words in inks of knowledge, permanence, and collectivity – as we have seen before on Turtle Island, as we will see again.

Probably because they're not written in pencil.

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Saul, John Ralston. A Fair Country: Telling Truths About Canada. Toronto: Viking Canada, 2008.

Widdowson, Frances and Albert Howard. Disrobing the Aboriginal Industry: The Deception Behind Indigenous Cultural Preservation. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2008.

Endnotes

I - For reputable and detailed research on this, I recommend Charles Mann's 1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus (New York: Vintage, 2006) or Arthur Ray's I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People (Toronto: Key Porter, 2005) as excellent starting points.

II - This is only a minor sampling of these authors' grandiose statements and recommendations. For more, see chapters entitled "Land Claims: Dreaming Aboriginal Economic Development" (81-105), "Self-Government: An Inherent Right to Tribal Dictatorships" (106-28), "Justice: Rewarding Friends and Punishing Enemies" (129-59) and "Traditional Knowledge: Listening to the Silence" (231-48).

III - Widdowson and Howard claim that when Native peoples and their advocates label the "missionaries' efforts as 'genocide'" this "obscures" the reality that residential schools were important movements in Native "cultural development." Although they admit that "[a]lthough the missionaries deserve criticism for the methods they employed in attempting to bring about this transition," they claim that "[m]any of the activities held as destructive to aboriginal peoples – the teaching of English, the discouraging of animistic superstitions, and encouraging of self-discipline – were positive measures intended to overcome the social isolation and economic dependency that was (and continues to be) so debilitating to the native population" (24-5).

IV - The use of the song by Widdowson and Howard is ironic on several levels. "Imagine," which appeared on John Lennon's 1971 number-one album Imagine, is widely known as holding an anti-war, anti-violence, anti-religious, and anti-capitalistic message, which doesn't quite mesh with the authors' Eurocentric, assimilationist agenda, nor the interest in such violent policies as residential schools. In addition, the fact that historically the song was written in response and resistance to the Vietnam Conflict, and a war devised out of nationalistic, patriotic, and ideological conformity – not to mention the deaths of 6 million people and a long-standing occupation by Americans – and experiences that virtually mirror Aboriginals in North America, seems lost on the authors. Or, perhaps Widdowson and Howard are literally interested in Lennon's intentions, as envisioned and embodied in his music video of "Imagine." It features a cowboy-dressed John Lennon walking through a forest holding hands with a stoic and Pocahontas-looking Yoko Ono, when they both discover a beautiful house, enter a room completely painted white, sing, kiss, stare out the window and presumably live there forever, in "civilized" bliss.

V- For more provocative ideas and opinions on what the Indigenous peoples perspectives on, and potential contributions to, globalization and world economic development, see Jerry Mander and Victoria Tauli-Corpuz's edited collection of essays and opinions by twenty-seven scholars and activists from across the world, entitled Paradigm Wars: Indigenous Peoples' Resistance to Globalization (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 2006).

Niigonwedom James Sinclair *is a graduate of the Native American Literatures program at the University of Oklahoma and is currently a PhD Candidate in the Department of English at the University of British Columbia. His dissertation is an Anishinaabeg literary history. Niigon is originally from Ste. Peter's (Little Peguis) Indian Reserve in Manitoba and is the proud father of a little girl, Nimiizhiian-Nibiens, or Sarah. His creative work has appeared in Prairie Fire and Tales from Mocassin Avenue: An Anthology of Native Stories while his critical work will appear in three anthologies in 2009 and 2010, with Wilfred Laurier University Press, Broadview Press and Michigan State University Press. He also writes a monthly column entitled Birchbark Bitings in Urban NDN, Manitoba's monthly alternative Native newspaper.*

What Lies Beyond the Patriarchal Looking Glass: An Analysis of Iroquois Gender Relations.

Katie Vicks

Introduction

> The story of Native North American women as players in their own societies needs to be told to allow a full description of the traditional lifeways of Native peoples that is dictated less by the structure of Euro-American culture.
>
> Laura Klein & Lillian Ackerman
> *Women and Power in Native North America*

Native American tribes, although multiple and varied across time and place, were affected in similar ways by the colonial encounter with Europe: the patriarchal norms of the predominantly Christian settlers contrasted dramatically with Native lives. Many, if not all, Native societies were organised according to completely different schemes; that is, as many now agree (e.g., Kelm et al. 2006:5; Klein et al. 1995:231; Allen 1992:2), none were absolute patriarchies nor had the inequalities that are found in patriarchal, hierarchical societies. Instead, Native nations organised their gender roles around complementarity and reciprocity. Furthermore, in many societies, such as the Iroquois of the North East, the social organisation revolved around the women, and their greater importance was seen in every aspect of these cultures. In fact, it is the Iroquois who are seen as having been the world's only "matriarchy," a statement that is itself controversial and subjective.

The controversy surrounding the Iroquois and whether or not they were a matriarchal society is telling of how biases affect the interpretation of data. It seems that the viewpoint, time and place of those that have written on this matter greatly determines their conclusions—in addition to this fact, which is true for any text, is the agenda that seems to be present in these different writings. There are a number of sources on Iroquois society that I will look at in order to determine the role of Iroquois women (and conversely, men) and how these have changed over time.

Matrilineal and egalitarian nations, such as the Iroquois, posed specific challenges to the patriarchal and Christian viewpoints of the settlers. In response, Euro-American observers saw them through narrow lenses, and thus either misinterpreted the gendered roles to fit into their assumptions, or else completely ignored the high status and power of the women. Nonetheless, texts from the first colonial encounters, when the nations of the New World were still completely alien to the European mind-set, reveal much about both cultures. The status of Iroquois women has been taken up more recently by Western feminists, starting with the first wave at the end of the 19th century, throughout the second wave of the 1970s until today. Western feminism has a tendency to essentialize relations between the genders: across cultures, the feminist gaze focuses on women's agency in unequal power relations, often criticizing patriarchal systems that maintain women subordinate to men. This gaze fails to allow for alternative ways of cultural organization, ones that may in fact have equal divisions of gender roles, thus enabling "equality" (though this may differ from Western feminists' ideas of "equality") between women and men. Thus it is that Western feminism today for the most part does not allow Iroquois women their historically principal place in Iroquois society. Finally, contemporary Native writers themselves are concerned with the status of Iroquois women. They look to Iroquois oral traditions and early colonial texts, as well as through the biases of other texts regarding this status, in order to conclude that Iroquois society was organized around completely different sets of values to Western patriarchy, values that had at their centre women and their important roles.

The Colonial Encounter: Contact to the early 1800s

> The truth of Old Iroquois is as often veiled as revealed by the verbiage of the chroniclers.
>
> Barbara Alice Mann
> *Iroquoian Women: The* Gantowisas

As many have pointed out (e.g., Kelm et al. 2006:4), because the first explorers and colonists to interact with Native Americans were predominantly men (as were later anthropologists), and as they—for myriad reasons (from their own assumptions of gender roles to Native tribes' own customs of gender differentiation)—typically chose male informants, the world of Native women was kept to what they could observe from a distance. These records, almost completely male in origin, have been used by mostly male scholars to portray Native men as representative of the Native peoples as a whole (Barman 2006:271). The lives and roles of Native North American women are conspicuously absent from colonial records and ethnographic literature. This silence is invested with the readers' own cultural expectations for the "natural" role of women. As Klein et al. argue in *Women and Power in Native North America* (1995:3), for the non-

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Native reader, the Native woman becomes a reflection of a time specific self, and through the (re)production of this "self" and women's "natural" roles in secondary and tertiary literature, these images become "truth." However, the silence in the original texts about women's roles is not only the product of the male researchers' limited gaze. The lack of discussion about power and gender by the Native informants speaks more about the Western tendency to equate silence with powerlessness than about women's inferior roles and status in relation to men. In societies where there has not been a dispute about the appropriate role of women (as their has been in Western societies for more than a century), silence on this matter would be expected.

Among the Native nations of North America, the Iroquois and the roles of their women have attracted much attention of both the original settlers and later scholars. But where do we find information about them that is not tainted, subjective, or biased (at least not detrimentally so)? For as well as containing a lack of information about women, the observations and accounts were biased from the outset: they took male supremacy as a given, and thus, as Mann says in *Iroquoian Women: The* Gantowisas (2000) "all male actions in Iroquois tradition were 'naturally' assumed to have been more important than any female action in tradition" (61). For a glimpse of the roles of women, Mann looks to the "baffled logs of the first explorers and missionaries," those written "*before* Europeans presumed to know all, see all, and, worse, explain all about a people" completely foreign to them to reveal an "authentic Iroquoian cultural trajectory" (5, emphasis in text). Father Joseph Lafitau, writing in the early 18th century, is one source on the matter who has been cited frequently. Lafitau (1724) observes that Iroquois women were the "souls of the councils;" he also records that "It is they who maintain the tribe. In them resides all the real authority" (qtd. in Mann 182). To further drive home the point of women's superiority, Lafitau details the areas of Iroquois society in which women have control: women maintain "the nobility of blood, the genealogical tree, the order of generations and conservation of the families"; women are "the arbiters of peace and war; they hold the taxes and the public treasure; it is to them that the slaves [captives] are entrusted; they arrange the marriages; the children are under their authority; and the order of succession is founded on their blood" (qtd. in Mann, 182).

Another writer in the latter half of the 19th century, Lucien Carr, comments on the ultimate authority of Iroquois women, although one must look through his male-biased wording. As he states (1884), "women [sic], by virtue of her functions as wife and mother, exercised an influence but little short of despotic"; her power extended from the "wigwam" to the "council fire"; "among the Iroquois […] her influence was absolutely paramount. Chiefs, warriors and councils were all obliged to yield to her demands when authoritatively expressed" (13). Carr records women's own voices to an American Colonel; what they say illuminates not only

the traditions on which such statements are based, but also on the real authority they continued to have, even into the later part of the 1800s. As he quotes, the women told Col. Proctor, "'You ought to hear and listen to what we, women, shall speak […] for we are the owners of this land—and it is ours. It is we that plant it for our and their use […] you must not think hard of us while our men shall say more to you; for we have told them'" (19, emphasis in text). Interestingly, Carr saw the power of women as so great in Iroquois society that it oppressed men; men, accordingly, had no escape from the power of women as long as they were part of the tribe, their "yoke was riveted at every joint," and as long as law and custom prevailed, the "rule of woman was one of the most ingeniously contrived despotisms that could possibly have been devised" (25).

Despite these early accounts of women's authority in Iroquois society (and countless others like them), many others failed to see through the cultural assumptions that enveloped their outlook and have thus left skewed records. According to Mann, "the antique European record which, because the concept of powerful women never occurred to its authors, submerged the fact of powerful women in a welter of culturally crossed lines of mis/communication" (119). Because first-contact observers could not understand political power in the hands of women, they were often quite puzzled by what they saw. This, however, did not prevent them from recording what they merely assumed were the facts. For example, it was customary for Iroquois to arrange inter-group meetings along gender lines. Thus, the men were viewed as the only appropriate beings to convey the group's greetings with other men, i.e., the explorers and early settlers. The women would stay in the background, as their Speakers (men who spoke their messages to other men) went forward. It was "dignity and status, not submission and weakness" that likely caused the women to sit at a distance while their Speakers "dealt with the lowly, unwashed, and rather odorific intruders" (Mann 120). As Mann succinctly puts the matter of women's authority: "There is no lack of enlightening data in the primary sources. Evidence that [women] were central to Iroquoian political life has always existed" (120).

The Colonial Encounter: Impacts

Undoubtedly, the imposition of settler values affected Native communities (an impact that continues today, as colonialism is something still experienced across Native North America). However, the argument that the colonial encounter changed a defined entity (e.g. Iroquois society) into another one entirely assumes a linear model of change, one that arises from Western narrative traditions; it seems more likely that historical change is more complex and moves in many different directions at once. For instance, colonization affected women and men differently, throughout time and across Native nations. For societies, such as the Iroquois, that

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afforded their women greater authority and power than their men, settler society changed these in ways both predictable and perhaps unexpected: predictable in that the loss of women's high status led to a loss of quality of life (through a lack of power); unexpected to those who see women's unchanging role in the private sphere as insulating them from the harsh contact with whites that their men were forced into.

At the place where the cultural and physical meet, colonization dramatically affected the social construction of Aboriginal female bodies. They were "doubly burdened by the racism and sexism of patriarchal colonialism," as Kelm et al. state— racialized theories of evolution worked alongside Victorian misogynistic views of sexuality in ways that served the colonizers while reducing Aboriginal women to beasts of burden, sexual, status-less beings to be fit into scientific or sociological categories (14). The sexual regulation of Native women was part of the larger goal of nation-building. It was the basis of creating moral, nuclear families based on Western notions of marital monogamy and the distinct gender roles of the female homemaker and male breadwinner. However, as Sangster (2006) argues, this "disciplinary project" within colonial goals was "fraught with ambiguity, as indigenous peoples ignored, inverted, or attempted to maneuver within new forms of legal governance" (303). Nonetheless, the hegemony of patriarchal Euro-American rules of law has in many ways dominated indigenous values and customs. Native communities have struggled against the over-powering of their traditions since the colonial encounter, yet the march of "progress" and the "civilizing project" has continued to bear down on them.

The Euro-centric, Christian ideology of settler society redefined Native ideas of gender complementarity, inherent in societies such as the Iroquois, to better fit with patriarchal norms of gender hierarchy. That is to say that European settlers misunderstood, in the words of Mann, "what was really evidence of women's economic powers as evidence of their enslavement" (187) when they saw women farming, storing produce, and redistributing it. Instead of seeing these actions as the crux of women's power and centrality, they interpreted them to mean that women were the "put-upon peons of lazy men" (ibid.). With the destruction of the division of labour—in which men hunted and women farmed—due to direct impact with white society, and also the consequent fracturing of the kinship institutions which were intrinsically linked to these economic activities, Iroquois of both genders had their lives drastically altered. However, as the women were central to the social organization—through the matrilineage, their dominant role in farming and redistributing food, and their political power—they likely felt this loss more sharply, and arguably continue to experience it in the generations since. For Iroquois men, who were no longer needed for war, trade, or conquest, their experience with colonialism has also been complex. The men eventually took up agriculture, thus taking from women (although unintentional and

due to forces greater than themselves) their leading role and much of the source of their independence and power.

There are those (e.g. Martha Champion Randle 1951:170) who assume, based on Western conceptions of the public and private sphere, that contact had a less severe impact on women than on men. In this view, women's economic role is presumed to have changed little over time as it continued to revolve around the home. This view fails to see that in traditional times, it was the Longhouse (the structure that housed all members of one matrilineage) that was the basis of Iroquois society, and the later nuclear families, although controlled by women either as single mothers or as homemakers, is not remotely similar. Furthermore, the culturally recognized distinction between public and private spheres would eventually lead to an inequality between men's and women's arenas of power as the relations with the outside, white world increased in importance (Maltz et al. 1995:235). The view that men have suffered more damage to their traditional status than women is more a reflection of colonial attitudes toward the primacy of male experience than a historical fact. As Allen (1992) puts it, although women still maintain "traditional roles of housekeeper, childbearer, and nurturer," they no longer have recourse to the "unquestioned positions of power, respect, and decision making on local and international levels that were not so long ago their accustomed functions" (202). Furthermore, she posits that while it is true that colonization destroyed roles that had given men their sense of self-worth and identity, the significant roles lost (not those of hunter and warrior) were those they "once derived from their ritual and political relationship with women" (204).

Feminist viewpoints

> This refusal, this inability to accept difference and respect difference and rejoice in difference is the point at which my anger grows. Equality is […] a celebration of difference.
>
> Patricia Monture Angus
> *Thunder in My Soul*

Feminists, both the founding mothers of the late 1800s, their sisters of the 1970s, and those today have been concerned with the status of Iroquois women because the existence of their traditional power and authority (a fact that is contested by certain feminists, among others) puts into question the patriarchal assumption that women are naturally subordinate to men. Although the women of the late 1800s fighting for equality looked directly to Iroquois women as examples, this fact has

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largely been forgotten by later feminists. As Mann states, Iroquois women "inspired the nineteenth-century American feminists, providing their cited model of socially, economically, and politically free womanhood" (242-243). During the Second Wave of feminism, in the 1960s and 70s, equality between the sexes (i.e., putting women on the same level as men) was the main goal: The Iroquois were again taken up, but unlike their predecessors, the high status of Iroquois women was contested in order to prove that women everywhere, throughout history, have been made subordinate to men. Therefore, the Iroquois, with their distinct division of gender roles, those nations previously lauded as being the world's only matriarchies, were reduced to yet another version of rule-of-man in which women's only power was influencing change behind the scenes. One book in particular, Rosaldo et al.'s *Women, Culture, and Society* (1974) makes this argument forcefully. It seems counterintuitive that feminists would be so hard pressed to disprove the existence of societies in which the rule-of-women was the norm in order to disprove the naturalness of women's subordination, but I suppose it is more dramatic to speak in universals rather than particulars. The authors of *Women, Culture, and Society* interpret the data on Iroquois women consistent with the conclusions they are trying to make: that of women's universal domination. Much of these interpretations assume a definition of equality that is not in line with Iroquois understandings—Iroquois sexual divisions of labour and roles (those which are understood as separate but equal for Iroquois) are seen as unequal by these feminists because women are not allowed the same roles as men. However, this view of equality has been questioned, and in turn a nuanced theme of balanced reciprocity is understood in which women's and men's worlds are distinctly different but not, therefore, perceived as hierarchical. In this understanding, while men and women have different expected roles, neither is considered superior. As Klein et al. state, "the efforts of both women and men are acknowledged as necessary for the well being of the society" (14). In contrast to the idea that gender complementarity necessarily leads to gender stratification, or that "complementary but equal" gender roles are an impossibility, is one that allows a sexual division of labour without sexual asymmetry.

The debate on the status of Iroquois women began, in some respects, with the statements of Lewis Henry Morgan in 1851, in which he claimed they were "the inferior, the dependent, and the servant of man," (qtd. in Bilharz 1995, 102). These statements contradict most accounts until this point, such as Lafitau's and Carr's. Morgan has thus been the go-to source for those who wish to show that Iroquois women had no power, they were not the world's only matriarchy, and therefore women have always been subordinate to men. The feminist argument that Iroquois society did not represent a counter-example to universal male domination is founded on a few assumptions. One is that egalitarian societies, those in which everyone lacks power, where few, if any, hierarchical distinctions are made between

people, do not provide their females with power. Women do not have power over men (and conversely, men do not have power over women)—therefore, egalitarian societies do not necessarily disprove universal male domination because there is a total (or almost) lack of domination. Another argument is to discredit the kind of power, *influence*, Iroquois women are commonly assumed to have held. This argument, as Maltz et al. state, "concerns the often complex relationship between formal authority", which involves the holding of official political office, "and political power in general, including indirect or behind-the-scenes power" where influence involves the ability to affect the decision without the need of office (233, 243). Second wave feminists saw the only real power in a society as that which was held by those in political office. However, in Iroquois society, no person, male or female, had the right to force another to do his or her will, and thus all, in one way or another, ruled by influence and persuasion.

Because Iroquois chiefs were men, these second wave feminists concluded that in Iroquois society only men had power. This view speaks of an intrinsic connection to the Western patriarchy in which those holding it wrote and lived, and disallows Iroquois women the power that was rightly theirs. Rosaldo et al. see *influence* as having no more power than mitigating male authority in certain circumstances: "women (through gossiping or yelling, playing sons against brothers, running the business, or refusing to cook) may have a good or informal influence and *power*"; while women may acknowledge male authority, they may also direct it to their own interests, "and in terms of actual choices and decisions, of who influences whom and how, the power exercised by women may have considerable and systematic effect" (20-21, emphasis in text). But, if one changes the values with which these cultures are viewed, if one sees the power to influence directly who is in political power, and every decision made by those in the political office, as being as, if not more, important as holding political office, and fundamentally who see the difference of roles not equating the inequality between roles, then women begin to be seen as the ones having power. This is the case in traditional Iroquois society. The *influence* argument "has been successful with Euro-American feminists because it accommodates Western stereotypes" (Mann 228). The power of women's *influence* should not be taken lightly. For example, their ability to start or prevent a war, as Lafitau documented, was not merely in their indirect ability to not deny or feed a war (as many feminists have argued); it was, rather, simply in their announcing as much publicly (ibid.).

The question of why certain Western feminists are so quick to dismiss the power of Iroquois women needs to be explored further, as it not only paradoxical but is also harmful in its conclusions and interpretations. According to Mann, Western feminism has little interest in abandoning European myths if they happen to be working for Western feminist agendas. Specifically, in the argument of universality, "Western feminists

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have a political stake in defining the slit-eyed, patriarchal oppression of women as 'universal' and 'unbroken' since **The Beginning of Time**" and are thus "loathe to admit that any culture might ever have existed that did not oppress women" (Mann 79-80, emphasis in text). In their quest to rid the world of patriarchy, "they do not hesitate to manipulate Native cultural truths, heedless of how much damage they may be doing Native lore or of how zealously they may be Euro-forming tradition in the process" (Mann 80). As Randle (1951) states, "Behind the feminist movement as well as behind most male chauvinism is the concept that the difference between the sexes is always to be interpreted as inferiority"; this inferiority can only be removed through getting rid of the difference, which is called equality (140-141). Iroquois women and men had separate and different cultural patterns, different values and different goals: differences that remain today. It does not follow that women lacked power, nor were they confined to their traditional roles: It was precisely their roles that provided them their considerable power.

Native Viewpoints

The oral tradition is vital; it heals itself and the tribal web by adapting to the flow of the present while never relinquishing its connection to the past.

Paula Gunn Allen
The Sacred Hoop

As has been shown throughout this paper, Native writers are unanimous in their rejection of the position that Iroquois women were powerless. They base their assertions of Iroquois women's power (a power they see as traditionally greater than men's) and central role in Iroquois society by reading through the patriarchal assumptions of early colonial accounts, as well as looking to Iroquois oral traditions, which have survived in one form or another since contact. And they use the living memories of their powerful female ancestors to affect change in their communities today.

In *Iroquoian Women: The* Gantowisas (2000), Mann explores the world of Iroquois society that once was, a world in which women had dignity and stature naturally theirs by virtue of their sex: a high status not granted by men, but something which was inherently theirs and by which they were the *grantors of status*. In direct contrast to Western understandings of "women"—those derived from Christian understandings and that implicitly suggest sexuality, weakness, evil, and inferiority—are Iroquois connotations of the word, past and present—those of power, ability, goodness, and intelligence.

Woman was the perfect complement to man. The sacred teachings in Iroquois oral tradition make this point clear in the tales about the Twins (or the two sons, Flint and Sapling, of Lynx, who was herself the daughter of the first person, Woman Falling From Sky). As Mann explains, the Twins' story is meant to show "the sacred rule of cosmic equilibrium, a steady principle guiding most of the social inventions of Iroquoian peoples" (60). Furthermore, this equilibrium was the "animating purpose" behind "gendering," or those "male and female energies that dictated the separation of social functions by gender" (ibid.). These two energies, embodied in men and women, functioned as cooperative halves: at the same time independent and interdependent, in all areas of Iroquois life, women did women's half and men did men's half, and it was only when the two equal halves came together did the community become a functional, healthy society (ibid.). Women farmed, men hunted, but the final product was that everyone was fed. Conversely, women held Clan Mothers' councils, men held Grand Councils, and the two interacted to conclude in community-wide consensus. In all things each half was aware of what the other was doing and worked to ensure that it fit "snugly into the space left for it by its gendered complement"—women's planting considered the strength of men's hunting, men's councils awaited the decisions of the women's (Mann 98). The Clan Mothers' councils are often overlooked in an analysis of traditional Iroquois life, even though their presence is clearly written in The Great Law of Peace (the Iroquois Constitution-like document). The Great Law not only required the Clan Mothers to hold councils, but also, instead of asserting that women had the same rights as men in this regard, pointedly stated that *men* had the same rights as *women* (Mann 121). In the final analysis, Mann concludes that "if the scale was tipped in favour of one gender over the other" it was the Iroquois women who had more power through councils (164). It is they who considered all matters first. Men could not deliberate upon any issue that had not been sent forward by the women, thus the women set the agenda of the League. The powerful Iroquois women guided their Nations in their abilities to de/name Council officials, adopt new citizens, keep domestic and international peace, declare wars as well as in their control of the economy—that is, not only did they ultimately legally own all the means of production (through their official and deeply sacred bond with Mother Earth) but, more importantly, they had the sole right to keep and distribute Her bounty (Mann 187).

As half of the cosmic balance, women were rightly honored, supported and protected. Mann (as do others) finds evidence of this in the continual refusal of colonial women who had been adopted by the Iroquois (Mary Jemison is one famous example) to return to "civilization." The stubborn refusal was due to the women's better treatment by Iroquois men than their white contemporaries, which leads one to question who was the "savages" in the early colonial period. Fundamentally, the relationship

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between men and women, that which developed from the core of sacred teachings, spoke to those values that were so highly held in Iroquois society: reciprocity, balance, cooperation, mutuality, "and the joyful coming-together of two to create one self-perpetuating whole" (Mann 90).

Two works by native authors discuss the reconciliation of Iroquois traditions with contemporary situations: Paula Gunn Allen's *The Sacred Hoop* (1992) and Patricia Monture-Angus' *Thunder in My Soul* (1995). I will use these in my attempt to show the importance of contemporary Native women looking to their own past in order to solve the present crises they face in their communities, because often the solutions offered by the Western world (those either found in the law or in feminists accounts) prove time and again to be another form of oppression.

Allen states that the current situation leaves Native women struggling on two fronts—for physical survival and cultural survival. Women have to fight against the effects of alcohol and drug abuse (their own, and that of their husbands, lovers, parents and children); poverty; rape, incest, battering by Native men; assaults on fertility and other health matters by official Indian and Public Health Services; a high rate of infant mortality due to substandard medical care, nutrition, and health information; lack of educational opportunities or, just as harmful, education that takes them away from their traditions, language, and communities; extremely high suicide rates, homicide, or similar expressions of self-hatred; a lack of economic opportunities; substandard housing; and the sometimes violent but always pervasive racist attitudes and behaviourss directed against them by the entertainment and education system "that wants only one things from Indians: [their] silence, [their] invisibility, and [their] collective death" (Allen 191). The increase in violence against women by men is a product of colonialism: instances of rape were unknown among Native nations prior to contact, as was violence against women in general. As Allen asserts, "the colonizers' image of Indian women has, more than any other factor, led to the high incidence of rape and abuse of Indian women by Indian men" (203). The violence is condoned by tribal governments across the continent in their refusal to address the issue, in their failure to provide care, shelter, or relief for the women victims, as well as their unwillingness to competently or usefully deal with the offenders.

Monture-Angus discusses more specifically the ideas of "equality," Iroquois traditions, and the contemporary legal situation of Native women and how these all interact in modern women's lives. She resents the feminist discussion of equality because it goes against traditional Iroquois understandings that held women as sacred precisely because they bring life into this world, a fact that ensure that "women are respected as the centre of the nation" (49). This rejection of "equality" as understood in Western terms—that is, of sameness—leads her to find solutions to the problems facing Native women outside of the legal system of the colonial state.

Monture-Angus writes specifically on the Canadian State and the *Indian Act*. In discussing the *Indian Act* and its controversial amendment, Bill C-31, passed in 1985**,** which restores status to Native women who married non-Native men, it is clear that the real oppressor that Monture-Angus sees is the Canadian State, and the violence and abuse in Native communities is a direct result of the discrimination (itself a form of violence) against Native peoples of both genders. Regarding Bill C-31, she argues that Native women's identities have not been restored through this amendment. Instead, what was achieved was "a more equal access to the system of laws which have successfully oppressed our people since the advent of the Indian Act in 1876. Equal access to oppressive laws (colonialism) is not progress" (183).

The solution lies not in amending colonial documents and laws, but in looking back to traditional practices. That is, in discussing powerlessness and frustration, which create the harsh conditions of life on reserves and are a result of colonialism and colonization, women involved in the healing of their nations must remember that these are the ill-consequences of the imposition of the political ways of the dominant society, and not their own traditions. As Monture-Angus states, "I am yet to be convinced that any form of traditional Aboriginal government was *ever* based on a notion of gender inequality. We must take care to think with decolonized minds no matter how difficult the task may be" (147, emphasis in text). Furthermore, only couching violence against Native women as the physical violence experienced at the hands of men discounts the everyday violence of their lives due to living in a colonized state. This "fragmentation of violence," as well as the "social legitimization of only the wrong of physical violence," creates a situation where Native women are restricted from examining the totality of their experiences within a movement (feminism) that is put forward as the solution to that violence: simply put, she sees feminism, as well as the struggle for "equality" among Native women, as an ideology that remains colonial (171).

Native women have a traditional history unlike white, Western women, for they have collective memories of a time when there was no known legally sanctioned or other kind of violence against women. Violence and abuse (including political exclusion) against women was simply not tolerated in most Native societies. Part of this was that women had the power to define what was unaccepted behaviour: "included in that definition […] was the failure to respect women" (Monture-Angus 178). Monture-Angus finds the answers to not only the problems facing Native women, but men as well, in reclaiming the traditions of her Mohawk people: the respect and power women once held needs to be restored, an action which is contingent on men remembering their traditions—traditions not found in European roots of feminist movements or the idea that women's oppression will be eradicated when they assume male-defined positions of status and power (179). Men must work with women

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to restore the balance of their community by putting women back in their former positions, because without that balance the society cannot function. The root of their oppression is the collective memory loss—"the men must be re-educated about what their responsibilities are in our efforts to abolish the experience of violence against women in our communities" (Monture-Angus 238). However, as Natives look to their traditions, they must recognize that these social systems did not have to deal with the social ills present in Native life today. Therefore, romanticizing these systems will do no good. As Monture-Angus states, "We cannot look to the past to find the mechanisms to address concerns such as abuse […] many of the mechanisms did not exist […] because they were not needed" (258). What they can reclaim are the values that led to a system where abuse did not exist in the first place.

Conclusion

The controversy surrounding the existence of a matriarchy within traditional Iroquois society has clouded the historical roles of Iroquois women. What is more, this controversy helps continue their oppression (as well as the oppression of their male Native contemporaries), for they are denied a true knowledge of their past, and so are afflicted with cultural memory loss. By peeling away the many layers of the controversy—from the original observers' misunderstandings, biased outlooks, and lack of interaction with women, to later settlers' disbelief in such societies due to their own implicit and overt trust in the only existence of *one* way of life (i.e., patriarchal and hierarchical), to feminists using the women's status among the Iroquois to further their own agenda, whatever that may be—one is left with a good deal of knowledge of how texts are culturally produced, and only glimpses of the lives of Iroquois women that lie in between and underneath the colonial verbiage. Native women have taken matters into their own hands, and taken the research a step farther, in that they look to their own oral histories, those that have continued (although somewhat battered) throughout time, and have found within these their strong, powerful, central Iroquois Grandmothers. It is these traditions that help one see the truth within colonial documents. Iroquois women were the core around which all of their society was built and revolved; they were the heart of the community, but they were not complete without the traditional roles of the men. In this sense, yes, women held the most power, but men were absolutely necessary for the society to function as a working whole. So perhaps there is not such a thing as "matriarchy," perhaps when the power structures are set up in a hierarchical way, with one person (or type of person) at the top, it matters not if the person holding this power is male or female—"matriarchy" in this sense can be seen as another way of saying "patriarchy." Instead, in societies such as the Iroquois, where women were not at the top of anything, but were the thread that wove

the whole fabric of the culture together, and where men had their own important parallel roles, applying Western, patriarchal notions of "power" is useless.

Iroquois women need only to look to their own past to help realize solutions to their current problems. And they need to remind their men of this shared past. For the only lessons for them to learn are from their own historical roles—those that go back farther than the time of colonial impact—and any solutions based on Western ideas of "equality" are another example of colonial imposition, and therefore oppression. Western feminists, on the other hand, should look once again to the Iroquois society as an example of how a society looks where everyone is equal, albeit different.

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Akunishkueun: Bonnets of the Innu Women of Nistassinan

Pamela Fillion

Early on a fall morning in October, the faint smells of cigarettes and coffee consumed the previous night while writing dissertations lingered on our clothes as we waited for Professor Muller. We walked along the corridors of the McCord Museum in a half-daze of slumber and excitement. The six of us kept quiet as if to demonstrate our respect for the vast amounts of historical objects that were donated to the McCord. The museum curator led us to the room where the McCord collection of First Peoples artefacts are kept and attended in the archives. As my classmates and I walked the rows and rows of ornamented moccasins, hunting tools, cradle boards, Inuit *amauiti*, various sizes and shapes of snowshoes, labrets, and much more, I felt the air buzzing with a panoply of whispers. Taking a deep breath, I closed my eyes and thought about how each of these objects had been made, worn, exchanged, loved, and used by people who lived and had lived complex lives: parts of these people have become a part of these objects and parts of these objects have become parts of these people.

In my mind and with the words of both the curator and the whispers of historicity, I visualised the vast territory of the land now called Canada and all the lives that have shaped it. I wondered which of these artefacts had been a part of shaping the land I call home and about the lives of these very people. I remember the names I heard as a child such as "les Montagnais" and "les Algonquians" and tried to focus on the voices in the museum which were related to these peoples. I heard a voice slowly recite[1]:

I have the rivers to drink,
The wildlife to eat.
The tree branches for my cushion.
The firewood to make me warm.
The berries and bakeapples for my vitamins.
The roots to cure me when I'm sick.
The fir tree branches are my frangrance.
The lakes are for me my bath.
I cleanse my body in the sweat lodge.
I stay fit as I hike up the mountains.
The elders are my singers and my drummers.
My father is my storyteller. He provides me with food.
My mother is my teacher. She takes good care of me.
My grandmother is my guide. She knows the perfection of
the land and the sea.

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I learn by watching and listening.
My culture is rich.
I am proud of who I am.

I followed this voice until I heard it speaking near and through the Innu artefacts of the collection. The curator pointed out the double-curved motif on several of these artefacts and spoke of how the Innu have lived in the North Eastern parts of Quebec since time immemorial. She told us that they are not to be confused with their northern neighbours the Inuit and that other names for the Innu have included the Montagnais, the Naskapi, and the Barren Ground People. I followed the strong voice amongst moccasins, and leggings, and found myself staring at an odd looking artefact. I was surprised by the aesthetics of this object which did not seem to fit the stereotypical images of Native peoples I had been presented with in my youth. This peculiar red and black hat stood out and, as I focused my eyes on its intricate seams and beadwork, a voice spoke out from the drum of voices and asked me: "Why have you not seen me before?" I looked around to see if the others had also heard the voice. However, the others were slowly walking away. "I don't know," I answered in a meek rushed whisper.

