

**FROM BIRCHBARK TALK TO DIGITAL DREAMSPEAKING:
A HISTORY OF ABORIGINAL MEDIA ACTIVISM IN CANADA**

By

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**A HISTORY OF ABORIGINAL MEDIA ACTIVISM
IN CANADA**

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ABSTRACT

The thesis addresses the interconnectedness of Aboriginal media practices; historically changing government policies; Aboriginal social and political movements; and the local situations of reserve and urban Aboriginal peoples in Canada. It is premised on the idea that in order to understand the cultural transformations associated with the rise of modern Aboriginal society, it is necessary to assess the development of Aboriginal communications media and their impact, and to draw out the ways that colonial processes underwrite contemporary media practices. Focusing on the communicative aspects of Aboriginal agency, it documents colonialism as a form of communication, and tracks Native communicative agency on a broad historical and socio-cultural scale. It attends to the centrality of people and their social relations, rather than to media texts or technology. It offers an analysis of media as a social form and media production as a crucial form of social action. It examines the “cultural mediations” that occur through Aboriginal media production. My principle concern is with Aboriginal strategies of indigenizing, or diminishing the massness of, communications media through *narrowcasting*.

Highlighting media practices and technologies as sites of hybridity and creative adaptation, I assert that the Native mediascape serves as a locus for the production of localizing, nationalizing, and modernizing discourses. The popular version of the narrative of Canadian colonialism conveys the idea that European colonizers made readers of listeners and that agriculture, literacy and more recently, “the media” were imposed on hapless Indian communities by the state. My analysis draws attention to the ways that technologies of literacy, printmaking, radio and television are actively and selectively appropriated, renovated and redeployed by Native peoples themselves. I show that by mobilizing Aboriginal audiences to imagine local communities and to forge social identities that are predicated on Aboriginally-authorized discursive constructs, Indigenous media activists are contributing to the articulation of divergent modernities and a new social order.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: English Language Literacy And Print Technology	
On the Utility of Literacy Models.....	12
Aboriginal Symbolic Literacies.....	18
The Print Revolution and the North American Invention of the Newspaper.....	23
Chapter Two: The Medium Is The Methodist.....	30
Crops, Clocks and Cupboards.....	33
Moderate Modernity: Selective Appropriation and the Hybrid Form.....	38
The Anishinabek Literati: the Beginnings of Native Print Journalism in Canada.....	44
Printed Pride and Protest: Early Anishnabek Literature.....	50
Chapter Three: Native Authorial Authority.....	55
Schoolcraft's <i>The Literary Voyageur</i>	56
Hurlburt's <i>Petaubun</i>	59
<i>The Indian</i> : A Vision of Aboriginal Sovereignty.....	63
Wilson's <i>Our Forest Children</i> and <i>The Pipe of Peace</i>	84
Chapter Four: Transformative Strategies in the Hudson's Bay Territories	95
Birchbark Talking: the Printing Press and Cree Syllabary.....	99
Steinhauer's Methodism: an Oji-Cree-ative Hybrid.....	112
Impediments to the Formation of Regional Cree Political Organizations.....	127
Chapter Five: Competing Indian Identities in the Mainstream Presses Settler Discourse in the Prairie	
Presses.....	143
Native Nationalizing Discourse: Inscribing Indian Dissent in the Mainstream Press.....	163
Writing Strategies and the Spirit of Self-Authorship among World War Two and Residential School Veterans.....	177
Chapter Six: Native Political Presses in the Post-war Era.....	190
The British Columbia Aboriginal Point of Mediation.....	192
Aboriginal Mobility and Organizational Media Mobilizations.....	204
<i>The Calumet</i> and the Evolving Form of Aboriginal Protest.....	217
Chapter Seven: Red Taped: Native Communications Societies and Community Casting	
Technology as a Discourse and Native Narrowcasting.....	232
Aboriginal Radio Activity.....	253
Canadian Aboriginal Broadcast Policy.....	260
Inscribing Ideoscapes And Community Building.....	280
Conclusion.....	305
Bibliography.....	314

INTRODUCTION

Whatever the mode of narration, whether by smoke or hand signals, by word of mouth along the moccasin telegraph, through wampum exchanged in inter-cultural trade networks, by divining, dreaming or speaking to spirits in a shaking tent, Aboriginal peoples have long been engaged in processes of discursive mediation. Most recently, they have adapted the printing press and are innovating electronic technologies to meet the contemporary communication requirements of their communities. This thesis is premised on the idea that in order to understand the cultural transformations associated with the rise of modern Aboriginal society, it is necessary to attend seriously to the development of Aboriginal communication media and their impact, and to draw out, as Appadurai (1996:18) has done, the ways that colonial processes underwrite contemporary media practices. This study examines the circumstances of Aboriginal media production and highlights media practices and technologies as sites of identity negotiation, as loci for the production of nationalizing and modernizing discourses, and as strategies of community building. The development of Aboriginal media is interwoven in fundamental ways with the major transformations in Native religious, educational and political institutions — adaptations which have greatly influenced the nature of modern Indian communities.

The popular version of the narrative of Canadian colonialism conveys the idea that European colonizers sought to make readers of listeners and that agriculture, the school system, literacy and more recently, “the media” were imposed on hapless Indian communities by the state. My analysis draws attention to the ways that technologies of literacy (both alphabetic and syllabic), printmaking, radio and television are actively, yet selectively, appropriated, renovated and redeployed by Native peoples themselves. It is my intention to inscribe in the histories of the Aboriginal mediators I discuss, the capacities for activism, ingenuity and self-determination in the midst of a traumatic inter-cultural encounter. Agentive Aboriginality, it must be noted, exists whether or not it is included in the historical record, and

thus with or without my intervention.

Given the many nuances of this complex field, I mobilize a conception of culture that corresponds with my reading of contemporary Native communicators' experience. I submit that Aboriginal identity is responsive to a constantly shifting context (Erikson 1999:577) and I mobilize a version of culture that is no longer imaginable as a cohesive system of beliefs, values, and behavior (Clifford 1988). My focus, therefore, is on cultural partialities, as opposed to a totality — on discourse and the conditions under which texts are produced. I present Aboriginal "cultures," as well as individuals as fundamentally hybrid and complex and stress that colonialism, while it did not initiate, certainly accelerated, this mixing process. Attending to the hybrid, rather than the essential, naturally raises questions as to the coherence of such categories as "traditional culture" and "modern" or "Western" technology. The very existence of Aboriginal media renders the notion of *pristine* cultures untenable. Instead, as Nicks points out, Native media, much like museums, speak to the interactions *between* Native peoples and Europeans (1996:500). Bakhtin has shown that the language of a speaker or writer is never exclusively his own but is enabled and diffused with the speech of others. Consequently, it is important to look both at, and beyond, Native contexts in order to understand Native media. Native media are inscribed in a process of mediating social change. As such, the collective processes concerning the construction and transformation of Aboriginality that occur through Native media production must also be contextualized in relation to other local, national and global projects for Indigenous cultural autonomy, social justice and territorial sovereignty.

The introduction of literacy, new patterns and relations of trade, forced settlement, missionization, residential schooling, the Potlatch law and pass system, Enfranchisement Acts, the Indian Act, treaties, and Canadian nationalism, each had profound effects on the ways Native peoples in particular areas of the country communicated with each other. These forces transformed relationships between Aboriginal individuals at local, regional and national levels. This re-routing of Aboriginal peoples' communication channels also affected interlocution between Native people and non-Natives and indigenous populations the world over. The development of a modern Aboriginal media is very much about restoring the corridors of

communication that were disrupted by colonial projects, as well as with creating and enhancing new connections with communities of shared experience or sentiment.

My focus on the complexity of cultural interpreters or mediators is intended to convey the idea that mixing takes place both at and within the margins, and between the margins and a changing mainstream, resulting in a sometimes contradictory inter-penetration of cultures. Inasmuch as the individuals I discuss are hybrid in terms of their written language, they are also creatively adaptative in action, for instance, in their appropriation of farming; and innovative in their pursuit of progress or modernity.¹ These historical figures, therefore, resemble Naficy's "exiles" — those he says, "who relocate outside their original habitus" (1993:229). They do so, however, strategically, annexing the outer forms of the global onto the local as a way of ensuring the survival of their beliefs and ways of life. This attention to tactical appropriation shows Peter Jones and Peter E. Jones; Henry Bird and Eugene Steinhauer, Fred Loft, Edward Ahenakew, Mike Mountain Horse, Joe Dion and others, engaged in a politics of cultural hybridity, and generating in the process multilayered identities, intermingled literatures, mixed livelihoods and a syncretic Aboriginal mediascape. It should be noted, however, that enacting hybridity does not preclude mobilizing in print, or

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In its most common usage, modernity is understood as a singular trajectory of social and technological progress which began and finished in Europe (Mitchell 2000:1). This hegemonic notion of modernity is spelled out in Modernization Theory and in theories of "development." For non-First World peoples, therefore, "modernity" is commonly understood to entail a less than completely successful assimilation into the mainstream. My use of modernity shares with the normative definition the idea of an identifiably "novel" formation of culture, capital and the nation-state (Ong 1999:34). Modernity, in my view, also designates a change in consciousness that is often articulated in a culturalist discourse. This discourse typically chronicles the transformation from the old to the new. Modernity is thus manifested in a new type of subjectivity -- that of "the narrator" (Lee 1993:169). I take it as axiomatic, however, that the transition to modernity begins with different starting points in divergent cultural contexts and leads to necessarily varied outcomes. Following Gaonkar, I mobilize a version of modernity which is best understood not as an epoch, but rather as "an attitude" as well as a form of discourse -- one that is interrogative of the present (1999:12-14). Aboriginal modernity thus represents a reflexive mode of "relating to contemporary reality" (ibid:12). As this "attitude" unfolds by thinking through and against, and thus by engaging with, the Western discourse on modernity, however, I argue that Aboriginal modernity ought to be viewed as "privileging a particular angle of interrogation," (ibid:14) rather than as relying on a positing of purer cultural states preexisting entanglements with an exogenous modernity (Marcus 1990:5). Aboriginal narratives of tradition, I would submit, are very much about modernity. As critical reflexions on the past they represent moral-political projects through which Native actors seek to master their presents and to control their futures.

via radio or television, a “strategic essentialism,” given the proper social and historical circumstances (Spivak 1988).

In examining the social and political contexts in which Native media products are produced, it is my intention to situate Native media production in relation to wider contexts of power. I am therefore indebted to the theorists who have treated Aboriginal communications technologies as one would other Aboriginal discursive formations (Ginsburg 1993, 1991, Kulchyski 1988, Meadows 1995, Michaels 1987, 1986, 1984, Ruby 1990, Turner 1992, 1991, Worth & Adair 1972a, 1972b).

Until recently, a concern with communications media has been most notable for its absence in the writings of anthropologists. This may in part be due to the fact that communications media commonly implies a “massness” — that media consumers constitute a vast and undifferentiated sea of passive recipients. Indigenous media production, in this view, implies merely a different use of the same technology, and that mediated communication operates, simply, as an opiate for the masses. The principle concern of this study is diminishing the massness of media, or what Naficy refers to as, the underappreciated discourse of “narrowcasting” (1993:2). This relates to the ways Indigenous peoples domesticate or indigenize a shared discursive space in the production of an Aboriginal media apparatus. For their part, communications scholars who focus on the development of Native communications start from 1969 and tend to accept without question Euro-Canadian communications media as the definitive model, and locate the impetus for Native media development in government broadcast policy and government funding. Native media development began long before the 1960's and is closely linked with the evolution of Native schools, political organizations, missionizing projects, and other phenomena outside the realm of “communications” policy. The impetus for Native media development, moreover, began with Native peoples themselves and initially, the Canadian government created legislative *impediments* to Native media. Later funding agreements were designed to correct this pattern.

My interest in the origins of the Native media movement developed over discussions with Mohawk protestors during the Oka crisis. It carried over into my Masters thesis research regarding urban Aboriginal

radio in Southwestern Ontario. My ethnographic strategy has been to seek to discuss Native media with the Native, Métis and Inuit mediators with whom my path crosses at such Native community gatherings as, Aboriginal media conferences, CRTC hearings, pow wows, and at the events they are covering, the protests they are manning and the ceremonies they are attending. It soon occurred to me that many of these cultural translators, in their attempts to explain Native past and present realities to non-Natives as well as to their own peoples, were doing anthropological work -- without necessarily pursuing a narrowly construed "ethnographic" project.

I chose to interview Native communicators who do not limit themselves to "reporting the news," but are active participants in the reshaping of Aboriginality, in the "healing" (cf. Flynn 1993) of their communities and in the quest for social justice. They are "mediators" in the sense that they are translating meanings across times, while reaching beyond cultural and territorial borders and transcending culturally imposed technological limitations. They are "cultural producers" insofar as they are facilitating an ongoing negotiating of Indianness. Until recently, theirs are the voices that have largely been excluded from an anthropological literature which has been more concerned with the so-called "purely traditional" pursuits, and thus with non-English speaking, technologically-autonomous, northern reserve dwellers -- in short with the supposed "real Indians." This study shows many of these very authenticating categories to be *hybrid* formations themselves. My reconsideration of the marginal at the margins is thus partially in reaction to the essentializing that occurs both in, and outside, academic and Indian communities which excludes or dismisses hybrid individuals who occupy interstitial positions.

The Native media community, while growing, is not enormous. I have therefore spent a number of years sharing the good company of a relatively small group of similarly interested individuals from across Indian Country. I have also read extensively on the theme, both in terms of academic literature and Native publications. There is not the space here to include all of the interview materials I have collected. Instead, I have selected some of the major themes that were repeated throughout the majority of my conversations with Indian mediators, and have attempted to provide an idea of the complexity and variety of views among

Aboriginal peoples of different ages, genders and geographic areas, on each of these topics. This study reflects what many of the interviewees agreed needed to be studied, namely the *historical* development of Aboriginal media in Canada. The ethnohistorical approach is also conducive to an explanation of the broader pattern of the Aboriginal appropriation and indigenization of extraneous elements, as for example, such components of the Euro-Canadian capitalist political economy as voting and for profit farming. In this tradition of adaptation, mass media technologies represent only a relatively recent achievement. To do research into Native media in the post-1960's era, one need only have access to the internet, on which Native communicators are actively and expertly chronicling contemporary media history. The amount of information thins incrementally, however, with each decade to which one reverts. Wherever able, I have relied on oral testimony. I have also sought to foreground and build on the existing anthropological material devoted to Native media. Generally relegated to the margins of anthropological relevance, this information is most often to be found in the form of technical adjuncts in footnotes and other asides.

In terms of technology, I refer to the discourses (ideologies) on reading, writing and electronically mediating. I am therefore concerned as much with practices and processes of production as with the media products themselves. Following Tagg, this work asserts that a technology has no inherent value outside its mobilizations in specific discourses, practices, institutions and relations of power (1997:158). Communications media, therefore, have to be negotiated in and across other discursive fields in Native contexts. The literature on globalizing communications (Innis 1950, McLuhan 1974, Ong 1982 and Meyrowitz 1985) would have us believe, on the other hand, that the introduction of media technologies is generally associated with a homogenizing global modernity. I concur with Appadurai (1996), who suggests that although migration and electronic media are the two globalized features of a variety of modernities, media consuming and producing peoples are not becoming incrementally similar, but instead are imagining increasingly different lives.

The following is an ethnographic analysis of a specific context of modernity — one involving a path of progress that was conceived according to the internal imperatives of particular Aboriginal

communities in relation to a hegemonic Euro-Canadian modernity, and according to the idiosyncratic interests of particular individuals. In this study, modernity is understood to be inscribed through a specific kind of activity, namely recounting and inscribing a culturalist discourse, or stories “that people tell themselves about themselves in relation to Others” (Rofel 1992:96). In addition to recording and orchestrating a common repository of customs, practices, myths and legends, these stories chronicle the transformation from the old to the new.

The media effectively amplify such stories, creating connections where none existed before, as well as repairing relationships which were damaged by colonial projects. Thompson posits that employing communications media creates new forms of action and interaction and provides individuals not only with new sources of identity, but with the information required to develop a political consciousness which exceeds the common locale. This type of communicatory activity, he says, enables the imagining of a collective national future (1995:4). My examination of media production is, therefore, also directed to contemporary experiments in Aboriginal nationalism and thus, to productions of the collective Aboriginal imagination.

Canadian understandings and representations of Indian modernity are often informed by assumptions concerning Aboriginal culture loss or replacement and by an alleged Aboriginal indulgent over-consumption of “white technologies.” Aboriginal capitalist ventures, for example, are sometimes perceived simply as unselfconscious mimicry, and are evaluated as less than competent economic accomplishments despite their alternative goals. Understanding the unique nature of Native modernity is important as the above ideas are often offered as arguments for the disappearance of Aboriginality, and as justification for the abnegation of Aboriginal rights. These ideas reflect, if anything, the discursive residue of assimilation projects from the colonial era. The silencing of Native scribes during colonial times hastened the institutionalization and legitimization of non-Native paradigms regarding Aboriginality. Native media projects provide critical tools for negotiating the significant gap between dominant constructions of Indianness and self-perceptions of Native people. Aboriginal cultural mediations return the

authority for interpreting one's own culture to Native persons, and thereby address contemporary challenges to self-determination.

Chapter one proposes a wider application of the term literacy, and suggests that one way to approach Native peoples' contemporary radio and television practices and products is to address the manners in which alphabetic literacy was incorporated into prior Aboriginal literacies. Native media production and electronic literacy today are discursively and historically linked with the indigenization of books and print. I address the notion of an information system, suggesting that it be broadened to include a wider range of negotiated relations and therefore, communicative pathways in general. I discuss the proposition that some of the major communicative transformations that occurred in Euro-North America are attributable to a revolution in print. Euro-Canadian settlers, consequently, have tended to equate the absence of Aboriginal alphabetic literacy with a lack of "progress." Instead, Aboriginal literacies and other technologies tend to be treated as derivative developmental indicators along the singular, so-called "definitive" (Canadian) evolutionary trajectory. This has effectively blinded Euro-Canada to Native modes of modernity.

Chapter two focuses attention on mediating figures in 19th Century Ojibwe territory, pointing out the implausibility of assertions of any sort of essentializable difference. Attending to the act of cultural interpretation, it delves into the ways Ojibwe Methodist missionaries, the first Native broadcasters, served as metonyms for Christian civilization. The manners of Ojibwe resistance to, or accommodation of, European forms, however, were not always obvious. Many Aboriginal people in present day Ontario, for example, selectively appropriated elements of Methodism as a strategy for preserving Ojibwe ways and for gaining access to the technologies that produced white wealth and power. Modernity, moreover, is a contingent process and Ojibwe cultural complexity precedes European contact. This chapter outlines the beginnings of Native print journalism and examines the writing careers of Ojibwe Methodist ministers, Peter Jones and George Copway who used such discursive strategies as letter and book writing to explicitly express Native sovereignty.

Chapter three outlines the legislative process by which Native rights were diminished, and with them, Aboriginal peoples' capacity to author their own affairs. It addresses how non-Native Methodists and government officials effectively usurped the role of mediating agent between Native peoples and the outside world -- a role formerly occupied by the Ojibwe literati. These non-Native intermediaries would henceforth become the self-appointed "official" voice of Indian country and the authors of Indianness. In addition to stifling Aboriginal discursive energy, church and government officials, in speaking for and about them, sought to render Ojibwe peoples readable and legible. Textual realities would prove to be infinitely more manageable than lived ones. These processes of *écriture* had the effect to undermine relationships between Native individuals and between Native communities, disrupting Indigenous communication corridors and invalidating the information carried along them.

Chapter four inquires into the culturally transformative work of the first professional Native printman, an Ojibwe Methodist minister named Henry Bird Steinhauer. Focusing on the Rossville Cree mission in 19th Century Manitoba, it attends to the diversity of northern Native adaptative strategies, and addresses the cultural mediation of the syllabic system in this context. A pattern is readily discernable among Crees, of selecting, appropriating and localizing culturally extraneous elements. This process of incorporation, however, does not necessarily produce a qualitative shift in the economy away from hunting, or in the social structure away from communalism.

Chapter five addresses how settlers mobilized the early prairie presses to generate borders by pushing Indian voices to the peripheries of the debate on Plains progress. Settlers used the images they created of "Indians," on the other hand, as diacritical markers, with which to define their own identities and a Canadian narrative of nation. These immigrants to Canada attributed to themselves what they considered to be the modern characteristics that were allegedly lacking in the Indigenous populace. They then *performed* modernity by enunciating it through the presses. "Indian" representations in the presses functioned to sanction a social order and a racial hierarchy and to *essentialize* an erroneous version of Aboriginality as "non-progressive." Consequently, Native people were increasingly made to suffer the

harsh judgements of settlers who attributed their misfortunes to personal, individual, attitudinal and moral problems such as “indolence” and “moral turpitude” rather than to a larger configuration of power -- a discursively and institutionally structured inequality.

Chapter six addresses the idea that Aboriginal peoples have seldom used introduced communications media in the ways that missionaries, and later, ethnographers, journalists and government broadcast policy makers would have anticipated. The Native Brotherhood of British Columbia deployed the *Native Voice*, for instance, to consolidate a province-wide land rights protest campaign. The newspaper thus provided a new platform, and an official point of mediation from which to engage the opposition. The expansion of Native political organizations through such organs as *The Calumet* and *The Native Voice*, and the infiltration of Native individuals into the “privileged sanctums” of the press and the Canadian political system, ought not to be viewed as mere reactive or defensive maneuvers, nor as examples of Aboriginal acquiescence to a hegemonic print-capitalist system. This development of new platforms for Native mediation represented an innovative organizational accomplishment, namely, an elaboration on the form of Native protest. I focus on innovated forms of Aboriginal organization and communication and the indigenizing of city spaces. Urban activists in the 1960s sought to construct a collective identity concerning Native modernity, and to build a sense of solidarity and indeed, a community that was derived neither solely from mainstream nor Aboriginal models. Newspapers, such as the Union of Ontario’s *The Calumet*, which served both as tools of cultural mediation as well as social artifacts or cultural products, like friendship centres and political organizations, were arenas wherein the gap between the dominant perceptions of Indianness and the self-perceptions of Indian people could be negotiated, while simultaneously inscribing Aboriginality and hybridity in the process.

Chapter seven is a critical examination of the academic literature relating to globalization and Native communications. Native newspapers, radio and television have been employed both as means and modes of political self-determination, self-styled modernity and cultural competence -- in ways, therefore, that are not necessarily derivative of mainstream or global models. This chapter investigates the invention

of Aboriginal radio, a media which Native communicators have not narrowly construed to be limited to the mere exchange of information. I trace the development of Aboriginal broadcast policy and assess the current funding environment for Native media. Finally, I address the emergent Aboriginal media discourse on community building. Aboriginal mediation is a novel form of social agency by means of which Aboriginal communicators are re-inscribing traditions in contemporary circumstances so as to contribute to language retention and evolution and political, historical and cultural awareness. The processes of cultural mediation are crucial sites for the making and re-making of Aboriginality and co-Aboriginality or community.

The following is a story of relationships between non-Native and Native missionaries, farmers, ethnographers, leaders, mediators and political activists. It is also about the interrelationship of all these people with their own divergent belief systems, historicities, subjectivities, and experiences and constructions of Otherness. To this convergence, it brings the imprint of policies from various government divisions, church and school bureaucracies -- all at various historical junctures and in different geographical regions. This narrative addresses as well a number of contending theories issuing from Anthropology, Communications, Cultural, Literary and Film Studies as they relate to the above, as well as from Aboriginal peoples themselves. Modernity, hybridity and Aboriginality are not the only contexts in which Native people make their lives. What follows, therefore, is not the only possible reading of these texts.