"Where have the heads I adorned gone?" the voice asked loudly. Again, I glanced at the others and saw that Drew, Emily, Pui Sye, and Karly all huddled around Professor Muller who was showing them different types of sinew. My cheeks enflamed and I could not find the proper words for my lack of knowledge. "I don't know" I whispered quickly, "I can find out and tell you if you'd like."

"How will you do this *kekashau*[2]? Who are you to do this *akaneshau*[3]? Who are you to speak for my makers?" the voice spoke louder and louder. I cowered and felt confused.

Then, stuttering the words leaped from my lips, "I do not want to speak for your makers, I wish simply to know them, to know myself from them, to know about our shared past and inform our shared future!"

There was no answer from the voice, simply a confused and perplexed look from my classmate Drew who stared at me, twirled his finger in his beard, and confirmed to himself that, indeed, on that October morning I was a bizarre North American specimen in the archives of the McCord Museum.

Focusing on the first peoples who inhabited the area now known as the administrative region of Saguenay-Lac-St-John, leads to the Montagnais-Naskapi culture of Nistassinan (Figure 1 and 2) and, ultimately, to the *material culture* research and analysis of objects such as ACC5703 (Plate 1) in the McCord Archives. Following the clues left by this type of hat known as *akunishkueun*[4], the Innu-Aimun word for an Innu woman's traditional beaded bonnet, leads to an interesting journey through the last centuries of Innu life. This enterprise reveals a great deal on the lives of

Innu women from the 19th century through to the present day. Indeed, these bonnets are the evidence of diverse yet similar lives of happiness, sorrow, pain, love, hope and loss of the hundreds of Innu women that have lived and live today on the North-eastern peninsula of the Canadian province of Quebec. Furthermore, the *akunishkueun* is a powerful symbol of the lives of the women who wore them and continue to wear them. The *akunishkuen* is also a symbol of the Innu struggle of being an Indigenous peoples of Canada struggling for its basic human right to continue existing as a socio-political cultural group without the pressures of assimilation that they have been subjected to and are still subjected to presently.

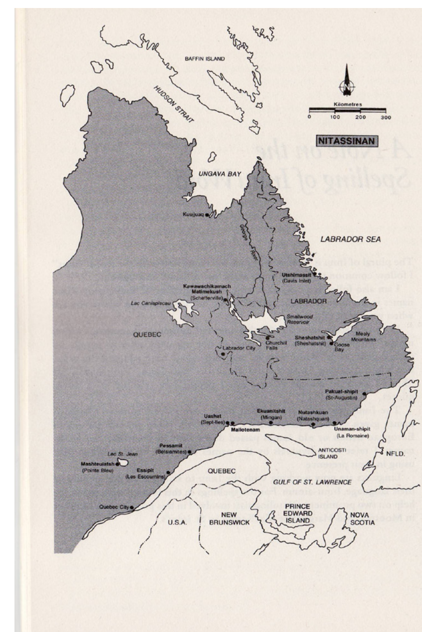

Figure 1 (Above) Nistassinan. Map courtesy of cartographer Charlie Conway in Nympha Byrne and Camille Fouillard, It's Like the Legend: Innu Women's Voices (Charlottetown, PEI: gynergy books, 2003), 6-7

Figure 2 (Left) Nistassinan. Map courtesy of Polaris Communications Ltd in Mary Wadden, Nitassinan: The Innu Struggle to Reclaim Their Homeland (Vancouver, British Colombia: Douglas & McIntyre, 1996), 2

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Plate 1 ACC5703, Eastern Subarctic Innu Hat, 1900-1925. Materials include cotton cloth, wool cloth, silk ribbon, glass beads, shell buttons, and cotton thread. Dimensions: 24.5 x 26.3 cm. Contributed to the McCord Museum by E.S. Holloway. Photo courtesy of the McCord Museum of Canadian History.

Plate 2 M939.5, Eastern Subarctic Innu Hat, 1900-1925. Materials include wool cloth, cotton cloth, glass beads, and cotton thread. Dimensions:29 x 26 cm. contributed to the collections of the McCord Museum by E.S Holloway. Photo courtesy of the McCord Museum of Canadian History.

Firstly, Prown said of the study of material culture that it "is the study through artefacts of the beliefs-values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions-of a particular community or society at a given time"[5] and that "the underlying premise is that objects made or modified by man reflect, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, the beliefs of individuals who made, commissioned, purchased, or used them, and by extension the beliefs of the larger society to which they belonged."[6] Most importantly, studying artefacts such as ACC5703 and M393.5 (Plate 2) is based on the premise that "the way to understand the cause (some aspect of culture) is the careful and imaginative study of the effect (the object). In theory, if we could perceive all of the effects we could understand all of the causes; an entire cultural universe is in the object waiting to be discovered."[7] In his article, Prown proposes a tentative methodology for the study of material culture which attempts to eliminate the cultural biases of the interpreter and allow for the non-restricting opening of meaning. Thus, this text reflects his methodology by abstaining, as much as is possible, from providing presupposed knowledge of the Culture from which the hats derive. As Prown suggests, the text and research use the object as a source from which information is divulged one layer at a time.

The first step in Prown's proposed methodology of material culture studies is that of the careful *description* of the studied object and/or group of objects, including formal analysis and content analysis of what can be found in the object itself. Following his methodology, this venture begins with the dating and material composition of both ACC5703 and M393.5. These hats, which are about as tall as and slightly less wide than a 30-cm ruler, are both dated as objects of the first quarter of the 1900s and are composed of woollen cloth, cotton cloth, cotton thread, beads and in once case, shells[8]. The materials that compose them such as wool, cloth, cotton, silk and beads suggest the evidence of trade between Euro-Canadians and the Innu. However, at this point in the research the use of these materials cannot be the basis of situating its origins and the curatorial dating does much to inform the next steps of the interrogation: The use of such materials in the 1900s to 1925s suggests an adoption from earlier materials to that of those provided by the fur-trade. In much the same way as other cases of *métissage* (hybridisation), these materials are found in the material culture of Aboriginal peoples who came into contact with extensive networks of the fur traders of early Canadiana.

The embroidery work on both hats has the double-curved motif and in one instance, a floral motif. Frank G. Speck wrote in the early 20th century on the spread of the double-curved motif amongst Algonquin groups in North America. In the 21st century, Speck's work remains one of the most extensive on the double-curved motif. In his findings, he defined the motif as "consisting of two opposed incurves as a foundation element, with embellishments more or less elaborate modifying the enclosed space,

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and with variations in the shape and proportions of the whole." This motif corresponds well to that found on both ACC5703 and M393.5, albeit present in different forms. Furthermore, Speck writes that the origin of this motif is difficult to pinpoint but that it seems safe to state that the double-curved motif "occurs most abundantly and is most characteristic among the extreme northern and eastern Algonkian tribes" and that "it is restricted to them as a fundamental motive." Speck speculates that from these tribes the motif has spread westward or that it may have been at origin another design element that was remodelled and subsequently adopted by neighbouring tribes. With regards to a form of symbolism embedded in the design, Speck concludes that the double-curve "is throughout much of the region primarily an ornamental rather than a symbolic motive." This conclusion is based on his findings of no particular symbolism in the art of the tribes he investigated. On the Naskapi, who "in several related bans, inhabit nearly the whole interior of the Labrador peninsula north of the height of land dividing the Arctic watershed from that of the Gulf of St. Lawrence" and the Montagnais, who consist of "the bands of Indians who hunt south of the height of land in the Labrador peninsula southward to the St. Lawrence river and the gulf," in particular, Speck notes that the designs of the Naskapi (Plate 4 & 5), whom he describes as "about the most uninfluenced of the Algonkian tribes" of his time, are characteristic of their use of the double-curve motif which "has a smaller curve or two ellipses superimposed upon the centre of the main double-curve, which generally has sweeping shallow sides" and of which the "effect is very artistic. Practically no flowers except the three petal or leaf-like pattern, which is found both north and south of the St. Lawrence, appear in the designs of this tribe." As for the Montagnais (Plate 3), in the same text Speck states that their use of the double-curve "is much obscured by the broad line figures and the spreading elevated interiors. They are, however, very artistic. These figures are known among the people as trees, spruce or balsam, only in the most general indefinite way." In the same text, Speck also states that the "Montagnais show a strong tendency toward the modification of their simple double-curve designs into floral forms, this becoming more intense as they occur westward." Again, no symbolism is noted in the particular design by Speck in his accounts of motif the early 20th century.

The next methodological step proposed by Prown is that of *deduction* which includes speculations, theories, and intellectual engagement with the object which must be use referentially throughout the research. Then, Prown advises the use of *external evidence* using allied disciplines such as archaeology and art history, as well as anthropology and history, to complete and inform the research on the object and its potential to divulge upon the society to which it belonged and to which it belongs now. According to Gosden & Marshall, "objects can be understood only through looking at the cultural contexts which originally produced them

and the new circumstances into which they later moved. The histories of many objects are composed of shifts of context and perspective." When looking at these shifts of context and perspectives turning to the disciplines of historical record can lead to complications. The discipline of ethnohistory can then serve to help enlighten the histories of objects such as the traditional beaded bonnet of the Innu. Ethnohistorians, however, must ensure "to combine a respectful study of traditional Native views of history and causality with what we regard as more conventional historical or ethnohistorical investigations."Considering the methodological stances of Prown, Gosden & Marshall, and Trigger, the following questions are formulated on ACC5703 and M393.5 as a suggested path of inquiry: *Where did this type of hat originate? How widespread were these hats in Innu society? Which part of the society wore these hats? Was there a particular intention or symbolism conveyed in the wearing of these hats? Are they still worn today? How were they worn?* As a result of searching archival databases and various museum collections, over one hundred photographs were found of women from various Innu communities, then Montagnais-Naskapi, wearing these hats from a range of dates including the early 1900s to present day. Also, a couple dozen hats were found in museum collections across North America including two more at the McCord Museum of Canadian History, seven at the Canadian Museum of Civilisation, one at the Pennsylvania Museum, and several at the Peekanim Mackenzie School. These findings were used to formulate many more questions such as: *Who were the Innu then and who are the Innu now? What were and are the lives of these women like? What experiences do they share in common? What changes took place in their way of life during the last two hundred years and how did these changes affect the Innu woman's experience?*

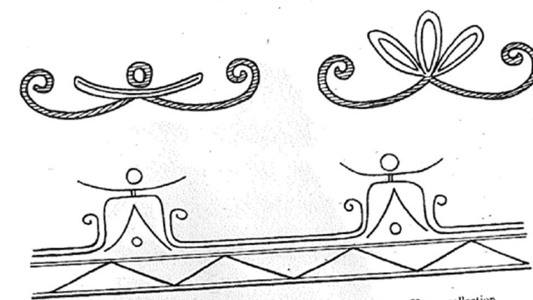

Plate 3 Montagnais double-curved designs. Collected by Frank G. Speck in The Double-Curve Motive in Northeastern Algonkian Art (Ottawa: Government Printing Burea, 1914)

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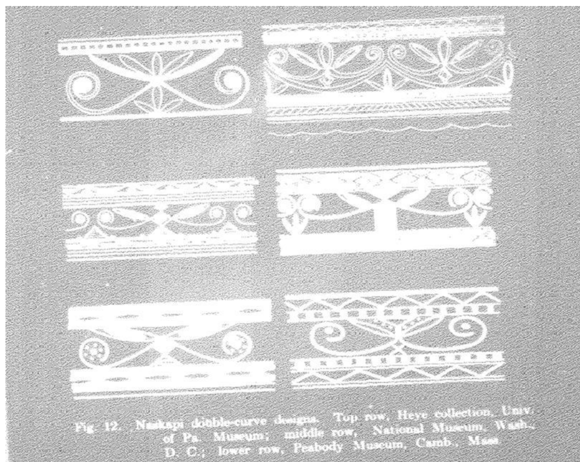

Plate 4 Naskapi double-curved designs. Collected by Frank G. Speck in The Double-Curve Motive in Northeastern Algonkian Art (Ottawa: Government Printing Burea, 1914)

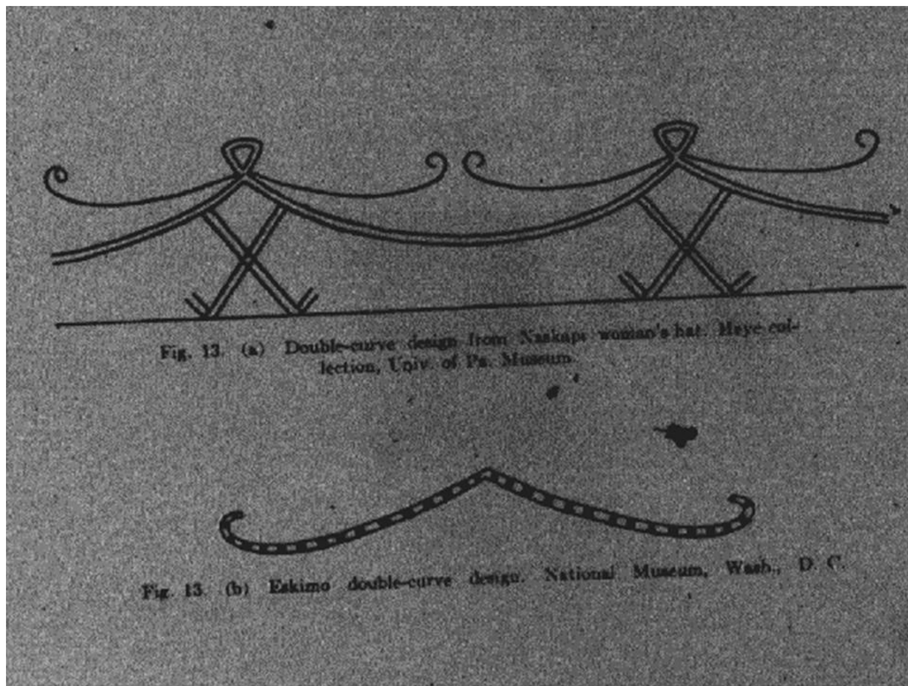

Plate 4 Naskapi double-curved designs. Collected by Frank G. Speck in The Double-Curve Motive in Northeastern Algonkian Art (Ottawa: Government Printing Burea, 1914)

Foremost, the most extensive direct explanation of these hats is found on a virtual museum called *tipatshimuna: Innu stories of the land*, recipient of the 2006 Canadian Museums Association Award for Outstanding Achievement in Multimedia and the 2007 ICOM's International Committee for the Audiovisual and New Image and Sound Technologies (AVICOM) Prix Web'Art d'Or de l'exposition virtuelle. The explanation is given by Shimun Michel and Manian (Ashini) Michel in a narrative entitled *manituian - mitish akunishkueun*, women's traditional beaded hat, and reads as follows[18]:

> In the "post-contact tradition,"[19] women would have had at least two of these hats - one a working hat for life in the country, the other a hat for special occasions such as attending church and all its associated functions (Mass, weddings, funerals, etc.). Women wore their hair long, which they wrapped about small, wooden blocks/boards (ashpituakan), and covered with black strips of cloth. This bun of hair is called shetshipatuan. Older women in some of the Quebec North Shore communities continue to wear these bonnets on a daily basis, but in Sheshatshiu, women wear them only on special occasions. The bonnet is generally not associated with Barren Ground Innu women. Although they wore their hair in buns (shetshipatuan), they covered their heads with scarves rather than bonnets, while in cold temperatures, they pulled the hoods of their caribou fur jackets over their heads. The beadwork on the bonnets could be very elaborate, and frequently made use of the double curved motif.

On the origins of the *akunishkueun* the virtual museum states that its origins are "a great mystery" and goes on to cite documented testimony of early Euro-Canadian explorers who described the bonnet and/or photographed Innu women wearing the *akunishkuen*. The earliest recorded reference to the bonnet is in James MacKenzie's description of Naskapi dress when he mentions that "the dress of the women consists of a conical cap, a role with detached sleeves, which is belted around the waist and hangs from the shoulder to half the leg, leggings, and shows of caribou skin. They bundle the hair on each side of the head." When MacKenzie visited the region of the "King's posts" in 1808 he differentiated the Nakapi and Montagnais

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(Montagner) in the same manner as Speck. and thus this informs his following descriptions as well as the overt racism and sexism present during the time:

> The only difference between a Nascapee[sic] and a Montagner[sic] woman's dress is that the former dresses in leather and the latter in cloth, with the addition of a shawl tied with an elegant knot to conceal her tempting beauties from the roguish eye… Their caps, in the shape of a priest's mitre, are made of red and blue second cloth, the seams and rim of which are ornamented with beads and ribands, fancifully put on. Their robes made of red or blue cloth and with detached sleeves, hand from the shoulder to the ankle and are wrapped tight around the waist by a belt of the same cloth but of different colour, so that their shapes are plainly seen.

A century later, in 1908, Mina Hubbard who explored Labrador with her husband Leonidas Hubbard, also refers to the *akunishkueun* in her diary, later published alongside her husband's work :

> Their clothing was of a quite civilised fashion, the dresses being of woollen goods of various colours made with plain bodice and skirt, while on their feet they wore moccasins of dressed deerskin. The jet black hair was parted from forehead to neck, and brought round on either side, where it was wound into a little, hard roll in front of the ear and bound about with pieces of plain clothe or a pretty beaded band. Each head was adorned with a tuque made from black and red broadcloth, with beaded or braided band around the head. Both the manner of wearing the hair and the tuque were exceedingly picturesque and becoming, and the types were various as those to be found in other communities ranging from the sweet and even beautiful face to the grossly animal like.

Hubbard's account of the way of dress of the Montagnais versus the Naskapi reaffirms, as well as explains, that the *akunishkueun* is less associated with the Barren Ground Innu. In her diary, Hubbard remarks that amongst the Naskapi: "There was but the one black and red tuque with braided band,

and the chief's daughter alone wore the beaded band on her hair, which was arranged as that of the women in the Montagnais camp." Interestingly, already at the time of Hubbard's expedition, the *akunishkueun* was a material possession of significant value. In an anecdote , Hubbard recounts how she tried to retrieve the beaded head band of what she perceived as the Chief's daughter:

> Looking about for something which I might carry away with me as a souvenir of the visit, my eyes caught the beaded band, which the chief's daughter wore on her hair, and stepping towards her I touched it to indicate my wish. She drew sharply away and said something in tones that had a plainly resentful ring. It was, "That is mine."

Although the origins of *akunishkueun* are difficult to pinpoint, evidence of its presence and use span from the early 1800s until the 21st Century. Furthermore, questions of origin can only inform so much on the specific relations that an object is embedded in and with. In the case of the *akunishkueun*, looking at the past two centuries and the circumstances of those women who wore these bonnets follows Gosden & Marshal's premise that "as people and objects gather time, movement and change, they are constantly transformed, and these transformations of person and object are tied up with each other."[27]

Thus, to properly discuss the Innu from the 19th Century to the 21st Century, looking at the conditions that brought them to this historical instance is needed. Archaeological evidence indicates that the Innu have inhabited Nistassinan for over two millennia and "some scholars believe that they are descended from the first human inhabitants of eastern Canada, who moved into the region around 8,000 years ago, at the end of the last Ice Age."[28] According to Samson, Wilson, and Mazower, the Innu first encountered Europeans in the 10th century. These Europeans were the Vikings who at the time established for a short period of time a settlement in Newfoundland, close to the mainland of Labrador and Quebec. Following this contact was the 1497 claim of the land by John Cabot for King Henry VIII of England and subsequently the capture of Innu by Gaspar Corte-Real, a Portuguese sailor, who then sold the natives as slaves, in 1501. Over the next century, the Innu, like other Aboriginal peoples of North America, experienced a quickly developing trade as "European fleets swarmed to the western Atlantic to exploit rich fishing grounds off Newfoundland, and sailors began coming ashore."[29] At the beginning of the 17th Century, "these pragmatic, informal contacts" were replaced as European countries established permanent settlements and trading posts in eastern North America. The fur trade was a fierce agent

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in the "neutralisation," "assimilation," "destruction," and "extermination" of the relatives of the Innu in North America. At this time, Paul Lejeune a Jesuit missionary, attempted to "civilise" the Innu but failed in his attempt to settle the Innu. For the following three centuries, fur traders continued to exert their influence deeper and deeper into Nistassinan. However, even when the other Indigenous peoples had been driven from their land, the Innu remained in Nistassinan due to the fact that the "Quebec Labrador peninsula was still valued for what the Innu could harvest from it than for the land itself."[30]So for the next three centuries, the fur trade acted to slowly diminish Innu self-sufficiency using the politics of creating "artificial wants."[31] This brings the research to the early 19th Century, at the time of MacKenzie's reference to the *akunishkueu* which is the earliest reference to the *akunishkueu* as a component of the material culture of the Innu.

In the early 19th Century although the fur trade had altered the way of life of the Innu, and therefore of the Innu Women who wore the *akunishkueu,* the Innu remained nomadic hunting bands:

> For most of the year, when the waterways were frozen and Nistassinan was thickly covered with snow, small, mobile bands of two or three families journeyed through the interior in search of game, walking on snowshoes and pulling their possessions on toboggans. Then after the 'break up' of the ice in May or June, they travelled by canoe to the coast or to a large inland lake to fish trade, make and repair equipment meet friends and relatives.[32]

According to Samson and personal accounts by present day elder Innu, *tshenut*, relations between the sexes followed the Innu emphasis on "both mutual responsibility and individual autonomy"[33] and thus, were egalitarian before contact with Euro-Canadians and remained prevalently egalitarian before settlement in the 1960s. The woman who wore the *akunishkueu* in the 19th Century and until after the Second World War

> went ice fishing, hunted small game, snared rabbits. They took impeccable care of the main tents, looked after the children, cleaned and prepared the animal skins, and dealth with all the other rigmarole of daily life. The men were constantly on the move, checking traps and snares, and keeping watch for big game, especially caribou. The women gave birth, the people took care of each other, healing their illnesses as well as their wounds and they died. [34]

Mathieu Mestokosho, an elder Innu man, said of the women that used to live in the old way in the country, *nutshimit*, that they "cooked the food, repaired the clothes, boiled them to wash them, and took care of the children and old people. They cleaned the animal skins and, in addition, hunted and fished. They never stopped, and so often didn't have time to eat the food they needed"[35].

Leading up to the time of the Second World War the fur traders (who left the picture with the collapse of the fur trade), officials, and also missionaries increasingly influenced and pressured Innu life. In It's Like the Legend: Innu Women's Voices[36] several narratives by now elder Innu women are recounted on the Innu life of the early 20th century. Mary Adele Andrew, an elder woman born and raised in *nutshimut* and then permanently settled in Sheshatshu where she died at the age of sixty-three. Of the 'old days', Mani-Aten, a women most likely wore or saw *akunishkue* during the early 1900s, spoke:[37]

> I will tell you my story about the times I spent in *nutshimit*. In the old days it would be some time in August when we left to go to *nutshimit*. We travelled along where the train runs today. We canoed and it took us a long time, two months usually, to get to where we wanted to camp…We would arrive in *nutshimit* in the fall to where we wanted to camp, stay until winter and then move on...
>
> …In them days the man and his wife always travelling together to hunt. We didn't get money from Social Services for food, although we did get relief from the store clerk in North West River. That's how the Innu bought their food and boats. We always had enough food from this relief to go back into *nutshimit*. We mostly gave furs to the clerk to pay our bills. When we returned to the community, we had already cleaned the furs for the clerk.

The making of material culture such as the *akunishkue,* was and still is today an important part off Innu culture. Angela Andrew, a well known Innu tea doll maker, said in the same collection of stories that "a long time

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ago, the use of crafts was strong. The Innu made their own moccasins, canoes, drums and shelters."[38]

After the Second World War changes began happening at a more rapid pace in the lives of the Innu men and women of Nistassinan. Photographs from the archives of Innu-Aitun, show a great instance of the traditional bonnet being worn by Innu woman in juxtaposition with the crucifix (Figure 4) and even in the church (Figure 5). The photographs show the ever increasing pressures of the Church in Innu life. The Church, which had been a presence on Innu land and in Innu life since Paul Lejeune, increased measures of conversion and the tolerance of the different way of life led by the Innu began to diminish. Using influence and coercion, the Church helped to promote the eventual sedentarisation of the Innu.

At a time when the United States had abandoned the Residential School programs, Canada began assimilation policies on the Innu, aiming its tools of 'civilising', once again, at the children. With promises of 'White education' the Church headlined the pressures that drastically changed the experience and quality of life of the Innu. The treatment received by the Innu children, daughters, sons, nieces, and nephews, was something that their Innu way of life had not prepared them for: from Innu child rearing practices that did not include overt punishment to the strict policies of the Church schools. More so, these schools were a tool of assimilation policies that promoted Western values and ideals over Innu cultural understandings and traditions. Pien Penashue from Sheshatshu said of this that "the best way to destroy a culture is to train its children in another culture"[39]

Furthermore, relations and roles between and of the sexes were changed by the Church. The lives of the children of Mary Adele Andrew and many more women in Nympha Byrne and Camille Fouillard's collection, which has an illustration of an elder Innu woman wearing the *akunishkue* (Figure 3) on its cover, were drastically altered by the Church. Egalitarian views of male and female relations were replaced by the institutional subjugation of women in the Catholic Church system to the raising of the male over the female in Innu life. Due to the Church and Western academic methods of anthropology which focused on Innu men, the voices of Innu women were made mute, either by turning off reception or by brute force.

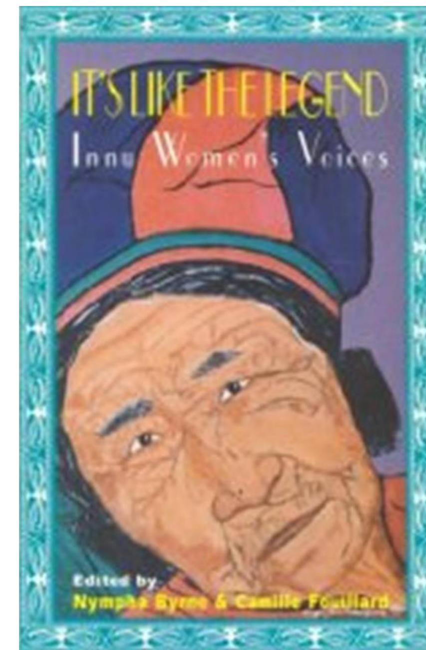

Figure 3(Left) Cover illustration of a collection of Innu Women's life stories. Elderly woman wearing the *akunishkue.*

Figure 4 (Right Innu Woman wearing an *akunishkue* along with a crucifix, 1950s-1960s. Photo courtesy of Innu Aitun.

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Figure 5(Left) Innu Woman wearing *akunishkue* along with a crucifix walking with Priest, 1950s-1960s. Photo courtesy of Innu Aitun.

The Innu today, number approximately 18,000,[40] and are, after the sedentarisation of the 1960s, located in eleven communities: Utshimassits, Matimekush, Sheshatshu, Mashteuiatsh, Essipit, Pessamit, Uashat mak Maniutenam, Ekuantshit, Nutashkuan, Unamam Shipit, and Pakua Shipit. Nine of these fall under the Quebec administration and two of these are in Labrador. However, the Innu have never signed a treaty or ceded their land of Nistassinan to the Crown nor to the Canadian Government. Presently, at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st Century, the Innu Nation suffers from the highest suicide rate in the world.[41] An Innu is "almost 13 times more likely to kill themselves than the general population of Canada."[42] In "How did we get here?"[43] Samson, Wilson, and Mazower write that the way sedentarisation occurred is obscured by politics and has given way to the notion that it "just happened" and desperation all around for the state of the Innu. The Church, schools, the health-services, the Law, political authority of the state and imposition of a certain political organisation on the Innu, mining developments, hydroelectric projects, and military training have all contributed and still contribute to the present day conditions of the Innu communities of Nistassinan, Quebec and Labrador. These conditions, as presented in Samson (2003), Nympha Byrne and Camille Fouillard (2003), Samson, Wilson, Mazover (1999), and Wadden (1996), are horrific and show that the State of Canada, even after the injustices of the Second World War and its decry of human rights violations in China and elsewhere, has been and continues to be in direct violation of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous

Peoples (2008).[44]

Contemporary Innu women and elder Innu women, who are still alive today and remember a different time, live in bleak conditions of varying degrees of high rates of physical and sexual abuse, addictions, alcoholism, unemployment, and high infant mortality rates. During the 1980s and 1990s, and ongoing today, a wave of activism began in Innu communities led by Innu women, whose past and present the *akunishkue* represents as a symbol of Innu Culture. These women took decisive action in 1987 to protest illegal hunting laws where their ancestors had hunted for centuries before the arrival of Euro-Canadians. In 1988, Innu women and youth once again protested State decisions by peacefully marching on the runways of NATO military test flight air base in Goose Bay. Many of these women were arrested, including Nympha Byrne, editor of It's Like the Legend: Innu Women's Voices, and several of the contributors. Then in 1993, a group of Mushua women supported by Chief Katie Rich evicted a judge and his court from Utshimassits, Davis Inlet. There are many defeats but some successes for the Innu. In 1998,[45] more than 100 Innu successfully blocked Premier Tobin of Newfoundland and Premier Lucien Bouchard of Quebec from announcing the beginning of a hydroelectric project that would sufficiently destroy Innu land. These movements have given women, as well as men, hope and courage and have begun a widespread movement towards healing in the community including addiction-treatment services within the communities and in *nutshimit*.

Contemporarily, the *akunishkue* has come to be part of the cultural conception of the traditional Innu woman itself- a prototypical element of the prototypical schema of the Innu woman. The evidence of this is in another product of material culture of the Innu of Nistassinan: *innikeu*, the tea doll (Figure 6). These dolls are part of a long practice of Innu crafts. According to the narrative by Matinen (Selma) Michelin courtesy of *Tipatshimuna: Innu stories of the land*:

> A long time ago, the dolls were dressed like that. A woman was dressed up like that in the past. We dressed up like this when men and women got married and the clothing was made out of caribou hide. The children were bundled up like that too. A man dressed up when he got married. They looked very good. I made so many dolls, and I sold them all away. People asked for them constantly. People in the United States asked for those, too. I sold two there. And in Australia some people asked for two dolls and I sold a few there, too. Tea. And that's why they called them

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tea dolls - because of the tea stuffed inside the doll. The loose tea doesn't come out because it is sewn very tight. But it cannot be washed. The tea might come out if the doll gets wet, so the doll has to stay dry. The dolls had to be in the plastic bag to stay dry. I have been making these for a long time now. I was 16 years old when I started making them. I gave them away to children and people used to ask me to make dolls for their children, and when I had time on my hands to make them. My mother taught me. She used to make tea dolls, but she would make them differently, and not the way they are made today. I taught myself to make them and I remembered the old ways people used to dress up - when we were still trading out of Uashat. I had a book that shows how people used to dress up a long time ago. I copied their clothing including their hats when I made the tea dolls and that's how I dressed up the dolls that I made. [My mother] made them different. Old people like my grandmother and my mother didn't care about the books and they would make any kind of dolls.

Figure 6 Tea Doll, wearing the *akunishkue,* made by Angela Andrew, 1980. Photo courtesy of Tipathsimuna.

According to Angela Andrew, crafts such as the *innikeu*, for which she is known, "helps non –Innu people understand us better when they get to see our crafts. For example, they learn more about our culture and spiritual world…This might give them a clue, make them learn more about us, understand us, the way we were a long time ago."

Furthermore, today, the *akunishkue* is worn by elder women of Innu communities and by others on special occasions. In the virtual museum of *Tipatshimuna* there are five *akunishkue* made of felt and that have face hair buns, *shetshipatuan*. These *akunishkue* in the Peenamin MacKenzie School collection, are not considered "genuine", and "were made for Innu girls going to the provincial winter games in Corner Brook in 2000." Thus, the *akunishkue* have moved into a different realm of material culture into the "display of tradition." This reaffirms the bonnet's status as a representative of the lives of Innu women from the time of its appearance to the time of its collection in the museums of both Euro-Canadians and Innu.

Indeed Prown, Gosden & Marshall, and Trigger were on the right track in their methodological choices of focusing on different areas to inform knowledge about cultures: on objects themselves, the shift in the context of their use and the lives of their users, and including what the people have to say about their own histories. Indeed both Prown and Angela Andrew are correct in saying that material culture objects such as the *akunishkue* serve as guides to "an entire cultural universe."

The *akunishkueun* itself is a powerful symbol of the lives of the women who wore them and continue to wear them and of the Innu plight of being an Indigenous peoples of Canada struggling for its basic human rights to continue existing as a socio-political cultural group without the pressures of assimilation that they have been subjected to and are still subjected to presently. Venturing into the complex webs of social relations of which the *akunishkueun* has been a witness, actor, and bystander has reduced the noise of cultural bias and the voices of the Innu women of Nistassinan have filled my ears with sorrow, pain, laughter, and joy. Now, when I walk by the McCord Museum I remember and hear the soft drum of the voices coming from the archives, or perhaps this time they are coming from my own heart. I cannot help but smile for this time I understand what the whispers say:

Almighty Woman,
You have so much power
Trying to gain strength
For your community.

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"I am so proud of you."
And I have high hopes from you.
"I will walk with you."
You, Almighty Woman,
you are strength
for your people.
And your land.

You are still nurturing
your little children,
but you can't wait,
because your elders
and your people
come next.

Almighty Woman
Almighty Woman,
you are a fighter
for your culture.
You have a heavy load.
I see the brightness
in your face,
because you believe
in yourself.

Almighty Woman
Almighty Woman,
you've been crying for so long,
you've washed your fae
with your tears,
letting your hair grow
for your strength,
braiding your hair
for your proudness,
sharing your spirit
for kindness.

Almighty Woman
Almighty Woman,
you've touched the hearts
in your community,
you make your elders so proud.

The Great Spirit will thank you
for all your strength,
you will be a legend
to your people.
You will empower your community
and your elders,
your peoples and children,
you free your spirit
for your beliefs…

Endnotes

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2 *Kekashau* is a Davis Inlet word which originally meant Anglophone and has come to mean all White persons, this is the singular form. Nympha Byrne and Camille Fouillard. It's Like the Legend: Innu Women's Voices (Charlottetown, PEI: gynergy books, 2003), page 290

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8 Curators of McCord Museum. See Plate 1 and Plate 2.

9 Frank G. Speck The Double-Curve Motive in Northeastern Algonkian Art (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914), 1

10 Frank G. Speck The Double-Curve Motive in Northeastern Algonkian Art (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914), 2

11 Frank G. Speck The Double-Curve Motive in Northeastern Algonkian Art (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914), 2

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17 Most photographs, which were dated between the 1950s-1970s, were found at "Photothèque." Innu Aitun. 2005. Prod. Maikan http://www.innuaitun.com/modules/xcgal/ (Accessed Dec 2008). Photographs, which dated in the earlier 1900s, MP000036111, MP000036119, MP000011075, MP000036120, MP000063912 , were found at the McCord Museum at Keys to History: Collections at the Museum. McCord Museum of Canadian History http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/en/collection/artifacts/ACC5703§ion=196 (Accessed Dec 2008).