CHAPTER ONE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LITERACY AND PRINT TECHNOLOGY

This chapter identifies the unit of analysis for this study, examines common conceptions of the term “literacy,” and addresses multiple forms of Aboriginal textuality. Only a very narrow range of forms of competency or literacy are commonly associated with the concept of “progress.” I argue that because Aboriginal technologies tend not to be identified as such, Aboriginal modes of modernity are often misidentified. I examine the incorporation of the global technology of news printing by European settlers, and contrast this form of expressive culture with Aboriginal modes of *écriture*. This sets the ground for a discussion in later chapters of the broader pattern of active incorporation and creative adaptation of technologies, in ways which allow Aboriginal peoples to control the shape and pace of change in their own communities.

The chapter attends to the ways Native peoples incorporated alphabetic literacy into preexisting forms of inscription. The practice of selective adaptation that Native peoples have historically deployed provides clues to the interpretation of contemporary Native media practices and products. To account for what is fundamentally different in Aboriginal and mainstream mediascapes requires a focus on the variations in cultural information systems. The revolution in print, for instance, constitutes a central communicative transformation in the trajectory of Euro-Canadian progress. Aboriginal peoples have made very different demands on their media.

On the Utility of Literacy Models

In common parlance, literacy is often narrowly construed as merely alphabetic literacy, in the same way that the term “education,” is commonly understood in its restricted sense, as school learning. In the “official” historical record, for instance, literacy essentially means reading and writing alphabetic scripts. The term pre-literate that is most often assigned to oral cultures, implies that non-letter writing cultures are

lodged in a stage of arrested evolutionary progress. Social and cognitive consequences, on the other hand, are assumed to automatically follow merely from the use of alphabetic literacy (Worgan 1994:408).

Writing, Murray submits, is evoked as an intellectual achievement and as an index of evolutionary development rather than as a range of diverse practices (1991:24). Consequently, the historical moment at which time alphabetic literacy is introduced to tribal cultures is generally viewed as signifying an initial and irrevocable step on the trajectory of “progress toward enlightenment.” Battiste writes:

Viewed as the benign liberator of the mind, literacy is perceived to be the modernizing agent of society and an economic commodity necessary for national development (1986:23).

To adopt the Western practice of literacy, it is generally held, is to bridge the “great cognitive divide,” that separates the savage mind of civilization’s outsiders, from the rational intellect of its creators (Frake 1983).

Outside the officially sanctioned historical record, however, “unauthorized” historical accounts abound. When issuing from Native sources, such accounts are often framed in a highly conventionalized oral idiom. The institutionalized nature of Native oral histories testifies to the fact that literacies of a different order are operative in Native contexts. Micmac educator, Marie Battiste, for instance, insists that literacy is not used in the same way by all cultures:

Modern conceptions of literacy have further disguised its processes because they are fragmented and limited: fragmented by the search among western scholars for normative standards which can be universally applied; and limited by the bias toward instrumental objectives of modern liberal social theory and Western school practices. Literacy, however, is not an all or nothing proposition; its elements cannot be universally applied. Rather, literacy is a relative social concept more reflective of culture and context than of the levels of formal instruction by which it is usually measured (1986:24).

Literacy, according to Scribner and Cole, “...is not a unitary phenomenon with unitary psychological impacts. Writing is a variable tool that can be used in a variety of ways to accomplish a variety of aims” (in Frake 1983:0). The hegemonic deployment of literacy in its most restrictive, essentialized, sense, has had the effect of denying the existence of other forms of literacy, including the reading and writing of Native symbolic languages, for instance the pictography by means of which Native peoples communicated in written form. Murray submits that in the discourse on Aboriginal languages, there has emerged a conception of an evolutionary sequence which proceeds from the natural to the cultural, and hence from

silence, through gestures and signs to spoken words, then pictographs and eventually syllabic and phonetic writing (1991:15). Everything prior to syllabics was considered more of the realm of the pre-discursive or gestural than of the properly lingual. The term “literate,” has thus been denied to Native scribes in a double sense, first in an idiomatic sense -- they were not allowed to write in their own terms, and second, in a more radical sense -- they were not recognized as being capable of writing, but merely of drawing. The label “illiterate” has had concrete political consequences for Aboriginal peoples. A 1917 immigration law drafted in the United States, for example, barred “illiterates” from entering the States. According to Mohawk journalist George Beaver,² this legislation was used to turn Indian people away at the border, directly contravening the 1794 Jay Treaty, and the 1812 Treaty of Ghent which guaranteed Aboriginal people the right of unfettered passage over the 49th parallel (1997:68).

In recent times, and in academic circles, the term “literacy” has been broadened to incorporate the notion of a capacity for the apprehension of a multitude of texts (Clifford and Marcus 1986). For Ricoeur, all meaningful action bears the mark of textuality (1970). Geertz, and other proponents of hermeneutics, moreover, have argued that cultures might be examined as an “assemblage of texts” (1973:452), thus, one might speak of the obviously symbolic: songs, rituals, speeches, as well as the more mundane: meals, clothing, buildings and conversations as texts, and the competency with which one participates in them as a form of literacy. Cruikshank (1990) and Basso (1984) contend that landscapes are viewed in various Native cultures as texts in so far as sites are named and mapped, and are productive of signs which are subsequently read by competent Native interpreters. Michaels suggests that literacy might also be applied to the use of electronic information systems insofar as electronic media are conventionalized modes of inscription, which one must learn to *read* and to *write* (1990:8). Despite the obvious analogy to the experience of writing the word literacy entrains, the term comprises not merely “what corresponds to

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That indigenous words for writing exist suggests inscription is not entirely alien, nor necessarily novel, to Native peoples. George Beaver for instance, received the Cayuga name “Hay-yaw-twa,” “He Writes” or “The Writer” in an official naming ceremony, and the Mohawk name, “Kahia-tohkwah-tseri:io,” or “Eloquent Pen” under more informal circumstances (1997:91).

writing in the field of action” (Ricoeur 1970:540), but what corresponds to an achieved competency of action -- a competency of practice, for instance for hearing or moving, which is as complex as any capacity for reading. My use of the term literacy is thus a deliberate attempt to place the discursive practices embodied in Native oral traditions on par with the discursive practices of Western written traditions.

Native peoples have not only always been capable of “literacy” in the symbolic sense of being communicatively adept, numerous Native nations practised particular forms of writing, and were thus literate, in a literal sense. One way to understand Native peoples’ uses of radio and television is as analogous to their uses of books and print. To understand Native peoples uses of books and print, however, it is necessary to comprehend how a technology such as alphabetic literacy has been incorporated into prior symbolic literacies. Owing to a specific set of historical circumstances, in nineteenth century Ontario and Alberta, Indigenous peoples annexed alphabetic and syllabic to such pre-existing communicative systems as: pictography; smoke and hand signals; blanket talk; verbal and non-verbal, and human and supernatural communications as I show in chapter four.

A problem arises, in this study: what should be considered the unit of analysis? As far as Native media are concerned, what, and where, exactly is the text? Most often, for literary and communications scholars, the text is: the picture on the screen, the story told on the radio, or the written work. The fact that authors, performers, and audiences are *culturally* constituted is usually not addressed when the objectivist methods that are privileged by these schools are employed to interpret such texts. As there is seldom an attempt made to stress the cultural mediation of text comprehension or literacy by specific belief systems (Worgan 1994:409), inferences drawn solely from literary products are, more often than not, culture-blind, and therefore, limited. To his credit, Raymond Williams (1974) has suggested that literary texts ought not to be considered unitary transparent productions, and that conditions of distribution and readership of works such as *Huckleberry Finn*, may create additional texts. Whereas Williams has contributed much to the field of Literary Criticism by suggesting that Europeans in earlier centuries might be considered contemporary Europeans’ cultural others; it is neither the intent, nor within the scope, of Euro-sociological analyses to

address the production, nor the dissemination, of non-European literary or other texts.

Anthropologists have taken an approach similar to Williams insofar as they argue that the meaning of the medium of print, for instance, is not inherent to the written text, but must be sought in the social relationships of the people who both read and write it. The circumstances of its production, therefore, must be brought to bear on the finished text. According to Ruby, an anthropological approach begins with the assumption that:

The unit of analysis should be the community and the community members' social interaction with these events and not focus exclusively upon the product or artifact (Ruby 1990:36).

Nor, Ruby asserts, should attention be limited to the effects of an introduced technology:

New communications technology are never introduced into a vacuum but into a dynamic political, social and economic environment. In other words, studies designed to gain an understanding of what happens to a society when they gain access to a new means to communicate require an ethnographic approach to see the technology embedded in a socio-cultural framework (1990:44).

As communication is seldom limited to intra-cultural affairs, it is necessary to understand something of the nature of interaction also between communities, and between cultures. In anthropological discourse, therefore, texts are extant at numerous levels. Prior to attempting to understand how Australian Aborigines read televised texts, for example, Michaels undertook ethnographic research, holding to the idea that:

people's readings of media are based as much on their lived experience, historical circumstances and cultural perspectives than any inherent instructions in the text itself on how something ought to be interpreted (1990:21).

As such, it is instructive to regard cultural communicative conventions as comprising an information system, though not a necessarily coherent, nor as Bakhtin would assert, a "finalizable," one. Cultural information systems are more than mere abstract epistemological ideals; they imply conditions for who is likely to communicate with whom, when, under what conditions, and via what channels. Each communication system involves a negotiated set of relations and alliances, characteristically gathering only certain people together, while excluding others, thus protecting communication pathways and the information they carry. Patterns in the creation, distribution and interpretation of communicative texts, however, do not represent simple reflections of abstract social processes or societal values. While they are

created in particular social, historical, or cultural contexts; they are also informed by the attempts of perceptually positioned, active individuals to make sense of the real-life situations in which they find themselves. It is the variation in cultural information systems, that accounts for what is fundamentally different in Native and mainstream literary and other media texts, discourses, apparatuses, and mediascapes. Aboriginal literature, like later Aboriginal radio and television, thus, does not represent simply a difference in the *use* of a neutral technology -- it is an identifiably different *technological invention* as I will show below.

Judging by the enormous amount of state intervention in English language print literacy promulgation in the past century, it seems rather obvious that the Canadian government considers reading and writing a pre-requisite to *proper* Aboriginal "progress." Communities, and groups within them, however, are differentially empowered to project their own constructions of reality. The empowered, moreover, often lack the motivation to consider their own notions of modernity as *relative*. Hence the authority of the "official" written historical record, and the reason for the absence of Native voices within it.

Despite having been identified as the hallmark of civilization, state policy concerning letter literacy in Aboriginal populations in Canada has been inconsistent. Under certain historical circumstances, for instance in the 1800s, at which time a mass settlement of Europeans on Native lands was underway, Aboriginal literacy was not part of the government's agenda. Even after the institutionalization of the residential school system, questions remain as to whether literacy was ever the intended goal. Assimilative projects which aimed to transform the everyday habitual practices of Native peoples, preceded and facilitated later, more overt attempts to colonize Native minds through forced schooling. That print and electronic media literacies were achieved in Native communities, therefore, has as much to do with the motivations of Native peoples to adopt and adapt new technologies of communications, as it does with the state policies which have, at different times, both enabled and impeded access to the wide variety of communications media.

Print and electronic literacy development in Native communities, have followed two very different

historical trajectories. Print, as Michaels points out, “took nearly two thousand years, required the invention of the printing press, the associated rise of Protestantism, capitalism, and the industrial empires” (1990:37). Electronic literacy, on the other hand, developed simultaneously, in Native and non-Native contexts, beginning with the invention of radio and later, television in the early 20th century. Owing to relatively contemporaneous birth of broadcasting technology, Native peoples know as much about radio and television as do Euro-Canadians. The facility with which Aboriginal individuals incorporated alphabetic and syllabic literacies into their communicative practices would lend support to the notion that in terms of the operation of electronic hardware, and the creation of media software or electronic literacy, providing they undergo training, Native and Euro-Canadian peoples possess equal capacities for reading and writing their own texts.