18 "pm21." Tipatshimuna: Innu stories from the land. 2005. CHIM. http://www.tipatshimuna.ca/1110_e.php?catalogue_no=pm21 (Accessed Dec 2008).

19 "Post-Contact" is used loosely in the text and is, after more research on the origins of the bonnet and on the history of the Innu, most probably used to mean before the sedentarisation of the Innu in the 1960s.

20 "pm21." Tipatshimuna: Innu stories from the land. 2005. CHIM. http://www.tipatshimuna.ca/1110_e.php?catalogue_no=pm21 (Accessed Dec 2008).

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22 Mr. James McKenzie. The King's Posts and Journal of a Canoe Jaunt through the King's Domains, 1808. "The Saguenay and the Labrador Coast", In. L. R. Masson. Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest: Récits de voyages, letters et rapports inédits relatifs au nord-ouest canadien (Québec: de l'Imprimerie Générale A. Coté et Cie. 1890), page 422

23 Mina Hubbard , A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador (St. John's: Breakwater Press; 1908), 191

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25 Mina Hubbard , A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador (St. John's: Breakwater Press; 1908), 213-214

26 Chiefs were not part of Montagnais-Naskapi organisation. The first man, *utshimau* , however was symbolically considered the leader for his hunting and shamanic skill. Even so, he had no significant power over the actions of the others in the camp. Colin Samson, James Wilson, and Jonathan Mazower. Canada's Tibet : The Killing of the Innu (UK: Clement and Foster, 1999), page 11

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35 Account of the stories of an elder Innu named Mathieu Mestokosho. Serge Bouchard, Caribou Hunter: A Song of A Vanished Innu Life (Vancouver, British Colombia: Greystone Books, 2006), 147

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41 Colin Samson, James Wilson, and Jonathan Mazower. Canada's Tibet : The

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Frontier College Photo Essay

Mat Lyle

These signs welcome those landing at Fort Hope's single runway airport.

I spent the summer of 2007 on the Eabametoong First Nations reserve also known as Fort Hope, Ontario working as a daycamp counselor in one of more than 30 summer reading camps set-up by Frontier College in reserves throughout Northern Ontario. Frontier College is a Canadian non-profit whose mandate is to promote literacy among all sectors of society and who has partnered with the Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and the Nishnawbe Aski Nation to administer these camps with the goals of fostering a love of reading, learning and mental wellness among aboriginal youth and providing engaging and constructive activities for children during summer vacations.

Frontier College's reading day camp combined reading, writing and creative activities to increase literacy and interest in books.

Fort Hope is a small isolated community only accessible by air year-round and ice-roads for 2 months of the winter. The population of the community 1500 with another 1000 or so Eabametoong band members living off-reserve in Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout and elsewhere.

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Best friends pose at the annual summer Pow-Wow held in the community ice rink. Children and youth are highly involved in the performance of traditional dance and song over Eabametoong's pow wow weekend.

The Ontario provincial flag waves at the site of Camp Bigfoot, a locally run bush camp for the youth of the community.

A State of Epidemic: A Comparative Analysis of Diabetes in Two Aboriginal Communities of Quebec

Catherine Duclos

The Relevance of Diabetes Today

The Aboriginal peoples of Canada have been afflicted by centuries of displacement and forced alienation from their own culture. Certain changes have caused resistance, while others were gradually assimilated into Aboriginal way of life over centuries of exposure. Today, much of the Aboriginal diet, subsistence, leisure and work activities are unlike what they once were when isolation meant greater freedom from the influences and pressures of the outside world. The Aboriginal peoples of Canada have become increasingly restricted by the government-imposed limitations on their lands and the environmental degradation caused by land development and exploitation. As a result, the ample resources that once were have been destroyed or contaminated, and Aboriginal peoples have been forced to adopt habits that are becoming increasingly detrimental to their health. In the past two decades it has become widely acknowledged that type-2 diabetes is a severe health problem among Aboriginal communities across Canada. Having reached an alarming rate that is three to five times higher than the national average, diabetes is a pervasive threat that continues to increase in reserves and communities across the country.

The First Nations of Quebec are no exception to the ever-growing diabetes trend. Some Cree communities around James Bay have reached a shocking 25% prevalence in populations above twenty years of age. Given that most diabetes prevention efforts have been oriented towards educational and health programs, should one assume that a First Nations reserve that has limited access to a school and health centre would automatically have a higher occurrence of diabetes within its population? The Cree of Chisasibi and the Mohawk of Kahnawake are two Aboriginal peoples living in relatively different settings, with disparate levels of health care and access to health education. Comparing the prevalence of type 2 diabetes in the abovementioned reserves should reveal that a hazardous amalgamation of health, educational, geographical, and socio-historical factors can have varying effects on the development and propagation of the epidemic. Most of all, it should become clear that change and improvement of health conditions and programs cannot come solely from outside the community; it must be a collaborative process that involves the will and participation of the people of these communities, and that centres on the inclusion of

of Aboriginal conceptions of health, medicine, and social initiative.

An "Epidemic in Progress"

The Public Health Agency of Canada defines diabetes as "a chronic condition that impedes the production and/or proper use of insulin, a hormone vital to normal metabolism" (Public Health Agency of Canada 2008). Type 2 diabetes usually begins with insulin resistance, and is followed by an eventual decline in the ability to produce insulin (Public Health Agency of Canada 2004-2005). Although diabetes was identified by Swiss physician Phillipus Aureolus Paracelsus as a "serious general disorder" in the sixteenth century, only in the twentieth century did it become the focus of serious clinical research (Canadian Diabetes Association 2008a). According to the Canadian Diabetes Association, 246 million people worldwide are currently affected by diabetes. If the increasing trend continues with a further seven million people developing diabetes each year, that number is expected to reach 380 million by 2025 (Canadian Diabetes Association 2008b). Most importantly, the public health significance of diabetes lies not exclusively within the disease itself, but in the manifestation of long-term complications which may ensue. Such complications may affect the "cardiovascular system, eyes, kidneys and nerves, resulting in premature death, disability, and a compromised quality of life (Young 2000: 564). The risk of developing type 2 diabetes is significantly lower in people who maintain a healthy weight and participate in regular physical activity (Public Health Agency of Canada 2004-2005). Among Canada's adult population, rates of diabetes went from 3.2% to 4.9% between 1996 and 2005 (Statistics Canada 2007a). This increase depicts the pervasive North American trend, which also concords with drastic increases in obesity in recent decades.

The contemporary diabetes crisis within Canada's Aboriginal populations is of much greater severity. The Aboriginal communities of Canada have seen a tremendous increase in the rates of diabetes in the past three decades. As several doctors from the Canadian Medical Association have noted, type 2 diabetes was rare in Aboriginal populations before the 1950s (Young 2000: 564). In the Sioux Lookout Zone of northwestern Ontario, the prevalence of type 2 diabetes increased by 45% in a ten-year period. In Saskatchewan, the rate of diabetes amongst First Nations doubled between 1980 and 1900 (Young 2000: 564). In 2006, the Cree community of Waswanipi reached an alarming 25.8% rate of type 2 diabetes among the population aged over 20 years (Kuzmina 2006: 4). As a means to put a halt to the pervasiveness of type 2 diabetes in First Nations communities, several efforts have been concocted in recent years by health organisations, independent groups, and government officials. Most efforts have been geared towards the improvement of aboriginal access to health care, as well

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as toward the development of educational programs that promote healthy eating and exercise habits.

Current Debates in the Discourse of Aboriginal Diabetes

Many have argued that one of the greatest problems for Aboriginal communities located far from urban centers is that they do not have access to healthy foods at affordable rates due to the cost of transportation. Inuit villages in Quebec are located even further from urban centres, which would thus lead one to infer that prices are as high, if not higher than in First Nations villages such as Chisasibi. Nik Barry-Shaw, census worker for Statistics Canada, spent several months in 2006 touring Aboriginal reserves and villages in northern Quebec. Outraged by the $12 boxes of cereal in local stores, Barry-Shaw recalls having been blown away by the cost of fruits, vegetables, milk and cheese, which he says were in short supply but always sold out by the end of the week. "The administrative capital [of the Inuit], Kuujjuaq, was the obvious exception and was quite well-stocked food wise," Barry-Shaw explains. "The higher percentage of whites, the higher incomes and the more frequent flights from the South all contributed to this" (Barry-Shaw 2008). Barry-Shaw says most store owners blamed the high prices on transportation and the lack of competition, which is no incentive for having low, competitive prices. Although Aboriginal communities have shown that exorbitant food prices have been detrimental to aboriginal dietary consumption across Canada, it cannot be regarded as the sole cause for the surge of diabetes prevalence. Seeing that Inuit communities are generally located farthest north from Canada's urban centers, and thus have little access to healthy, affordable foods, should one thus assume that they have the highest prevalence of type-2 diabetes amongst Aboriginal communities in Canada? This assumption is quickly disproven by the fact that type-2 diabetes is not yet "an important health problem among the Inuit" (Young 2000:563). In 1990, according to Health Canada, the prevalence of self-diagnosed type-2 diabetes was lowest in the northernmost territories of Canada, where access to affordable food was, and still is, most restricted (Health Canada 2008). In 1991, the rate of diabetes amongst Canada's Inuit, at 1.9%, was lower than the general Canadian population, whose rate of diabetes was 3.2% at the time (Health Canada 2008). Today, the trend remains similar, with the prevalence of diabetes being lower in the Inuit populations than in Canada's general population. Although the problematic of location and access to healthful dietary products at low cost will be expanded upon below in regards to the Cree village of Chisasibi, it cannot be assumed to prevail over all others possible causes of diabetes: most Inuit villages seem to have maintained low prevalence of type 2 diabetes despite their remote locations.

A contemporary debate that involves diabetes amongst the

Aboriginal peoples of Canada centres on the water pollution caused by paper and pulp mills. Recent Korean research on U.S. data demonstrates a correlation between exposure to persistent organic pollutants (POPs) "such as dioxins released from pulp and paper mills or found in flame retardants, and insulin resistance, something that leads to type 2 diabetes" (McElheran 2008:7). Researchers argue that "this link might explain why Canada's Aboriginals, who often live a subsistence lifestyle downstream from industrial developments, are three to five times more likely than the general population to contract this disease" (McHelheran 2008:7). A study published in the January 2008 issue of *Lancet* was first to report on the connection between diabetes and environmental pollution. "Some chemicals disrupt the ability of the body to metabolize fats directly, thereby inducing symptoms, such as weight gain, that can lead to diabetes," report the authors of the *Lancet* study (McHelheran 2008:7). Considering how Canada's 737 recognized Aboriginal communities within the vicinity of an industrial development, this research could prove pivotal in the diabetes crisis. Activist John Hummel has been researching the link between pollutants and health problems amongst the First Nations. He states that if one looks at "First Nations coast to coast for communities that fish downstream from or in the vicinity of pulp and paper mills, it works out to roughly a quarter of all First Nations in the country" (McHelheran 2008:7). Hummel concludes that the situation could be considered genocide:

> First Nations people who rely on traditional foods like fish and other animals are in a "catch 22" situation. If the people eat a lot of wild foods they may be exposed to poisons that bioacumulate in their bodies and harm their health. If the people stop eating wild foods then the beneficial effect of that food is gone and a central part of the people's culture is lost. Such a situation leads to poor health and social disintegration. The situation I just described is genocide. The only option I can see for First Nations to escape the "catch 22" is to hunt down the specific companies who are polluting their people, force those companies to stop the pollution, clean up their toxic mess and pay damages to their victims. (Hummel 2000)

Although the Canadian government closed fishing grounds all over Canada due to a concern about dioxin/furan related risks, "it never bothered doing dioxin/furan testing of the people in downstream communities who eat those fish" (Hummel 2000). Unfortunately, few laboratories seem willing to dedicate resources to the long-term longitudinal studies needed for

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Although the Canadian government closed fishing grounds all over Canada due to a concern about dioxin/furan related risks, "it never bothered doing dioxin/furan testing of the people in downstream communities who eat those fish" (Hummel 2000). Unfortunately, few laboratories seem willing to dedicate resources to the long-term longitudinal studies needed for such investigations, and the Canadian government shows no interest in providing the necessary support for such research to be conducted (McHelheran 2008:7).

Comparative Analysis of Living Standards and Health of First Nations Communities

The juxtaposition of two different Aboriginal communities, the Cree settlement of Chisasibi and the Mohawk reserve of Kahnawake, may expose factors that play significant roles on the development and prevention of diabetes. The Cree settlement of Chisasibi is located on the eastern shore or James Bay, ninety kilometres west of Radisson. Its population numbers approximately 3,500. Chisasibi has an elementary and secondary school called James Bay Eeyou School, a nearby regional hospital managed by the James Bay Cree Board of Health and Social Services, a community centre and arena (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada: Chisasibi 2008). The prevalence of type 2 diabetes among the population of Chisasibi that is over fifteen was 15.3% in 2006, comparatively low in relation to other Cree villages such as Waswanipi, with a rate of 25.8% (Kuzmina 2006:5). In a setting rather divergent from that of Chisasibi, the Mohawk reserve of Kahnawake is located across from Montreal, on the south shore of the St-Lawrence River. The reserve has a total of six schools, ranging from preschool to secondary school, a Mohawk hospital on-site, an educational centre, a cultural centre, a youth centre, an arena, swimming pool, gymnasium, walking and bicycle paths and several parks (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada: Kahnawake 2008). Amongst its population of slightly over nine thousand, the prevalence of type 2 diabetes in the Mohawk Community of Kahnawake had already reached 9% in 1988 in adults 18 years old (Horn 2007: 438). In the 45-64 age group of Kahnawake, the rate of type 2 diabetes had reached a high 14% in 1988 (Horn 2007: 438). Specifically noteworthy is the fact that although prevalence of type-2 diabetes in Kahnawake is still significantly exceeds the national average, rates have fallen in recent years, against the increasing trend across Canada, especially amongst Aboriginal communities. What makes Kahnawake different from Chisasibi? What factors of Kahnawake's development could be credited for the reduction of diabetes prevalence? Several factors may come into play when seeking to answer such questions, for problems and solutions cannot be divided from their multi-dimensionality.

The Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay publishes

an annual update on the diabetes crisis amongst the Cree population of Quebec. In the "Cree Diabetes Information System" of 2006, type 2 diabetes is shown to have risen to a crude occurrence of 17.9% in the Cree populations of twenty years of age and over (Kuzmina 2006:2). With such alarming updates, the source of such an epidemic must be found and radically altered. The location of a community may have a significant impact on its access to food, resources, and knowledge of the effects of different dietary consumption. Firstly, its distance from a large city increases the cost of food items that must be transported to Chisasibi before they are sold. With an employment rate of only 42.5% and a average total yearly income of a mere $15,733 per year, most citizens of Chisasibi resign themselves to purchasing and consuming the most affordable foods. Of course, this often involves foods of lower quality, often filled with sugars that lead to the onset of type 2 diabetes (Statistics Canada 2007b). This factor alone cannot be blamed for the high incidence of diabetes in Chisasibi. Kahnawake, located only a few kilometres from the city of Montreal, is situated in proximity to a mass of commercial products and services. Resources are thus more readily available to residents of Kahnawake, at more affordable prices. The difference in location between the two villages can thus be regarded as having a potential impact on the accessibility of healthy consumer products that do no generate risks of developing type 2 diabetes.

Aside from the availability of affordable foods, the conscious choice to eat well also affects the health of Aboriginal residents in Chisasibi and Kahnawake. When one has restrained dietary choices due to lack of availability or affordability, then dietary choice is also restricted. The village of Chisasibi also fails to promote healthy eating in restaurants. Barry-Shaw explains that Chisasibi has two restaurants, one that serves pizza and another that serves burgers and poutine. Barry-Shaw adds that "healthy foods [in restaurants] were definitely harder to find, and more expensive. Whites who complain about the Natives giving their children Coca-Cola instead of milk should drop the tone of moral superiority and look at the price differentials" (Barry-Shaw 2008). Journalist and political scientist Sue Montgomery casts part of the blame on Chisasibi's only restaurant, Googoom's Kitchen, where children indulge in poutine, ignoring the healthier choices offered by cook Michel Fortin. Once, in half an hour, Fortin says he served a record of 186 orders of poutine to local children. "If I were to take poutine off the menu, there'd be a revolt," Fortin says. "No one would come and I wouldn't make any money" (Montgomery 2004:A1). "The favourite breakfast remains, eggs, bacon, sausage, home fries and toast – a heart attack on a plate" (Montgomery 2004:A1). Restrained by financial conditions, restaurant owners try to respond to the demand for inexpensive, coveted food items that are not always healthy for consumers. On the other hand, consumers confronted with financial difficulties opt for foods they can enjoy at low prices, which are frequently insalubrious.

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Additionally, Montgomery points out that Cree traditional diet did not necessarily include many fruits and vegetables. "The problem is, most people haven't a clue what to do with broccoli or carrots, since vegetables were never part of the Cree traditional diet" (Montgomery 2004:A1). Kahnawake's proximity to larger cities increases the population's access to restaurants or grocery stores that offer healthier products to its clients, and the issue in regards to dietary lifestyle choices is perhaps less relevant to the Kahnawake diabetes situation.

Although dietary consumption and the integration of healthy foods into traditional diets remains a central issue in Aboriginal communities, an active lifestyle, or lack of one, also calls attention to the discourse of type 2 diabetes. Chisasibi and Kahnawake both have a health and fitness centre of some sort, which grants access to its residents and permits those willing to maintain a healthier exercise routine. As Sue Montgomery describes in *Obesity, Diabetes Epidemic in Quebec's 14,000 Crees,* Chisasibi has a fitness centre which is only used infrequently or not at all by most residents. Montgomery asserts that residents who do use the fitness centre on a regular basis are part of a "minority in a population where obesity is becoming the norm rather than the exception" (Montgomery 2004:A1). Perhaps a lack of will is to blame, or perhaps it is the people's misinformation about the health benefits of regular exercise. Considering the social and economic struggles from which many Aboriginal communities suffer, where work is hard to find and resources tend to be scarce, it is only normal for physical exercise to lose priority. In addition, a detachment from traditional ways of life, including intensive hunting, trapping, and fishing, caused by environmental or land restriction issues, have ultimately led to a reduction in physical exertion for subsistence purposes. In an effort to encourage participation in physical activity as a means of social interaction and involvement, the Sports and Recreation department of Chisasibi's community council organises an annual square dance competition as well as several sports tournaments for its residents (Cree Nation of Chisasibi 2006).

In Kahnawake, with its health centre, arena, swimming pool and park, residents have ample facilities in which to remain healthy if they so choose. For example, the Kahnawake Youth Centre offers a yearly family membership for only $75, which includes access to recreational, sports, fitness, educational, and cultural programs (Kahnawake Sports and Recreation Unit 2008). The Kahnawake Sports and Recreation Unit coordinates sports leagues for children and adults, and hosts tournaments in various athletic disciplines. The Unit also offer weight training workshops, sports classes, and coaching certification (Kahnawake Sports and Recreations Unit 2008). Due to its proximity to larger urban towns such as Brossard, Longueil, and Montreal, Kahnawake is more accessible to health researchers, students, institution and associations who target their efforts toward the betterment of Aboriginal health. In November 2008

for example, the Indigenous Physicians' Association of Canada hosted a free 5km run and walk event at Kahnawake's Youth Centre, where healthy breakfast and lunch were served to participants and supporters. As observable in regards to both Chisasibi and Kahnawake, residents have the infrastructure and services necessary to become physically active and to promote such a lifestyle at a young age by involving children in sports and fitness activities facilitated by the community and its sports and recreation amenities.

Traditional Medicine, Collaboration, and Inclusion

Community access to health care is crucial when a large portion of the population is affected by chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes. Chisasibi and Kahnawake both have access to a health centre on site, which helps diagnose and treat the symptoms of diabetes, and also aids in monitoring health complications caused by diabetes. The treatment and care offered by the health centres of Chisasibi and Kahnawake are predicated upon Western biological medicine. Due to the importance of traditional healing methods within Aboriginal communities across the country, the imposition of scientific health care systems that completely disregards traditional methods of healing is not the best approach to Aboriginal health in regards to the residents' acceptance of treatment and medical benefits derived from such methods. The Cree Public Health Department has been increasingly involved in research concerning the effects of ethnobotanical healing of type 2 diabetes. In July 2006, the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay released a preliminary report on the anti-diabetic capacities of traditional plants in the Cree village of Mistissini. The report exposed 17 plants identified for their anti-diabetic potential, all of them used by traditional healers and residents of the village. The report also explained the importance of laboratory testing to see the beneficial compounds contained in the plants, and such research is currently underway. Thus far, it has been determined that all 17 plants "help glucose to enter muscle or fat cells, and therefore help to lower blood glucose levels. Further experiments will look at whether plants have a beneficial effect on the liver and whether they can help protect nerve cells against the damages caused by high blood glucose levels" (Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay 2006:8). As significant as the anti-diabetic potential of traditional plants is the opinion of the Crees of Mistissini regarding traditional and modern healing methods. According to the report, 73.4% of participants would use traditional medicine more often if it was more readily available in the community. Conversely, 61.3% believe medical clinics should offer traditional medicines as well as modern medicines. In all, 63% of participants said that the transmission of traditional knowledge in the community has decreased over the years, and

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68.2% conclude that medical programs involving traditional plants would be helpful for the Cree communities of Quebec (Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay 2006:9). In 2007, the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay released the "Anti-Diabetic Plant Project Update" in which it was stated that "a research agreement emphasizing a real partnership between scientists and healers is being finalised by the Grand Council [of the Crees]" (Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay 2007:1). Undoubtedly, a collaboration between medical approaches is the most desired form of treatment by the Crees; such an alliance of epistemic medical systems could prove more beneficial to the treatment of type 2 diabetes in the near future, albeit the research that still needs to be carried out regarding the use of traditional plants for their anti-diabetic effects.

As regards the epidemic of type 2 diabetes, the Kahnawake has had a distinctive health approach which has proven efficient in the reduction of the prevalence of diabetes in Kahnawake in recent years. The Kahnawake School Diabetes Prevention Project (KSDPP), which started in 1994, is "a partnership of health care workers, educators and community organizers credited with raising awareness and stabilizing diabetes rates in the community" (Curran 2008: A4). The KSDPP has promoted healthful eating and increased physical activity with some success in intermediary outcomes, it has produced no reduction in the prevalence of overweight (Receveur 2008). Ann Macaulay, researcher and physician, began her investigation of type 2 diabetes in Kahnawake in the 1980s. After several years of research and efforts to stop the epidemic, Macaulay's research team "went to council chiefs, teachers and even a local seniors' home to spell out their findings and recommend preventive measures, such as better eating habits and more exercise"(Curran 2008:A4). Macaulay says that recent researchers observing the efforts and effects of the KSDPP were "blown away by the speed with which people in Kahnawake mobilized, shifting from seeing diabetes as one person's illness to a community disease" (Curran 2008:A4). "Kahnawake is an absolute leader in the country for community control of education, health and community services," affirms Macaulay. "As a result of that, they have been able to develop programs that are custom made for the community, so they aren't dependent on top-down programs" (Curran 2008:A4). In recent years, Macaulay has looked at ways scientists and family doctors can collaborate with patients and policy-makers. "If you have everyone at the table during the research process, it's just natural that everybody ends up with increased knowledge" (Curran 2008:A4). The positive effects of the KSDPP is rooted in its collaboration of eclectic forces, both Mohawk and non-Mohawk, based on long-term, wide-reaching efforts that target all age groups within the education, physical fitness, and health programs. The Project calls altering lifestyle rather than simply treating symptoms when it may already be too

late; the focus is prevention rather than treatment.

Education holds a vital role when it comes to the influence it generates within the young populations who are still sufficiently impressionable as to rid themselves of detrimental lifestyles at a young age. There is an aggressive education program underway in nine Cree communities of James Bay, and day care centres are changing their menus to include a more healthful variety (Mongtomery 2004:A1). Within the entire Cree population, the percentage of overweight children in aged 6-12 is an alarming 60%. Thus, lifestyle alterations are a necessity in childhood development. Chisasibi, despite having a school, has a low level of completion of the secondary level. 63% of the population of Chisasibi that is 25 years or older has no high school diploma (Statistics Canada 2007b:). Aside from the fact that this reduces one's employment opportunities, income, and thus access to healthier, often more expensive foods, it also proves that efforts geared toward the prevention of diabetes cannot only be focused on education. Conveying the importance of healthy lifestyle choices should also be done outside the schools to reach a greater number of residents. Even those patients already suffering from type 2 diabetes should be informed, for they can also educate younger generations by helping them adopt healthy exercise and eating habits. Changes must be fostered from inside the family unit and the community as well, from the bottom up, not only from the top down. The overall strength of the Kahnawake School Diabetes Prevention Project is its incorporation of residents from different age levels and backgrounds, whether directly or indirectly affected by diabetes. The project's effort to identify the root of the epidemic and to attempt to propose lifestyle modifications is has been successful in reducing the prevalence of type 2 diabetes in Kahnawake because suggestions and developments have been concocted through a collaboration between physicians, residents, elders, teachers, healers and overarching political, educational, and health institutions.

Conclusion and Suggestions for Healthy Development of Diabetes Prevention Efforts

As rendered apparent above, a myriad of factors combine to form the multi-dimensional etiology of diabetes. There is neither a single cause, nor a single solution to the alarming prevalence of type 2 diabetes in Aboriginal communities across Canada. As was depicted in the comparison of the Cree village of Chisasibi and the Mohawk reserve of Kahnawake, village location, lifestyle, education, and health services all affect the prevention and treatment of diabetes. Remoteness from urban centers can lead to a decreased access to affordable, healthy foods. One's conscious choice of dietary consumption and physical activity cannot be changed

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instantaneously, but must be gradually altered and integrated into Aboriginal peoples' ways of life. Above all, these changes cannot be forced or imposed, but must arise from within the communities themselves if improvements are to be sustained and encouraged among generations to come. Because the living situation of each Aboriginal community varies so drastically, there is an urgent need for community-based screening and primary prevention programs that urge respect for, and sensitivity to, language and cultural issues. Due to the lack of completion of secondary education, the education system cannot be relied upon as the only discursive space where diabetes prevention efforts must take place. In the future, there must be an instantiation of far-reaching, longitudinal program outside of education boundaries. Children can learn from parents and elders, and teaching by example is the most effective and culturally continuous approach to positive evolution. Drawing upon the success of the Kahnawake School Diabetes Prevention Project, an improvement in diabetes prevention must integrate all members and groups of the targeted social milieu. Change cannot be forced from the top down: health care professionals who serve Aboriginal people need to adapt their treatment plans and education programs to the culture and social environment of their patients. Traditional medicine can be incorporated into modern medical practices if both sides are willing to contribute to health development and if the patients believe in the medical and lifestyle choice they pursue. The diabetes epidemic will only improve if change is regarded and carried out as a consensus, a collaboration of several forces working together to achieve a common goal.

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Sweating Out Our Differences: A Look at the Sweat Lodge

Laura Turley

"Within the lodge you are within the body of something alive and powerful and in the darkness within that skin of power, you pray for health and life"
-Bruchac 34.

The following is a personal account of participation in a Native sweat lodge ceremony:

> Upon our safe return from a 20 day canoe trip in the Temagami wilderness, we enter a sweat lodge together. Stripped of any masks you may wear in the 'real world,' as soon as the intensity of heat hits your body you are reduced to your rawest self; laughing, crying, screaming, digging at the earth below you for some cool air. Four rounds of hot stones enter the lodge, and with each round you are closer to your greatest enemy—yourself. There is suffering in the sweat lodge, but also a deep happiness and humility that arises. At the end of it all we emerge—renewed, united, and more deeply aware of ourselves and our place in the universe than before we entered.

I have had multiple opportunities to participate in such a ceremony through my affiliation with an organization called *Northwaters/Langskib* (NWL). NWL is located in Temagami, Ontario, and has been offering canoe trips, and also sweat lodges, for over three decades. The original owner of the camp, David Knudsen, met Wallace Black Elk—an Oglala Sioux medicine man—in the early years of the organization and confessed to him that although he was providing a great adventure for young people through canoe tripping, he felt that on a deeper level something was missing. Black Elk was expecting David—he had dreamt of his coming—and he said it was time to show David's people how to be with the earth; he predicted that the organization would attract people from all over the world. Black Elk sent his son-in-law to Temagami for three years to teach David the ways of the Lakota people (Knudsen 2008-11-17).

The result of this encounter is an organization based firmly in many Native practices, such as the medicine wheel, community meetings, teepee gatherings, and the sweat lodge ceremony. Yet the organization consists of almost entirely non-Native staff and participants. In contemporary discourse on Native spirituality, there is much controversy as to the

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'legitimacy' of a sweat lodge if it is not a practice that emerges from one's *own* culture or tradition, or if the practice is not well understood in today's context.

This is a widespread phenomenon. Increasingly, people living in the Western world seem to be searching for spiritual practice through traditions other than Christianity, and as Brown (2001) points out there has simultaneously been an "unprecedented interest in Native American traditions in recent years" (3). There is a concern that the undiscriminating "New Age" movement allows and encourages people to take pieces of a tradition—or many traditions simultaneously—to create their own spiritual path, but without respecting the histories and contexts from which the chosen practices emerged. Thus Niezen (2001) claims that Native spirituality is being pulled in opposite directions by popularizers and preservationists (195). In the most extreme case, Westerners may think they can 'purchase' Native spirituality by attending weekend retreats in which they experience an 'authentic sweat lodge' for $500, all inclusive.

In this paper it will be argued that the opportunity to experience an authentic sweat lodge should be available to all people, but that it must be approached with intention, humility, and respect by both leaders and participants. The paper is broken into four main sections. First, some background and history of the Lakota sweat ceremony will be explored, with particular sensitivity to the fact that European settlers in North America banned the practice for centuries. Second, it will be shown that there are indeed legitimate grounds for misunderstandings of the sweat ceremony between Native and Western practitioners, as the particular ritual emerges from a distinctively Native worldview. Third, the notion of legitimacy is addressed through a discussion of 'genetic authority' and through the Lakota response to contemporary 'spiritual seekers.' Finally it will be made clear that the tradition of the sweat lodge must be understood to include the reality of its present uses. It is genuine *intention* which must be at the core of the sweat lodge ceremony for it to be effective and respectful in the modern context.

Background and History of the Lakota *Inipi*

The Lakota

The sweat lodge is one of the most widespread traditions of Native North Americans (Bruchac 1993:2). Scholars, such as Jordan Paper (1988), claim that it is in fact even more widespread than the ritual of the sacred pipe (40). While there are many types of sweat lodges which have been practiced across the continent—from high arctic all the way to the Gulf of Mexico—the focus of this research is on the Lakota-Sioux practice of the sweat lodge ceremony, a group who refer to the lodge as *inipi*. The reason for this focus is twofold. First, it was the Lakota people who "were tenacious in clinging to the *inipi* through a time when many other

American Indian tribes were forced by the pressure of the missionaries and the federal government to give up their sweat lodges" (Bruchac 1993:2). As will be shown, the Lakota's ability to hang-on to their tradition over the centuries is what makes Lakota knowledge so prevalent on the issue of the sweat lodge in the modern context for Natives and non-Natives alike. Secondly, it is the Lakota-Sioux style sweat lodge which has been practiced at NWL and is known to those interviewed for this research.

The Lakota were plains people who roamed the mid-western U.S. prior to their settlement on reservations. They are originally descendant of the Santee people, and moved west in the 18th century. By 1885, with the 'winning' of the American West, the Lakota had been militarily pacified and made to settle on the Great Sioux Reservation, comprising what is now half of South Dakota (Biolsi 2008:28). Their relatives to the East—the Dakotas—are located in the modern-day Minnesota region, but the material on the Dakotas drastically declined in the 20th century, and simultaneously much research and writing came to focus on the Lakota groups (Bucko 1998:26). There is so much historical focus on the Lakota, in fact, that they came to be the "archetypal Indian in the American imagination" (Bucko 1998:34). Again this may explain why it is their version of the sweat lodge that came to dominate the current understanding of the traditional practice.

The Lodge

It is worth beginning with a rough sketch of what a sweat lodge is and what a sweat lodge ceremony actually consists of. While some lodges are dug into a river bank or earth mound and some are even made of ice (curiously), for the Lakota, sweat lodges are round structures made with wooden poles, tied together with vines, and covered with buffalo hides, animal skins or, most commonly today, canvases or heavy blankets (Bruchac 1993:34). In the most mechanistic sense, the ritual follows some broad strokes: stones are heated from a large fire located outside of the lodge itself, participants enter the lodge and 'purify' with sage or tobacco smudging, and the stones are brought inside the lodge to a central pit in the earth. From here, the door is closed, water is poured over the hot rocks, then there is praying, singing, and the opening of the door (Bucko 1998:88). This highly generic description of the ritual accounts for one round, and typically there are four rounds in one practice.

The water on the hot stones produces a steam bath, and the thick covering of the lodge ensures that little heat is lost from the structure. Thus the inner temperature increases rapidly causing participants to sweat profusely. Bruchac (1993) points out that it has long been known in many cultures that sweating is healing and therapeutic for the body (10). The physical healing aspect is, however, only a small part of the much wider uses of the sweat lodge by the Lakota. More accurately, "the native

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approach of healing the whole person—not just alleviating a physical symptom as does western medicine—is exemplified in the sweat lodge" (Bruchac 1993:107). As will be explored, every aspect of the physical sweat lodge is full of symbolism and meaning, and likewise the experience within the sweat has profound spiritual possibilities. So while cleansing in itself is commonly seen as a sacramental act in many cultures, among Native people of North America, the sweat lodge is more sacrament than recreation. A sweat lodge is strongly associated with purification, healing, prayer, and giving thanks to the Great Spirit. A sweat may be a communal experience or an intensely personal one (Bruchac 1993:6).

A History of Repression

Although the topic is not explored here in any great detail, there is a history of water-vapour baths in many cultures throughout the ages. The ancient Roman *balneum,* the Arab *hammam,* the Japanese *mushi-buro,* and the Finish *sauvusana* are only a few examples of remarkably similar practices of sweating communally, with accompanying ceremony (Bruchac 1993:6-16). This should be kept in mind in the context of non-Native people seeking to experience the ancient practice, but for our purposes the focus will remain on the distinctively Native North American ceremony and preparation.