Native peoples are “disadvantaged” only in the sense of having been denied access to the means of producing, and distributing electronic texts through the “official” channels. Frustration at having been invited to read, but not to write “official” texts, partly explains the veritable explosion of Native voices over electronic media, beginning in the 20th century. While they were barred, for the most part, from addressing Canadian masses or *broadcasting*, many Native communicators were content to “*narrowcast*,” that is, to employ electronic media to speak to their own communities. The realm of electronic media has attracted many of the Native people who were either excluded by, or who rejected, letter literacy. Despite, or possibly because of, the relatively low amounts of state intervention in proffering electronic literacy, as well as properties inherent to the media which allow for communication to be transmitted orally, Native communicators have been able to privilege their own principles of social organization in the creation of a multitude of forms of electronic communication, many of which diverge widely from the Euro-Canadian “norm.”

Aboriginal Symbolic Literacies

At the time of mass European settlement, but prior to the coercive type of educating that

characterized the residential school era, alphabetic scripts, much like rifles or horses which preceded them, were either adopted and adapted, or rejected by Native peoples, who assessed the value and function of this technology with regard to their own unique practical and political concerns, and their own pre-existing forms of literacy. Whereas some have argued that Indian people viewed writing itself as an inherently powerful activity, and a superior communicative technology (Axtell 1988:93); Worgan insists that Native perceptions of alphabetic literacy varied in accordance with the belief or value systems of particular Native cultures. Jesuit writing in New France, for instance, was not deemed to be a valuable skill within the Montagnais system of reciprocity. Worgan writes:

During the entire winter that the Jesuit LeJeune lived with a nomadic band of Montagnais...no native ever expressed any curiosity about - let alone amazement at - Jesuit writing...The key to understanding this indifference is that LeJeune brought few food supplies with him; worse, he did not procure a single piece of game during that entire difficult winter. At least for these Montagnais, writing without food or other such "results" was apparently seen as noting more than a senseless distraction (1944:415).

According to Battiste, at first, written phonetic scripts gave no hint of their latent use as instruments of domination, and the idea of recording words as they were spoken appealed to some (1986:32). There are numerous accounts in which it is apparent that particular individuals expanded their literary repertoire out of necessity, adding to it a new mode of communicating in order to appeal to a distant European audience, particularly with regard to land rights. Micmac Chief, Paussamigh Pemmeenauweet, for instance, wrote the following to Queen Victoria in 1841:

I cannot cross the great Lake to talk to you for my Canoe is too small, and I am old and weak. I cannot look upon you for my eyes not see so far. You cannot hear my voice across the Great Waters. I therefore send this Wampum and Paper talk to tell the Queen I am in trouble. My people are in trouble...White Man has taken all that was ours. He has plenty of everything here. But we are told that the White Man has sent to you for more. No wonder that I should speak for myself and my people. The man that takes this talk over the great Water will tell you what we want to be done for us (In Petrone 1983:54).

That he employed both wampum, the principle form of traditional ideographic public script, and "paper talk," -- English alphabetic script, clearly indicates an incorporation of, rather than a displacement by, European ideas into an existing symbolic literacy.

Battiste writes that "pictographs, petroglyphs, notched sticks, and wampum were the primary

Native texts of Algonkian ideographic literacy” (1986:24). Embodying Native epistemologies, these birchbark, rock, string, shell, and twig texts, which supplemented oral accounts, served as material documents of, as well as mnemonic references to, both historical and practical information. Wampum, for instance, which is employed by both Haudenosaunee and Anishinabek peoples, was principally a public record and was maintained by a tribal historian. Barreiro writes:

In the northeastern Indian tradition, treaty meetings and other important negotiations were not considered complete and binding without the preparation and presentation of wampum belts. Thus the Iroquois belts record some of the earliest governmental transactions in the contact and colonial periods (1992:137).

Tribal knowledge was not, however, embodied merely in one historian, but generally emerged through dialogue as keepers of particular types of knowledge contributed their parts to a vast and ever cumulating socio-historical discourse. While wampum engages members in intra- and inter-national or community discussion, the pictographic birchbark scrolls of the Ojibwe Midéwewin or Grand Medicine society facilitate communication between human and spirit worlds, and moreover, document a spiritual legacy insofar as they are inscriptions of individuals’ visions and experiences with the spirit world (Dewdney 1975). Other written symbols, including other types of pictographs, as well as petroglyphs and notched sticks, served more mundane purposes:

The Algonkian Indians used them to communicate information and messages to friends and relatives about their whereabouts or of routes and directions taken, to relate stories, to enlist warriors into battle, or to tell of herbal cures (Battiste 1986:26).

The following are excerpts taken from an article entitled “How Our Ancestors Wrote,” which appears in the first Native newspaper in Canada which was published by members of the New Credit reserve in Southern Ontario. The anonymous article is part of a larger didactic discourse, and it is irrefutably sanctimonious in tone. Serving perhaps, principally, to deride the practice of raiding by criticizing the “boasting” birchbark message left to relate the event; it does, however, offer some useful insights into the ideography employed by Ojibwe peoples in the late 1800s. In the article, the author relates the story of a raid on an unoccupied Bear clan camp by a Turtle clan, after which, he writes:

...The Turtle chief chooses a piece of smooth, cream-colored birch-bark, chews up a little tobacco

to serve as ink, plucks a twig of soft wood for a pen, and with the tobacco juice draws the following pictures: First comes a turtle, and it is a very big turtle...Then he draws as many waving lines, to represent bows...his lines bend forward to show in what direction the trail went. Following these, a rising sun stands for daybreak, and three lines under it mean that three days went by in going to the Bears. Next he puts down as many funny little pyramids as there were Bear wigwams, and draws them upside down to show that they were destroyed. After that, he draws...a wee, wee bear, very small, in order to show his contempt for the Bears. Finally he draws with the greatest care as many oxen and ponies as he has captured...Had there been resistance and men slain on either side, the exact number of dead would have been noted by drawing just as many human figures without their heads. Then to call the attention of all who pass through the wilderness, the war chief fixes the piece of bark to the top of a long pole, and plants it on the path so that the most careless passer can not fail to see it. There is no date...but there is not much need of being so exact, because news runs from camp to camp with surprising quickness, and any other war party that sees the card, before rain and wind destroy it, is quite certain to know something of the raid to which it refers (*The Indian*, 7 July 1886).

In his first published literary work, *The Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation* (1850), Chippewa author George Copway included a chart of Ojibwe pictographs taught to him in his youth, that were used to denote various verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs and short phrases. He writes:

These are some of the figures used by us in writing. With these, and from others of a similar class, the Ojibways can write their war and hunting songs. An Indian well versed in these can send a communication to another Indian, and by them make himself as well understood as a pale face can by letter. There are over two hundred figures in general use for all the purposes of correspondence. Material things are represented by pictures... (Copway in Petrone 1983:110)³.

Whereas the vast majority of communication in Native communities was oral, important exchanges were formalized by means of rituals which had the effect to render the ethereal, material. In Haudenosaunee communities, for instance, there still exists a special class of Runners, whose duties in ancient times included carrying verbal messages in, and between, Native communities. It is still customary for an offering of tobacco to be made before a Runner's information is imparted. It is a gesture of respect which conveys the idea that a common epistemology exists between the message sender, bearer and its receiver.

Tobacco is a potent symbol in Native cosmology, properly offered it connotes the idea of the interconnectedness of all natural things, a reverence for the cycle of life, and an acknowledgment of the

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This account of Ojibwe pictography contrasts with Brinton's assertions that Lennapi Algonkian pictography, principally in the *Wallum Olum*, refers not to objects but to letters, and hence conveys actual words and ideas not merely signs (cited in Murray 1991:21).

positioning of humans within a multi-layered cosmos. Tobacco lends weight to words, and expresses the formal nature of a request. A sacred pipe (or calumet), an eagle feather, and a council fire, also serve as important contextualizing factors. The symbol that is chosen to mediate communication in each context encodes the information. Therefore, the information that is exchanged after having smoked the pipe, in a lodge, over a council fire, or while holding an eagle feather, is of a different order than that which is exchanged in informal conversations. The symbol inscribes itself on the communicative situation insofar as it imbues both the message and the event with added meaning, meaning moreover, which only the culturally competent can “read” or decode. Such communicative contexts are irreducible to static or essential features. Because their meaning often changes with the passage of time and the replacement of actors, they do not hold to any “pure” or authenticating formula. As Brown and Vibert cogently instruct, “Contexts, like rivers, are always in motion, always diverse and differently witnessed, depending on whether their observers are in midstream or on the shore” (1996:xix). Symbolically inscribed talk is therefore no more fixed in terms of meaning for Ojibwe individuals at a ceremony at the Toronto friendship centre, for instance, than would be the meaning of a written text such as the Bible for Toronto’s Catholic community. Texts and contexts, rather, are *infused* with meaning by living individuals and collectivities at specific historical moments, hence their vibrancy and relevancy for contemporary peoples and situations.

In the 19th century, missionaries infiltrated Native communities armed with Bibles, hymn and prayer books, and engaged in vigorous campaigns to “civilize” Native sensibilities. The lack of so-called “civilized” traits and of European approved technologies was their justification for subjugating Native peoples and appropriating their cultural and material possessions. Given the rich traditions of inscription extant in Native communities, however, one could argue that it was the newly arrived missionaries who were illiterate. The works of such scholars as Tannen 1982, Erickson 1984 and Scollon and Scollon 1984, suggest that there are different kinds of non-literacies as well as numerous types of literacies. A letter written in 1918 by Ana-Quon-Ess, a World War One veteran, illustrates the type of non-literacy he attributes to settler society. He writes:

For all their mode[r]n inventions they cant live the way we do and they die if they try because they cant read the sunset and hear the old men talk in the wind. A wolf is fierce, but he is our brother he lives the old way, but the Saganash is sometime a pup and he dies when the wind blows on him, beca[u]se he sees only trees and rock and water only the out side of the book and cant read (in Petrone 97).

Missionaries and other interlopers who equated Aboriginal peoples' lack of alphabetic literacy with a lack of progress, were themselves generally unable to recognize or read Native modes of modernity, nor to function within the framework of Native competency. The following chapters present an account of the historical processes by which Native peoples, primarily in Southern Ontario and Northern Alberta, adopted and adapted alphabetic literacy, and later electronic technologies, and fashioned from them their own information super-highway modelled on notions of a Good Red Road.

In the next section I demonstrate that printing is a global, as opposed to a "white" or European technology. Combining elements from "other" expressive traditions of ecriture with their own, however, Europeans brought together a particular set of practices -- a work strategy -- which has come to be covered by the term, "North American journalism." Aboriginal peoples, as I will discuss in later chapters, have also combined global technologies of mass mediation with their own local styles for structuring productive relations and their own storytelling, information gathering and sharing, and cultural production practices. The resultant mix is a historically contingent, and demonstrably unique, pan-Aboriginal communicative apparatus.

The Print Revolution and the North American Invention of the Newspaper

It was during the period of nation-building, otherwise known as the colonial era, that a radical transformation of the European information order was to occur. According to Benedict Anderson, prior to the 17th Century, by which time languages in Europe had assumed their modern forms, the major world religious traditions were imaginable as communities owing to the medium of sacred languages like Latin, which were privileged systems of representation that required a bilingual intelligentsia to translate them for the masses (1983:20). The fall of Latin, he writes, "exemplified a larger process in which the sacred

communities integrated by old sacred languages were gradually fragmented, pluralized, and territorialized” (1983:25). English, which developed as a new vernacular, thus undermined the imagined community of Christendom, yet combined with a relatively new system of production and productive relations (capitalism), and a technology of communications (print); enabled the European public to imagine and fashion new types of associational groupings (1983:46).

Some of the major communicative transformations that occurred in Euro-North America, from 1691 to 1820, are attributable to a revolution in print. Newspaper production was a crucial feature of modern democratic life. Anderson asserts that, because newspapers were consumed in a collective ritual, that is, they were read simultaneously by individuals who were often separated geographically as well as experientially; newspapers contributed to a sense of horizontal comradeship or community (1983:40). This sense of collective participation and identification, he argues undermined the subjective particularities that marked individual differences. Print-capitalism, Anderson writes, “created unified fields of exchange and communications below Latin and above the spoken vernacular” (1983:47). Thus, through the medium of newspapers, English-speaking literate classes would acquire access to new types of information.

More relevant to this study is the fact that the printer-journalist was a uniquely North American phenomenon, which developed as travellers, traders and administrators allied with the post master to produce the continent’s first newspapers (Carey 1989:211). As appendages of the market, early newspapers typically carried commercial news, news about the metropole and colonial political appointments (Anderson 1983:62). They announced ship and rail schedules, grain prices and the founding of new parishes, and thus served to entrain organized activity as controlled from a central time-keeping, price-setting, morality-monitoring administrative base.

The printing press technology alone, however, did not determine the newspaper as a cultural product; paper, after all was a Chinese invention, and Europe did not own the monopoly on inscription. Rather it was the very conception of what “news” was -- the inclusion of particular stories and their juxtaposition -- which both reflected and shaped the “imagined community” to which these elements

belonged. As Anderson asserts, what brought seemingly arbitrary elements of information together on page, “was the very structure of the colonial administration and the market system itself” (1983:62). The communication of information via newspaper, thus incorporated a structure of human action, an ensemble of expressive forms, and a structuring set of social relations. Newspapers not only enshrined information, they also engendered particular practices which determined the relevance of particular types of information, as well as social and technical conventions of suitable modes for representing “reality.”

Skea writes that the way the newspaper industry depicts the world is not necessarily the way the world exists. The industry employs frames and framing techniques, some less consciously than others, “to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely, to recognize it as information, to assign it to categories and to package it for quick relay to their audience (1993-1994:15). By the very “objectivity” of the empirical facts reported, however, newspaper reportage precludes an appreciation for, as well as an acknowledgement of, alternative socio-cosmological perceptions of reality. In early Canadian newspapers, views rooted in an understanding of Native peoples’ experiences of colonialism were excluded. Appadurai employs the term “ideoscape” to describe this phenomenon. He writes:

Ideoscapes are...concatenations of images, but they are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counterideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it. These ideoscapes are composed of elements of the Enlightenment worldview, which consists of a chain of ideas, terms, and images, including *freedom, welfare, rights, sovereignty, representation*, and the master term *democracy* (1996:36).

The master narrative of Euro-North American modernity, much like the master narrative of the Enlightenment, conforms to a sort of internal logic, one moreover which presupposes a definitive relationship between reading, representation and the public sphere (Appadurai 1996:36). According to Habermas (1989), for example, alphabetic literacy, along with other factors such as the development of critical reason, were crucial prerequisites both to participation within European public spheres, and in the emergence of a re-constructed consciousness -- the European Enlightenment. Arguably, it was an English culturalist discourse (including ideas of popular sovereignty and democracy) and its ecriture in novels and newspapers (print mediation) -- an ideology of interrogating the existential circumstances of British

presentness mixed with print Capitalism -- which drew these factors together into a "public culture." The possibility of the nation in the European context, as Featherstone instructs, was reliant upon the development of the book, novel, and newspaper, alongside a literate reading public able to imagine itself as a community (1996:53). Within this self-referential regime of truth, the consideration of Native perspectives, but not Native imagery, was clearly superfluous to the Anglo-centric focus (Lee 1993:167).

In addition to "empirical information" on transportation schedules and market prices, newspaper articles, particularly those chronicling historical events, for instance, were rife with ideological content. Siegel, for instance, asserts that Canada's earliest newspapers served merely to amplify the views of the political parties that funded them:

There was nothing neutral about the press; each paper preached to its adherents and sought to bring in fresh converts. The press not only mobilized public support for the various factions, but also explained party politics...Financial support provided by political factions therefore largely shaped the contents of the newspapers. Information was distorted to suit political interests, causes were taken up and dropped on the basis of cash flow, and information that favoured opponents was conveniently omitted (1996:93).

Newspapers, however, also conveyed cultural ideologies at a much less obvious level. Editors selected from a virtually limitless repertoire of possible ideas, what was worthy of inclusion in a newspaper, as "news." Communications scholar, James Carey suggests that this is meaningful insofar as the notion of *news* is itself a historically situated cultural product (1989:21):

It is a form of culture invented by a particular class at a particular point of history - in this case by [Euro-North America's] middle class largely in the eighteenth century. Like any invented cultural form, news both forms and reflects a particular "hunger for experience," a desire to do away with the epic, heroic, and traditional in favour of the unique, original, novel, new - news.

Obviously, the content of Euro-North Americans newspapers and other colonial presses, would have varied greatly from what colonized nations, encompassing radically different socio-cosmological articulations, with vastly different information orders, communicative genres and social relations, would have assembled, given the same technological form.

In the early 1800s, particular Native individuals had come to understand the powerful role printed words played in the control and administration of Native peoples and Native lands by foreign powers. By

this time, Native people east of the plains were virtually surrounded by non-Native settlers. LaCourse writes:

Adaptation of the printing press to Native American interests emerged as literate Indians became familiar with the press and its role in non-Indian communities - particularly its role in supporting the forced emigration of tribal people from their homelands to accommodate non-Indian settlers and squatters. If newspapers could be used as agents for white settler interests, they could also be used to represent those of Indian peoples. In addition, newspapers could be read and understood by neighbouring readers and people living great distances from Indian lands, and could establish a public voice for tribal interests and causes amid the cacophony of public debate about the future of Indians in North America (1994:54).

Newspaper creation in Indian Country originated with unique sources and pursued a divergent historical trajectory from that of non-Native newsprint. The media paths of Aboriginal radio and television, moreover, are not necessarily consistent with the directions taken in Native newspaper development. Some of the characteristics of the newsprint media itself undoubtedly influenced its reception in Native communities -- print media most notably required alphabetic or syllabic literacy and, generally, proficiency in the English language. The Aboriginal presses were usually owned and largely controlled by Native political organizations and served as instruments of social and political policy. Communication via newspapers was characteristically delayed and indirect, or removed from the circumstances of its production. The reception of information, moreover, was subject to transportation networks and the delivery of material goods and tied therefore, to trade networks. Native radio, on the other hand, often began as an extension of the trail radio system employed by hunters and fishermen while on trap lines or at sea. From its inception, and owing partly to its accessibility and immediacy, Native radio was seized upon by average community members, rather than political leaders per se. Both television and radio, particularly in northern areas, however, were dependent on a satellite system which meant that these forms of communication implicitly required cooperation with and from the state.

With the exception of newsprint, Canadian settlers and Aboriginal peoples were introduced to these media technologies at approximately the same time, and were able to innovate media practices, products and media educational institutions to correspond with their communities' own internal imperatives and their own modernizing goals. The Native and non-Native media institutions of the modern era

characteristically express their own unique “values” and have determined their own methods for evaluating media competency. Before considering these specific means of communication, however, it is necessary to examine a broader spectrum of Aboriginal communication systems, and to consider how forces such as missionization, and Canadian Indian policy and legislation, significantly altered some of the resources that are brought to bear on Aboriginal symbolic exchange.

Prior to the 19th Century the trading companies, which represented the primary forces of change among Native nations, actively discouraged Indian peoples from reading and writing. “Civilizing” or Europeanizing was not high on the list of company priorities. However, given that participation in the Canadian political public sphere took for granted a certain form of competency, namely alphabetic literacy and the capacity to engage in critical rationalist debate, Native peoples strategically appropriated English, and syllabic or alphabetic literacy so as to be able to ensure their distinctiveness. The following chapter shows that by engaging with the forces of globalization, by participating in the Euro-Canadian political sphere, and by adding their voices to the dominant historicity, Indian people sought to master the intervening forces of change in their lives, rather than be mastered by them.

While missionary efforts began in 1620, and spread from Eastern to Western Canada; with few exceptions, they contributed little to English language literacy among the few Native students with whom they had contact. Schmalz posits that by the mid 1800s, the vast majority of Ojibwe children in Southern Ontario, for instance, were not in school at all (1991:158). It is partly for this reason, that this study begins in the 19th Century, a time devoted to the “civilization” of the Aboriginal habitus. It was during this time that Aboriginal media activists would gain mastery over the formats that the non-Native public associated with the construction of knowledge and meaning — English language newspapers and books. As I show in later sections, Aboriginal efforts to decolonize are very much about engaging with a public beyond the immediate locale. For this, global technologies would be required, such as the English language, political organizations capable of speaking for polities larger than locales, and mass communications through which to transpose and to transport information and experiences.

Owing to the breadth of their institutional base, we might consider Native missionaries as the first Aboriginal broadcasters, in that they attempted to spread the seeds of Methodism, literacy, and agriculture far and wide. By the mid 19th century, the Methodists who worked in Indian communities from coast to coast, were able to establish a national audience, owing partly to their itinerant preaching practices and their national newspaper networks. They were certainly not the first, however, to reach out beyond the local or regional attempting to nationally unite Indian peoples. Toward the end of the 18th century, and particularly around the time of the War of 1812, Tehcumse, for one, laboured intensively to unite diverse Native nations to defend their territories against encroachment by whites in the US. Tragically, he did not succeed. Native Methodist missionaries were slightly more successful at first, perhaps because they focussed on uniting diverse Native peoples under the banner of Methodist-styled Christianity, something which transcended cultural differences. Later this re-organizing force would be the cause of increased divisions within local groups as factions developed based on membership in the various Christian denominations, as well as traditional groupings. While their reformatory agenda had, at best, dubious, and at worst devastating, results, Native Methodist missionaries did manage to spread the lasting influences of alphabetic and syllabic literacy and agricultural know-how.

When missionaries first arrived in North America, it was the bibles with which they were armed that afforded Indigenous peoples with their first experiences with the printed word. Later, Native nations would become intimately familiar with European uses of printed materials, as the scrolls bearing the edicts of the royal families in Europe were read aloud with great ceremony, imparting information regarding land grants, military activities and legislation which would radically affect the lives of Native peoples throughout the continent. The still Latin Bible however, probably had less direct impact on Native peoples than did the mostly English language evangelical pedagogy of the missionaries.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MEDIUM IS THE METHODIST

This chapter addresses the culturally mediating or translating work of a group of 19th Century Ojibwe Methodists. These figures served as metonyms for Christian “civilization,” broadly casting the Methodist usages far and wide in the process. The ministers advocated a selective appropriation of Methodist technologies as a strategy for accessing white wealth and preserving Ojibwe ways. It was through the careful creation of cultural syntheses that an Ojibwe discourse of protest based on cultural comparison would develop. It was also out of this cultural intermingling that the beginnings of an Aboriginal print journalism would emerge. The Ojibwe literati would employ their protest literature to champion Native capabilities and to express Aboriginal sovereignty. The existence and historical importance of these culturally complex or hybrid figures calls into question the essentializability of cultural differences and the polarization of strategies of resistance and accommodation.

Previous to white settlement, fish, deer, and gathered foods, as a focus of everyday activity, were the epitome of Ojibwe social and symbolic capital. Hunting and collecting activities produced “the capital that linked a material economy of things to a moral economy of persons, and so constructed a total economy of signs and practices” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:144). With the encroachment of Indigenous hunting territories by whites, and the corralling of Native families on reserves, it became apparent that traditional hunting economies were imperilled. As settlement projects were focussed on southern regions, Southern Native communities often fell prey to increasing social problems, resulting mainly from the poverty that ensued when hunting and fishing activities were prohibited. The influx of settlers along Lake Ontario, for instance, seriously depleted Ojibwa food supplies of wild game and fish (Schmalz 1991:150). Thus in southern Native settlements, Methodist missionaries found literally captive audiences to whom they might administer their message of practical economic reconstruction, and individual self-construction. It was,

however, first to the circumstances of material, rather than moral, matters that Methodists directed their efforts, transforming the everyday habits of the person in order to lay a foundation for conversion.

Teaching by example, Ojibwe missionaries became metonyms for “Christian civilization.” They farmed, rather than hunted, and advocated the settled life. They followed a daily work routine that was regimented by hours, minutes and seconds. Moreover, the missionaries were bilingual and literate. Several Anishinabe ministers wrote highly stylized autobiographies, which included chronologically ordered narratives of their traditional childhoods, conversion experiences, and later ministerial endeavours. These texts, in which the authors presented their lives as a series of historical events organized into coherent and finalized wholes, and which featured comparisons and contrasts between Ojibwe and white ways, contributed to the conceptualization of an Ojibwe nationhood. It was by means of such texts, moreover, that the life-work of the Ojibwe missionary -- his moral career of self-improvement -- would come to serve as a model of, and for, the “civilization” of Ojibwe peoples.