The earliest European accounts of sweat lodges are actually of the Lakota ceremony, and trace back to 1680 when Louis Hennepin was captured by a Lakota group (Bucko 1998:26). From then onwards, there are many centuries of records, usually communication between Europe and the Americas, of Europeans making observations on the sweats, of their own experiences in sweats, and generally their curiosity about the practice. After a century of European settlement in North America, separatist policy eventually gave way to assimilationist policy, and the dominant idea became that Native Americans "should be assimilated into mainstream of American culture by being forced to abandon their traditional culture, including their languages and their religious beliefs, in favour of ideas and customs of white society as taught to them in missionary schools" (Gill 2002:163). This hostile treatment is more bluntly put by Paper (1988) who writes, "[a]fter destroying the traditional economies and resources, nearly exterminating the bison, and establishing the reservations, the Euro-American governments set out to destroy the Native people's self-worth and worldview […]; for those left alive, a policy of cultural genocide was implemented" (102).

By 1873 'sweat baths' were forbidden to all Native Americans by the federal government of the United States, though they were often prohibited prior to this (Bruchac 1993:28). In Canada, sweats were similarly outlawed by the turn of the century through Indian Act legislation. Although both nations purport to be founded on ideals of civil rights, many Native communities were denied those rights by law for nearly a century. These

laws were actively enforced, and often it was left to Christian missionaries in the communities to carry them out on the ground by prohibiting all 'religious practices' other than the ones endorsed by the Church (Bruchac 1993:28). It was often "at the instigation of the missionaries, [that] Natives were jailed for participating or even speaking about traditional ceremonies" (Paper 1988:110). The ban continued right through to the 1970's in some cases (with the jailing of religious healers), and over the centuries there are many records of Natives not being able to speak freely, congregate publicly, or to worship (Paper 1988:110).

It was not until the late 20th century that new policies of noninterference were implemented in the United States, leading gradually to less government intrusion in Native religious practice (Bruchac 1993:113). In Canada the Indian Act revision of 1951 revoked laws prohibiting practice of Native American religion. But in both cases, religious freedom did not necessarily follow (Paper 1988:111). Similarly from the Vatican, in 1977 a statement of *U.S. Catholic Bishops on American Indians* spoke of respect for the "distinctive traditions, customs, institutions, and ways of life of its peoples." Not surprisingly it was confusing for Natives when the Church, which had first taught them to abhor traditional religious ways, then told them to embrace the old ways (Paper 1988:111). At the other end, it continues to be a challenge for dominant cultural authorities, with an understanding of 'religion' stemming from the Judeo-Christian tradition, to recognize a religion without institutions, doctrines, sacred texts, or a history based on Western time (Paper 1988:112).

There are different interpretations of the rationale behind the banning of the sweat lodge. Suffice to say that sweat lodges were categorized as 'religious practices' through Western eyes, and being different from Christian religious practices they were thought of as being either the work of the devil, sorcery, or witchcraft (Bruchac 1993:25). Thus Bucko (1998) suggests that "what concerned the missionaries in dealing with the sweat lodge was neither the physical cleansing in the bath nor its salutary effects, but the spiritual power attributed to the Sioux divinities invoked and accessed through the ritual, particularly through the medium of stones" (31). In this case, it is the notion of stones having a life force that can be communicated with in a ritual space that led early Europeans to consider the practice equivalent to sorcery.

Another, slightly more comical, reason that the sweat lodge in particular posed a problem for the colonizers was that there was a strong European aversion to bathing for the first centuries of contact (Bruchac 1993:25). Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, bathing was actually seen as unhygienic, or even an abomination. Not surprisingly the Natives' emphasis on cleansing and bathing, and the practice of the sweat lodge, were "often described as ignorant […] unhealthy and savage" customs (Bruchac 1993:25). This takes a somewhat humorous tone in light of the fact that

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European colonizers were thought to have smelled foul to their colonized peoples! As Bruchac mentions, "the oral traditions of the native peoples of the Americas and Africa mention that one could smell a European coming from some distance away" (18).

For all of these reasons, any Native religious practice we can witness today have survived either by going underground or remaining strong in the minds of elders. In light of this historical context, it should be clear that there is indeed irony in the Western appeal to Native religious practice today; furthermore, contemporary practice by both Natives and non-Natives alike should acknowledge the sensitivity of this history.

Grounds for Misunderstanding

Different Worldviews

What is the perceived danger of an 'amateur' sweat lodge? Niezen (2000) reminds us that an enormous strain is placed on cultural integrity when an indiscriminate and uninformed audience is hungering for "authenticity" (195). Grounds for misunderstanding seem to derive, quite simply, from the fact that Native and non-Native cultures emerge from different worldviews. A worldview can be defined as the following:

> That outlook upon the universe that is characteristic of a people. The picture the members of a society have of the properties and characters upon their stage of actions. Worldview differs from culture, ethos, mode of thought, national character. It is the way someone sees themselves in relation to all else. (Gill 2002:15)

There is a fear that in the New Age movement, "enthusiasm has far outstripped the knowledge and the ability of the non-Native people who involve themselves in and even lead these ceremonies" (Brown 2001:6). In our analysis of the legitimacy of the modern day sweat lodge ceremony, it would be naïve to ignore the reality that there are fundamental differences between Native and Western worldviews. Although these two terms 'Native' and 'Western' gloss over a great diversity within each worldview, they are helpful in making certain broad distinctions. By exploring these differences perhaps more legitimate understandings of authentic practice will emerge.

Time and Cosmology

Western culture perceives time as linear, and humans are believed to evolve along this line (Brown 2001:9). From birth to death, our lives follow this linear progression. Whether or not we are explicitly aware of it,

linear time is significant in our experience of the world and, though it is difficult to genuinely grasp, not all cultures share this experience of time. Native American cultures, for one, traditionally observe the rhythm of the world to be circular (Paper 1988:11). Cycles found in the natural world—such as the ebbing and flowing of rivers, plant growth, turning season—are in constant interaction with humans; this interaction accounts for how time is experienced (Brown 2001:11). Old people become young again eventually; most Native languages lack past and future tenses—the reality is the present and reflects the cycle (Brown 2001:11).

This emphasis on cycles is important to the symbolism of the sweat lodge and in the act of communicating with the Great Spirit, referred to as *Wakan Tonka* by the Lakota (Bucko 1998:98). At the centre of every circle or cycle there is a constant, or changelessness, around which everything else evolves; this also true of the universe. For the Lakota, *Wakan Tonka* is always present in the universe and in the sweat lodge—it does not enter and exit as participants do (Brown 2001:15). Thus the sweat lodge is like a microcosm of the entire universe, and indeed the circular sweat lodge is often likened to a womb, through which entrants may return to timelessness at the centre, and then be reborn back into the world (Brown 2001:16). For Westerners, very generally speaking, linear time defines our experience in the world. Unlike cyclical time, it has no centre, thus making both the symbolism of the round sweat lodge and the possibility of contacting the Great Spirit a stretch of the imagination.

Furthermore, performing sacred Native ceremonies recreates mythic time (Brown 2001:17). In a sweat ceremony one is contacting ancestors by referring, for example, to the sacred stones which enter the lodge as "Grandmother" and "Grandfather." This contact is possible because the earlier time of the ancestors or of the spirits has the potential to unfold in the present moment (Brown 2001:15). Although we are in the present, under cyclical time we are constantly connected to the past. In Western thought, myth is of the long-gone *past*, and thus this element of the sweat ceremony may be difficult to grasp from such a different worldview. These differences have led to many misunderstandings, both in ethnographic accounts of the sweat lodge and in the context of modern adoptions of Native ceremonies.

Interrelatedness and Reciprocity

It must have been strange for Native peoples to have had their rituals and ceremonies categorized by Europeans as 'religious practices.' Certainly 'religion' is so pervasive in Native American life that no Native language has a term that could be translated as 'religion' in the way that we understand it (Bruchac 1993:5). The interconnectedness of life's systems *is* the presence of the sacred (Brown 2001:6). Unlike in Western thought, there is no

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dichotomy between animal, natural, human, and supernatural, and as the sweat lodge ritual shows, even 'inanimate rocks' are possessed with life (Brown 2001:84). Ancestors are called upon during a sweat ceremony with a welcoming of *Mitakuye Oyasin*—"all my relatives"—but the notion of 'relatives' extends far beyond a Western idea of family or bloodline. Instead, "all beings are relations; hence the spirits, including animals, plants and minerals, are all addressed by humans as 'Grandmother,' 'Grandfather,' 'Mother,' and 'Father'" (Paper 1988:58). Native North American tradition offers a metaphysical philosophy of nature which emphasizes interrelatedness of all things. Thus, as Brown (2001) points out, while "categories of religious experience may make sense to the non-Native, most Native Americans experience them as a whole" (7).

An important theme in Native's relationships with other beings is reciprocity. Reciprocity implies that if one receives or takes away, one must also give back—another cycle. Thus it is thought that "in treating the world and all its beings in a sacred manner, one is in turn treated well by nature" (Brown 2001:85). This respectful treatment of others is present in the sweat lodge, as the act of calling forth mystic beings cannot be done carelessly (Brown 2001:16). The leader of a sweat lodge must be aware of the power of this communication. In this setting, words are not merely symbols to point things out, words can actually call forth the reality and the power of the being mentioned (Brown 2001:16). This notion of transcending physical differences between humans and other beings (and objects) derives from a specific worldview, and should be understood and respected by those wishing to experience a sweat lodge ceremony.

Preparation of the Lodge & Preparedness of Participants

Every part of the sweat lodge preparation is full of symbolic meaning. The materials used, for starters, come from the sacred and generative forces of the earth. Traditionally the poles of the lodge are made from willow, which is a tree usually found near rivers, and appropriate for the water cleansing aspect of the sweat. The willow is additionally symbolic in that deciduous trees represent resurrection as they re-grow their foliage each spring, and this is thought to parallel the symbolic death and rebirth of someone entering the lodge (Bruchac 1993:32). While collecting the materials for the lodge, it is proper to show their sources respect, "for when they are properly honored, they may share their life and power with humans" (Biolsi 1995:30). For example, tobacco is often offered to the earth in exchange for the branches of a tree used for poles for the lodge (Bruchac 1993:30). When the Lakota build a sweat lodge they align the willow frame with the four cardinal directions and place a stick at the central and draw a circle around it. Again we see the importance of the circle, as "without such ritual fixing of a centre, there can be no circumference, and

with neither centre nor circumference a person cannot know where he or she stands" (Brown 2001:37).

Part of the reason for the rituals of preparation is to ensure the objects used are vessels of power (Brown 2001:66). Present in the ceremony may be the animal whose hide is being used, the spirit who is painted on the canvas, or the deer whose antlers carry in the hot stones (Gill 2002:100). Similarly, the door to the lodge facing east symbolizes wisdom and new beginnings, and allows that force to infuse the sweat. The pit in the centre of the lodge is understood as the womb of the earth, and in which are placed the grandfathers. From here they are sprayed with water—the life fluid of earth—and may interact with humans and other beings in the lodge. Participants themselves must also prepare:

> If you enter a sweat, you should do so with a clear mind; if you have troubles when you enter the lodge, you cannot hide them in your heart. You can pray for cleansing, but if you are not ready to be cleansed of such things as anger and jealousy, you would be better off not entering at all. (Bruchac 1993:7)

For these reasons it is clear that sweat lodges run and participated in by people who have not inherited this knowledge of cosmology—the interrelatedness of all things—and further who deemphasize the importance of preparation, have the potential to be disrespectful and, perhaps, ineffectual.

The Issue of Legitimacy

Where is the Middle Ground?

What determines the legitimacy of a sweat lodge? Is it an issue of genetic authority? If so, then is the only legitimate sweat one with a full-blooded Native male leader—who has inherited the knowledge of the sweat from family—with full-blooded Native participants? Or does legitimacy have more to do with correct procedure and understanding? In this case, a 'weekend retreat' sweat lodge in New England run by non-Natives charging $500 per head could be entirely legitimate as long as all are aware of the preparation rites, the symbolism, the history and the cosmology. Obviously, neither one of these extremes is correct. But where is the middle ground? A good place to begin this investigation is with the accounts of Nicholas Black Elk.

Black Elk Speaks

In 1932 *Black Elk Speaks* was first published, a book that reveals the life and personal visionary experiences of Nicholas Black Elk, an Oglala-Sioux

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holy man and priest, and grandfather of Wallace Black Elk, the medicine man mentioned earlier. In 1953, Joseph Epes Brown published *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux* based again on interviews with Nicholas Black Elk. This latter book was the first extended account of Lakota ritual and a chapter of the book is dedicated to the symbolic interpretation of the sweat lodge (Bucko 1998:51). Wallace Black Elk continued in his grandfather's steps by publishing an autobiography in which he addressed the important question: should non-Lakota people practice Lakota ceremonies (Rice 1991:413)?

Both generations of Black Elk material have been highly influential in shaping North Americans' and Europeans' understanding of Native ceremony in the modern context. Their accounts have been widely read and distributed by both Natives and non-Natives alike (Bucko 1998:119). Beginning with the Black Elk material, emphasis shifts away from the *precision* of ceremony to the interpretation and understanding of the inner meaning of ceremony. Generally, Bucko (1998) claims the material universalizes the imagery of the sweat: "the role of the spirits is downplayed and a focus is placed on one God" (53). Less importance is placed on the efficacy of the lodge for healing; emphasis is instead placed on the broad interpretation of symbols. Both Nicolas Black Elk and his grandson focus on *universal salvation*, as exemplified by Wallace Black Elk's offering that, "Lakota spirituality exists to prevent nuclear destruction" (Rice 1991:415).

The Black Elk material has been criticized for lending to the narcissism of the "New Age dilettantes" (Rice 1991:415). This controversy surrounds the issue of whether or not these publications accurately depict the Lakota practices of today—in light of the fact that both Black Elks converted to Christianity at one point in their lives—and if their impact weakens or strengthens Native ceremonies or practices (Rice 1991:415). Regardless, the material has been widely read and interpreted. Black Elk set the stage for the sharing of knowledge of sacred ceremonies, and the broad message is the possibility of spiritual awakening and salvation for all people.

Genetic Authority

These publications contradict the proposition that there is something inherently or biologically 'Native' which is necessary to effectively conduct a sweat lodge ceremony. Indeed it does seem implausible that in today's world of intermarriage across race and culture, that the entirety of a religious/cultural/spiritual practice's significance should be stored only in the minds of those with a certain blood type. If this were the case, eventually all knowledge and practical ability to conduct a sweat lodge would be lost.

Interestingly, the issue of genetic authority "arose in part from the 19th century government policy of establishing Indian identity according to blood quantum—"how much" Indian ancestry one had" (Bucko 1998:26).

So somewhat ironically, this racial dichotomy was originally imposed on the Natives by colonizers, and questions of 'genetic legitimacy' in the case of non-Native ritual practitioners exist today at least in part because of its legacy. In some cases, Native peoples themselves have adopted blood-quantum notions of legitimacy. In anthropological research, for example, texts are evaluated by the authority of a full-blooded consultant, and "at times blood quantum takes precedence over historic connection with living community or scholarly research into the culture" (Bucko 1998:26). Olofsson (2004) adds that many Native people ascribe ethnic identity, or 'Indianness,' to physical appearances or in their ability to live off the land (23). These notions of inherent or biological Native identity have been highly problematic for many reasons. In our case it could imply that full-bloodedness is a prerequisite for leading a legitimate sweat lodge. Yet in reality, sweats are being led today by Natives and non-Natives who have sought out their own legitimate forms of instruction.

C.G. Stephens, the current owner and director of Northwaters/Langskib, has been running sweats for young people and adults for several years now. His experience in coming to run sweat lodges sheds light on this issue of authority and biology:

> Me, I went to Virginia [a Native woman living on Bear Island, Temagami] a number of years ago, gave her tobacco, and asked her to teach me to run sweats. She taught me a lot but I feel I still have much to learn. I try to go at it with the very best intentions and trust the creator will forgive me my fumbling. My dad was adopted, in a time and place where many native children were adopted. There is a distinct possibility that he was native, I'm not sure I'll ever know. (Stephens 2008-11-10)

While there is a possibility that C.G. does have Native blood, it is not *the* factor which enabled him, or inspired him, to ask Virginia to lead the sacred ceremony. Similarly for David Knudsen, who now feels he is in a position to share the knowledge of how to run a sweat lodge with others, he questions the claim that one must even be trained by a Native person. He says, "If someone comes to me to learn how to run a sweat, and thinks it could be of good use in the world, I will share my knowledge. I don't know that it is strictly a Native practice anyways" (Knudsen 2008-11-17). Increasingly it is more important to approach running—or participating in—a sweat lodge with an *intention* that is good and genuine than it is to have a biological link to the Native tradition. If truth claims can come only from biological Natives, then the question, "Is the person actually Lakota?" becomes more important than the question "Is this person actually telling the truth" (Bucko 1998:26)?

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The Lakota Today

It is important to note that many Native people—including Lakota people—have not had the traditional knowledge of the sweat ceremony passed down to them; thus, this form of 'genetic' legitimacy does not work for them either (Bucko 1998:100). Sweats either went underground or died with the elders during the centuries of the suppression of Native 'religious practices.' Knowledge that is passed through oral transmission is precarious for this reason; it could be permanently gone in just one generation (Gill 2002:47). Knowledge of the sweat lodge was lost, and it is only in recent decades that such old, abandoned ceremonies are being brought back into the open in some reservations (Brown 2001:4). This has not always been an easy process. As Gill (2002) writes about the difficulty for Natives in this new wave of interest in Native spirituality: "having their entire way of viewing the world and reality almost completely destroyed in a few generations, while not being enabled to find a place within the new, dominant culture, has left a great many feeling abandoned and hopeless" (167). Both Natives and non-Natives, therefore, are currently searching for the wisdom of the sweat lodge and the legitimacy required to lead them.

The Lakota elders have been committed to aiding this process in sharing their sacred ceremonies with other Native communities that want to reinstate them, and also in interpreting their ceremonies and rituals for many non-Native seekers (Bruchac 1993:16). Furthermore, early observers' accounts show that the Lakota sweat was a *flexible* ceremony whose structure and usage depended on circumstance, and catered to a multiplicity of needs (Bucko 1998:60). Today, the ritual continues to address both the historical forms of the sweat and the contemporary needs of the participants, the latter which "extend from the pragmatic daily needs of individuals to the need to be understood by the outside world, a world perceived to be hostile at the time to certain Lakota beliefs" (Bucko 1998:51). Ultimately it is a choice to include or exclude other Native and non-Natives in the traditional knowledge sharing. For those who choose inclusion, sharing knowledge in today's diverse contexts requires more flexibility and patience than ever before.

Tradition in Contemporary Contexts

In his extensive research on the Lakota sweat lodge, Raymond Bucko (1998) asked an elderly Lakota woman how to say "traditional" in Lakota. She looked confused, and after a moment replied "we never talked about that is the past" (100). As his and other studies have made clear, tradition draws from the past but must be negotiated in the *present* context (Bucko 1998:99). Contemporary practice and needs should be included in our understanding of a traditional ceremony such as the sweat lodge, and the past can provide guidelines for acceptable ritualistic behavior.

There is No Hidden Universal Truth

This is perhaps the universal truth: that there is none. Even amongst the Lakota people, it is clear that there is no one source of uncontaminated truth on ritual and ceremony. Bucko concludes: "my consistent experience in fieldwork has been that there is no "true" position containing the nature and the use of the sweat lodge" (111). There is no one group authority that is universally accepted by the Lakota, and there is continuous disagreement as to what truly 'traditional' practices entail. Just as there is often time a romanticization of Native people's connection to the land, so too does there seem to be a romanticization of a pure, essential truth about the sweat lodge ceremony.

Culturally sensitive Westerners may have the illusion that spiritual authority rests exclusively with Native people, but in the case of the sweat lodge we are dealing with traditions (plural, not singular) in a very heterogeneous context. A relevant anecdote is found on the Lakota reservation called Pine Ridge, located in South Dakota:

> An Indian on Pine Ridge is just another Indian. If he goes off to Nebraska he portrays himself as a local leader. If he makes it to New York, he is a chief. If he gets to Europe, he immediately becomes a shaman. (Bucko 1998:106)

This is one way of showing that even within a Native group—not to mention between different groups—there is no universal truth waiting to be discovered. Furthermore it should not be assumed that *all* Lakota are pleased with the widespread sharing of their practices. As Olofsson (2004) reminds us, among some Lakota there is a strong reaction against New Agers using their religious beliefs (252). However, it is clear that change and innovation are not 'contamination,' but are themselves a part of the definition of the living tradition of the Lakota sweat lodge.

Respect, Intention, and Humility

On the one hand, Native American traditions are open to discussion in the modern context, yet there is still an enduring historical core to the sweat ceremony that should be respected and that affects the dialectical construction of tradition (Bucko 1998:100). Most people who have led or been in a sweat lodge would say that there is a consistent core which must be in place for the ritual to be effective, or that there is a way in which the ceremony is *properly* conducted. Some leaders hold that if the rocks are not placed in the correct way, the ceremony will not work. Others say that only those who knew songs, or have done a vision quest, or performed the sun dance could effectively lead a sweat (Bucko 1998:130).

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C.G. shares the sentiment that respect is an important aspect of one's approach, but reaffirms that the sweat ceremony is ultimately open to all:

> The Sweat is a gift for the people - all people. You will find it in the history of many peoples in addition to North American First Nations so you need never feel in exploring it, that it is somehow not yours. That being said, for many people a sweat is a sacred ritual that is one component of their culture and beliefs and so, it's important to approach it in a way that respects and honors them. (Stephens 2008-11-10)

Indeed it is respectful for the leader to have learned from an elder or a spiritual leader; it acts as a legitimizing mechanism. In other words, rarely would a contemporary Lakota merely appeal to written literature as the source for their practice (Rice 1991:414). Similarly, it would be disrespectful to incorporate new elements into the ceremony before they are validated through a respected individual's vision or shown to be effective through practice (Bucko 1998:35). The leader should always know their responsibility in making sure the participants' suffering in the sweat lodge is controlled, and that a balance is found between humor and suffering, to make the latter easier to bear (Bucko 1998:141).

According to David Knudsen, at the 'core' of the matter is one's *intention* while preparing for and participating in a sweat lodge (2008-11-17). While some people are preoccupied in finding the right drum, or making sure the materials are just right, it is intention that ultimately "helps one move from the outer world to the inner world through the process" (Knudsen 2008-11-17). For Knudsen, it is important to be mindful of placing logs in the fire and of consciously honouring the stones. If the fire is built in a certain way, then it is a fire that *feels* different (from one just thrown together and drenched in gasoline for example). When things are done intentionally, there is unmistakably a certain *feel* to it. The process of preparation should be honoured because it has been developed and well thought-out for over thousands of years. As for the sweat lodge, it is the intention that is put into the ritual that "keeps it from being just a sauna" (Knudsen 2008-11-17).

Just as much as the leader's intentions be genuine, so too must the participants strive for sincerity. It is not necessary for participants to act in accordance with all of the necessary songs, rules, and actions, but they should act with intention (Bucko 1998:138). In contemporary era, the *inner disposition* is more often the mark of success: "sincerity of the participants is important for the success of the ceremony" (Bucko 1998:70). Much of this should be common sense 'respect,' but often times, interest in Native American traditions can come from the ego, even if done with great sincerity (Brown 2001:2). Thus one must also approach the sweat

from a place of humility. As Knudsen says: "Go into a sweat with respect, intention, and humility, but don't make a big thing of it because it's not about your ego" (2008-11-17). Furthermore, Knudsen advises never to do a sweat in exchange for money.

Concluding Thoughts

A common figure in many Native stories is the 'trickster' who tells us what not to do (Bruchac 1993:84). Ruled by appetite and selfishness, the trickster ultimately deceives himself as well as others—by doing the wrong things at a sacred ceremony, for example. The fact that he is deceiving mainly *himself* makes him less threatening and more tolerable. Similarly, in the Lakota tradition when ritual is not performed correctly, it is referred to as *skatapi* or 'just playing around' (Bruchac 1993:102). Could this lead people who believe in the strict ownership and exclusion of spiritual practices to a particular group to be more tolerant of 'amateur' sweat lodges—that if they are conducted without respect, humility, and intention they are essentially void of meaning and spiritual power? This research based anthropological study and interviews with contemporary practitioners clearly shows that if *intention* is not present in the preparation for or the experience of the sweat lodge, then it is to the detriment of the participants—in the form of an empty, groundless experience.

The opportunity for a genuine sweat ceremony should be available to all. The alternative is exclusivist practice and spiritual elitism, and that does not serve humanity. Indeed "running through virtually all indigenous NA traditions is the pervasive theme that the sacred mysteries of creation may be communicated to *humans* through all forms and forces of the immediately experienced natural environment" (Brown 2001:110). The emphasis is placed on *humans* and not a specific cultural group. This does not have to imply a loss of cultural identity. Hope for the coexistence of the two cultures will come from knowing who we are in relation to one another and who we might become (Brown 2001:8).

Now let us abandon the question of *the legitimacy of a non-Native led sweat lodge* and turn to the question: How can this knowledge best be transmitted to a wider audience in an authentic way? It seems that "ceremonies that offer freedom from guilt to a spiritual elite only insulate the participants from a world that needs help now" (Rice 1991:415). It is time to turn our attentions onto how to provide opportunities for humans on this busy, crowded earth to bring as much meaning to their lives as possible.

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Developing Restorative Justice Initiatives in Aboriginal Communities: A Multilateral Canadian Perspective

Christine Porterfield

Introduction

Restorative justice first appeared in Canada during the mid-1970s by way of the Victim Offender Rehabilitation Programme (VORP) (Chatterjee and Elliott 2003:348). Mennonites from Kitchener, Ontario developed VORP in response to an excess of vandalism occurrences in the small neighbouring community of Elmira (Chatterjee and Elliott 2003:348). Instead of taking a retributive approach to the crimes (that is, seeking monetary retribution, probation, or institutional sentencing for the accused), the Mennonite village focused judicial efforts on rehabilitating the young offenders' relationship with their community. This was achieved through meetings between the victims and offenders, during which a bilaterally suitable restitution was negotiated.

In the decades following the initial launch of restorative justice through VORP, Canadian institutions have developed many restorative justice programmes that operate within both government and community spheres. These programmes universally seek to rebuild relationships between victims, offenders, and the community, and reduce future harm by way of intervention and communication. Restorative justice efforts may be implemented at any stage of the criminal process: from the initial prosecution of the offender, up to community reintegration after a sentence has been served (Daly and Immarigeon 1998:57). Perhaps most importantly, restorative justice initiatives have proven to be more successful than retributive justice programmes at reducing recidivism, increasing offender compliance with restitution conditions, and generally increasing "victim/offender satisfaction" (Chatterjee and Elliott 2003:347).

This paper will first examine the function of restorative justice in Canadian Aboriginal communities. Next, government initiatives in executing Aboriginal-specific restorative justice programmes will be examined. This section will include a discussion of the pragmatic implementation of policy measures outlined in documents such as The Commissioner's Directive 702 and section 718.2(e) of Canada's Criminal Code. Following this, hybrid initiatives in which government institutions and Aboriginal communities collaboratively develop a restorative justice programme will be examined. Discussion will focus in particular on the role of the RCMP as mediator and community liaison. Finally, the paper

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will turn to a broad discussion of efforts by Aboriginal communities that have implemented restorative justice programmes in entire operational autonomy from government institutions.

The Role of Restorative Justice in Aboriginal Communities

"Healing is justice, and justice is healing" (Andersen 1997: 309)

Restorative justice is particularly relevant to Aboriginal communities for several reasons. First, the focus on enhancing community relationships inherent in most programmes is a valuable mechanism for social development. The dialogue between the offender and his or her community inherent in Aboriginal justice (Andersen 1997: 306) helps local leaders determine what resources a community might lack by having the offender assert his or her criminal motivations (Chatterjee and Elliott 2003). To the contrary, Euro-Canadian justice systems are "primarily reactive in nature" and rarely address the "etiology of the criminal behaviour" (Griffiths and Hamilton 1996: 181). This poses a problem for communities pursuing autonomy and self-determination. Most traditional justice programmes are significant in that they offer a strong holistic view of crime, and consider a "wide range of issues beyond the specific criminal behaviour" (Griffiths and Hamilton 1996: 182). These initiatives recognise and are prepared to deal with the "frequently [displayed] problems of abandonment, displacement, racism, and difficulties with personal identity" plaguing Aboriginal offenders (Hollow Water doc, 84). Thus, a holistic criminal etiology is particularly relevant to communities pursuing self-government or self-determinism, as it affords the community an opportunity to remedy local weaknesses through assessing the cause and effects of criminality.

Second, community based initiatives help Aboriginal groups to re-examine traditional values associated with crime. In pre-colonial times, many Aboriginal communities did not differentiate judiciary traditions from other parts of traditional life (Blue and Rogers Blue 2001:63). The causes and consequences of crime were perceived as interwoven with socioeconomic, religious, and personal circumstances (Blue and Rogers Blue 2001:63), with both the origins and effects of crime thoroughly perceived as a part of the community. Andersen elaborates on this point, arguing that a traditional representation of the Aboriginal social body has become "increasingly fragmented, carved into separate enclaves representing separate yet interrelated domains operating through separate yet interrelated logics" (1997:311). Indeed, Aboriginal society has, post-colonialism, become a historically constructed "community of communities" (Andersen 1997: 311). Additionally, tribal laws in pre-colonial times were not necessarily written: they were longstanding conventions passed down through oral tradition (Blue and Rogers Blue 2001:63). Through traditional justice

programmes, Aboriginal communities may re-integrate traditional values such as oral narratives into the justice process. When communities are free to apply culturally relevant principles to their own members, disappearing cultural traditions may be given an opportunity to flourish.

Finally, from a political standpoint, the Canadian government has an obligation according to the Criminal code to dutifully consider and encourage non-retributive justice, "with particular attention to the circumstances of Aboriginal offenders" (Katz and Bonham 2006:189). Thus, Aboriginal populations have a golden opportunity to establish self-determinism through restorative justice initiatives. Without a doubt, the development of restorative justice in Aboriginal communities is largely "occurring against the larger political backdrop" of Aboriginal self-governance (Griffiths and Hamilton 1996: 182).

Government Initiatives and Programmes

"All available sanctions other than imprisonment that are reasonable in the circumstances should be considered for all offenders, with particular attention to the circumstances of aboriginal offenders." (Criminal Code, section 718.2(e), 2008)

The interaction between Aboriginal traditional justice and the Government of Canada raises the concern of what initiatives have been taken by Canada's bureaucracy to facilitate the autonomy of judicial administration in Aboriginal communities. The truth is, the Government has taken several bureaucratic steps to try and ensure that the cultural needs of Aboriginal offenders are met while in custody. A keystone for initiatives in traditional justice came through the Commissioner's Directive 702, developed in 1995 by Correctional Service of Canada. In this document, the government responded to, among other things, the demands made by Aboriginal offenders for access to traditional religious services while incarcerated in federal institutions. The Commissioner's Directive 702 outlines the following objectives: to ensure Aboriginal offenders the right to practice their culture without discrimination, to recognise that cultural and tradition aid in holistic healing, to recognise the right of both Aboriginal groups and individuals to maintain their cultural identity, and to "ensure that the needs of all Aboriginal offenders are identified and that programmes and services are developed and maintained to meet those needs" (Edwards 1995:1). This final point is particularly significant to the development of restorative justice programmes geared towards Aboriginals, and was reinforced with the enactment of the previously mentioned Section 718.2(e) of the Criminal Code in 1996. The Commissioner's Directive 702 goes on to describe two primary means through which this fourth objective is met. The first initiative addressed the issue of access to traditional

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spirituality. This was spoken to by developing contracts with Elders, who are to be "accorded, in all respects, including compensation, the same status as chaplains" (Edwards 1995:4). Typically, an institution contracts one elder, which brings about a dilemma for individuals not represented by the Elder's cultural affiliation (Waldram 1997:134). Nonetheless, offenders are encouraged to set aside cultural differences and learn from the Elder some basic elements of Aboriginal spirituality (Waldram 1997:135). Offenders have, thus far, demonstrated a near-universal favourable response to the Elder interaction initiative, despite its decidedly pan-Indian perspective (Waldram 1997:136).

A second initiative taken by the Government to develop programs and services for incarcerated Aboriginals consists of contracting Native Liaison Officers. These individuals, who need not be native, are responsible for arranging spiritual practices, compiling a bank of contact resources in both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and mapping the activities and needs of Aboriginal inmates via personal interviews and observations. Essentially, a Native Liaison Officer takes on the role of a cultural broker, ensuring that the specific needs of Aboriginal offenders are met in an institutional setting through fostering a sense of community within the Native population.

The efforts within Canadian institutions to release Aboriginal offenders with a renewed sense of cultural awareness and responsibility certainly qualify as restorative justice initiatives. However, government initiatives are not compelled to divert offenders. In order to be exposed to cultural programming offered by the Canadian government, offenders need to be formally sentenced in a Euro-Canadian setting to a correctional institution. Traditional justice is only offered as a preparatory measure for release. There are several proposed reasons for why the Canadian government has chosen to institutionalise traditional Aboriginal justice. First, diversion away from courts and towards Aboriginal communities holds serious economic consequences for individuals employed in the correctional sector (Warry 1998: 198). In Canada, Aboriginal offenders make up a disproportionately large component of the federal prisoner population. According to data collected between 2000 and 2003, "Aboriginal offenders represent 15.7% of the federal offender population while they represent 3.3% of the total Canadian population" (Government of Canada National Parole Board, 2004). Diverting Aboriginal offenders would hold dire consequences for federal employees involved in the prison industry: as Warry notes, "Indians are big business" to non-Aboriginal employees of the health and justice sectors (1998: 198). A second reason for the reluctance to divert offenders involves Euro-Canadian perceptions of the legitimacy of traditional justice. Much as the "Western legal system is without moral or social relevance" for many Aboriginal offenders (Warry 1998: 194), affording First Nations complete control over judiciary affairs

is "politically unpalatable" (Warry 1998: 201) and certainly conflicts with entrenched ideas of colonial superiority.

That being said, microcosms of the greater federal government have made progressive attempts to integrate traditional justice at a community, non-institutional level, often with the goal of diversion rather than imprisonment. Many restorative justice programmes are a co-operative initiative between Euro-Canadian justice and traditional justice (Griffiths and Hamilton 1996:182). The following section uses the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to exemplify how Euro-Canadian institutions can work collaboratively with Aboriginal communities to formulate restorative justice initiatives.