The independent Methodist Episcopal Church, which formed in 1784 out of the American Revolution, and which first entered Upper Canada in the 1790s, was a movement that sought to transform the very basis upon which a community’s social organization was premised. Methodist missionaries sought to remake the person as well as his context, his habits and his habitus⁴ (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:238). New Methodist coverts were organized into classes and grouped in local societies. Under a senior preacher, there stood the “extorter” and the “local preacher”, and below them, the “class leader,” each with his own respective set of responsibilities. Itinerant preachers travelled on circuits speaking to groups of societies, and assembled annually at a Church Council conference. According to Smith:

Itinerancy was the basic principle of the Methodist system...The minister had to keep constantly on the move, fulfilling a monthly preaching plan that allowed him to meet as many appointments as

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Bourdieu’s (1977) term “habitus” refers to a tacit realm of reproducible practices and dispositions. I employ it to designate everyday practices. I would assert that outside efforts to alter the Ojibwe habitus have rendered it more an area for conscious choice; one re-producible, moreover, only by means of political will.

possible, often more than one each day. He had to set up classes, appoint their leaders, counsel class leaders and local preachers, perform marriages and funeral, advise in family matters, bring news, and spread the gospel (1987:57).

The organizational structure and the mobility it fostered among church leaders, was not altogether different from the movements of Ojibwe hunters and fishers at the time. Nor did the roles and responsibilities of ministers differ greatly from those normally associated with Ojibwe chiefs and “medicine men,” who according to Peter Jones, governed more by persuasion than by coercion. It is incumbent upon the chiefs, he writes, to “settle all disputes which arise among the people, watch over their territories, regulate the order of their marches, and appoint the time for their general rendezvous” (1861:108-9). A central epistemological difference, however, lay in the missionaries’ perception of the preaching circuit as entraining “orderly” movement, which contrasted significantly with they viewed as the hunters’ “random” wanderings. Moreover, the missionary’s service to diplomacy inhered in inter-cultural, rather than intra-cultural affairs. Missionaries often interceded on behalf of Native communities in governmental affairs, but at the same time, did much to encourage the formation of intra-cultural factions, as Christians allied with other Christians, to the exclusion of “traditional” segments in each area. Not incidentally, it was those often of mixed blood who, excluded from the conventional spheres of prestige and power, first heard the Methodist calling (Jones 1861:241).

Methodism underscored the virtues of industry, thrift, discipline, punctuality, Bible reading, and abstinence from alcohol. Missionary work, moreover, was seen as inseparable from secular teaching (Schmalz 1991:151,155). Certain individuals, therefore, may have been attracted to Methodist missionary work because it offered possible alternatives to the deplorable social and material conditions that had come to characterize southern Native settlements at the time. White Christian communities, furthermore, were often associated with economic prosperity. Native communities may have been eager to gain access to the technologies which produced such wealth, without necessarily committing to a project of full-scale cultural change. Schmalz writes:

Both teaching jobs and missionary work were encouraged...particularly by the Methodists. People

who had acquired missionary and teacher skill in the mid-nineteenth century were held in high esteem in both the white and the Indian communities, particularly if they still retained their native language. They could fill the positions of preacher and teacher on the reserves, and also of writer and interpreter in the increasing need to communicate with the Indian Department. In some cases people holding these positions were given a salary and status equivalent to those of chief. It was an attractive incentive to study. In the mid-nineteenth century in southern Ontario, the educated Ojibwa missionary-teacher replaced the successful warrior-hunter in status (1991:156).

In Southern Ontario, Native villages in close proximity to large white settlements generally expressed the strongest desire for schools. Native peoples occupying less populated areas in northern Ontario, by contrast, showed little interest in acquiring the sedentary agricultural lifestyle that accompanied mission-driven educational endeavours (Schmalz 1991:157). Much to the chagrin of both Native and non-Native missionaries, moreover, there were regions even in the most populated areas of the south, such as along Lake St. Claire and the Thames River, that persistently rejected the successive and multi-denominational waves of Christian reformers who rivalled for Aboriginal adherents.

Ojibwe communities, in general, were somewhat more receptive to Methodism, than were the Iroquois. For the most part, the Senecas, Cayugas and Onondagas, as strong adherents to the Code of Handsome Lake, openly rejected those elements of Christian ideology not already incorporated by Handsome Lake, and commercial agriculture in toto (Smith 1987:49). Many of the Mohawks and Oneidas, on the other hand, whose history with whites began in their ancestral home in present day New York were already literate owing to their alliance with the Church of England (Petrone 1990:35). It was perhaps the conversion to Methodism, and subsequent ministering of eight Ojibwe individuals, among them Peter Jones, George Copway and Henry Bird Steinhauer, for instance, that Methodist pedagogy in literacy and agriculture, were able to make such significant advances in Ojibwe communities in Upper Canada.

Crops, Clocks and Cupboards

The separation of political, religious, educational, and economical domains which had come to characterize early nineteenth century European industrial capitalist society, was not a feature of Ojibwe practice. What Europeans, at the time, would categorize as “religious” or symbolic action, saturated the

habitual forms of everyday Ojibwe activity. As Bourdieu writes, “one cannot really *live* the belief associated with profoundly different conditions of existence...still less give others the means of reliving it by the sheer power of discourse...” (1990:68). Clearly demarcating realms of the sacred -- designating preachers, churches, altars and a Sabbath day -- created a context for the transmission of practical mastery through *practice*. Without rising to the level of discourse, Methodist missionary activity focussed on gaining control over the material and semantic practices of the mundane.

The modifications of seemingly insignificant habits of the body that were introduced as a corollary of conversion to Methodism, would bring with them significant social changes. Methodists endeavoured to instill a set of organizational principles that were drawn from European industrial capitalist culture, with the intention to root these fundamental societal structures in the primary experiences of the body, and thereby to embed in the corporeal, an epistemology of morality, as a necessary precursor to the construction of a moral economy. These principles included but were not limited to: the valuation of private property and the primacy of the private family estate; the ideal of material accumulation and the proper attitudes towards toward work and time; the privileging of individual human choice over inherited tribal affiliations and obligations; and finally, participation in a global market economy through “civilized” technologies of commodity production and trade. That the preceding were the intended innovations of Methodist efforts is evident in the responses written in mid-nineteenth-century Ontario, by Ojibwe Methodist minister, Peter Jones, to questions proposed by government Commissioners. When queried on what course of action he would prescribe to promote “religious improvement,” Jones suggests combining manual labour with religious instruction, and training youth to become missionaries and school teachers (1861:238). He concludes that building industrial schools and congregating “scattered tribes” into settlements would improve the moral, intellectual and social situation of Ojibwe peoples (1861:239).

Wholly convinced of the reconstructive power inherent in Methodism, Jones enumerates the “progressive” steps taken to enact the ideal of moral order:

Previous to the year 1823, at which time I was converted to Christianity, the Chippeway and indeed all the tribes were in a most degraded state; they were pagans, idolaters, superstitious,

drunken, filthy, and indolent; they wandered about from place, living in wigwams, and subsisted by hunting and fishing. Since their conversion, paganism, idolatry, and superstition, have been removed, and the true God acknowledged and worshipped. The Christians are sober, and comparatively clean and industrious; they have formed themselves into settlements, where they have places of worship and schools, and cultivate the earth (1861:236).

In addition to new spiritual beliefs, Methodist converts in Jones' home community (the Credit River band) took on European names, a fixed residence, and agricultural practices, which constituted an economic base that was radically different from that of the fur trade era. Families moved from widely scattered circular wigwams to rectangular log houses which were arranged along straight lines. Extended families sharing communal dwellings moved to residences which enclosed the members of the immediate family within walls. Previously discrete domains of activity of men's and women's work began to merge and intersect. In some cases, new separations of gendered work arose. By 1826, the Credit River settlement had come to stand as a model for a nascent reserve system. The newly classified reserve embodied the Methodist aesthetic of "correctly" inhabited space in every detail. In addition to a chapel and a school, which separated religious from educational activities, the domestic area was carefully partitioned with: "window curtains, boxes and trunks for their European wearing apparel, small shelves fastened against the wall for their books, closets for their cooking utensils, and cupboards for their plates, cups, saucers, knives, and forks; some had clocks and watches" (cited in Wilson 1986:67).

The basic economic unit shifted from the extended, to the nuclear family, and Ojibwe women were directed to focus their activities inwardly, toward the management of this emergent household sphere (Jones 1861:237). In addition to influencing changes in gender roles, the Methodist re-organizational agenda was directed toward the realm of the body; converts were expected to be fully dressed in European apparel at all times. Social practices followed suit. Methodists were expected to practice monogamy, and parents were no longer entitled to arrange marriages for their offspring based on membership in totemic clans. The Church, alone, retained the power to acknowledge marital unions, and encouraged inter-marriage with whites so as to assist in the general process of adoption of white ways. Despite the full-fledged ideological affront these principles represented to Ojibwe socio-cosmological articulations; practical concerns proved

to be extremely powerful, for with conversion, the Mississaguas were provided with desperately needed economic aid which took the form of farming technologies and tools. Cooperation with evangelists, even if partly superficial, ensured the participation of a large network of white Methodists, as well as Native preachers, in community development. The external attention, validation and protection gained through incorporation into the Methodist body, offered a means by which to avert any further encroachment of Native territories.

Unfortunately, the Methodists were not content with skin-deep reform; in return for their services they expected nothing less than one's very soul. Stressing the morality of "properly inhabited space" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:42), and enterprisingly employed time, the Methodists saw in the "unsettled" life an implicit immorality. The mobility essential to hunting lifestyles, was viewed as random "wandering" and represented uncircumscribed activity, and by extension, ungovernability. "Idleness" signified non-profitably spent time. "Inebriation" epitomized exceeding the acceptable limits of consumption. Communal living quarters, like "dirt," were evidence of an improper mixing of domains. Following this logic, "idolatry" might equally have been viewed as *misplaced* spiritual energy. With little concern to, or perhaps awareness of, the economy of signs and practices embodied in the hunt, Jones, who must have seen the Indian community as the pinnacle of disarray, writes:

Desirous of the welfare of our Christian Indians, I have often longed for the time when the game and fur shall be so destroyed as to leave no inducement for them to abandon their farms and houses. This, coming from the pen of an Indian, may appear strange; but I have good reasons for saying so. No one acquainted with the hunting propensities of Indians will deny that the little game now left is rather a source of injury than benefit to them. It induces them to leave their homes, and fosters indolent and lounging habits. So long as they depend upon this precarious mode of subsistence they must continue in wretchedness and want. The sooner, therefore, they abandon hunting the better. They will then from necessity be compelled to devote their attention to the more primitive, healthy, and profitable employment of man, and become tillers of the ground (1861:172).

It could be argued that such evangelical efforts facilitated the economic transition, at least for some Ojibwe communities, from communal hunting to commodity production, insofar as the essential features that inhered in the agriculturalism introduced by the Methodists -- an appreciation of money, time, work discipline and so on, oriented individuals, at least to some degree, toward the culture and practices of

industrial capitalism.

In a similar vein, one might view the pedagogic activity of Ojibwe and other missionaries as contributing to the colonization of Indigenous systems of knowledge. Aboriginal missionaries/teachers, as representatives of successful conversions, were, after all, living lessons of European styled self-hood, and bourgeois individualism. Forces larger than missionary activities alone, however, conspired to create the social and political inequalities that characterized the colonial situation in nineteenth century Ontario. Thus, the extent to which Ojibwe missionaries achieved any power to act as agents of change, must be understood within the context of a larger power structure, one which acknowledges the hegemony of a state apparatus that is able to determine that change will occur, and to profoundly shape what forms change will take.

Together, Native missionaries formed a unique class; more highly educated than the average white settler, yet lacking civil rights; with a foot in each world, belonging to both yet neither; their status was perhaps best described as an ascribed ambivalency. Although they advocated agricultural and educational reform, and integrative technologies they hoped would grant Indian people access to decision making power, as a marginal group, they had little power to control the institutions they helped to create. Education, for instance, once seized from the control of the Indigenous masses, institutionalized in schooling, and regulated through state legislation, would serve to sharpen, rather than diminish, the distinction between a class of colonial subjects, and a class of colonizing administrators.

Missionaries were not alone in advocating education, many Native leaders made the promise to promote instruction in speaking, reading and writing in the English language -- capabilities which were correctly perceived as weapons which empowered colonial administrators -- a condition to treaty signing.

Miller writes:

It was a result of such thinking, and pursuant to Aboriginal rather than government prodding, that a provision was inserted in each of the seven treaties signed in the 1870s promising a school on the reserve 'whenever the Indians shall desire it' (1996:99).

That the spirit of such promises, in general, was not honoured is a matter of historical record. According to

Miller, the primary mandate of residential schools even after the 1950s when post war prosperity made more funding available to schools, was to Christianize Native children, and to provide vocational training in order to inculcate farming, fishing and labouring skills in boys, and domestic skills in girls. The training, which produced little by way of useful academic skills, was often merely a facade for operating the school itself, and provided Native youth neither access to the Euro-Canadian job market (1996:181), nor the skills necessary to function as competent participants in Native land-based economies. It would not be until after the 1950s that literacy rates would rise; as Native parents, some of whom having returned from the War were able to compare the conditions of reserve with urban life, insisted that their children be permitted to attend schools along with non-Native students. It was commonly known, that white schools exacted higher teaching qualifications from their teachers, and therefore provided a better education (Schmalz 1991). The role of Christianity was at the same time ironic and contradictory, in attempting to improve the conditions of reserve Indians, it was to prepare them for their eventual subordination. While Methodism, for instance, encouraged literacy, sobriety and industry, it also demanded the adoption of vastly different conceptions of work, time and value. In adopting these ideas, Native individuals were initiated into industrial capitalism, however, with limited access to the full spectrum of capitalist sectors. Aboriginal men, for example, were normally restricted to low paying manual labour jobs, and women to domestic service in non-Native homes.

Moderate Modernity: Selective Appropriation and the Hybrid Form

Although missionized communities often divided into opposing factions, organized under such designations as “traditional,” “moderate,” and “progressive;” membership in one group did not necessarily preclude participation in, or interaction with, another. Thus, each life-strategy was seldom as discrete, stable nor as distinct from the others as these labels imply. Ojibwe conversions to Methodism, for instance, did not necessarily represent the victory of the modern world over the traditional, nor the mere replacement of beliefs. As Aihwa Ong has pointed out, moreover, “modernity” ought not to be viewed as a European

invention. Non-European modernities are not necessarily derived merely from the so-called “definitive” Western model (1996:61). Modernity is a contingent process. The Moderates pursued modernity in a 19th century Southern Ontario Ojibwe context, for instance, by intertwining or combining elements, and often by redeploying the very forms of the modern that were used to identify them as its “others.” Peter Jones, perhaps the staunchest of Methodist supporters, for instance, used Indian medicines, carried a sacred eagle feather, and continued to fast, as was customary for Ojibwe men prior to a hunting or war party, before undertaking a work of Gospel translation (Smith 1987:242). He is the first person, moreover, to have rendered the Ojibwe language to written form. This was not new. Native peoples during the fur trade, actively, yet selectively, sought out practical information, including other technical forms, to deal with the changing circumstances of their environments.

Furthermore, long before the arrival of Europeans, Aboriginal peoples had extensive histories of interaction, through trade and raiding for instance, where cultural information was exchanged with other Indigenous groups. Prophetic, spiritually motivated revelations, and the contact with, and sometimes assimilation by, other Aboriginal culture groups (which frequently resulted from migration and warfare), suggest that changes in consciousness and a critical attitude toward the present were anything but new to Aboriginal peoples. If modernity operates, as Rofel suggests, as “a story that people tell themselves about themselves in relation to Others” (1992:96), it certainly was induced *among* Aboriginal groups long before the arrival of Europeans⁵. Unlike the cold closed structures by means of which the “cultures” of Native peoples are sometimes conceived of today, with both geographical and ideological boundaries marking one Native group off from “others,” Aboriginal ethnic borders were then as they are now, porous. What the Ojibwe missionaries offered by way of insider views of the cultures and traditions of Ojibwe people

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What Povinelli asserts regarding the promise of a traditional Aboriginal presence, however, could be argued for an Aboriginal modernity. She insists that traditionality is not simply discursive. Rather, “It also produces and organizes subaltern and dominant feelings, expectations, desires, disappointments, and frustrations — sometimes directed at a particular person or group, sometimes producing a more diffuse feeling” (1999:29).

amounted to a critical culturalist discourse, which promoted an increasingly *relative* sense of the meaning of heritage.⁶ Because this discourse was framed in terms of comparison and contrast with other cultures, it made available to individuals an array of experiences that would have been otherwise unimaginable to them. With this information, Aboriginal individuals consequently became increasingly capable of envisioning a wider range both of cultural others, and of possible lives for themselves. The Ojibwe intelligentsia selected as objects of analysis cultural elements such as: religion, mode of subsistence, economy, political systems and so on. These they wove into a coherent form which could be used, as Featherstone has suggested, “to give the past a sense of direction and construct a national identity” (1996:53). These elements are still invoked by Ojibwe peoples today, as the defining features of Ojibwe culture, and indeed, “culture” in general.

The Commaroffs argue that although motivated by a desire to appropriate European technological and cultural forms to suit their own ends, the Tswana of South Africa, who were subjected to British Methodist re-organizational projects, “...were inducted into the *forms* of European discourse; into the ideological terms of rational argument and empirical reason” (1992 :245), and into European “forms of communication and representation” (1992:254). In merely debating the relative power of Tswana rain makers and white preachers, for instance, or in comparing or contrasting white and Tswana ways; the Tswana entered an embattled terrain wherein Europeans possessed the power to determine the rules of combat. In negotiating their relationships to these European forms, therefore, the Tswana were to some extent affirming the validity of these forms.

Ojibwe missionaries, who participated in the transcription of the Ojibwe language, in the translation of biblical texts, and in comparisons of white and Ojibwe customs, employed the very discursive

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In this context, modernity might be instructively understood as a highly accentuated form of hybridity — one that emerges from the process of cross-cultural translation and which designates a change of consciousness. I would submit that Ojibwes were traditionally hybrid. However, the Ojibwe intelligentsia articulated the new more complex form of hybridity, which emerged through contact with Europeans, in a culturalist discourse. Their stories chronicled the transformation from the traditional to the modern or *neo-traditional*.

strategies deemed appropriate by those same European agents of colonization that were responsible for the oppression of Ojibwe peoples. They implicitly accepted that European industrial capitalism, like Christianity, had become the measuring stick with which “other” economies were to be compared, and against which other traditions were to be measured. While they did not necessarily idealize capitalism, their responses to the social disruption it brought were articulated in its logic. They tended to see Ojibwe cultural affairs as “worthy” of inclusion in its discourses, and therefore set about to bring the objects of their analysis within the prevailing system of European scientific classification and its incumbent hegemony of forms. Subjecting these objects to a “scientific” re-ordering was enough to create a congruence with the European discourse on language.

The politics of language was principally a debate about structure or ordering, not substantive content. The work of translation involved re-organizing the Ojibwe language, stressing vocabulary and a normative grammatical form. Working within the categories of Indo-European languages, Ojibwe ministers took on this work of de- and re-classification, and in so doing, re-presented Ojibwe language and customs to Ojibwe peoples in new terms. As much of the debate was carried out in print, literacy was a crucial, if not fundamental, discursive strategy without which one simply could not participate. After repeated demands for fair treatment had met with government disinterest, the Ojibwe missionaries correctly perceived that Europeans would not respond to arguments framed in the Ojibwe oral idiom. As George Copway wrote in the preface to his book, “I am an Indian, and am well aware of the difficulties I have to encounter to win the favourable notice of the white man” (1847:1). It was as if the colonial administrators were deaf to all but the “proper” (European) means of expression, without which one simply had no voice whatsoever. The desire on the part of Ojibwe missionaries to impart English instruction probably had more to do with this view of the position of Native peoples in a political reality of European making, than with any perceived superiority of European languages or modes of communication.

As in the transformation of production practices, changes to the Ojibwe modes of communication would require significant epistemological adjustments. Prior to the cultivation of crops, Ojibwe peoples

associated plants and animals with the personal potencies of hunter and medicine spirits. Success in hunting as in curing, required that one nurture a respectful relationship with these beings, and with other community members (Copway 1847:36). With the introduction of agriculture, Ojibwe farmers were encouraged by their Methodist teachers, to view their crops as the products of “righteous industry,” which invariably flowed from the “proper” deployment of self-possessed human labour. Once sacred connections between an individual, his community, and his spirit helpers were effectively subverted by the symbolic domination of a logic system in which the market, rather than a pantheon of spirit forces, was central.

Practical activity was thus as important to the construction of a Methodist worldview, as it was to the material basis of the civilizing mission (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:248). The Methodist’s emphasis on the relationship between cultivation and salvation, the plow and the Bible, prepared adherents for an economy based on commodity production, which brought labour values under market control; as well as for a religion which rendered submission to the church hierarchy a requirement of Christian redemption. As the ability to consult the written Bible was deemed the sign of a “cultivated” mind, schooling was an integral part of this process of colonizing Ojibwe consciousness. It was out of these linked processes, that the colonial subject would be manufactured. “Disentangled” from hereditary and tribal affiliations and obligations, “delivered” from superstition and animism, “liberated” to pursue “disciplined” education, “released” from the “primitive” pursuit of the hunt, the Ojibwe agriculturalist had become a veritable free-agent, subject only to his own alleged “innate” limitations, and of course, to Church and State law.

Missionaries competed relentlessly with “traditional” chiefs and medicine men for the authority to inflect educational practices. Two information orders were at battle, one -- oral, the other -- written.

According to Petrone, in Aboriginal oral traditions:

The *word* carried the power to create, to make things happen -- medicine to heal, plants to grow, animals to be caught, and human being to enter the spiritual world...Words did not merely represent meaning. They possessed the power to change reality itself (1990:10).

As the repositories of “old ways,” the words of tribal Elders held the power to invoke spirits to cure as well as to cause harm, to impart information that issued from other than human realms, and to transmit the

attitudes, gestures as well as the verbal skills necessary for competency in Ojibwe hunting society. Oral narrative was the means by which Native peoples formulated their basic assumptions about the universe and their place in it. As cultural knowledge was generally transmitted by Elders, they were crucial to the process of socializing the youth. Moreover, as Petrone points out:

Many narratives were considered private property in some tribes, or in societies within the tribe (for example, the Midewewin Society of the Ojibway), and were owned by a particular person or family. This secrecy meant that only a limited few - certain initiated elders - had knowledge of them. Only they had the right to tell or hear them, or to perform the associated rituals. Restricted access to certain kinds of knowledge helped to ensure their power and authority (1990:11).

It is surely a testament to the determination of particular Elders, that this knowledge still exists today, despite centuries of attempts by colonial officials to eliminate it entirely.

The determination of the “traditionals,” however, did not deter the missionaries. They translated hymn and prayer books into Ojibwe, and distributed spelling and grammar booklets to Ojibwe children, hoping to instill a comprehension of Christian theology, which was essentially expostulated in book form. Certainly the Bible, which accompanied every missionary, was used to exemplify the centrality of literacy to Christianity. The potential for mass production and dissemination of these texts, helped to undermine the authority of an information system which would have closely guarded such knowledge. Certain forms of Native knowledge were highly individualistic, gained through lived experiences, and cumulatively amassed over a lifetime. The European styled education, on the other hand, in which valued knowledge was vested in the allegedly objective realm of scientific reason, and stored in books to which any literate person had access, wrestled access to this type of knowledge away from its aged keepers, and put it in the hands of any able reader. The interpolation of alphabetic literacy into Native knowledge systems did not therefore produce a simple progression from communal to privatized knowledge. Assumptions associated with this type of information flow were, however, the very foundation of a print consciousness, and were as necessary to the spread literacy, as to the proliferation of “the good word.”