Integrative Models

"As our community gets stronger and is coming from a place of wanting to resolve these situations, we will not need judges or defense lawyers or crown attorneys to come and decide what is to happen. My community is not at that place yet. We feel that we still need the courts to help us hold people accountable." (Aboriginal Peoples Collection, 1997:137)

The RCMP: Community Justice Forums

Though a government institution, the RCMP has demonstrated considerable operational autonomy through its frequent interaction with small, isolated communities. The RCMP is highly involved in the national Aboriginal community, serving 600 Aboriginal communities (80% of their total number of detachments) (RCMP 2008). Thus, simply due to the scope of its influence, RCMP involvement is imperative for the successful integration of traditional justice at the community level. In the mid to late 1990's, the RCMP began to adopt a restorative justice framework, which was formalised in 1997 with the development of Community Justice Forums (CJFs) (Chatterjee and Elliott 2003:352). The main goal of a CJF is to encourage the offender to take responsibility for criminal behaviour and attempt to change future behaviour through social shaming (Aboriginal Justice Directorate 2008). CJFs integrate restorative justice values by directly involving community members, encouraging a dialogue between the offender and victim, and emphasizing how the victim and offender can both move past the event towards successful reintegration into the community (Aboriginal Justice Directorate 2008). The RCMP sees CJFs as complimentary to its community policing practices, (Chatterjee and Elliott 2003:352), and beneficial to the restorative justice framework informally adopted by the RCMP (Cooper and Chatterjee 1999). By training community members to become CJF facilitators, the RCMP act

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simply as a "catalyst...encouraging and helping communities to solve their own problems" (Chatterjee and Elliott 2003:352). CJFs are an excellent example of how Euro-Canadian institutions such as the RCMP can operate within Aboriginal communities and integrate traditional values, such as shame and responsibility. Extrajudicial measures such as this provide communities with the opportunity to choose the path they wish to send offenders on, while still maintaining the presence of community policing.

The Hollow Water Programme

"The people of Hollow Water do not believe in incarceration. They believe that incarceration means that offenders can hide from, rather than face, their responsibilities for the pain they have caused. The difference in Hollow Water is that offenders face their responsibilities with the love, respect, and support which the Anishnabe people believe are due to all creatures." (Aboriginal Peoples Colllection 1997:10)

The Hollow Water Programme is a landmark example of cross-cultural cooperation between the RCMP and Aboriginal communities. Founded on Hollow Water First Nation, Manitoba in 1986, the Hollow Water programme was initiated as a community's response to high rates of sexual and family abuse (Griffiths and Hamilton 1996:182). The programme demonstrates a high degree of cooperation between the RCMP and community facilitators throughout the duration of the offender's participation. After initial suspicion is raised by community members against an offender, the community works independently to gather data related to the crime. Once substantial evidence is found against a suspected victimizer, the RCMP detachment is notified and informs the suspect that he or she will be charged (Aboriginal Peoples Collection 1997:121). At this point, the offender is given the option of going through the Euro-Canadian court system, or pleading guilty and entering into the Hollow Water Programme without any period of incarceration (Aboriginal Peoples Collection 1997:121). Once involved with the programme, the offender is required to complete thirteen steps, some of which involve direct contact with the RCMP (Griffiths and Hamilton 1996: 183). The Hollow Water Programme has furthered Euro-Canadian involvement by creating a network of non-Aboriginal legal aids who serve both to support the programme within the Euro-Canadian judicial community and legitimise it in the eyes of the non-Aboriginal public (Aboriginal Peoples Collection 1997:148)

The conscious effort of the Hollow Water First Nation to involve the RCMP in the Hollow Water Programme demonstrates that the Nation did not want to see Euro-Canadian policing disappear overnight. This is a trend that is not uncommon amongst communities experimenting with

traditional justice (Waldram 1997: 200). To many Aboriginal communities, the idea of eradicating Euro-Canadian police is unrealistic. This may be because of the inadequacy of sociological and institutional resources for dealing with criminal behaviour in Native communities. Pressures from non-Aboriginal institutions may force Aboriginal communities to legitimise traditional values by integrating them with Euro-Canadian approaches to criminal behaviour. Regardless, semi-institutionalised programmes such CJFs or the Hollow Water Programme serve to provide a foundation for independent Aboriginal justice programmes.

Independent Aboriginal Justice Programmes

"At least here we have a chance." (Aboriginal Peoples Collection, 1997:175)

Some Aboriginal communities have had considerable success developing and sustaining traditional justice programmes in entire autonomy from government institutions. These communities have recognised that the combination of institutional racism within Canada's criminal justice system and criminal and the local etiologies of criminal behaviour results in a cycle of oppression made escapable only through building community strength and independence.

Traditional justice programmes vary in structure but generally incorporate informal sanctions such as gossip, mockery, derision, and shunning, as well as formal sanctions such as Inuit song or drum duels, banishment, and corporeal punishment (Griffiths and Hamilton 1996:180). Most traditional justice initiatives contain elements of traditional culture, placing "a strong emphasis on healing, [and] spirituality" (Griffiths and Hamilton 1996:182). All programmes emphasise the role of family and community in resolving criminal behaviour (Griffiths and Hamilton 1996:180) and seek to increase community participation "in sanctioning criminal activity, thereby taking ownership of the problem" (Andersen 1997:306). Aboriginal justice reflects the traditional idea of "circular vision", or seeing the world holistically (Winfree 2002:291). This mindset is a spiritual value provided to Aboriginal people by the Creator, and, in the context of restorative justice, allows communities to see below the surface causes of criminal behaviour (Winfree 2002:291). Finally, Winfree identifies eight primary values universally represented in Aboriginal justice programmes: "honesty, sharing, strength, kindness, humility, wisdom, honour, and bravery" (2002:291).

Generally, communities have limited their restorative justice programmes to a co-judging paradigm, which has close ties to the Euro-Canadian criminal justice system (Nielsen 1996:220). The co-judging paradigm embraces the traditional view that all tribal members are viewed

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as equal (Winfree 2002:298), and employs a "vertical mediation" model to resolve criminal issues (Winfree 2002:291). Examples of co-judging formations include: "sentencing circles, elders' or community sentencing panels, sentence advisory committees, and community mediation committees" (Andersen 1997:306). The differences between these four structures are minimal, and are by and large due to "the local contexts within which they are constructed" (Andersen 1997:306). Griffiths and Hamilton (1996:177-179) poignantly describe a co-judging ceremony in an unidentified Vancouver Island Nation. The ceremony involved an offender responsible for the sexual abuse of several women over the course of 35 years. The community chose not to involve the Anglo-Canadian justice system, and instead held a "traditional justice ceremony and potlatch", during which the community, victims, and the offender had the opportunity to interact. The victims were able to confront the offender about the impact of the abuse on their lives; the offender had the chance (and, indeed, was required to) fully disclose and accept responsibility for the crimes. Furthermore, the offender figuratively renewed the victims' womanhood by washing their feet. Through symbolic interactions and open community dialogue, the offender was given the opportunity to ask for forgiveness, which he was granted in accordance with Aboriginal tradition and customs (1996:177).

The success of extra-governmental Aboriginal justice programmes is dependent on several factors. First, it is imperative that community leaders are spiritually healthy and free from the influences of historical harm that plague many Aboriginal groups (Griffiths and Hamilton 1996: 187). Second, the rights and safety of victims must be protected. Concerns regarding the severity of the crime and whether it might eclipse the threshold of emotional or material community resources must be addressed (Griffiths and Hamilton 1996: 188). This concern includes the pragmatic reality that many Aboriginal communities simply cannot afford to tie up "their meager funds" in restorative justice initiatives (Andersen 1997: 315). Third and finally, it is important that care is taken to ensure that family, kin, and community power hierarchies do not hinder the success or fairness of the programme (Griffiths and Hamilton 1996: 188). There are concerns that the egalitarianism requisite for community justice initiatives is a hindrance to their success (Winfree 2002: 298), for the simple reason that all members of the community are not necessarily viewed or treated as equal. Andersen posits that community sentencing creates "a situation in which more marginalised members of Aboriginal communities are forced to acquiesce to the wishes of those controlling the reigns of power in the community" (1997: 313). Thus, in order for the offender to be successfully "reintegrated" into the community, he or she must have been perceived as "integrated" in the first place (Andersen 1997: 313).

Conclusion

The development of restorative justice initiatives in Canadian Aboriginal communities is complicated by a host of political, sociological, and historical issues from which it cannot be detached. When evaluating the potential of communities to apply traditional justice autonomously, one is essentially evaluating the success of the community in overcoming a harsh history of Euro-Canadian colonialism. Although it may be disheartening to learn that many restorative justice initiatives have only succeeded with the help of the same Euro-Canadian institutions that have historically oppressed Aboriginal self-determinism, efforts made on the part of government institutions ought to be viewed as promising. The success of programmes such as Community Justice Forums or the Hollow Water Programme demonstrate how Aboriginal communities are pursuing self-determinism through traditional justice, with the implied acquiescence of Euro-Canadian institutions. Likewise, the efforts made by the federal government to introduce Aboriginal cultural programming in prisons can be viewed optimistically, as Aboriginal offenders have the opportunity to gain a more thorough understanding of their culture. Upon reintegration, the offenders may use this education to strengthen the cultural identity of their home community. Thus, although the development of successful traditional justice institutions in Aboriginal communities may be wrought with social and historical roadblocks, the perseverance of Aboriginal community members and Euro-Canadian recognition of the unique needs of Aboriginal offenders can break the path towards a self-deterministic, restorative justice framework for Canada's Aboriginal peoples.

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Canadian First Nation's Approaches to Healing and Strengthening Community and Spirit

Sylvia Chomko

Given the long history of colonialism that Native groups living in Canada have dealt with, there are many issues to consider—issues that include loss of territory, the legacy of residential schools, and bans on traditional ceremonies. In order to fully understand the situation of contemporary Indigenous people in Canada—one that is interpreted by many as continued colonialism—we must remember this history even while looking for solutions to a better present and future. The focus of this paper will be to examine some First Nation responses to the social crises which are present in many of their communities. The people discussed in this paper emphasize the importance of traditional community building and spirituality in their arguments and actions. I want to examine how these ideals are implemented and how traditional values are negotiated within (or outside of) the colonialist bureaucratic system.

I will approach this question from two angles: (1) theoretical perspectives and (2) practical examples. To begin with I will look at the theories of Taiaiake Alfred, a Mohawk academic who hails from Kahnewake, a reserve near Montreal. In Alfred's most recent book Wasase, he argues for an emphasis on spiritual and community strengthening which can be achieved through remembering the traditions and practices of the elders. In order to gain a more nuanced perspective on Alfred's argument, I will look at James Waldram's Chapter, "Healing the Traditional Aboriginal" in Revenge of the Windigo as well as Paul Nadasdy's Hunters and Bureaucrats and a section of Gold et al's article "The Community as Provider". In the second section, I will look at the structure of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation as well as that of the Four Worlds Development Project in order to understand how these larger systems are implemented on a grassroots level within specific communities. The communities discussed below, incorporate strengthening of community and spirit in programs that attempt to balance tradition with the contemporary situation and succeed in offering new avenues along which Indigenous people may move forward beyond the oppression of contemporary colonialism.

Theoretical Perspectives

In Wasase, Alfred articulates a shift away from his previous perspective, which emphasized Indigenous governance, towards a new argument. He points out that winning a land-claim or rights to self-governance does not change much in the wider scope of things since only a small minority of First Nations people actually benefit and even within that community not many of the deeply entrenched social issues are actually resolved (30-31). Paul Nadasdy comes to a similar conclusion. His ethnographic work with the Kluane of the Yukon showed that though winning land-claims might appear to have given them more control and liberties, the bureaucratic structure that is required in order for them to engage with the government on these issues is actually counter to their fundamental beliefs and attitudes regarding ownership and governance (9).

This reconsideration of Native peoples' experiences in interactions with the colonial government has led to a shift, represented by Alfred's most recent argument, towards a new politics of resistance. He points out that many *Onkwehonwe* (a Mohawk term: "original people")

> are awakening to the need to move from the materialist orientation of our politics and social reality toward a restored spiritual foundation, channelling that spiritual strength and the unity it creates into a power that can affect political and economic relations. (22)

He argues that all past endeavours at establishing a sustainable, constructive relationship between the governments and *Onkwehonwe* have been ultimately unsuccessful and have only served to further entrench the hierarchy of power imposed by the Canadian government (20-21). This lack of success is due to the fact that the *Onkwehonwe* are required to operate within the colonialist framework: this demand itself is eroding their spiritual and cultural heritage. A good illustration of this, mentioned before in Nadasdy, is the push for the Kluane's system of government to be modeled in the image of the Canadian bureaucratic system. The amount of time which the Kluane needed to spend doing paperwork in order to establish land-rights was not something they would have committed to voluntarily (9). This process also costs the Kluane a lot of money which further entrenches them in the colonialist system of exchange.

Alfred argues that his approach will help to address the problems of disconnection and fear that are inhibiting any attempts at progress made by Indigenous groups (20). He emphasizes that, "personal and collective transformation is not instrumental to the surging against state power; it is the very means of our struggle" (28). For Alfred, a discovery of real, deep peace that emerges from a reconnection to the land and traditional culture should be accepted as the final goal of this spiritual movement. While justice is something that will be accomplished along the way, it is limited in scope because it only looks to the past (27).

The question which arises for Alfred is how the imperialism of the colonialist government can be transformed when the force of oppression has become so diffused that it is hard to pinpoint any specific target. He

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points out that as a result of this diffusion, as well as the long history of colonialist oppression and racism a "psychology of deep denial [has formed. People are] using religiosity and chemicals aids [….] to distance and medicate the pain" (60). Alfred sees a problem with the fragmentation and local focus of many First Nations groups across Canada because it cannot elicit the large-scale, unified movement for de-colonization which he sees as necessary (65).

Though Alfred brings forth many important arguments in his call for a strengthening of community and spirit, some questions arise regarding his apparently strict binary distinction between the social groups of the *Onkwehonwe* and the settlers, as well as the values which each of those groups uphold. Interaction and cultural sharing (in both coercive and non-coercive ways) between these groups has been going on for centuries. This history of interaction creates a fluidity of culture and ethnic identity, which makes it difficult to distinguish so strictly between the groups.

As James Waldram points out, healing traditions (and by extension, spirituality) take on many different meanings for Indigenous people depending on the context in which they live. Waldram cites Csordas' study of the Navajo which problematized the strict distinction between "tradition and modern/postmodern and identified three healing traditions: the 'traditional', the Native American Church, and the Navajo Christian faith healing" (Waldram 290). Though this study focused on the American Navajo, these three approaches to healing show the extent to which Native traditions across North America are influenced by outside sources—Christianity in this case.

Alfred's call for a unified solidarity across all *Onkwehonwe* nations requires some qualifying comments. While there are some elements of First Nations traditions which are common across all of Canada, many cultural and spiritual practices are specific to place and people. Waldram, writing about healing initiatives for First Nations people in prisons, points out that that the Indigenous 'traditions,' which are offered to the inmates as therapeutic practices, originate in a specific localized place and are often foreign to the indigenous people in prison. Some First Nation people might not even have been raised with any Native traditions or their traditions might originate elsewhere and bear no resemblance to what is offered in the prisons (Waldram 289).

This specificity of traditional practices to particular locations, as well as the influence of external forces such as Christianity, must be taken into consideration when arguing for a return to tradition and spirituality in the mobilization of indigenous people across a country as large as Canada. Waldram problematizes the concept of 'tradition' in a helpful way, arguing that if the term refers to 'pure' pre-contact practices, then it no longer exists, even though variations of that past tradition are still present today (291).

An exploration of the Inuit term 'Inuit *Qaujumajatuqanjut*' as seen in the study by Gold et al. might be helpful in coming to a more appropriate definition of 'tradition'. "[D]efined as Inuit traditional knowledge, expertise and experience … this [definition] …fails to capture the breadth of the term as well as [its] evolving, fluid quality" (Gold et al.14). This traditional knowledge might better be understood as 'Inuit experience' and was described by Inuit participants in the study as:

> an ever evolving, all-encompassing approach to life that is rooted in Inuit history and experiences of living on the land, colonialism, includes the settlement of communities and the imposition of Western European religion and southern Canadian health care. (Gold et al 14)

This emphasis on grounding in Inuit history and traditional experiences might be a helpful way to approach this idea of a return to indigenous tradition while still remembering the influence of 'outside' forces.

This more nuanced understanding of tradition will be helpful in understanding how a movement based on these concepts can succeed in healing and strengthening First Nations groups in the movement towards self-determination. Another question which arises upon reading Wasase is Alfred's emphasis on freeing the indigenous people of Canada from state oppression by ceasing any co-operation with state power structures (36). The practical issue which emerges from this prescription is that much of the funding for healing programs and community building comes from the bureaucratic structures of the government. While this fact is problematic and must be modified to allow for self-determination, at this point in time, complete disengagement from any interactions with state officials would severely limit current efforts at community and spiritual strengthening since many initiatives rely on direct or indirect state funding as I will describe below.

Practical Examples of Community and Spiritual Healing

Now that Alfred's prescriptions have been considered and nuanced, we can examine some practical applications of the perspectives discussed in Section I. Firstly, I will describe the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) and the Four Worlds Development Project. Following that, I will take two examples from Marie Wadden's book, Where the Pavement Ends in order to examine how these above-mentioned institutions are being used for healing.

The AHF, a fund set up in 1998 by the Canadian government, is a ten-year, $350 million plan to help heal First Nations communities who were negatively affected by time spent in residential schools (AHF

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website). Many children's experiences of residential schools included sexual or physical violence inflicted by their teachers or principals. Residential schools also broke up communities by removing the children from their homes and prohibiting them from speaking their language. Since the last school closed only in 1996 (CBC website), many of today's generation of parents are still suffering from the effects.

Alcohol and drug addiction are common symptoms of the traumas experienced in residential school. These terrible experiences often lead to disconnection from traditional practices and from other community members. Many First Nations parents today never learned traditional parenting skills, because throughout their childhood they lived apart from their families in residential schools for most of the year. Adults' sexual and physical abuse of children and young people especially, has become another serious problem in reserves across Canada. This sense of disconnection from community and spirit can also be linked to government removal of First Nations groups from their traditional territory, another detrimental policy which continues today.

Though the money for the AHF came initially from the Canadian government, the board of directors (which is comprised of First Nations elders and leaders), has full authority in processing applications and assigning grants to specific organizations and communities (AHF website).

While the AHF was a government initiative, the non-profit Four Worlds Development Project is a non-governmental organization. It was the result of a meeting in 1982 at the Blood Indian Reservation in southern Alberta. The meeting was called in response to the social crises of addiction and self-destruction occurring on many First Nations reserves. Forty traditional elders as well as a small support team, some of whom were based at the University of Lethbridge AB, gathered to reconsider what human development meant for their communities (Bopp 3). The Four Worlds Development Project was formed along a guiding philosophy which mirrors many First Nations traditional community and spiritual values. Four Worlds values community direction and initiative while at the same time recognizing the importance of outside support and changes within the wider community. The organization recognizes that in order to develop, a community must have a vision of what they would like to see in the future. Finally, Four Worlds recognizes that individual and family development must be addressed together and that ways of living that are life-preserving and enhancing must be encouraged (Bopp 4-5). There are three heads of the organization, two of whom are non-indigenous academics, Michael and Judie Bopp, who were chosen because of their past effective work with indigenous people around the world. The third principal is, Phil Lane Jr., is Native.

This Four Worlds Project is an interesting example because there is a distinct mix of non-indigenous and indigenous influence. This

demonstrates quite effectively that co-operation between First Nations people and what Alfred calls the 'settlers' is imperative in the creation of a healthy Canadian society. Now that these two organizations have been elaborated upon, I will look at concrete examples of specific indigenous groups' initiatives to heal and strengthen, which make use of the above-mentioned programs.

In her book, Marie Wadden sets out to learn about First Nations solutions to the problems I have described above. Though she finds many examples of community initiatives, I will limit my discussion to two. Wadden describes the progress of the Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nations reserve outside of Sudbury, Ontario. One member of the community, Levi Southwind, read a book by the Four Worlds principals, Michael and Judie Bopp, which inspired him to invite them in helping with alcohol abuse problems on the reserve in 2003 (Wadden 191).

As discussed before, the philosophy of the Four Worlds Development Project requires that the whole community become involved in identifying problems and arriving at concrete answers to the issues. In Sagamok, the Bopps served as facilitators, educating the community on ways that they could work effectively together, and later teach one another. One of the methods used was to gather a community story; as Michael Bopp puts it, "exposing the community's thinking about itself" (Wadden 193). From this, a general framework was created which highlighted the priorities and goals of the group.

This method has proven effective. In 2008, five years into their ten-year plan, 88% of Sagmok's employees were sober, a vast improvement from before the community's work with Four Worlds (Wadden 190). In 2003, when the community plan was first drawn up, they estimated that 70% of males, 60% of females and 80-90% of youth abused alcohol and drugs (Wadden 196). More recently Southwind, who invited the Bopps observed:

> I don't see the people coming home drunk, falling down anymore. Very seldom do I see signs of physical abuse, which used to be commonplace years ago. I grew up with that violence. It's seldom nowadays. (Wadden 196)

This community healing and development plan was funded by a grant from the AHF. The interplay of a grant from a government-funded organization, and the invitation of non-indigenous educators—representing a non-governmental organization—who help facilitate a community-initiated healing process demonstrates that any strict divisions between groups or their world-views is unhelpful and will ultimately hold back progress in healing the community and spirit of First Nations people. This initiative also shows that it is important that the movement for change be locally rooted and that it speak to the specific community's needs and

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vision.

The second example from Wadden's book which I will look at is that of the Hollow Water First Nations reserve in Manitoba. A progressive system of healing circles was invented there by a group of Anishnawbe women who wanted to see an end to the sexual abuse in their community. Sexual abuse is another symptom of deeper underlying issues of cultural and spiritual division which many communities have experienced as a result of past and present colonialist attitudes and policies. It is a major cause of substance abuse and suicide. In a report for Corrections Canada which examined the methodology of these healing circles, Christina Sivell-Ferri observed that "Dysfunction, including the sexual abuse of children is a foreseeable outcome that has resulted from the deliberate intent of the dominant society to sever a people from themselves" (qtd. in Wadden 87).

Wadden spoke with the woman who initiated the healing circles in Hollow Waters, Burma Bushie. Bushie described her community as being at its worst in the 1970s, after the women—who had held the community together until then— finally gave in to social pressure and began drinking as well. Bushie believes that when children are sexually assaulted they lose their spirit.

> I have been looking at my community for a long time. The weakest piece in the community is the spiritual. We started to use all these drugs and alcohol…to numb the pain. That separated us from our sprit even more. Your spirit's home is your body, so if you are putting all this bad stuff in your body where does your spirit want to go? (qutd. in Wadden 88)

In 1986, Bushie and a group of twenty-four people from Hollow Waters began a program that was so effective that they are allowed to first deal with sex offenders on their own instead of being obliged to turn them in to the provincial court system immediately.

This system, called the Community Holistic Circle Healing (CHCH), involves a series of four healing circles which are held in response to a report of sexual abuse; each case takes five years (Wadden 90). The circles involve progressively more members of the community until in the end, the offender is describing his (usually offenders are male) deed to his whole community as well as a provincial judge who then pronounces a sentence after consultation with the community. The process is long and difficult for all parties concerned, but in the end, the success is tangible—the rate of re-offence is very low. If at any point, the offender is unwilling to continue in the healing circle, he is turned over to the provincial court system (Wadden 90-93).

The positive effects of these healing circles can be seen in the community at large. There are fewer rates of sex offences and less substance abuse. These positive developments have influenced the surrounding

communities; children from other reserves are often sent to be fostered in Hollow Waters since it now has a reputation for being a positive environment.

Wadden writes that though the CHCH receives some funding from the AHF and in 2007, each staff member received $100,000 from the Canadian and Manitoban Justice departments. The organization has not been able to expand as they would like to since the money received is only enough to pay salaries. In this case, it is clear that the most effective work has come from within the community and although they collaborate with the justice departments, their method of healing is much more effective, longer lasting and cheaper than putting people in jail. As in the example of Sagamok above, indigenous and non-indigenous groups often collaborate in such a way that makes it difficult to separate the two as strictly as Alfred advocates.

This is not to say that government operations are commonly carried out for the benefit of First Nations groups. The example of the AHF is definitely an exception to the rule of past governmental responses to the issue. Many (both indigenous and non-indigenous) argue that the AHF was set up out of the government's embarrassment after the First Nations people's horrible residential school experiences became known publicly. Another problem is that the AHF's ten-year plan is set to expire in 2008 with no arrangements for renewal (AHF website). Though grants from the AHF have helped fund many community initiatives aimed at community and spirit strengthening, there is still much work to be done and with no more funds, many of these hopeful movements will be held back.

Many First Peoples have observed that the main goal of the Canadian government is to maintain bureaucratic structures instead of addressing people's needs. Wadden quotes a Hollow Waters community administrator of social development programs, Marcel Hardisty who points out that,

> Bureaucracies, institutions, government programs—all have a need to maintain and justify their own existence, so people's needs become secondary. These institutions were founded to meet people's needs, but for the sake of maintaining existence, people's needs become secondary. (qutd in Wadden 95)

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to remember that both First Nations communities and Canadian bureaucracies are comprised of individual people and are not impenetrable unified entities. Within the Canadian government there are many 'civil servants' who are uninterested in helping with the creation of an equal system that reconsiders its colonialist attitude. Many are interested only in maintaining their post or moving up within

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the system. Be that as it may, there are some who are open to reassessing the government's role and are interested in creating possibilities for self-determination within First Nations groups.

Historically, the government has intentionally withheld any power and authority from First Nations groups in order to make it easier to control them; it is imperative that this government intention be recognized and denounced. A new approach must be generated so that the two groups can work together in building a sustainable and positive relationship where each voice has equal strength and weight. This move towards self-determination must begin with what Alfred calls for—community and spiritual healing, which will allow indigenous people in Canada to be strong enough to engage in a new politics of resistance. As I have described above, this strengthening is already beginning on a grass-roots level, but this push also needs to be supported by the government and non-Native people.

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Untitled
Paumalu Cassiday

I am, and proud to be, part Native Hawaiian. What I am not so proud of is the current state of my community. In the aftermath of annexation, many social problems have severely struck the indigenous Hawaiian population. In response to their plight, I aim to be a proponent for the advancement of the Hawaiian people. My goals include instituting rehabilitative programs for at-risk youth and victims of substance abuse. Ergo, I must equip myself with the tool necessary for attaining these aspirations. This tool, I believe, is knowledge—knowledge that can one day be applied in the struggle to liberate many Native Hawaiians from the deathly grip of drug addiction. I am thus driven to obtain the knowledge and skills I need to achieve my ambitions.

However, this task is unfortunately not so simple. It is complicated by a question deeply rooted in a challenge faced by all Native Hawaiians for the last hundred and ten years. This is the challenge of adaptation to a post-colonial reality conjoined with the simultaneous conservation of traditional values and culture. The question for me is this: to what extent do I pursue the knowledge of customs and values past on by the ancestors, and to what extent do I forego these teachings for the seemingly more practical information found in a university education? In other words, in my mission to rehabilitate my community via the obtainment of knowledge, where do I invest my efforts? Do I need knowledge of the past or of the present? To this problem, my answer is simple. I need both.

I presently attend McGill University in Canada. I am a psychology major, and am applying for admittance into the honors program for next year. I am also doing independent research under the supervision of Dr. Don Taylor, and am investigating cultural issues pertinent to Aboriginal people. I therefore came to university to develop a foundation. A foundation that consists of knowledge that is relevant to the present and applicable to my pursuits.

This foundation, however, is not limited only to the erudition found in classrooms. It is also consists of the education inherent to my heritage. It is for this reason that I am currently working towards earning a certificate in Hawaiian language from the University of Hawai'i. When I am home, I also partake in *hoe wa'a*, or ocean canoe paddling. This past time serves as preparation for one of my childhood dreams: to join the crew of the *Hokule'a*. The *Hokule'a* is a traditional sailing vessel that is navigated using only the stars and the signs of nature as a compass. It was by these

methods that the ancestors explored and settled the Earth's largest ocean over a thousand years before Europeans left their shorelines. The *Hokule'a* has become a symbol of great pride to Native Hawaiians—a pride that has been sorely lacking in recent history. Retracing the sailing routes of the ancestors would not only personally strengthen me, but it would also grant me knowledge that I could then impart to others. This knowledge of the past is just as important to restoring Native Hawaiian well being as a modern education is.

In conclusion, I believe that both contemporary and traditional knowledge are needed for the attainment of my career goals. This sentiment is summarized best in a proverb from the ancestors. *'Ike i ke au nui me ke au iki.* "Know the big currents and the little currents." Thus, it is only through familiarity with both currents of time—the past and the present—that Native Hawaiians will ever sail successfully into their future.

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First Peoples' House Pow Wow

The First Peoples' House of McGill University

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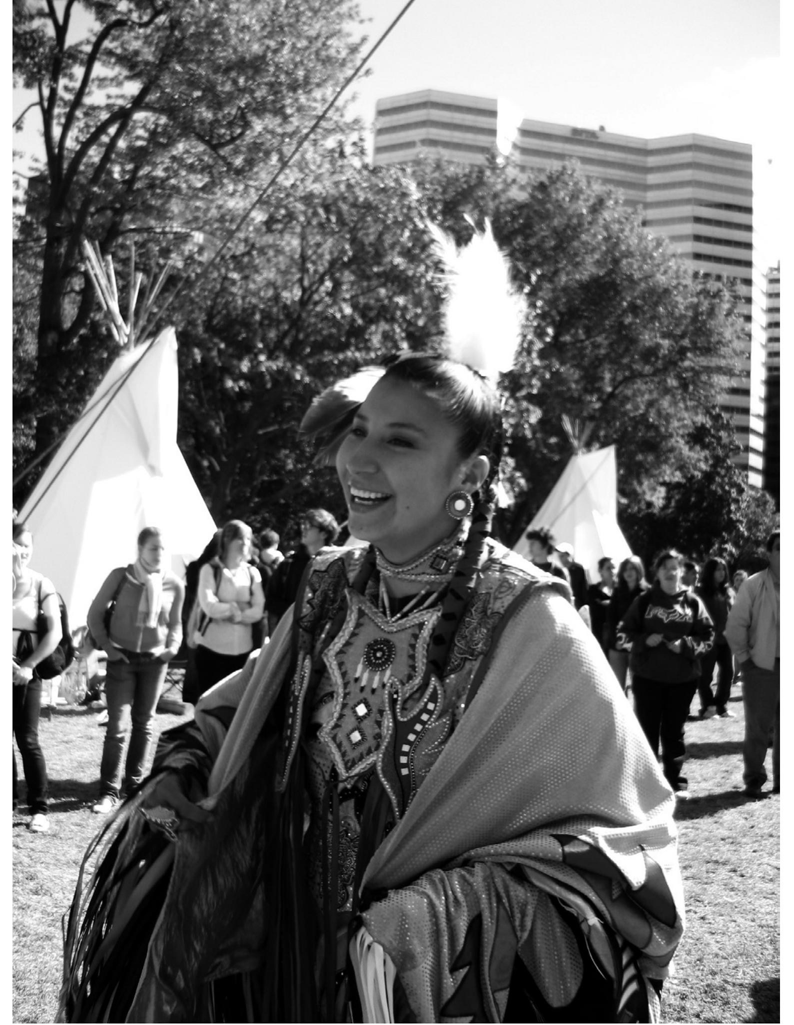

A Study on the Impact of Residential Schooling on First Nations Identity

Corrine Jones

"*Attachment to a stable identity is a human need that cannot be denied without causing suffering*" (Niezen 2000: 10).

For over a century, between 1879 and 1986, more than one hundred thousand children in Canada were removed from their Aboriginal communities and placed in residential schools (Bezeau 2007). This was a brutal attempt by the government and the Church to "civilize" native communities. The first Canadian Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, announced the aim of residential schooling in 1887 as the need "to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the inhabitants of the Dominion" (cited in McKegney 2007: 27). Richard H. Pratt, who infamously declared the need to "kill the Indian and save the man", reaffirmed this idea several years later (1892, cited in Niezen 2000: 46). Residential schooling was thus, as Christopher Devlin of the Canadian Bar Association states, one of the highly insensitive "nation-building policies" of the government (Bezeau 2007), which also had roots in Christianity; for in order to create "good Canadians" out of Aboriginal children, they would have first have to be transformed into Christian Canadians (McKegney 2007: 26). Duncan Campbell Scott, the Minister of Indian Affairs, reiterated MacDonald's rhetoric in 1920 when he said: "I want to get rid of the Indian problem…. Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic" (cited in McKegney 2007: 28). Aboriginal author Sam McKegney has described this comment as "explicitly genocidal in its intention to obliterate Native societies by rendering their children 'non-Native'" (2007: 28).

This essay will examine how the traumatic experience of assimilation through residential schooling (in terms of language loss, separation from the family, Christianization, and abuse) has had implications on First Nations' identity. It will also explore how the consequences of oppression have continued to reverberate across generations in Aboriginal society.

The institution of residential schooling saw Aboriginal children incarcerated in boarding schools miles away from their families. Under the established "omnipresent threat of Jesuit-style punishment" (McKegney 2007: 26), the children underwent a monotonous and strict daily routine centred on the removal and prohibition of all signifiers of their Aboriginal identity. This included "names, hairstyle, clothing, food, and, most

important, language" (Niezen 2000: 61). The children's cultural heritage was further undermined as they were also repeatedly "taught" that the North American indigenous cultures were primitive and inferior to white civilization.

The impact that the colonialists' culture imposed on Aboriginal students, not only in terms of its cultural expectations, but also in its regimented methods of teaching, caused both immediate and long-term negative effects on the distinct Aboriginal culture in North America (AHF 2007: 12). For over a hundred years, Aboriginal children were vigorously subjected to this missionary-led oppressive and abusive schooling, which undercut (or at the very worst, eradicated), any sense of the child's autonomy, self-worth, integrity, and, most demoralizing of all, the child's Aboriginal identity (McKegney 2007: 27).

The Attack on Aboriginal Languages

"A culture cannot survive without its language. The language is an expression of the culture – it is the backbone, the identity of the people. When the language is lost, the culture is crippled" (York 1989: 36).

Residential school educators and the Department of Indian Affairs were well aware of the fundamental link between language and culture. To ensure that Native children would be assimilated into the white culture more easily (York 1989: 36), the government insisted that English or French were the only languages spoken in residential schools (Miller 1997b: 6). If a child was caught speaking an indigenous language, they faced severe punishment in the form of humiliation or physical abuse bordering on sadism. As Ralph Johnson recalls, "there was a lot of abuse. We were told not to speak Ojibwe, we were told it was the devil's language" (McLaren 2007). Another former student of a Catholic residential school remembers being whipped for talking to her own brother in their language (Miller 1997b: 11), while a school in Saskatchewan endorsed putting adhesive on a pupil's mouth for the same reason (Miller 1997b: 6).

Some teachers clearly felt that humiliating a child had more of an effect in degrading indigenous languages. Gladys Griener, a residential school "survivor" (a frequently used term –York 1989, McLaren 2007), has described how she was taunted by her teacher in front of her whole class for not speaking English: "[the teacher] said, 'look at the dumb Indian, she can't speak English.'" Sadly, when Gladys returned to her Aboriginal community after seven years of speaking English, she was no longer able to speak her Native language. Even many years later, she still resents speaking it because, as she describes, "I feel like I'm sneaking something. I find myself hesitating before I speak. I guess I learned my lesson so well that it's hard to change" (York 1989: 36-37). This is just one devastating example of the several detrimental long-term effects of residential schooling. For

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numerous other survivors, being ashamed of their Native language meant that they did not pass it on to their children, proving that residential school had damaging intergenerational effects (York 1989: 36). In some residential schools, the level of education was so low that many students finished their schooling unable to speak fluently in either their mother tongue, English or French (Ashworth 1993: 55), thus problematizing complete assimilation into either their own First Nations community, or white society.

Language enables a person to place their cultural heritage within a logical framework that defines and preserves the "institutions, beliefs, values, perceptions, outlooks, attitudes … literature and history" of that culture (Johnson in McKegney, 2007: xiv). It allows one to transfer their culture onto the next generation, and to "promote pride" in their heritage (Adams 1992: 48). If the language is lost, the person loses this direct connection to their cultural identity. As Jannica Hoskins has described, a child's alienation with their Aboriginal culture would only have accelerated the process of Canadian acculturation (Bezeau 2007). Indeed, it is clear that the attack on the "Indigenous voice" (McKegney 2007: 13) was "part of a broader assault on Aboriginal identity," as James Roger Miller has attested (1997a: 6).

Separation from the Aboriginal Community

"*The boarding school disassociates the Indian child from the deleterious home influences to which he would otherwise be subjected.*" The Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs, 1890 (cited in Ashworth 1993: 51-52).

A friend of Sir John A. MacDonald, Nicholas Flood Davin, was commissioned to write a report in 1879 on the already well-established residential school program in the United States. His findings convinced him that the separation of Aboriginal children from their parents was the most effective way to strip the child of its "barbarous" cultural roots, thus erasing the child's "Indian-ness" and rendering the "civilizing" process more effective (Bezeau 2007, Niezen 2000: 71).

Chief Bob Joseph of Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada remembers as a child often hearing an elder saying at a potlatch, "But for our children, what would our purpose be?", highlighting how precious children are in the First Nations culture. He feels that the Government realised the extent to which First Nations culture revolved around their children, so they were aware that, in isolating children from their communities and families, Aboriginal traditions and communities would quickly deteriorate (Bezeau 2007).

Reservation Police agents came to First Nations communities to implement the government's orders to take the children away from their parents (which, as the description below attests, was nothing short of a

meticulous and large-scale kidnapping). This distressing scene of an autumn morning in 1887 has been described by one of the agents themselves:

> The parents "hurried their children off to the mountains or hid them away in camp, and [we] had to chase and capture them like so many wild rabbits." When it was all over, "the men were sullen and muttering, the women loud in their lamentations, and the children almost out of their wits with fright" (cited in Adams, 1988: 231).

It should also be noted that the kidnapping often took place at gunpoint. Such a violent and harrowing separation from one's parents would evidently have had an immeasurable affect on young children. The National Chief in the Assembly of First Nations Canada, Chief Phil Fontaine, attended residential schools for ten years during the 1950s, and confirms that "the greatest damage to my psyche [out of the whole ordeal]… was the separation from my family" (Bezeau 2007).

This isolation from the family would only have been amplified when parents visiting the school were denied access to their children. Their visits were considered an inconvenience by the school authorities, and many schools recruited children who lived in remote areas to make it harder for parents to visit; as well as for the pupils to attempt escape (Ashworth 1993: 54, and Miller 1997a: 5). In fact it has been proven that, due to the lack of parental love and affection in residential schooling, poor parenting has been more common, or "hereditary", as York has suggested, in First Nations communities affected by residential schooling (1989: 39). This will be examined in further detail later on in the essay.

By the time the second or third generations of children were being snatched from their Aboriginal communities, many former students would now have been the parents of these children. The guilt and helplessness these parents would have felt, watching their children being taken to residential school and having no power to prevent the same abuse from happening, is incomprehensible (Christopher Devlin in Bezeau 2007), not to mention clearly destroying the family as a unit of strength, pride, and love. Siblings too were separated upon arrival at the school, which would only have intensified the children's feelings of disorientation, isolation and displacement (Ashworth 1993: 54).

Unfortunately for many pupils, the disorientation that they suffered did not end when their time at residential school did. The severance of family ties at a young age meant children no longer understood their Aboriginal cultural heritage upon returning home. One Cree elder remembers believing his parents were ignorant because they could not speak English: "[after] all those years in school … I thought I was a different person. I thought my parents didn't know any English. … This is what the school did to me" (Niezen 2000: 81). Dr. Mary Thomas, a Senior Elder, describes how it felt for children to return to their aboriginal community after years in residential school: "they felt empty – they didn't know who they were,

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they didn't know anything about their identity, they *didn't even know who their parents or their relatives were*" (emphasis added, Bezeau 2007).

Separation from the community also meant that religious beliefs and cultural traditions, such as hunting, were not passed onto the children. Consequently, when the children finished their schooling and returned to their community, many experienced difficulties bonding with their relatives and they could no longer participate in traditional or spiritual activities within the community, because they were no longer accustomed to these traditions (Niezen 2000: 82).

Christianization and Scientific Racism

"- t*he post-colonial story of hegemonic Eurocentrism being inflicted violently upon passive Indigeneity*" (Mckegney 2007: 5).

As previously mentioned in the introduction to this essay, the colonial desire to create "civilized" citizens out of the "savage Indian" was conducted under the pretence of paternalism, by attempting to convert the First Nations pupils to Christianity. As one Priest declared, "It is only by imbuing the minds of the Indian children with sentiments of Christianity that their proud and stubborn disposition can be subdued" (Ashworth 1993: 53). Sadly, this misguided understanding of Christian morality shaped the dominant view in white "settler" society of the First Nations culture as being full of "atrocities" and "heathenism" for not complying to Western norms and values (de Leeuw, in Nelson and Nelson 2004: 132). William Duncan, a Protestant who established one of the earliest residential schools in Canada, exemplifies such widespread ignorance in his description of Native communities as "dens of darkness and antiquity… The dark mantle of degrading superstition enveloped them all, and their savage spirits, swayed by pride, jealousy and revenge, were ever hurrying them to deeds of blood." He further went on to belittle Native history as "little else than a chapter of crime and misery" (York 1989: 30).

This disparaging Eurocentric attitude was taught as truth in residential schools, especially with reference to Native spirituality. Dr. Mary Thomas remembers spending a lot of time in the chapel being told "how *evil* our parents and grandparents were…[and that] their way of living was the work of the devil" (Bezeau 2007). This denigration of First Nations culture and traditions subjected the children's young, malleable minds to a horrifying perspective of their families, which would have undeniably distorted how they viewed their Native identity. Jane Willis, a former student, exemplifies this:

> For twelve years, I was taught to love my neighbour – especially if he was white – but to hate myself. […] I was made to feel untrustworthy, inferior, incapable, and immoral. […] I was taught to feel nothing but shame for my 'pagan savage' ancestors…I had been stripped of all pride, self-respect, and self-confidence (York 1989: 40).

Indeed, David Wallace Adams has even pinpointed this attempted conversion to Christianity as "the most pronounced assault on the Indian's identity" (1988: 229).

Charles Darwin's 1859 publication, *On the Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection, or* [the less well-known name], *the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle For Life,* provoked enormous change in the study of humankind in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It advocated the theory of "Social Darwinism," which was based on the belief that there was an inherent link between race and intelligence. These ideas have since been recognised as "Scientific Racism" and have thus been disregarded in the late twentieth century (Berkhofer 1978).

Lacombe's ladder was similar to Social Darwinism, in that it placed human races in a hierarchy, or a "ladder of civilization", except it also represented only two possible pathways for these races to take – either heaven, or hell (Miller 1997b: 3, and Adams 1988: 227). Unfortunately, these theories strongly reinforced the Christian ideals that residential schools were founded upon, so Social Darwinism and Lacombe's ladder were incorporated into the syllabus as scientific fact. Aboriginal students were thus repeatedly subjected to the teachings from the "ladder of civilization," which placed white civilization at the top of this hierarchy, and Native Americans at the bottom, as inherently inferior to all other races. For Aboriginal children, the message was clear – participation in Native rituals meant they would end up in hell. "Lacombe's ladder was simply the graphic expression of an ethos in which all things Indian were pagan, evil, and unacceptable" (Miller 1997b: 3). This forced First Nations children to "accept" their own degradation "as an objective fact, a necessary step…if [they were] to begin the climb to civilization" (Adams 1988: 227). This "scientific proof" would have further forced the children to question the validity of their First Nations identity by infiltrating their minds with unsubstantiated, biased, and Eurocentric colonial beliefs. As Chief Phil Fontaine has said, "there was little [or] no positive reinforcement of who we were as a people" (Bezeau 2007).

Abuse

"There was "abuse of different types: physical, sexual, emotional, psychological… cultural – all those abuses coming down on little kids – and the effects of those abuses continue to reverberate within our communities." Garnet Angeconeb, member of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation Board of Directors (in McLaren 2007).

Evidence has shown that as many as 80 percent of First Nations people have reported that they were sexually abused in Church-run

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residential schools in Canada alone. It has since been proven that, almost universally, sexual abuse does not stop at the victim. The victim becomes the abuser, and abuse becomes a problem transmitted from one generation to the next (York 1989: 30). Victims of sexual abuse have to deal with the "pain, shame [and] guilt" which haunts them for years – in fact, alcoholism and suicide rates have been found to be especially high among Aboriginal communities worst affected by memories of childhood sexual abuse in residential schools (27-28).

Basil H. Johnson, an Aboriginal writer, has bravely told how, within six weeks of "being committed" to residential school aged ten, he was "sodomized by two fifteen-year-old boys." This experience was closely followed by being fellated by a Priest, who continually sexually abused him for the next three-and-a-half years, as well as two other religious figures of authority within the Church-led school accosting him throughout his stay. "From…when I was first sodomized, I went about guilt-ridden, dishonoured, a worthless being. Terror … of dying and going to hell, dogged me for years," he writes (cited in McKegney 2007: xi).

However, as Garnet Angeconeb has aforementioned, abuse in residential schools took several different forms. Dan Saul, Director of Kamloops Indian Residential School Museum explains how children who had attempted escape had their heads shaved so everyone knew what they had done, before being beaten and starved or further humiliated to show to the other children what would happen if they tried to escape (Bezeau 2007). Ernie Philip, a Senior Elder of Little Shuswap Indian Band, was lashed fifty times on his back in front of the whole dormitory for running away. "I couldn't sit down for three weeks, maybe more," he recalls (Bezeau 2007). Attempted escape was just one of the provocations for physical punishment. Children were also strapped for speaking their language - Dr. Mary Thomas, for example, was strapped around the ear by a Nun for this reason, and ended up getting impetigo and going to hospital for a month. She was only eight at the time and was never again able to hear properly out of that ear (Bezeau 2007).

These demeaning forms of punishment and sexual abuse scarred many children for life (York 1989: 35), evidently altering their integrity and self-worth. Johnson has described how he thought he was the only one who had been "befouled and desecrated" in school, but from talking to other former students, he learnt that "we had all been damaged in some way. Even those who had not been ravished suffered wounds, scars, and blemishes to heart, mind, and spirit that would never fully heal" (cited in McKegney 2007: x).

The Difficulty of Reintegration into the Aboriginal Community

"Caught between both cultures, …[one becomes] a representative of both – the ethnographic self and the radical other" (Stanley 1994: 66).

Aboriginal children who had attended residential schools had no hope of being accepted into white Canadian society, not only because of the "deficient education" they had received, but also because of underlying racism (Christopher Devlin in Bezeau 2007). The fact that they had been also severed from their traditional Aboriginal cultures at a young age meant that they "occup[ied] a liminal space characterized by disillusion, identity crisis, and despair" upon returning to their communities (McKegney 2007:28). The sheer amount of information and quotes available on this "identity crisis" affirms that it occurred to many former students. Edward Ahenakew described in Geoffrey York's book *The Dispossessed* how many survivors like him "sit on the fence between the whites and the Indians, belonging to neither, fitting into neither world… You cannot make a white man out of an Indian" (1989: 25). In *The School Days of an Indian Girl*, a story published in 1900, the author Zitkala-Sa describes how, upon returning to her community, she felt like "neither a wild Indian nor a tame one" and "no longer belong[ed] in either her mother's or the missionary's world" (Stanley 1994: 66). Basil H. Johnson has further exemplified this tragic situation:

> children knew nothing that they ought to have known. It was an alien world that did not readily accept them. Their communities had forgotten them; they did not belong; their families had forgotten them; they did not know their fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters; they had no identity. They were broken in heart, mind and spirit, unready for the world outside an institution (cited in McKegney 2007: xi).

According to Kirmayer et al.'s research, it is precisely this "betwixt and between" state upon returning to the community that has led to former residential school students "experienc[ing] problems of identity and self-esteem growing up on the margins of two worlds" (2003: 17). Evidence has also repeatedly shown that there are disproportionate rates of social malaise in First Nations communities. Although residential schooling is not the sole reason for the elevated rates of substance abuse, depression and suicide currently present in many (but not all) Aboriginal communities today, it is "a key factor singled out by indigenous peoples as contributing to their current status as among the most disenfranchised in Canada" (O'Neil 1993, cited in Adelson 2000:12, and Kirmayer et al 2003: 15).

Residential School Syndrome and the "Transgenerational" Effects of Residential Schooling

"By the mid-1980s it was widely recognized that the residential school experience throughout much of Canada was directly responsible for the devastation of native communities" (Niezen 2000: 83).

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As Sam McKegney attests, the "conscious infringement on Indigenous identity" has outlasted the implementation of residential schooling in Canada (2007: 33). Proof of this is "Residential School Syndrome," a term coined by psychologists who have noticed a distinct set of self-destructive behavioural symptoms in Aboriginal survivors of the schools (Niezen 2000: 83). Psychologists have likened these symptoms to the grief cycle a person experiences "after the loss of a close relative. But instead of losing a parent or a spouse," York states that Aboriginal peoples in Canada "lost their culture" (1989: 37), which directly affected their sense of self-worth one gains from attachment to a specific identity.

As outlined by Kirmayer et al.'s findings from Aboriginal life narratives, and as shown within this essay, the negative impacts experienced by former residential school students have reverberated across generations in what has been termed "transgenerational effects." These include poor parenting and the replication of physical and sexual abuse (2003:18). Jackie Miller, a writer for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation newsletter *Healing Words*, has pointed out that "descendents [of former residential school students] often appear to be more angry than the survivors, because they don't necessarily understand what happened to [them]… they tend to harbour more anger that their parents were not there for them" (AHF 2007: 3).

The significant loss of language and Aboriginal tradition caused by the "systematic devaluing of Aboriginal identity" in residential schooling, has, Kirmayer et al. believe, cumulated in the "loss of individual and collective self-esteem, … disempowerment, and, in some instances, … the destruction of communities" (2003: 18). Sadly, this too has been transgenerational, so even Aboriginal youth who were not directly effected by residential schooling have also experienced difficulties in understanding their Aboriginal heritage and identity (Kirmayer et al. 2003: 20**).** A young Aboriginal woman made the poignant statement in response to the Government of Canada's Statement of Apology for Residential Schooling that, "no matter how close one has been personally touched by the residential school system, it is still a personal wound shared by all Aboriginal Canadians" (Mckay 2008).

Conclusion: Repossessing Identities

"I felt that I was no more Indian, but would be an imitation of a white man" (Standing Bear 1928: 141, cited in Niezen, 2000: 63).

Removing children from their Aboriginal surroundings and placing them within an oppressive institution run by white missionaries and white government made it much harder for these children to resist conforming to the dominant white ideals of language, religion, and education (Christopher Devlin in Bezeau 2007). The fact that they were brutally

punished for speaking their own languages or observing any cultural or religious practices, but rewarded for abiding by Christian expectations, would have made resistance to the enforced acculturation in residential schooling near impossible.

As this essay has shown, there were several factors in residential schooling that imposed assimilation into white society through the denigration of "Indian" culture, which consequently taught First Nations children to hold negative connotations of their identity (Christopher Devlin in Bezeau 2007). The denial of indigenous languages was particularly detrimental, as First Nations writers have pointed out in *Healing Words*: First Nations language "is a major element [of] cultural identity, … because it allows for the creation and reinforcement of the ties within children and grandchildren" (AHF 2007: 18). One elder has made the devastating comment, "I never did get to know my parents," because of this language barrier (York 1989: 22).

It is undeniably clear that the denial and suppression of Aboriginal traditions for over a century in Canadian residential schools has "had a profound and lasting effect" on the Aboriginal identity (Adelson 2000: 12). Although Sam McKegney has rightfully pointed out that "the legacy of this genocidal atrocity ripples throughout Native Canada, its fingerprints on the domestic violence, poverty, alcoholism, drug abuse and suicide rates that continue in many Native communities" (2007: 28), there has in fact been a revival of Aboriginal cultures seemingly "lost" from residential schooling in the last ten years or so. Jannica Hoskins, a First Nations film-maker, attests that the Aboriginal identity was not lost, but was "*suppressed* over multiple generations with devastating results…the pow-wow is now one of the best ways to reclaim these traditions" (emphasis added. Bezeau 2007). Indeed, there has been a marked increase in "indigenous healing and cultural practices, including the use of medicine wheel teachings, sweatlodges and pow-wows" in eastern Canada (Adelson 2000: 13). Additionally, there has been a resurgence of Aboriginal religions in Canada, with the presence of the Catholic and Anglican Churches diminishing (Carocci 1997, Waldram 1997, cited in Olofsson, 2004: 10-11). Furthermore, Aboriginal languages are now the official languages of the North-west Territories of Canada, and Nunavut, a new province in northern Canada, has recently installed an Inuit-led government. This demonstrates how, as Kirmayer at al. have found, "many communities are currently engaged in cultural immersion programs geared toward strengthening Aboriginal languages and identity" (2003: 18). Through recuperating and reviving their denigrated Native heritage, First Nations people in post-contact communities have appropriated the power to define themselves, whilst also "reconstructing a community identity that was forged in oppression and dysfunction" (AHF 2007: 15).

Indeed, the ideological control, institutional racism and oppressive

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education present in residential schools greatly traumatised the First Nations psyche for over a century, as the harrowing experiences many children suffered indisputably altered how they viewed themselves and their Aboriginal identity. As has been shown in this essay, the worrying truth is that living with the memories of traumatic residential school experiences was so debilitating for some ex-pupils that many have since committed suicide.

The rebirth of Aboriginal traditions, however, is proof that the Aboriginal identity was not completely lost in communities, but repressed, and "like almost any centralized form of institutional control, residential schools fostered resistance as much as, or more than, compliance" (Niezen 2000: 84). As Garnet Angeconeb has said:

> There is hope, and there is great opportunity to come back – and we are coming back – we were lost, not through any fault of our own, but we were lost through […] Government imposed policy. […] We are rebuilding and restoring what we lost along the way (cited in McLaren 2007).

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Two-Spirit People: Urban Aboriginality and the Remaking of Traditions

Joel Pedneault

Aboriginal persons from a wide variety of national/tribal origins living in cities use the label 'two-spirit' to express a range of non-normative sexualities and gender identities in conjunction with their identity as Aboriginals. In recent decades, two-spirited people have gained visibility within urban sexual minority communities. Today, one will occasionally see the term 'two-spirit' added onto lists of 'queer' identities, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transexual/transgender (LGBT).[1] My intention is to situate two-spirit identity in the multiple contexts which have led to its articulation as an urban community linked to both Aboriginal and queer organizations.

The idea of two-spirit has roots in a historical understanding of third gender roles in pre-colonial Native American societies. Many pre-contact Native peoples had a conception of a gender role that was neither male nor female (Herdt 1994). Among many peoples, gender-nonconforming people could occupy certain special social functions; for example, some were shamans or healers. It was often acceptable for third gender people to partner with someone who shared their biological sex.

Some anthropological work has aimed at an ethnohistorical understanding of sexual and gender difference in pre-contact Native American societies (Williams 1986). Anthropologists have used the term "*berdache*" to describe historical third-gender roles in Native American societies. This term was borrowed from the word French colonists used for sodomy, and which was imposed on gender-variant Natives during the colonial period. A small body of writing exists concerning the pre-contact social role of "*berdaches*" (*c.f.* Williams 1986, Roscoe 1994).

Attempts at reconstructing 'authentic', 'pre-colonization' accounts of culture have been criticized by postmodernist anthropology (Clifford and Marcus eds. 1986, p. 112-115). Additionally, some authors have criticized the use of the "*berdache*" construct as applied indistinctly across a wide spectrum of Native American gender and sexual diversity (Meyer 1998, Jacobs et. al. 1997). The names that specific Native peoples use for third-gender people are arguably more representative of local realities than

1 See for example the Vancouver School Board's policy on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit and questioning people: http://www.galebc.org/POLICYFEB2004.pdf. My use of the label "queer" is as broad as possible and includes all non-heterosexual identities and all gender non-normative ones as well, and includes the label "two-spirit".

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the colonial idea of the "*berdache*". Rather than attempt to reconstruct 'pre-contact' Native traditions of third-gender roles, I will focus on contemporary negotiations of sexuality and Aboriginality by two-spirited people. This discussion will recognize the political negotiations of Native traditions by the two-spirit movement.

This investigation will begin by situating the lived experiences of two-spirited people within a postcolonial context. I will assess the extent to which past and present experiences of assimilation have led to a virtual exodus of gender-variant and queer Natives towards cities. I will outline the double discrimination felt by two-spirit people today, who face both homophobia from their communities of origin and racism within urban queer communities. Queer and gender variant Natives often face heterosexism and a lack of acceptance within their families and communities; as a result, many choose to live in cities. Finally, I will outline how both sexuality and Aboriginal ethnicity have been embodied in the relatively recent idea of two-spirit, which has its origins in city-based associations of queer indigenous people. The two-spirit movement is at the intersection between the movement towards pan-indigenous politics, specific Nations' understandings of two-spiritedness, and the anthropological construct of the "*berdache*".

Two-spirited people and the legacy of colonialism

Past and present assimilation policies continue to affect the lived experiences of two-spirited persons. Residential schools and missionary work, as well as other government assimilation practices have an ongoing impact on two-spirited people and their relation with their families. I will demonstrate how assimilation tactics have devalued traditional understandings of alternative gender roles and have contributed to the urban character of two-spiritedness.

Residential/boarding schools contributed to eroding the viability of third-gender roles as a social institution among Native people. The schools' operations were segregated by sex according to European understandings of a gender binary (Miller 1996, p. 420; Williams 1986, p. 180). For instance, boys slept in one wing whereas girls slept in another (Miller 1996, p. 363). The vocational training that was provided in many residential schools was also gender-segregated and sought to enforce non-Native occupational roles. In schools in Western Canada, for example, young men were taught how to manage farms (as part of ongoing sedentarization policies) whereas young women learned about domestic tasks such as cooking and sewing (Miller 1996, p.159, 181, 220).

Schools enforced a match between the biological sex and the gender roles of their pupils, and provided no leeway for young Native people who wished to identify as something other than their assigned gender. In one

residential school attended by Kwakiutl children, one biological male managed to pass as a girl until doctors examined pupils. Upon teachers learning about the child's biological sex, the pupil was forced to sleep in the boys' wing and dress as a Euro-Canadian male (Williams 1986, p.180). Residential schools also regulated pupils' sexuality in an attempt to enforce heterosexuality. In one school where, in the words of an administrator, "[sexual] immorality is prevalent among the boys", the student who had offended European standards of sexual morality was quietly removed from the residential school in order to avoid a scandal (Miller 1996, p.337).

Furthermore, when segregation by gender was phased out of the schools after World War II, it was done following the reasoning that pupils should be allowed to develop strictly heterosexual marriage prospects with other residential school graduates in order to establish nuclear family units and integrate into "settler" society (Miller 1996). Thus, by cutting Native children off from community settings in which gender variance was a part of tradition, by enforcing heterosexuality and a binary notion of gender, residential schools prevented generations of Aboriginal people from adopting the traditional social roles associated with being third-gender, and stifled the acceptance of a range of sexual identities.

Missionary work, combined with government policies banning Native spirituality, repressed the social and spiritual roles formerly occupied by third-gender people. Waves of conversions undercut the institutions that legitimized alternative gender roles. For instance, young Natives in many societies could choose a gender expression which did not 'match' with their assigned gender after undertaking vision quests; these were driven underground by missionaries (Williams 1986, p. 188). Furthermore, since third-gender people often occupied roles as shamans and healers, they were disproportionately affected by policies banning Native spiritual practices, in which they played a central role (Williams 1986, p. 178). Jesuit missionaries even attempted to prevent close friendships between Native men in order to prevent male-male sex from occurring (Williams 1986, p. 182). Government Indian agents also played a role in suppressing traditions of third-gender in Native societies by enforcing an administrative match between biological sex and gender/occupational roles, much like residential schoolteachers did at the time(Williams 1986, p. 178).

Allotment and relocation policies had a profound effect on the viability of third-gender roles. For instance, in 1887, the United States Congress attempted to do away with the reservation system by allotting land to Native men. This had the effect of stripping women and third-gender people of their land rights (Williams 1986, p. 176). Allotment policies, which continued into the 1960s, tore through the social fabric that had supported the social roles of third-gender people by isolating Native families on parcels of land owned by individual patriarchs (Carocci 1997, p. 118). Relocation policies, in effect during the 1950s in the

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United States, constituted a further attempt to reduce the cost of treaty obligations to government agencies by encouraging Native people to move to urban centres (Tafoya and Wirth 1996, p. 57). These policies cut Native individuals off from traditional understandings of third-gender roles and contributed to the destruction of the social institutions that had supported them. As well, relocation policies contributed to urbanization of Native Americans, at least in the USA, and contribute to understanding why a large proportion of two-spirit people call a city their home.

In an autobiographical piece, Michael Red Earth, a queer Dakota man, draws links between past experiences of assimilation and the acceptance of two-spirit people today:

> The policy at the Indian boarding schools was to reeducate and assimilate Indians into white culture. Expressions of Indian heritage were suppressed and punished. I believe this is important because it affected my mother's worldview as it related to me and my sexuality. (Jacobs et al. 1997, p. 210)

Still in place today are ssimilatory policies and practices which weaken the Native social fabric through which traditional understandings of third-gender roles may be passed on to the next generation. For example, a large proportion of Native children in North America are reared in foster care away from their communities of origin. As a result, they have little contact with the traditions of their Aboriginal ancestors (Tafoya and Wirth 1996, p. 57).

The erosion of a basis for acceptance of sexual and gender variance within Native societies, accomplished through assimilationist policies, has played a formative role in the two-spirit movement today. Queer Natives now face discrimination from their own families and fellow community members as a result of this loss of culturally sanctioned gender diversity.

Two-spirit, Aboriginality and the Gay Mainstream

Queer Native people have felt the need to leave their communities of origin – be they reserves or Métis or Inuit settlements – in order to find a better life in cities. As a result, two-spirit associations have flourished in urban centres with a large Aboriginal population. Queer Aboriginal people do, however, face discrimination within the white-dominated mainstream gay culture of North American cities. The result, which has sprung out of this double bind, is a two-spirit identity. This label reflects a specifically Native response to queerness that resulted from the double discrimination felt by queer Natives/two-spirited people.

The lack of acceptance for queer Natives exists in part because the cultural codification of same-sex desire among Native peoples has all but collapsed under the weight of assimilationist policies and colonial control; as a result, the basis for acceptance of queer people in Native communities has

significantly eroded. Michael Red Earth (Jacobs et al. 1997, p. 211) blames this on attempted assimilation by religious and state powers, as outlined above, as well as on contact with relatives in the city and the increased presence of television. Red Earth is not the only writer to emphasize that assimilation leading to the deterioration of Native understandings of sexuality is an ongoing process (*c.f.* Gilley 2006). Heterosexism, perpetuated by the power structures of Euro-American society and conveyed by its media, continues to erode Native understandings of gender and sexuality.

Nevertheless, some elders remember a social niche for gender non-normative individuals in 'traditional' Native societies (Williams 1986, p. 198). Michael Red Earth writes that the continuing remembrance of the past role of people with alternate sexualities in Sioux society helped his family accept his own queerness (Jacobs et al, 1997, p. 215). As such, traditionalist currents may play a significant role in helping two-spirit people (re)claim a role in Aboriginal communities by helping to reconstruct collective memories of the position of third-gender people in the past.

The silence surrounding Native understandings of gender and sexuality continues today. According to a report by the National Round Table on Aboriginal Urban Centres: "Aboriginal gay people […] are shunned, even by relatives. Sex […] is considered a private matter in many Aboriginal cultures." (1992, p. 66). The parallels between the scars left by the residential school system and the remaking of Native sexualities in the colonial era are rich: both have left a trail of negative emotions with respect to sex and sexuality. In the case of residential schools, extremely prevalent sexual abuse by school staff of pupils traumatized many communities. In a parallel manner, missionaries reframed homosexuality or gender variance as sinful practices and attempted to erase their role in Native spirituality. Williams (1986) describes the reluctance which some of the elders he interviewed expressed when engaging with the subject of alternate genders or homosexuality within their own traditions. In one person's experience, traditionalists were uncertain what to think of his immersion in the gay culture of the 1970s (Jacobs 1997, p. 213). Queer Natives may even remain silent in matters regarding their sexual orientation in order to be able to participate fully in life on reserves; this may lead to a split sense of self (Walters 1997, p. 53).

Like many people of colour, queer Natives are stereotyped or exoticized; some feel as if their acceptance as queer people hinges on erasing their ethnic identity as much as possible. For instance, Michael Red Earth describes how he internalized the racism he experienced within the gay community: "To be a successful gay man, I had to become a white gay man." (Jacobs et al. 1997, p. 214). Red Earth also recounts how he distanced himself from his Native heritage as a result of dominant discourses within the gay community: "One of the first things that I did, as I bought into the ready-made white gay culture, was convince myself that my family

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had rejected me because (according to white gay culture) all gay people are oppressed by their families." (Jacobs 1997, p. 214).

There is a consistent lack of overlap between Aboriginality and queerness that poses a problem for queer Native peoples when they attempt to reconcile both identities. On the one hand, traditionalists feel gay culture has no place within tribal traditions. As a result, Native people who come out as gay face a lack of comprehension within their communities of origin, since they may be seen as having deserted their culture for another. On the other hand, racism within the gay community pushes queer Native peoples to downplay their ethnic origins in favour of a gay identity. In this context, two-spiritedness has gained popularity as a way of reconciling one's sexual and/or gender identity with one's Native roots; as we shall see, the movement aims at reclaiming legitimacy within Native traditions.

Situating Two-spiritedness

The two-spirit movement emerged in response to the particular intersection of oppressions faced by people who are both queer and Aboriginal. As has already been discussed, Queer Native peoples face identity crises when confronted with both homophobia on reserves and racism within urban gay communities. To better elucidate the specific form in which two-spirited identity has emerged, I will situate the two-spirit movement within broader social and political trends.

A growing proportion of Aboriginal Canadians now live in cities: one report estimates there are now more Aboriginal people living in cities than there are in (rural) Aboriginal communities in Canada (National Round Table on Aboriginal Urban Centres, 1992, p. 11). The urbanization of Native people, spurred on by relocation policies and the structural inequalities faced by people living on reserves which favour the move to cities, facilitated the emergence of the pan-Indian movement in the 1960s an 1970s. I propose that pan-indigenous solidarities have set the stage for the emergence of two-spiritedness.

In cities, Aboriginality transcends 'tribal' identities in certain contexts, since people from many different Nations and communities may associate with each other on the basis of their shared Aboriginality. The disconnection felt from one's kinship group, coupled with a retained sense of Aboriginality, were at the roots of the Pan-Indian movement. This movement saw its origins in urban associations of Aboriginal people in the 1960s and 1970s. According to Hertzberg (1971), "[Pan-Indianism] was essentially an urban phenomenon, the creation of individuals who in the face of the loneliness of the city attempted to create an Indian community not of residence but of sentiment" (p. 302). It is important to stress that the city, and the fragmentation of life felt by Native peoples living therein, was a formative condition of pan-indigenous organizing in the past. Discussing

the origins of Pan-Indian movement, Niezen (2003) writes that "the assimilation efforts of boarding schools and the urban relocation programs […] led to the formation of Native support groups and organizations that eventually coalesced in international lobbying efforts." (p. 41-2). To this day, urban Native centres such as the Native Friendship Centre in Montréal provide services to First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, regardless of their treaty rights or status. This reflects a broad understanding of Aboriginal peoples as a community that shares a common set of needs and a similar colonial experience.

One type of Native support group that has sprung up in many cities in North America is the two-spirit association. The precursor of these groups was established in San Francisco in 1975 under the name "Gay American Indians" (Jacobs et al., 1997, p. 110). In past decades, communities of Aboriginal peoples from a variety of Nations have associated on the basis of their marginalized sexualities or gender expressions, and have identified as two-spirit. The idea of two-spiritedness ostensibly originated in cities, to the extent that its pan-indigenous quality may only have emerged where the conditions exist for people from a variety of Aboriginal backgrounds to meet.

Two-spirited identity was partly a reaction to the colonial construct of the '*berdache*'. The concentration of Aboriginal peoples in cities has allowed for queer Native peoples to come into contact with anthropological writings, which are only easily found in university libraries. Two-spirited people feel the term '*berdache*' does not reflect Native understandings of sexual and gender difference (Tafoya and Wirth, 1996, p.56). One author believes the term is insulting, and criticizes the narrow connotation of the term: that of male homosexuality (Jacobs et al. 1997, p.3-6). Two-spirit can thus also be construed as a counter-discourse to anthropological representations of Native traditions which emerged within city associations of Aboriginal peoples.

Although two-spiritedness has its historical bases in the Pan-Indian movement, it is not strictly circumscribed to arenas of Aboriginal sociality in which tribal ties are secondary as in cities. Two-spiritedness is clearly an identity that extends beyond any single tribe or people, yet its political claims are not separate from local Native histories. Two-spirited people in fact attempt to reclaim legitimacy within their own communities of origin by resuscitating erased local histories of third-gender roles in pre-colonial times (Gilley 2006, p.32-3). The two-spirit movement attempts to remake the boundaries of Native traditions in order for Aboriginal communities to be more inclusive of people who had been integral to their communities in the past.

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Conclusion

The two-spirit movement has a long history upon which it may build upon to find a solace for the future. Prior to contact with Europeans, many First Nations had accepted nonheterosexuality or gender variance as acceptable and attributed spiritual functions to people who were neither male nor female. During colonial rule in North America, residential schools, missionary work and relocation policies stamped out Native understandings of gender roles as they related to spirituality. More recently, queer Native people have associated in cities. This is in part because of poor conditions on reserves; as well, colonial erasures of Native tradition have caused Aboriginal queer people to find it difficult to cope with homophobia on reserves. Yet when queer Natives try to gain acceptance within the mainstream gay community in many cities, they face racism. To try and palliate this double discrimination, associations of 'Gay Indians' were formed in many cities coincidentally with the rise of pan-Indian organizing. In the past two decades, the label 'two-spirit' has gained popularity as a way of reclaiming the acceptance that gender-nonnormative or nonheterosexual people had purportedly enjoyed within Native traditions.

Today, we can hope for increasing acceptance of queer Natives as the two-spirit movement gains currency. First, within the gay community, two-spirit has been added to the ever-increasing number of social categories included under the umbrella term 'queer'. Second, traditionalist revivals are starting to engage in dialogue with the seemingly very modern two-spirit movement, in an attempt to heal the scars left on Native traditions by colonial rule.

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Barriere Lake Photo Essay
Charles Mostoller

In the Algonquin community of Barriere Lake in Quebec, a bedroom doubles as a living room in the overcrowded reserve housing. Space is at a premium on the 59-acre reserve, and many houses have been condemned by Health Canada.

Algonquin youth rest by the roadside outside of their community.

Algonquin youth from Barriere Lake have few prospects in life. Unemployment hovers around 85% and most people have little more than a second grade education.

Algonquin children pass the time playing broom hockey, a very popular game among the girls of the reserve. Each year, the girls' team competes in a tournament in a nearby town.

Algonquin hunter Eugene Nottaway pulls in his fish nets on Lac Larouche, Quebec. The Algonquins of Barriere Lake still subsist to a large degree on fish and game caught in their traditional territory.

Clear-cut logging threatens Barriere Lake's traditional subsistence activities, like hunting, fishing, and the gathering of medicinal plants. Logging has had a devastating affect on the forests in Barriere Lake's traditional territory, and the community has never recieved a share of the estimated 100$ dollars earned annually from thier territory.

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What's Wrong With Mainstream Journalism: Coverage of the Algonquins of Barriere Lake's Blockade of Highway 117

Maria Forti

It has already been demonstrated that First Nations people are stereotyped in the media in detrimental ways. These stereotypes are harmful and their perpetuation is evidence of the ongoing project of colonialism in what is now Canada. However, in addition to stereotyping First Nations people in the scope of coverage, journalistic structure discounts and de-legitimizes First Nations issues in the mainstream media. Through an examination of the structure of journalism, and an articulation of the ways in which it's structural flaws marginalize First Nations people in Canada, I find that in order for journalism to be used as a tool to end the oppression of First Nations people in Canada, it must resist these flaws. I take as a case study the Algonquins of Barriere Lake in Northern Quebec and, specifically, mainstream newspaper and television coverage versus anti-oppressive media coverage of a highway blockade set up by the community on October 6, 2008 to demonstrate the flaws and points of resistance relating to journalism.

There are underlying structural problems that contribute to the marginalization of First Nations issues in the mainstream news media. These structural problems relate to the ways in which journalism is done; including, but not limited to, the journalistic gaze, the standard journalistic form, the journalist as a primarily white, middle-class subject, the brevity of news articles and the issues of legitimacy and objectivity. Through an examination of these problems it is clear that journalistic practices as a whole privilege certain viewpoints. These viewpoints are those of the corporate-state (which, in the case of Canada, is generally white, male anglophones), which has a stake in the maintenance of this journalistic system that perpetuates the status quo and thus, does not allow dissenting views or styles to permeate the lines of mainstream newspapers and the minds of mainstream newspaper readers.

Though ideas about the gaze can be attributed to any style of writing, it is mainstream journalism that relies upon it in such a way as to create a dichotomy between writers and what they are writing about. For this reason, the journalistic gaze "marks an exclusion as well as a privilege: the privilege of inspecting, of examining, of looking at, by its nature excludes the journalist from the human reality constituted as the object of observation" (Spurr 13). The gaze, as an act, refuses to acknowledge the connections between subjects and instead, creates a dichotomy between

the subject employing the gaze and the object of the gaze. This means that journalists are able to create a sense of distance between self and other by writing news articles that do not acknowledge the person who is making the observations (the journalist). The absence of self-acknowledgement is a required part of journalistic writing.

This distancing of self from story means that "the standard journalistic forms do not easily permit reflection on the conditions – technological, economic, historical – that make reporting possible" (Spurr 14). Nowhere in a news story are journalists supposed to recognize the privilege associated with their position and the power relations that their "gazing" creates. In the case of reporting on First Nations issues, the journalistic gaze can often perform a similar function to the colonialist gaze in that "it corresponds to that aspect of colonial discourse in which an indigenous culture is reinterpreted under conditions determined by the observer, resulting in a presentation of indigenous life that merely reflects the framework of values imposed by the colonizing eye" (Spurr 176). The gaze, thus allows the (invisible) journalist to interpret indigenous life without acknowledging his/her place in the story and therefore, also not acknowledging certain historical processes (like colonialism) that give the journalist a position of power; an oversight which encourages this power to continue.

The layout of newspapers allows the readership to partake in the colonialist gaze of the journalist. Thus, "the visual makeup of the pages, in which individual news items are not connected with one another, is designed to isolate what happens from the realm in which it could affect the experience of the reader" (Spurr 25). If one acknowledges that the recognition of power and privilege necessarily accompanies a recognition of interconnectedness, then this isolation between stories is potentially dangerous (or at least promotes a sense of complacency). Theories of intersecting oppressions and understanding that one is complicit within a system of colonialism and racism is difficult to do when news stories, which, when taken together, might reveal the problems of structural oppression, are instead separated by pages and columns. The worldview that results from these separated pages and columns fits into neo-liberal individualist (i.e. hegemonic) ideologies that place colonialism and racism in the past.

Furthermore, those who most often occupy the role of the journalist are white, middle class men (Pindera cited in Roth). It is most likely that "this labor force has been bombarded with false images of Native people throughout their secondary years and beyond" (Belanger 396). This leads one to conclude that "as an entity, [print media] is preset to defining Native culture in a less than favorable light" (Belanger 396). Thus, upbringing, education, and history (among other things) contribute to the journalist as subject who is unwilling (or unable) to see his/her position of privilege and thus, writes as if the journalistic gaze was inherently fair and balanced.

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In fact, the ideas of fairness and balance, as well as objectivity, contribute to a dichotomous worldview. Set this way, mainstream journalism cannot be emotional, subjective, or one-sided. This is really evidence of the fact that "the definition of 'what news is' is problematic" (Pindera in Roth). Mainstream news journalists are not required (and in fact, are prohibited by short deadlines) "to look at historic factors that dictate how a situation is going to unfold" (Pindera in Roth). Many journalists who become familiar with Native communities (or are Native themselves) in the course of their writings are accused of bias.

Again, this discounting of certain ways of writing, certain personalities, or certain stories because of content, coverage or style erases a large chunk of what could be written and read. Erasure further contributes to the hegemonic discourse and allows those stories, and only those stories told in the right way, at the right time, by the right people, to hold legitimate value.

The dominant culture, which in Canada is male, white and of British or French descent, does not recognize its own dominance. This is especially evidenced in the structure of ordinary journalism; written in the third person, disconnected and ignorant of systemic discrimination. Therefore, since the dominant culture in Canada oppresses Native communities in a myriad of ways and it is the dominant culture who sets the standards for and writes mainstream journalistic pieces, one would conclude mainstream journalism oppresses First Nations people in Canada. There is no room or place for a structural analysis of oppression, a contextual argument about systematic discrimination, in mainstream journalism.

As evidence for this claim about the oppressive features of ordinary journalism, I use the case of the Algonquins of Barriere Lake, and specifically a highway blockade that the community erected on October 6th, 2008. In this case the mainstream news media played a role in perpetuating police violence against the community and allowing the Canadian government to ignore the community's demands. First, however, it is necessary to place the community's actions in context by providing a brief history of the Algonquins of Barriere Lake. An examination of different mainstream news stories published (or left unpublished) during and after the blockade will show how mainstream coverage of the blockade was insufficient, flawed and fit within the hegemonic discourse.

The Algonquins of Barriere Lake (ABL) are a community of about 450 in Northern Quebec (Lukacs, OP 50). They have lived on a 59 acre reserve since 1961 (Lukacs, OP 50). The community currently faces obstacles associated with a lack of housing, a high unemployment rate and the government run school. Despite these difficulties, they have preserved their native customs and languages through an alternative school and they continue to survive mostly off the land. The community has also hit

political obstacles, exacerbated by the Canadian and Quebec governments' refusal to recognize the community's traditional form of governance. This has lead to direct action in the past, including road blockades in the early 1990s aimed at logging companies who were illegally clear cutting part of the ABL's land.

On October 6th, 2008, the ABL, along with a handful of non-Native supporters, set up a blockade on highway 117 in Northern Quebec. The blockade occurred after a summer full of direct action aimed at the Harper and Charest administrations. The demands that the ABL were making at all of these actions date back to 1991 when the community signed the landmark Trilateral Agreement with the governments of Quebec and Canada. This agreement set the parameters for "a draft integrated management plan for renewable resources for the purpose of making their sustainable development possible" (Trilateral Agreement 2). Since 1991, the ABL have signed two other agreements with the Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs (DIA) and the Quebec government, which were also included in the list of demands stated at the blockade in October of 2008.

The first of these two agreements is the 1997 Memorandum of Mutual Intent, Global Proposal & Special Provisions in Contribution Agreements (MoMI) signed with the DIA. The MoMI required the DIA and the ABL to "work together towards the realization of the community's vision for the future as expressed by the Council" (MoMI 1). Specifics involved strengthening the community's cultural traditions through education, "self government through adherence to their customary system of government", "community development" and "a decisive voice in resource management decisions" (MoMI 1). The second agreement signed since the 1991 Trilateral Agreement is the 1998 Bilateral Agreement which was supposed "to negotiate a number of items, including expansion of land-base, electrification of the Reserve, co-management of natural resources and resource revenue sharing" ("AFN Briefing Note", Widmadwin).

Neither the Quebec nor Canadian governments have adhered to these signed agreements. The research into land-use required by the Trilateral was discontinued by the Canadian government in 2001 (Lukacs, OP 50). The MoMI has not been implemented and the Quebec government has been refusing to commence proceedings associated with the Bilateral Agreement since it was written. The ABL are currently dealing with judicial proceedings to force the government to respect these agreements.

In addition to refusing to honor signed agreements, and in direct violation of the MoMI's tenet about customary government, the Canadian government has been the cause of leadership disputes within the community, most recently by (re-)recognizing a minority faction as the community's leadership when that minority faction did not follow the ABL's customary code of governance during their electoral process (Widmadwin 2/28/08, 5-6). This is a repeat of situations that occurred in

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1995-6 and 2006 (Widmadwin 2/28/08, 5-6). The minority faction was recognized again in March of 2008 by a federal official named Laurier Riel who was not knowledgeable regarding the community's customary code (Widmadwin 2/28/08, 5-6). Since this recognition, the federal government has claimed that it will not reverse any decisions of recognition because leadership disputes are a community issue. However, by recognizing one customary chief over another, the government has legitimized the minority faction and furthered dissent in the community.

Thus, a small and not-so-detailed picture of the ABL can be painted. Canadian officials have refused to honor signed agreements and meddled with community leadership affairs, among other things. It would be safe to say that the Canadian state takes a very colonialist attitude towards the people of Barriere Lake through disregarding their agreements and intruding in the community's leadership affairs. Though the ABL are in court awaiting decisions that would push the Canadian government to honor its agreements and send in a negotiator to witness a new leadership reselection process, the community has no reason to believe that the Canadian government will not repeat history and continue its oppressive policies.

In light of the history of their dealings with the Canadian government, the people of Barriere Lake decided to use direct action in order to call attention to their struggle and possibly have their demands met. As stated before, the community has successfully used direct action in the past; specifically on logging roads within their traditional territory. This direct action in the early 1990s lead to the Trilateral Agreement. Therefore, it made sense for the community to once again utilize direct action in order to possibly have its demands met. It was in this context that the blockade of highway 117 was set up on October 6th, 2008.

Tactically, the blockade was erected in order to force the Canadian government to a negotiating table. However, instead of a negotiator, the ABL were met with riot police, tear gas and arrests. Their demands were not met. Though, overall, this may be due to the colonialism and racism that are embedded in the hegemonic discourse of the Canadian state, mainstream journalism certainly played a part in the outcome and aftermath of the blockade.

The main problems that the mainstream media had in covering this story involved three issues. The first is the fact that the political problems of Barriere Lake are complex and require in-depth coverage. Due to the privileging of brevity in news pieces, leadership and agreement issues were not explicated beyond a sentence involving the need for "an observer to oversee the selection of a new chief" (quoted both in The Gazette and CBC). The Ottawa Citizen stated that "The protesters said they will maintain the blockade until Canada and Quebec commit in writing to recognize previous agreements that would prevent the governments from

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interfering with the reserve's internal affairs". The Gazette boiled the three agreements into one statement about "economic-development and resource-management pacts in the area." In each of these pieces there is little to no contextualization that would allow the blockade to make sense to an outsider. There is no explanation of previous government interference in internal reserve affairs and no mention that the ABL have had to bring the federal and provincial governments to court numerous times in order to get certain agreements recognized. There is no context that would allow readers to understand why the community was blockading highway 117.

The second issue involved specific language used by journalists that de-legitimized the ABL. When people from the community are quoted or cited in articles, they are often "alleging" what is happening on the scene (CBC). The use of the word "allege" discredits the information source. Furthermore, one article states that the SQ was called to the scene to "make sure no trouble broke out between the protesters and the motorists"; implying that the SQ was only there to maintain peace instead of to offensively use violence against peaceful protesters (Ottawa Citizen). In the end, readers of these types of articles will sympathize with the police and support the (violent) removal of the Barriere Lake community from the highway.

The third issue involved mainstream network television coverage of the blockade. While a camera crew from CBC was present at the blockade, they were unable to enter at first. The police told them that the blockade site was a "security threat". This was misleading since the blockade was an explicitly peaceful protest. When the television journalists were finally allowed onto the blockade, they interviewed community spokespeople, took a few shots of the children playing on the road and then left. Their brief presence, and the subsequent lack of television coverage during news segments later in the day, created a space in which the riot police were able to move in unhindered and unwatched by anyone but the supporters and community members involved in the blockade.

Overall, the brevity of articles, the wording utilized by the journalists and the refusal of television cameras to stay on the blockade for longer than one hour were contributing factors in the Canadian and Quebec governments refusing to meet the requests of the ABL. In addition, the coverage that did occur was not in-depth regarding the demands of the community and utilized a framework that allowed journalists to recount the events of the blockade without the context of the community's issues and demands. Thus, the mainstream media maintained an objective silence that aided in the justification of colonialist discourse.

However, though the mainstream news media failed in the case of the ABL's October blockade, there was one article that resisted the colonialist discourse of the Canadian state. This article utilized a first person narrative

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of the blockade, which resisted the "writer's gaze" found in maintream journalism coverage. In addition, this independent news source relied upon the community itself for information about the blockade. Though this article will be my only example in the case of the ABL's blockade, this piece provides an example of a type of activist journalism that has the potential to create a space in which the public could be driven to put pressure on the government where it concerns the ABL. This style (and method) of journalism can combat the hegemonic discourse of colonialism and racism through its structure and its writing by recognizing power and privilege and attempting to fight them. What follows is a broad examination of activist journalism in general and then an examination of the article about the Algonquins of Barriere Lake.

Three of the main ways in which activist journalism combats the practices of the mainstream media is through breaking down hierarchies, sharing knowledge and acknowledging the presence of the journalist and the structural oppressions that existed in this situation. In this way "different forms of activist media can be used to foster... solidarity with people and movements struggling to resist forms of occupation, genocide and economic exploitation" (Schmidt 77). This solidarity can then "catalyze active and effective solidarity movements" elsewhere (Ibid.). People involved in the situation that is being written about can form links with people struggling to effect change in other places through utilizing these practices.

There are a few different ways in which activist journalism can break down hierarchies. Obviously, there is the hierarchy of the expert-journalist over his/her subject of writing. In this case, activist journalists "[break] down the exclusive authority of so-called expert media producers by extending the tools and skills of media production to as many people as possible" (Schmidt 79-80). They also can "re-conceiv[e] the conventional relationship between a media producer and his or her subject as a collaborative relationship of complicity between a multiplicity of potential media producers" (Ibid.). A collaborative relationship of give-and-take from both sides creates a more horizontal framework for journalism.

There is also the hierarchy of legitimate information. In this case, activist journalists seek out interviews with people who are usually underrepresented in the mainstream media, whether because of racial/location/fiscal biases etc and give these people a chance to tell their stories (Schmidt 77). This legitimization of marginalized groups can empower both the interviewees as well as readers to become involved in struggles for positive change.

Activist journalism also shares knowledge of media production in order to foster "the participation of both its intended audiences and those whose voices it amplifies. It flows in many directions at once" (Schmidt 81). The concentration on multi-dimension, multi-direction coverage allows

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for wider involvement and thus, wider viewpoints. It can also potentially change the apathetic response generated by the mainstream news media that blitzes people with catastrophes, but then does not open a door for action. Sharing of knowledge can bring about reciprocity in terms of social movement direction and action and can encourage wider participation in these movements.

The final way in which activist journalism resists the hegemonic discourse of the mainstream media is through acknowledging flaws in the journalistic structure and seeking to address them. Activist journalists are "often in close relation to the movements they broadcast" (Schmidt 81). Therefore, the reporters have "intimate knowledge of the politics they address and have long-term relationships and commitments to individuals and groups within these movements" (Ibid.). The traditional ideal of objectivity is ignored in favor of immersion and collaboration. The argument here is that one's understanding of a certain issue is enhanced if one is actually involved in working with those organizing around that issue.

In the case of the Algonquins of Barriere Lake's blockade of highway 117, one article stands out as a refusal to abide by the standards of mainstream journalism. This article, published on The Dominion newspaper website by writer Dru Oja Jay, is written in the first person and describes the events of the blockade in the context of the continuing struggle of the people of Barriere Lake. As an activist present at the blockade, Jay was immersed in the politics about which he was writing. Having done solidarity work with the community, he knew the ins and outs of leadership issues as well as the history of the community's treaties with the federal and provincial governments. All of these issues, which together create a clear picture of what is going on in Barrier Lake, are intertwined with a story about the blockade and the police repression that occurred there.

By writing in the first person, Jay refuses to stand back and watch on the sidelines. Though it is clear from Jay's piece that at one point he is physically standing on a embankment overlooking the highway while the police advance, this position of observation does not last. Jay mentions the taste of tear gas, hears what police are saying behind their lines and quotes liberally from community members involved in the blockade (unlike mainstream news media pieces mentioned earlier). As an activist journalist, Jay uses his personalized and faintly emotional writing as a way to spark involvement and interest in the issues surrounding the ABL.

However, there are ways in which activist journalism (with Jay's piece as an example) fails to achieve its goals. Activist journalists must be careful when writing. They must constantly self-assess their positions of privilege and be cognizant of when they are wanted and when they cease to be useful in a given situation. When these journalists are unable

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or unwilling to build long-term, two-way relationships with the subjects of their journalism, they perpetuate certain stereotypes and do not build sustainable relationships that may actually combat oppressive situations (Schmidt 82). Using this logic, Jay could have written a more collaborative piece, with community members voices more clearly involved in the process.

In certain circumstances, activist journalism can fall into the same traps as mainstream journalism. For instance, both mainstream and activist journalists work on deadlines. For many activist journalists "the pressure to produce reports rapidly is compounded by the fact that reporters are frequently funded by movement organizers expecting immediate results of their financial support" (Schmidt 82). This time constraint can mean that long-term relationships are difficult to build, let alone to maintain.

As stated earlier, it has already been demonstrated that First Nations people are stereotyped in the media in ways that marginalize, de-legitimize and oppress. As this paper has shown, this marginalization comes from the very roots of how mainstream journalism functions. These roots form the foundation for the media to work as a tool for the continuation of colonialism in Canada. As explicated in the last section, activist journalism that follows principals of horizontality, and collaboration and creates long term relationships that connect struggles through solidarity can combat the de-legitimization of First Nations issues in the news.

However, activist journalists must always be careful and attentive. Self-examination and self-location within anti-oppressive journalism are incredibly important. One must be aware when a two-way, long-term relationship between an oppressed community and an activist journalist is not possible, ceases to exist or is no longer needed by that community. Real collaboration takes time, energy and resources. Only when activist journalism strives towards the ideal of true horizontality can it fight colonialist discourse.

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Indigenous Resistance to Colonialism: A comparison of the standoffs at Oka and Wounded Knee

Cleve Higgins

This paper will compare two important instances of armed conflict between North American states and Indigenous people. The first was in 1973 at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, and the second was in 1990 at the Mohawk reserves of Kanehsatake (near the town of Oka) and Kahnawake, both in Quebec. Both of these incidents received large amounts of media attention, and they are both important historical moments for indigenous struggles in the US and Canada. Wounded Knee was the first time that the US army had been deployed on US territory since the Civil War (though this unconstitutional action remained hidden at the time), and Oka was the first time federal troops had been deployed in Canada since the War Measures Act was invoked in response to militant Quebec separatism in the 1970s (Churchill and Vander Wall 2002, 144; Hornung 1991, 235). Clearly, the indigenous resistance that led up to these standoffs was a serious threat in the eyes of both the US and Canada.

The paper will divide this comparison up into four parts: first, a short summary of the events at each standoff; second, a background on the history of the conflict between Indigenous people and the colonial state in that area; third, an examination of the Indigenous activist groups (AIM and the Warrior Societies) that were involved in each standoff; and fourth, a comparison of the state responses to the standoffs. I will end with some conclusions that can be drawn based on this comparison.

This paper is based on the premise that both the US and Canada are colonial states engaged in an ongoing domination of Indigenous peoples that struggle for self-determination, against colonial rule. No one disputes that colonialism occurred hundreds of years ago during the formation of the US and Canadian states, therefore there is only the question of when it ended. When did Indigenous peoples cease to be connected to the history of their pre-colonial societies, and no longer engaged in struggles against colonization? As the confrontations at Oka and Wounded Knee make clear, Indigenous peoples such as the Mohawk and the Oglala, among others, have never given up their collective identities as Indigenous people distinct from a dominant colonial society. In both cases, the conflicts were efforts to maintain indigenous self-determination in the context of a long history of struggles against colonialism.

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Summary of Wounded Knee

Although the armed confrontation took place at the town of Wounded Knee, it was based in power struggle in the town of Pine Ridge, 27 kilometres away. Richard Wilson was elected president of the Pine Ridge Reserve in 1972, and had the support of the federal government through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Like many reserve presidents before him, he used his position for corruption and nepotism. However, unlike previous presidents, he also armed his supporters for the purpose of repressing political opposition from the American Indian Movement (AIM), which was building community support for Oglala self-determination and against Wilson and the BIA.

As Wilson's rule became more repressive and undemocratic there was growing community support for his impeachment. It was in this context that the federal government sent special federal marshals to Pine Ridge to literally fortify his offices and reinforce his rule. In response to this situation, AIM and other groups organized a caravan to Wounded Knee where they planned to hold a press conference to demand negotiations with the federal government regarding the self-determination of the Oglala people according to the 1868 Fort Laramie treaty and the abuses of Wilson's presidency and the BIA. Once inside Wounded Knee, the caravan was surrounded by Wilson's armed supporters (known as GOONs – Guardians Of the Oglala Nation), federal marshals, the South Dakota National Guard, and the FBI, all with the unconstitutional support of the US military (Churchill and Vander Wall 2002, 135-145). The ensuing violent armed standoff lasted more than two months before an AIM stand-down could be negotiated. In the years following the conflict Wilson remained the president of Pine Ridge, and repression of AIM supporters in the area intensified (Churchill and Vander Wall 2002, 175-176).

Summary of Oka

The standoff at Oka began when a golf course in that town planned to expand on a piece of forest know as "The Pines". This expansion was protested by the Mohawk of nearby Kanehsatake because the Pines was (contested) Mohawk land that contained a burial site. To ensure that the golf course expansion did not proceed they set up a barricade of the dirt road leading to the site, and established a small occupation. Recognizing the potential for police intervention, the Kanehsatake Warrior Society had some warriors at the occupation site. The situation escalated dramatically when an unauthorized, poorly planned police raid on the occupation was forced to retreat by the unexpected resistance of Mohawk warriors. In response to the raid, many more warriors joined the occupation, an extensive system of defences was built, and blockades were put up at all

entrances to the Pines. Additionally, warriors in the nearby Mohawk reserve of Kahnawake immediately responded to the raid by blockading all highways through their reserve, as well as the Mercier bridge, a major commuter route to the island of Montreal.

After weeks of stalled negotiations and blunders by the Quebec police, the Quebec government agreed to let the federal government bring in the military and take over negotiations. As military troops closed in, the Mohawk resistance and negotiations became increasingly fractured. The blockades at Kahnawake came down with the consent of the warriors when they were confronted by the Canadian military. Canadian soldiers also pushed the remaining occupiers at the Pine off the land and into a nearby Treatment Center building where they remained until a final stand down was negotiated, more than two months after the occupation had began. The federal government ended up buying the Pines from the town of Oka, and the golf course was never expanded (Pertusati 1997, 101-121).

Mohawk background

On the surface, the standoff at Oka may seem disproportionately large and intense compared to the dispute over a small piece of land that sparked it. In order to make sense of the situation, the importance of that small piece of disputed land must be understood in the historical context of land claims by the Mohawk of Kanehsatake. The Mohawk have inhabited the area since pre-colonial times, but since the mid eighteenth century the Catholic seminary of St. Sulpice has claimed ownership of the land because it was granted to them by the government of New France. (Pertusati 1997, 29-31). The Mohawk have continuously disputed the legal grounds of this claim for hundreds of years, maintaining that they never gave up their land to anyone. In the late 1940s the remaining land that the seminary had not sold off to white settlers was purchased by the federal government and sold to the town of Oka (Pertusati 1997, 34). The Mohawk continued to assert their right to the land by making land claims with the federal government in the 1970s and 1980s, but all of these claims were rejected (Pertusati 1997, 36). This long history of land claims continued to be an important part of the culture at Kanehsatake, as explained by Pertusati: "Assertion of land claims themselves are part of culture and lore – part of the thread binding the various Mohawk clans into a community" (36) Thus, the defence of the Pines in 1990 was not seen as an isolated dispute, but a final stand in a struggle that had been going on for centuries.

The forms that resistance took at Kanehsatake and Kahnawake were also not entirely unique to this conflict. Similar direct tactics had been previously used and proven successful at defending Native interests. In 1988, warriors from Kahnawake had blockaded highways and the Mercier bridge in response to an RCMP raid of Mohawk cigarette stores (which

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do not pay Canadian taxes). These blockades were successful at getting the government to agreed to negotiate the issue as a condition for reopening the roads (Pertusati 1997, 78). Based on this experience, warriors at Kahnawake were able to react quickly to the police raid at the Pines, and knew that the government would have to pay attention to their actions. This was confirmed in negotiations, when one of the main objectives of the government seemed to be opening the bridge (Hornung 1991, 247). Based on their past experience in confronting the government, the Mohawk knew that blockades, especially of the Mercier Bridge, were an important source of power.

Oglala background

Like the Mohawk, the Oglala people also had a long history of colonial resistance, which went back to 1868 when they, as part of the larger Lakota tribe under the leadership of Oglala warrior Red Cloud, defeated of the US army in what was called the "Red Cloud War". This victory resulted in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 which guaranteed land and self-determination for the Lakota people. However, the US slowly undermined this treaty and took away most of what it guaranteed (Churchill and Vander Wall 2002, 103-105). In particular, the internal affairs of the Lakota came to be heavily influenced by the BIA, through activities such as sponsoring the presidency of Richard Wilson. It was in this historical context that Russell Means of AIM planned to run against Wilson for the Presidency on a platform of Oglala self-determination. A history of independence from the US government made it possible for AIM and Means to garner support among traditional Oglala at Pine Ridge, and also made this support a threat to the US government, hence their staunch support for Wilson (Churchill and Vander Wall and Vander Wall 2002, 135, 140).

The choice to have a press conference at Wounded Knee was also very much based in the history of the place, as it was the location of a massacre of hundreds of unarmed Lakota by the US army in 1890. The press conference at Wounded Knee was especially significant because their demands were framed as giving the government a choice of either negotiating their demands or (in reference to the massacre) shooting the whole caravan (Churchill and Vander Wall 2002, 243).

There were also underlying issues at Pine Ridge related to the control and exploitation of land, water, and resources on the reserve. In the 1940s the US government had wanted to build a dam project on the Missouri River running through the Pine Ridge Reserve, but had the project challenged by the Lakota who threatened to legally contest the project under the terms of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. Seeking to avoid bad publicity, the government did not proceed with the project.

(Churchill and Vander Wall 2002, 117-118) In the beginning of the 1970s the US government discovered large deposits of uranium and coal on Pine Ridges Reserve. It is speculated that the US government supported Wilson through the BIA, and opposed AIM, because AIM influence or electoral success on the reserve would make it more difficult to proceed with resource extraction, and could risk a repetition of what happened with the dam project in the 1940s (Churchill and Vander Wall 2002, 129-131).

These pieces of the history at Pine Ridge demonstrate that, as in Oka, the conflict at Wounded Knee took place in the context of a larger struggle between Indigenous people and a colonizing state. The intensity of the conflict at Wounded Knee had more to do with this larger history than the specific circumstances directly leading up to the conflict.

The Mohawk Warrior Movement

As the primary organization of armed combatants on the Mohawk side, the warrior societies played a central role in the standoff at Oka. In addition to their military role, the warriors are also a political organization committed to promoting and defending the interests of an independent Mohawk nation, and maintaining the history and culture on which that nation is based (Pertusati 1997, 43). On this political basis, they had an important role in affecting Mohawk demands and priorities during the course of negotiations with the State during the Oka crisis.

Organizationally, the warrior societies are officially based in the traditional longhouses of each community, and connected through kinship networks (clans) to form a single Mohawk warrior movement. In this way, they work together in the interests of the whole Mohawk nation, and not just individual communities (Pertusati 1997, 46). This explains the rapid reaction to the police raid in Kanehsatake by warriors in Kahnawake, and the arrival of warriors from the Akwesasne reserve to support the conflict at Kanehsatake.

During negotiations, the Mohawk nationalism of the warriors was expressed through their leadership positions in the main negotiation committee in Kanehsatake. For example, at one point their conditions for ending the standoff included "that all negotiations be carried out on the basis that the Mohawks are a sovereign nation" and "that all other issues, including criminal prosecution, be brought before the World Court in The Hague." (Hornung 1991, 220). Clearly, these conditions go beyond the immediate concerns of the standoff and the Pines, and this is reflective of the Mohawk nationalism of the Warrior Societies.

However, there was no complete agreement with the political agenda of the warrior societies. In particular, members of the band council wanted to maintain focus on achieving immediate political goals (such as reclaiming the Pines), and saw the nationalism and militancy of the

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warrior society as interference. However, this sort of division is not unique to conflict situations. It reflects a general factionalism in Mohawk politics between the band council system, which can be considered colonial because it is imposed by the Canadian State, and the longhouse system, which can be considered traditional because it is based on the pre-colonial forms of Mohawk governance (Pertusati 1997, 60, 113). Furthermore, there are also divisions within the longhouse system concerning the role of warriors and the legitimacy of violence. The division is based on different versions of the "Great Law of Peace", which is the constitution of the Iroquois Confederacy, of which the Mohawk Nation is a part (Pertusati 1997, 61).

Although warrior societies are part of the traditional Mohawk governance structure, it is interesting the extent to which modern concepts and experiences play a defining part in their organization. Firstly, they rely heavily on the concept of "Mohawk nationalism," even though nationalism is a concept that clearly has its roots in Europe. Of course, this is understandable since most, if not all, anti-colonial movements have appropriated some concepts and symbols of the colonial power when fighting them, and the Mohawk struggle against US and Canadian colonialism is no different. Secondly, accounts of membership in the warrior society often mention experiences that men have had, such as ironworkers who built skyscrapers up in the United States, and Mohawks who joined the US army and fought in Vietnam. Hornung describes them as follows: "Accustomed to enormous physical risks, they saw themselves as working-class heroes and Mohawk freedom fighters who had learned more from the Viet Cong than from any hunters who stalked the forests for bear and deer" (Hornung 1991, 209). As with nationalism, this is an example of how modern realities (industrial work and guerrilla war) become incorporated into, and give power to, a movement that is also based in ideas of indigenous traditions. Movements such as the Mohawk Warrior Society are simultaneously working to overcome colonialism, and being affected by it.

The American Indian Movement

AIM began as an urban political action and social service organization in Minneapolis in 1968, adopting the Black Panther Party tactic of police observation to prevent brutality and abuse. However, it spread to other cities, and through an emphasis on spectacular, media-friendly protests involving national symbols, it quickly became a nationally recognized organization.

AIM was part of an earlier generation of indigenous resistance in North America than the Mohawk warrior societies at Oka, and took a very different form. However, there are two important ways in which AIM connects to the beginnings of the warrior societies in the 1970s. The first

is a similarity between the two, which is that they both emphasize the importance of indigenous pride and empowerment, especially through reconnection of old ways and tradition. As a Mohawk warrior said, "Some of us knew people in AIM [...] they brought back a cultural pride that had been missing for so long, a more positive image for who we were as Indians..." (Pertusati 1997, 41-42). The second connection between AIM and the warrior societies is the way in which the warriors could have learned from the structure and strategic orientation of their predecessor. AIM was a more centralized, national organization that mostly focused on pan-Indian issues, and was less involved in local struggles at the tribal level (though this began to change at Pine Ridge). In contrast, the warrior societies are completely locally based, but networked with other societies to form a decentralized movement (Pertusati 1997, 42).

The warrior societies and AIM are also different in their strategic approaches and where they derive their power when trying to make change. AIM was very proficient at spectacular, media-based activism. However, this begs the question that Paul Smith and Robert Warrior pointedly ask, "AIM won attention, but what did the attention win?" (Smith and Warrior 1996, 277) At Wounded Knee, this media-based strategy was epitomized when their initial press statement stated that the only options of the US government were either to kill everyone in the caravan or negotiate their demands (Churchill and Vander Wall 2002, 142). The power of this action was that it potentially created a public relations crisis for the US government, but this was a limited form of power, because if the government could manage the PR (which they did) the occupiers were left with little negotiating power. The government did not need to kill everyone inside Wounded Knee, and it did not need to seriously negotiate their demands, it just had to repress them until they were willing to give up (Smith and Warrior 1996, 277). This can be contrasted with the Oka standoff, where a significant source of power for the occupiers in Kanehsatake were the bridge and highway blockades in Kahnawake.

Finally, AIM was similar to the warrior societies in that it was made up of Indigenous men with modern life experiences who saw reconnection to their indigenous cultural heritage as an important part of their political struggle. The main national leaders of AIM, such as Russell Means, Dennis Banks, and Clyde Bellecourt all came from urban backgrounds giving them skills and attitudes that made them effective organizers for AIM (Smith and Warrior 1996, 135). As with the Mohawk warriors, the same processes of colonization that had disconnected them from indigenous culture also gave them a greater ability to organize indigenous resistance to colonialism.

American Responses to Indigenous Resistance

One of the striking aspects of the response of the US government to AIM

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resistance was that they always maintained an overwhelming military superiority and show of force. Beginning with the positioning of specially trained marshals in Pine Ridge before the caravan to Wounded Knee, and ending with the flyovers by fighter jets and unconstitutional counter-insurgency advice from US army commanders, there was never any doubt that the government had complete tactical control of the situation. All of this, despite the lack of any real threat from the occupation, as reported in an internal Pentagon memo, "Because of its isolated geographical location, the seizure and hold of Wounded Knee poses no threat to the Nation, the State of South Dakota, or the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation itself" (Smith and Warrior 1996, 213). Therefore, the massive government response was probably more of an attempt at intimidation and demoralization by showing the futility of resistance.

Another government tactic was the control and manipulation of information regarding the conflict. For example, while the government was attacking the occupation, one of their men received a minor wound from return gunfire. The government then exaggerated this wound, and publicly used it as a response to justify an even larger attack than their initial one (Churchill and Vander Wall 2002, 149). Another important part of information control was the eventual expulsion of all news media from the site. Independent journalists who decided to stay were criminalized along with the occupiers (Churchill and Vander Wall 2002, 154). One of the more blatant manipulations of information was the announcement of a split between AIM and Oglala community members when in fact no such split had taken place (Churchill and Vander Wall 2002, 157). Control of information was an especially effective way for the government to disempower the occupation because it was an action that did not create any pressure on the government unless people knew about it; therefore, it depended on media coverage.

In their negotiations with the occupiers, and in their public representations of the conflict, the government emphasized enforcement of the law and disarmament of the occupiers, rather than the issues that were behind the occupation (Churchill and Vander Wall 2002, 151). This approach had two advantages for the government. First, by emphasizing the illegality of the actions of the occupiers it discredited them by framing them in terms of criminality rather than in terms of politics. This in turn justified supposedly apolitical "law-enforcement" actions to repress them. Second, refusing to negotiate on the main demands of the occupation and instead focusing on apolitical issues (such as disarmament) is in fact an effective negotiation technique because it forced the occupiers to moderate their own demands just to get them considered on the negotiating table, putting the government at an advantage when the political issues are eventually discussed.

Finally, perhaps the most significant response of the US government

to the standoff at Wounded Knee came after the standoff itself had ended. In the following years, dozens of AIM supporters in the Pine Ridge area were murdered, and hundreds assaulted (Churchill and Vander Wall 2002, 175). Though most of this violence was carried out by Wilson's GOONs, there are a number of ways in which it can be connected to support from the federal government. First, Wilson's presidency at Pine Ridge was clearly supported by the BIA. Second, the GOONs had a prominent role at Wounded Knee, and during the course of the standoff became more heavily armed, presumably with the help of the many participating government agencies (Churchill and Vander Wall 2002, 196). Third, despite the abnormally large number of killings and assaults at Pine Ridges, there was little investigation and no prosecution of anyone for committing these crimes. There continued to be a heavy FBI presence in the area, but they focused their efforts on investigating AIM members for crimes related to the standoff (Churchill and Vander Wall 2002, 175-176).

Canadian Responses to Indigenous Resistance

The use of force by Quebec and Canadian governments was also intended to intimidate and contain indigenous resistance at Oka, though to a lesser extent than at Wounded Knee. The Indigenous and colonial forces at Oka were much more evenly matched, especially while it was only the Quebec police, before the federal military was called in (Pertusati 1997, 110). This was both because the Quebec police were not well prepared for armed confrontation, and because the Warrior Societies were better trained and armed than AIM had been. In general, the scale of armed confrontation was completely different in the two standoffs. In Oka gunfire was only briefly exchanged once at the beginning, while at Wounded Knee guns were consistently being fired from both sides. Hornung provides one plausible explanation for this difference:

> Though Canadian officials saw the Mohawks' militancy as the beginning of an armed Aboriginal insurrection, they refused to negotiate the underlying political and economic issues of land claims, sovereignty, and control over natural resources. The standoff simply had to be contained to prevent similar uprisings across Canada [...] the troops were to place a perimeter around the dangerous politics and keep the peace. (264-265)

In other words, the situation was higher risk because the Canadian government had to ensure that the uprising did not provoke similar actions at Indigenous communities in other parts of Canada, making it impossible for the military to control them all, and therefore impossible for the government to keep avoiding the "underlying political and economic issues" that were being raised. As in Wounded Knee, this avoidance of political issues was reflected in negotiations, during which the government

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would keep returning to the taking down of the barricades and opening of the bridge (Hornung 1991, 247).

The approach of the government was also reflected in the way that they dealt with the question of the Pines. They were willing to prevent the expansion of the golf course, but not by recognizing the Pines as Mohawk land. Instead, they purchased the land from the town of Oka, with an understanding that they could sell it to the Mohawk of Kanehsatake. This approach allowed the government to respond to the grievance of the golf course expansion in a way that reinforced dominant European (Canadian) discourses of land and property, and avoided dealing with underlying issues of Mohawk land claims and sovereignty. The response of many Mohawks (especially from the warrior societies) was that the Pines could neither be sold by Oka nor bought by the Canadian government because it was and always had been Mohawk land and was not for sale (Pertusati 1997, 110).

Some important factors contributing to the power of the occupation at Oka were the broad political support for the defence of the Pines in Mohawk communities, and especially the spread of actions from Kanehsatake to Kahnawake, including the bridge blockade. However, the widespread support and multiple locations of resistance were also factors that created vulnerability to government attempts at dividing the movement along three (potential) cleavages. First, the movement included the warriors society in Akwesasne (which is on the other side of the US-Canadian border), but the government refused to negotiate any demands that involved that reserve, because it falls outside of Canadian territory (Hornung 1991, 221-222). Second, more than once the government made efforts to create division between the warriors and the band council leadership of the reserves by only agreeing to meet with the band council leaders. This was despite the existence of an official Mohawk negotiating team that included representatives of many different factions (Hornung 1991, 230, 248). Third, the government attempted to divide the movement in Kanehsatake from that in Kahnawake by setting up negotiations for the blockade of the bridge separately from negotiations on the occupation of the Pines. However, this was rejected by the warriors in both places because they knew that "as long as we controlled the bridge, we had a lot of power" (Hornung 1991, 231).

Conclusions

Looking at these two instances of indigenous resistance, there are general comparative conclusions that can drawn. Both standoffs were based in longer historical struggles between an Indigenous group and a colonizing state. These larger struggles over land, treaties, governance, and self-determination were the background in which the specific disputes and confrontations at Oka and Wounded Knee took place. In both cases the

colonial state was unwilling to negotiate these historically based political and economic issues, and instead preferred to use military force or the threat of military force to bring the confrontations to an end. However, there were a number of ways in which Indigenous people were able to mitigate the effectiveness of state force and give power to their historically based demands. Media coverage and military preparation and training were very important, but also limited. These two strategies are based on practices and institutions that are based in colonial society, but can also be used when opposing it. There are two other, more difficult, strategies that also played an important role in these standoffs. First, economic disruption, such as the blocking of Mercier Bridge and highways going through reserves, was an important source of power. Second, simultaneous resistance by other groups was very important, as was shown by Mohawks in Kahnawake, and as the Canadian government feared could appear among other Indigenous groups if the situation at Oka did not remain peaceful. However, as different groups became involved in a conflict, the government could attempt to weaken opposition by creating or taking advantage of divisions.

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The Beat of Their Own Drum: Aboriginal Self-Determination in Canada

Sean Connor Lynch

"Laws aid those who are vigilant, not those who sleep upon their rights"
(*Grand Council of the Crees Canada, 1994)*

The relationships between European colonial powers and Aboriginal populations are usually characterized as being uncomfortable and difficult. Native groups in Canada and the United States are bogged down in bureaucracy in relation to obtaining self-government. The human right to function as independent cultures and societies without interference from colonial governments is no-longer possible in the twenty-first century because of the demand for natural resources and uni-directional agreements in respect to Aboriginal politics.

This paper will argue that Aboriginal governments in North America change their political structures in order to operate with some level of self-government. By examining the relationships between Aboriginal people and Europeans in the early contact years, up until the later half of the twentieth century, including the Aboriginal Civil Rights Movement and the James Bay Agreements of Northern Quebec. These examples show that the reconciliation of Aboriginal systems of government with North American politics means changes for Aboriginal political systems.

Natives are forced to negotiate Aboriginal traditions and politics in relation to European concepts of property and jurisdiction (Scott 2002:7). Without compromise on the part of Native populations, Canada and the United States would stand to remove all rights and powers that all people deserve as human beings. It can be seen that Aboriginal populations who coordinate with the Canadian or United States governments to practice self-government have a legacy of resistance against colonial powers in their past. Time will tell whether these agreements mean better relations between colonial governments and First Nations or if they are just a façade for furthering the control of Aboriginal populations.

First Contact and Early Relationships

Looking at the first contact and early relationships between European colonizers and Aboriginal populations in North America shows the direction in which Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian and American relationships would develop and be maintained for the next four hundred years. By briefly examining the Fur Trade, the Treaties and constitutional documents and the formations of Reservations in North America it is

clear to see how these early relationships display the future structure of the relationships between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal populations.

When European explorers first made their way across the Atlantic Ocean to North America they never could have imagined that they would find peoples of such different social organizations, cultural practices and superficial physiological differences. The Fur Trade bloomed out of a reciprocal relationship between Europeans and First Nations. Aboriginal populations in North American had an extensive knowledge about the environments in which they lived. This traditional knowledge about the specific locations of animal migration paths, nesting grounds and the medical properties of wild plants saved the Europeans from starvation and illness. The ability to exploit a new found land was not lost on the European settlers, who in no time would push further inland to find more resources (Wolf 1982:160). This marked the beginning of a system of exchange that would change the lives of both European and Aboriginal populations forever. Aboriginal populations would find themselves under pressure to make adjustments to the newly arrived Europeans (Wolf 1982:163).

The Fur Trade and search for new and more abundant resources led Europeans deeper and deeper into the interior of North America. What seemed to be unused and vacant lands were really the traditional lands of the Aboriginal peoples in the area. Despite the fact that Europeans had never come across a people like this before, they brought with them conceptions about the racial hierarchies in terms of sociological and technological innovations. Aboriginal self-government existed at contact but was scrutinized because of the differences structure and relationships to the land compared to European societies (Miller 2004:55). The increasing number of settlers in North America meant that there needed to be some sort of established rules and laws, specifically in relation to the use and ownership of land. The result of this would be the treaty making process and the writing of constitutional binding laws for both Natives and non-Natives.

Treaty making and the drafting of constitutional documents demonstrate how Aboriginal structures of self-governance change while little is done on the part of the colonizer to reconcile the two systems. In Canada the treaty making process has operated under a system of individual treaties between First Nation Groups and the government of Canada in relation to specific geographical areas, known as "The Numbered Treaties". This treaty making process has been shrouded in confusion and mistrust on the Native side. "Though each treaty is unique in terms of its scope of application, Aboriginal understandings of treaties are relatively uniform. Aboriginal people entered into treaties with the Crown to formalize a relationship of continental co-existence (Macklem 2001: 152)". This shows that Natives were not passive victims during the treaty process, but rather that they were doing what they thought was necessary to preserve their way

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of life in a time of change.

Many of the treaties held relevance in the times that they were written, but hold little relevance in modern contexts today. Huge Brody, a contemporary author and spokesperson for Aboriginal claims to land wrote, "context contributes to meaning, so that to some extent the terms of a treaty must be what they were deemed to be when signed. The small print, existing in written English for people who neither read nor knew English, may be legally irrelevant (Brody 2000: 135)". This can be seen in the case of the 1781 Treaty between the Crown and the Chippewa and Mississauga nation which shows the surrender of Aboriginal territory to the Crown, for the three hundred suits of clothing (Macklem 2001:134). It should also be noted that some treaties did not refer specifically to land surrenders, but were in fact peace and friendship treaties (Macklem 2001: 134). These negotiations left thousands of acres of unceded land to be settled, which contradicts the 1763 Royal Proclamation.

The 1763 Royal Proclamation was written by the British Crown shortly after the victory over France in New France. The Proclamation clearly states that Aboriginal peoples have title to the land until it is given to the Crown.

> " An order in council affirmed that the power of the colonial governments to enact laws for the peace, order and good governments of the colonists could not be exercised anywhere in British North America so as to molest or disturb the nations or tribes in the possession of any land the crown had not yet purchased by means of a treaty or concession […] the Aboriginal right of self-government was confirmed as an inherent and full jurisdiction, rather than as a delineated set of enumerated powers (Clark 1990:205)".

The detailed description given in this codified document would seem to give Natives the right to self-government and inherent rights to their traditional lands, but unfortunately this agreement was never upheld.

The Royal Proclamation was most likely never upheld in Canada because of the British North America Act of 1867 and the Indian Act of 1876. Once Canada had consolidated its territory under a constitution it had more independence from the Great Britain in terms of it's control of the land and it's people. Section 91(24) of the British North America Act recognizes the continued existence of the Indian Territory concept for legal purposes, and assigned to the newly constituted federal government a legislative jurisdiction in relation to Natives (Clark 1990: 209). The Indian Act of 1876 furthered this notion of jurisdiction in relation of Native peoples by legally making them wards of the state. With the power to rule over the Native people of Canada, little could be done to stop

the government of Canada from appropriating their traditional lands and forcing them on to small tracts of land known as reserves.

By moving Aboriginal peoples onto these "reserved" lands the government of Canada could control almost every aspect of their lives under the Indian Act of 1876. In many ways this power is still possessed by the government of Canada in an amended Indian Act (York 1990:57). Reserves were seen by the Canadian government to be a concession to Native populations in that the land was given to Natives would be under their control through a system of local self-government. In fact the local governments were controlled and manipulated by the federal Cabinet (Miller 2004: 69). Without the power to control their own local governments, Natives living on reserves were powerless to prevent any further exploitation from a legal or self-deterministic standpoint. The Canadian government even went as far as to write a clause in the Indian Act that would give authority to the federal government to transfer land on an Indian reserve to provincial or municipal governments and corporations, without the consent of the Natives who lived on the reserve land (York 1990: 58). The future of Aboriginal rights to self-government would appear as an impossibility at this point in time. However government policy intended to prevent First Nations from ever regaining power, the voice of the Aboriginal contingency across the continent of North America could not be ignored forever.

Aboriginal Civil Rights and The Movement Towards Self-Government

The Aboriginal civil rights movement followed in the footsteps of the African American Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's to 1970's. By examining the universal claims to human rights, differences found between Canadian and American jurisdictions surrounding Native populations and the "White Paper Document" proposal, it is clear that Native peoples during this time began to push for higher levels of self determination than was given by governments. The progress made during this time in the fight for greater autonomy helped to make a place for Aboriginal peoples internationally as well as on the home front.

The formation of international organizations became the forum to express and argue against human rights violations. The United Nations is seen today as one of the best forum where these grievances can be expresses. In 1948, the United Nations drafted the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights". This document was made with the indent to include all peoples of the world and to bind the nations, which signed it to the declarations to these aspirations of for humanity equality and dignity (Niezen 2003:37). Despite the UN's valiant effort to include all the peoples of the world, indigenous populations were excluded from the declaration. The differences embodied by indigenous populations placed them outside the category of

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human in the minds of the conquering people (Niezen 2003:54). It may have seemed obvious to many (especially Native populations themselves) that indigenous or Native populations would be classified as human and therefore fall under the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", but countries that were found to have Native populations inside their boundaries would deny basic rights based on the conclusion that Natives may not be as human as non-Natives. This in effect shows the failure of nations to recognize indigenous people in their communities (Champagne 2007:318).

The differences between the expressions of self-governance and integration into Western societies found in Canada and the United States are significant in relation to tribal governments and jurisdiction over reserves. Tribal governments in Canada in many cases are still controlled through the Indian Act. Colonially imposed tribal governments often do not fit with a community's needs in spiritual, economic and social aspects (Champagne 2007: 334). By limiting their ability choose their own leaders the Canadian government continue to manipulate historical systems of government among Aboriginal populations. Historically communities saw their political systems as having a sacred order, connected to the universe. This explains the apprehensions in these societies regarding change within their political systems (Champagne 2007:84).

Possiblly the biggest issue during this time was regarding Native poeples rights to vote in Canada's federal elections, which was granted in 1960. This trailed the United States proposition to enfranchise Native peoples by almost forty years. This distinction reflects how the Canadian government was slow to acknowledge Aboriginal peoples as having the same rights as non-Natives to choose their leaders. Unfortunately, this reflected Canada's attitude toward Aboriginal self-government. The recent right to vote among Native peoples again shows the uni-directional policies of the Canadian government. Canada was maybe ready to let Natives become a part of non-Native government, but they were not ready to allow them to have control or operate their own governments. This would have been seen as giving too much power to Native peoples and a step away from the intergrationist policies in Canada.

The United States is by no means the best example of freedoms and liberties for Native people. It is fairly similar to Canada in terms of the freedoms in self-government and at the tribal or band level. Just like Canada the United States has a codified documents stating that Native peoples right to self-government and to the land, but the U.S still prevent Natives from holding complete power inside its' jurisdiction. The roots of Native law in the United States were well defined by the 1820's to 1830's (McNeil 2001: 58). This is exemplified through the statement from the U.S government in which Native peoples "are sovereign political entities possessed of sovereign authority, not derived from the United States,

which they predate (Pevar: 2002: 87)". The supposed recognition of this was stated in the Worcester Vs. Georgia case of 1832: " Indian Nations [are] distinct political communities having territorial boundaries within which their authority is exclusive, and having a right to all the lands within those boundaries, which is not only acknowledged, but guaranteed by the United States (Pevar 2002: 86)". The reference to exclusive authority of the land in this case refers to reserve land, though congress can still control or modify or eliminate the powers of local self-government which the tribes otherwise possess (Pevar 2002:87).

Though Native populations were given the right to vote earlier in the U.S, both Canada and the U.S perpetrated the same crimes by preventing expressions of Native government, only allow them to march to the beat of the settler socity's societies drum. One of the most critical examples of this is, tribal self-government, not as an ideal but as a legal right and an actual practice. Tribal self-government is tided to external forms of recognition in that the nature of its practice depends on who is recognizing their sovereignty and in which context (M, Cobb and Fowler 2007:230).

When the Canadian government tried to remove all Aboriginal rights and title to land, Native voices where heard more loudly and widely than ever before. In 1969 the Liberal Government of Canada, under the leadership of Pierre Elliot Trudeau tried to pass the White Paper Document. The coincidental name of the proposed draft sent shockwaves through Native communities throughout Canada. The White Paper was an attempt by the Liberal party, under the guise of multi-cultralism, to fully integrate Native people into Canadian society by stripping them of all special legal treatment and rights. This attempt to remove Native rights helped to position Canadian Native peoples in their civil rights movement by drawing more attention to their cause (Miller 1989:233). The two of the main figures in the civil rights movement in Canada are George Manuel and Harold Cardinal. These two men contributed directly to the push for Aboriginal rights in Canada during this time, in particular to the proposal called the Red Paper Document which countered the White Paper Document.

Through the White Paper Document, the government had decided to terminate its trusteeship position over to Native lands, giving these service for Native communities over to the provinces and eventually closing down Indian Affairs over a five year period (McFarlane 1993:108). In effect this would prevent Natives from making any further claims to stolen lands or unfulfilled obligations that had been presented in the Numbered Treaties. Prime Minister Trudeau was reported to have said "the treaties shouldn't go on forever, because it was inconceivable that in a given society one section of the society have a treaty with the other society (McFarlane 1993:109)." The sentiments that are rooted in this quote show the unwillingness of

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the Canada to move forward or have any sort of progression in terms of intergrating Native self-government in Canada. Native government at this point was seen as being incommensurable with that of Canada's because of the differences found in their political organizational strategies and in their belief systems. The only way that the Native population could fight against the White Paper Document was by uniting together as one people to fight off the government, this lead to the formation of the National Indian Brotherhood.

The National Indian Brotherhood tied the Native populations in Canada together as a people who would all equally feel the repercussions of the document had it been passed. The Brotherhood would also advocate for the enforcement and fulfillment of Native treaties and rights in Canada (McFarlane 1993: 112). The Department of Indian Affairs, lead by former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, had allegedly conducted research across the country that would support the main idea of the document. This research suggested that Native peoples no longer wanted or needed special status and would rather choose to be fully assimilated into Canadian society as equals. Once the proposal for the White Paper Document had been finalized the Department of Indian Affairs toured the country trying to gain the support of chiefs and reserves. The department however could not enlist the support of any reserve or chief (McFarlane 1993:110). The only Native supporter of the White Paper was Len Marchland who was a Liberal MP at the time; he eventually changed his position regarding his statement, in which he suggested that Natives could not live forever in a childlike relationship with Canadian society (McFarlane 1993: 110).

Drafted by Albertan chiefs in collaboration with George Manuel and Harold Cardinal, the Red Paper Document countered the policies of the White Paper Document and said it was an insult to the Native people and that it should be halted until Natives were consulted regarding changes in the Indian Act (McFarlane 1993:116). The presentation of the Red Paper Document to Prime Minister Trudeau and the return of the White Paper Document to Chrétien showed for the first time that Natives could sit down with the Prime Minster and the cabinet and choose their own future for themselves (McFarlane 1993:117). The will and determination of the Native population of Canada showed that changes can be made and that the two systems can operate together as long as respectful and reciprocal relationships are established. After receiving the counter proposal by the Native peoples of Canada Prime Minister Trudeau said "If the White people and the Indian people in Canada don't want to the proposed policy, we're not going to force it down their throats (Miller 1989:231)". The Native Civil Rights Movement showed that it was possible to reconcile Native and Euro-American ideas of government. Despite the apparent ability to reconcile two forms of government, uni-directional polices continued to dominate Native and non-Native politics.

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement

Most of Canada's population is assembled along the border with the United States. This gives the impression to most people that the North is a vast uninhabited landscape teeming with resources. This is possibly one of the biggest misconceptions regarding Native culture in Western society today. The Canadian north and specifically northern Quebec is the homeland for many Aboriginal populations. By looking at the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement we are able to see a case where Aboriginal title to lands was given up in return for more political autonomy. This agreement is one of the best examples of how Aboriginal and Canadian governmental systems can be reconciled. The Agreement does put a heavier weight on European style politics but has allowed the Aborigial peoples of Northern Quebec shape some of their policies. By examining the signing process and formation of an Aboriginal/Canadian political system in Cree government and the formation of the Grand Council of the Cree shows the possible future for more claims in Aboriginal government roles and structures inside of Canada.

The development of hydroelectricity in Quebec in the end of the twentith century would directly affect the Aboriginal populations living in the north. Hydroelectric dams require the flooding of thousands of acres of land in return for renewable and seemingly infinite power. The construction of these dams and the flooding of the north has been at the expense of the Aboriginal populations who inhabit Northern Quebec. The La Grand damming projects would make one of if not the most popular land claim agreement ever made in relation to the lands of Native peoples in Canada. The La Grand damming project is the basis for the James Bay Agreement and the struggle for control of the north.

The first James Bay Agreement developed during the 1970's was in the context of social and economic development of Quebec (Morantz 2002:251). The surveying of land and initial construction of the dams began without prior consultation to the Cree and Inuit populations in the area. Cree leader Billy Diamond wrote, "when the James bay began in 1971, our people were heavily dependant upon hunting, trapping and the harvesting of the natural resources of the land for livelihood [...] we couldn't believe that our rights and claims to the lands could be so blatantly ignored (Boldt and Long 1985:266)". The territory that was to be dammed and flooded had been reserved as Cree and Inuit territory, an earlier treaty with Quebec in the Quebec Boundaries Extension Act of 1912 where by certain Aboriginal rights were recognized and the region could not be developed until the rights had been ceded (La Rusic 1979:3). By beginning construction of the dam the government of Quebec had implied that these Aboriginal populations did not have Aboriginal rights to the land.

Prior to the beginning of construction in this area, the Cree had

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operated very independently from one another in terms of their political systems. Each band had their own leaders who seldom met with other chiefs. On June 29, 1971 the leaders of the Cree hunting bands of Northern Quebec met together for the first time in history to discuss the imminent changes that were about to change their ways of life (La Rusic 1979:i). In 1972, Cree leaders united in the decision to take the province of Quebec and its agencies to court, as the only possible way to save their land and their livelihood (Boldt and Long 1985:267). "In the court the Cree had to first establish that they had Aboriginal rights before the hearing was allowed to begin (Boldt and Long 1985:269)". The question of Aboriginal rights and title was affirmed by the Calder Case of 1973 where by Aboriginal title was found to be a legal right derived from Native peoples historic occupation and possession of their tribal lands (Clark 1990:31).

In 1975 the Cree of northern Quebec agreed to sign the agreement in return for more freedoms in terms of self-government and large sums of money. The signing of the agreement should be seen as an attempt to preserve a way of life for future generations, rather than a capitulation to Canadian politics, because of the Native involvment in the drafting and signing of the agreement. The James Bay Agreement implies basic changes in administrative structures for the north of Quebec, especially in that Native peoples are to be extensively involved in the new or changed structures (La Rusic 1979: 1) "In the agreement, specific municipal powers were delegated to and accepted by the Cree of northern Quebec [...] The Aboriginal right to self government and an inherent and full right to the land was arguably surrendered in the pursuance of these institutions and the corresponding legislation, not because of imperial constitutional law was repealed, but because the Natives waived their ability to rely upon it (Clark 1990: 215)". This statement shows that the Cree could no longer depend on government legislation to protect them from the development of their lands. Again this shows the unidirectional politics of Canadian government in relation to Native peoples. Had the Cree not Signed the agreement it is almost certain that the Quebec government would have proceeded with the construction of the hydroelectric dams without compensation or consultation of the Aboriginal populations in the area under development.

The signing of the James Bay Agreement helped in the formation of the Grand Council of the Cree. Established in 1976 it began to take responsibility and provide services and programs that would help to actively represent the interest of individual bands (Rusic 1979:64). In 1978 the Cree Regional Authority was created to manage the political affairs of the Cree while the Grand council would continue to be the voice of the Cree communities when amendments to the agreement were made (La Rusic 1979:65). Though the political structure of these new organizations would be modeled after European institutions they would help to strengthen

the Cree as a political entity operating inside of Canada. The strongest point that can be drawn from the agreement is that the Native peoples can make effective input to governmental administrative policy by making representation in committees involving members of the communities (La Rusic 1979: 94). The Cree now had the power to control the health, social services, school board, income security, police and security committees and developmental committees with the government (La Rusic 1979: 95). Many Aboriginals believe that the best chance for survival lies in working within the system by running for office and so effecting change by influencing legislation and state negotiations (Mallea 1994:5). Regardless of the fact that the Cree had to change their political structure in order to operate inside of Canada and protect what they can of their lands and rights, this shows a fairly successful integration of Aboriginal and Canadian politics but the fact that the Aboriginal political systems needed to change in order to be recognized as political institutions.

Conclusion

Obtaining self-government has been shown to be difficult for Aboriginal peoples of North America. Up until the late twentieth and twenty-first century Native communities were not in a position to make cultural, economic or political decisions while they were living in a politically subordinate relationship with the dominant powers (Champagne 2007:332). The reconciliation of Native and non-Native political structures still need to be worked at in order to ensure respectful and reciprocal relationships in the future. In instances where Aboriginal populations have adopted European political ideals in order to gain more autonomy in relation to self-government they have done so in order to protect their culture for future generation; an adaptation rather than assimilation.

The examination of early relationships between Natives and Europeans shown in the fur trade, treaty making and formation of reservations show the signs of what was held in store for Natives in the future. The Aboriginal Civil Rights movement shows the Native rejection of Western institutions while forming institutions of their own in order to help make claims to land and rights. In turn the James Bay and Northern Quebec agreement shows that Aboriginal self-government can be obtained on many levels but at a cost of land. Though these recent relationships show a more promising future for Aboriginal self-government, the cost of these relationships are still being incurred by Native peoples. Until the governments of North America make decisive changes in regard to the free expression and right of self-government in Native populations, colonial and Native relations will continue to operate in a uni-directional fashion in terms of policy making and rights to self-government.

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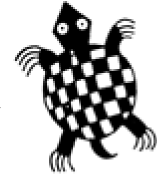
Partners and Contributors



The First Peoples' House of McGill University

Like most "Houses" across Canada, the First Peoples' House attempts to provide a sense of community and a voice to Aboriginal students that have left their home communities in order to pursue their education.

*It is our hope that the education that Aboriginal students receive here at McGill will benefit the communities which they are from. An anthropologist, whose name escapes me, once said, "The mark of a truly sophisticated civilization is its ability to adapt to change." These words reflect the resilience of Aboriginal people since European contact to the present. Education is one of many keys to our survival into the new millennium. Aboriginal students who have graduated from McGill would attest to this fact. Dedication and perseverance have enabled them to attain their goals and perhaps the realization that "they will emerge with their hands held forward to grasp the place in society that is rightfully theirs" (*the late Chief Dan George*).*

However, in order to keep our sense of identity within a large postsecondary institution, we must not forget our roots, our language, customs, traditions and teachings of our ancestors. We must remain true to those teachings and respect one another's differences. As Aboriginal people emerge from the darkness of oppression, we look to the future that we hope is full of light and freedom to control our own destinies. An academic education based on contemporary teachings, combined with our own ancestral knowledge, will allow us to "emerge with our hands held forward" into a promising future.

As our Elders tell us, "We are always learning till the day we die!"

We welcome all indigenous students including Métis, the Inuit, & Native (both "status" & "non-status"), Maori and Aborigines.

Skén:nen - In Peace and Friendship

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Office of Social Equity and Diversity Education (SEDE)

The Social Equity and Diversity Education (SEDE) Office is committed to fostering a fair and inclusive environment that respects the dignity of each member of the McGill Community. By actively educating, heightening awareness, and providing opportunities for dialogue about equity and diversity-related issues, we strive to strengthen the Community in our shared responsibility toward a truly equitable society.

Our Goals

- *Raise awareness and understanding by members of the University Community on matters of equity, diversity, discrimination and harassment;*
- *Make connections between different members of the McGill Community, and the wider communities in Montréal, Québec, and across Canada in order to foster dialogue, networks and learning, and to develop and promote best practices;*
- *Organize events and information campaigns through workshops, guest speakers, and print and electronic media;*
- *Provide members of the McGill Community with help to understand the relevant policies and their implications.*
- *Inform members of the McGill Community of available avenues and mechanisms to which they can direct their concerns.*

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TheMcGillInstitutefortheStudyofCanada(MISC)

The McGill Institute for the Study of Canada was established in 1994. Its mission is to:

• *promote a better understanding of Canada through the study of our heritage;*
• *develop a clearer understanding of Canada's social, political and economic future;*
• *identify and explore the benefits that a pluralistic society offers;*
• *support the study of Canada across the country and internationally.*

In order to achieve these goals, the Institute:

• *encourages a multidisciplinary approach to the study of Canada;*
• *promotes public as well as university-based education about Canada;*
• *fosters the development of networks in the areas of Canadian Studies;*
• *enhances informed discussion of public policy.*

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The Anthropology Student's Association

The Anthropology Students' Association represents the interests of students in the Department of Anthropology.

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BORDERLESS WORLD
" Empowering Youth for Leadership in Global Aid "

Borderless World Volunteers (McGill Chapter)

Borderless World Volunteers sends student volunteers to developing countries for community-development projects. Founded in 2003, the organization seeks to foster links between communities in need and students with a capacity for leadership and support in areas of international development.

We assist in empowering youth to lead and be part of group ventures directed towards the implementation of development projects at the most basic level. We provide a channel through which students can cause specific, measurable and long-lasting impact in the communities in which they work. We encourage our teams to research their proposed field site, develop a viable project proposal with measurable goals and benchmarks, conduct background research, and create a financial assessment of the project. Thus we encourage youth to participate not only in the application of development ideas but also in the generation, verification and assessment of their own projects.

Our Mandate: Developing tomorrow's leaders in development.

www.borderlessworld.org

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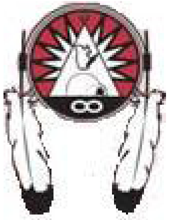
The Dean of Arts' Development Fund

The Dean of Arts' Development Fund consists of Alma Mater Fund donations designated to the Faculty of Arts. It is spent at the Dean's discretion to support faculty projects, as well as undergraduate and graduate learning.

In the past, the Dean of Arts' Development Fund has supported projects such as Research Time Stipends, academic initiatives — such as speakers and conferences — graduate student teaching awards, undergraduate research assistantships and student projects.

http://www.mcgill.ca/arts/awards/dadf/

The Native Friendship Centre of Montreal (NFCM)



The Native Friendship Centre of Montreal (NFCM) is a non-profit, non-sectarian, autonomous community development agency whose principal mission is to promote, develop, and enhance the quality of life in the urban Aboriginal community of Montreal.

The NFCM, being part of a regional and national initiative that bridges the gap between two cultures, serves the Aboriginal population of the eleven nations of Quebec. These nations include the Inuit, Cree, Mi'gmaq, Naskapi, Algonquin, Montagnais, Abenaki, Mohawk, Attikamekw, Huron and Malecite. The NFCM also works with nations found throughout Canada and the United States.

The NFCM, recognized as an information and referral centre, is also a reference point for other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations.

The number of Aboriginal people in the Greater Montreal region is approximately 44,500 (Statistics Canada, 2001 Census). First Nation, Métis and Inuit people who want to pursue their studies, who are patients in need of treatment away from their communities, who need respite or a warm meal or need further training come to the NFCM for assistance.

Our Mission

The mission of the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal (NFCM) is to promote, develop and enhance the quality of life of Montreal's urban Aboriginal community.

The Native Friendship Centre of Montreal is part of a national initiative that bridges the gap between two cultures.

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Native Women's Shelter of Montreal

The shelter is constantly evolving and striving to offer the best possible services to Aboriginal women and children.

Since its incorporation in 1987, the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal has provided shelter and support to Aboriginal, Inuit and Métis women and their children who are in difficulty. Our clientele are self-referred or referred by community resources.

The shelter provides an environment where women can focus on their various challenges and rebuild their lives. We offer in-house programs and services as well as outreach services that help in the healing process of the women while assisting them in re-establishing a balanced lifestyle.

The Native Women's Shelter works within an Aboriginal framework. We incorporate many different teachings from the various cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis. We combine traditional healing techniques with contemporary approaches to give the women a multitude of options to address their immediate needs and issues.

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