In writing, unlike conventional oral Ojibwe storytelling, for instance, Ojibwe students were taught to use roman script and employed successive linear, series of signs to express relationships (Bourdieu

1977:83). In transcribing, they necessarily submitted to grammatical rules and conventions of organization. A written text, moreover, could be mechanically reproduced, and therefore could achieve a level of abstraction that was otherwise impossible in oral traditions, where words were never divorced from their speaker, nor from the specific contexts in which they were spoken. The writing Ojibwe children in Ontario were taught, unlike Cree syllabics, required adherence to a particular logic of text construction and dissemination, one vastly different from oration. Finally, a pedagogy with literacy as its foundation, transformed the very activity of learning from a corporeal practice of performing or doing, to an austere exercise in reading. To some extent, one must concede that the terms of the debate over education at least, were indeed fixed by the group better positioned to impose its manner of construction on the reality that was shared, albeit unevenly, by Europeans and Indian people alike in the "New World."

Despite the hegemony of European forms, however, the ways in which Ojibwe peoples resisted and/or accommodated them were not always obvious. Undeniably Europeans possessed the means to define the terms of the discourse, hybridity, as Shohat and Stam assert, is both power-laden and asymmetrical, often representing for the oppressed and those forced to become "complementary" to the dominant culture, a sublimated form of historical pain (1994:43). Some Native individuals, however, have found ways to innovatively reconstruct these forms to their own advantage, mixing traditions and discourses as a strategy of survival, and inventing novel hybridized idioms of expression in the process. In mastering and transforming European forms of communication, for instance, Ojibwe missionaries fashioned a distinctly Ojibwe English, ripe with the metaphors, allegories, and symbolism that characterized Ojibwe oration, which they used to convey information to an emergent audience of literate Native peoples. In transforming these hegemonic discursive formations, and applying them in novel ways toward the service of their people, Ojibwe writers defiantly made the print medium their own.

The Anishinabek Literati: The beginnings of Native Print Journalism in Canada

Although hardly representative of the experience of the majority of Ojibwe peoples, the academic

achievements of a select group of eight college educated Ojibwe individuals were considerable, given that at the same time the average pioneer child attended only Sunday school (1991:154). As discussed in previous sections, success in education for the Ojibwe was intimately linked with Methodism, and it was no coincidence that the most highly European educated Ojibwe individuals later took on highly responsible positions within the Methodist ministry.

In addition to agricultural techniques, however, Ojibwe missionaries sought to provide their peoples with the tools necessary to achieve competency in a rapidly changing political environment. As Ojibwe peoples became subject to increasing government legislation, Ojibwe missionaries were wary that literacy would be crucial to the struggle to retain mastery over both their physical and cultural domains. In Southern Ontario, schools for Native children were developed owing to the initiative of Methodist educated individuals, who were determined to ensure the participation of Ojibwe peoples in the policy making processes which would greatly affect the conditions of reserve life. Kahkewaquonaby (Peter Jones), one of the two first ordained Methodist ministers in Canada, and the son of a Welsh father and Mississauga mother, began to establish schools and churches among the Ojibwa in 1824 (Schmalz 1991:151).⁷

Jones was an avid scholar, whose writing spanned a wide range of genres. He studied scriptures, and understood white laws and edicts. Often employing Indian runners, he sent letters to Methodist missionaries in other regions, local as well as English government officials and to newspapers such as the Methodists' *The Christian Guardian*. Jones served as the Canadian Correspondent for the London based 'Aborigines Protection Society' magazine, *Colonial Intelligencer*: or, *Aborigines' Friend* (Schmalz 1991:216). In addition to his public writing, Jones kept a diary, in which he recorded his thoughts and some

7

By the time of his Anglican baptism in 1820, Peter Jones, having lived with the Mohawks along the Grand River, had learned to farm and had internalized the concept of private property. His conversion was motivated by his desire to acquire for himself the privileges that were the exclusive preserve of whites in the area (Smith 1987:48). It was his later conversion to Methodism however, that would provide him with the organizational tools required to enact social reform. As an extorter (an upper rank in the Methodist missionary order), Jones' first project was to introduce farming to the Mississaugas at Davisville (Smith 1987:65).

of his sermons. In his *History of the Ojebway Indians* (1861), Jones describes the nature of his initial scholarly accomplishments:

With regard to the Ojebway language, I was the first person who attempted to reduce it to a written form; and, in so doing I made use of the Roman characters. I first translated the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments. After this I wrote a small spelling-book, and then translated a few of Wesley's and Watts' hymns, with the following portions of Holy Scripture: - Genesis, Matthew, and John (1861:188-9).

Jones attracted the attention and praise of white newspaper writers, who were particularly interested to comment on his lecture tours. On the surface, the coverage he was deemed to warrant would attest to an acknowledgement of his acceptance into the discursive realm of preaching, as a capable, and thus equal, missionary amongst other competent and like-minded individuals. The entirely negative publicity he received from the same reporters, however, when he married a white woman, would undermine any sense of complacency he might have earlier enjoyed (Smith 1987:143). George Beaver posits that the American press' accusations that the marriage was "unnatural," "improper" and "revolting" were directly linked with political projects at the time. He writes:

President Andrew Jackson was in the midst of removing by force, tens of thousands of eastern Indians to lands west of the Mississippi. The white people wanted to hear stories that said Indians were wild, bad savages incapable of human emotions in order to ease their own consciences. If Indians could be envisioned as sub-human and unworthy of fair treatment, then no one need to lose any sleep over their plight (1997:75).

Evidently in Canada, where the marriage was considered equally morally disquieting, it was acceptable for Indian people to aspire to the "civilized life," provided they did so without overstepping the acceptable limits of settler morality. Assimilation was perhaps, always more of an *ideal*, than a real possibility, as the class of "civilized Indians" was prohibited from achieving structural equality to even the lowest of white social classes. Despite the rigidity of political barriers, the Ojibwe intelligentsia refused to accept that promoting literacy and agriculture were exercises in futility. They persisted in asserting that Indian peoples were equal with whites in their capacities to apprehend these technologies, as is apparent in the following passage, written by Jones to government officials:

Indians at the present time enjoy no political rights or advantages. They cannot vote at elections for member of Parliament, nor sit as jurors, however qualified they may be, simply because they

have no title-deeds for their lands. I feel confident that these things act as a powerful check to their advancement in the arts of civilized life. I have often heard them say that it is not much use for the Indians to aim at the exalted privileges of their white neighbours, as they will never be permitted to enjoy them. I know of no legal impediment to their possessing such rights; the difficulty lies in the tenure by which they hold their lands. It is my firm conviction that many of the Indians are sufficiently instructed in the knowledge of civil affairs to be able to use the rights of British subjects as judiciously as many of their white neighbours (1861: 217-18).

Although his sentiments were inscribed in the mid 1800s, it would take more than a century before action would be taken to redress these issues, by way of amendments to the Indian Act in 1951.

Jones' frame of reference was not limited to local affairs, in addition to making several trips to England, he participated in the annual Methodist meetings in the United States where he became apprised of events and developments occurring in other Native Methodist circles. He was particularly impressed by the Cherokees, who had retained a large tribal territory, and in whose communities the American Methodist Episcopal church claimed to have inspired 800 conversions by 1829. According to Smith:

By every test the tribe constituted a distinct nation, with its own political constitution modeled on that of the United States, its own public schools, and its own newspaper...For [Jones] the Cherokees epitomized what the Upper Canadian Indians could become: self-supporting Christian farmers (1987:114-5).

In *History of the Ojebway Indians*, Jones cites a speech made by Cherokee missionary, John Ridge, in which he remarks on the invention of a Cherokee alphabet by George Guess (Sequoyah) (1861:187-8). Jones was hopeful that similar attention would accrue to the Ojibwe language. He writes, "It is my opinion that if it be desirable to form a written standard of the language, new characters should be invented, something like the Cherokee" (1861:190). However, in addition to the perceived educational benefits a written Ojibwe language might proffer, Jones was mindful of the political predicament shared by Ojibwes and Cherokees alike, and closely followed Cherokee peoples efforts to use a written version of their language to influence public opinion. According to Nabokov:

Before their peoples were forced out of present-day Oklahoma in the 1830s, the Choctaw and Cherokee established a network of over two hundred classrooms. Tribal literacy among their youth rose by ninety percent. The long tradition of Indian journalism was also launched around then with the *Cherokee Phoenix* published in both native and English languages in Georgia. The motive behind such initiatives was spelled out in a Cherokee elder's words to younger Indians, "Remember that the whites are near us. With them we have constant intercourse, and you must be sensible, that unless you can speak their language, read and write as they do, they will be able to

cheat you and trample on your rights" (1992:215).

According to Richard LaCourse, Cherokee employed the *Cherokee Phoenix* as a form of resistance to removal and as a means of defence. The first edition appeared on February 21, 1828 and employed a form of written Cherokee, invented by Sequoyah, and English⁸. The *Cherokee Phoenix* printing presses were disassembled and buried when the Georgia troops invaded the territory (1994:55-6). In June of 1839, after 4000 Cherokee men, women and children had been killed along The Trail of Tears, Elias Boudinot, former Editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix* was executed by Cherokee people under the *Cherokee Blood Law*, a piece of legislation ratified by the Cherokee General Council in 1829, which forbade the sale or disposal of Cherokee lands without the Council's consent (*The Cherokee Observer Online* 1992-1997).

In 1838, at the annual Methodist meeting in New York, Jones, who feared Upper Canada might adopt legislation similar to the American removal policies, learned of the brutal eviction of the Cherokees (Smith 1987:171). The event reaffirmed his own convictions of the necessity to secure land through title for the Ojibwe in Ontario, so as to defend the non-surrendered territories, as well as to provide a place of refuge for those desirous of avoiding removal in the States. According to Smith:

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of his life occurred the following year in late January 1840, when several hundred chiefs and warriors from across Upper Canada gathered for a grand council at the Indian village on the Credit. At this, the first modern Indian political meeting in present-day Ontario, he hoped that Upper Canada's Indian bands would formulate a joint position on landownership, education, and a future Anishinabe homeland (1987:172).

Although he was successful in gathering the concerned parties at the council, a consensus was never achieved. It was not, however, owing to divisions between the "traditionals" and the "progressives," that talks broke down. Rather, the initial dispute occurred between the traditional segments of Iroquoian and

8

By the time Sequoyah had invented the Cherokee alphabet, the majority of the Cherokee leaders had adopted English as the official language for the nation. Sequoyah was a traditionalist who viewed the Cherokee script not as inherently civilizing, but as a means of preserving Cherokee values and practices and thus as an instrument of cultural conservatism. According to Murray, Sequoyah devised a Cherokee script not to render his people more like whites, but quite literally, to draw a boundary line between nations. The bulk of Cherokee alphabetic writing, Murray informs, was on the subject of disputed land transfers rather than on spiritual matters (1991:28).

Ojibwe communities, whose contesting interpretations of an important symbol on the wampum belts incited the Iroquoian chiefs to withdraw from the meeting (Smith 1987:176). The Ojibwe chiefs who remained sent a petition to the lieutenant governor of Upper Canada urging that control of the unceded Saugeen territory be returned, which was subsequently ignored. The precarious unity of the Ojibwes dissolved soon after, particularly with regard to the Christianized groups. The Methodist church divided into three opposing factions, which were pitted against each other and against Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Mormon proselytes, as well as the Traditionals (Smith 1987:182). The complex array of political allegiances and rivalries reflected the multiform strategies for survival employed by Ojibwe peoples, none of which was informed exclusively by the desire to wholly dismiss, nor to wholly accommodate, the colonialists' directives.

Although the intertribal, and then pan-Ojibwe, political mobilizations failed to remedy the colonial government's indifference to Native concerns, Ojibwes continued to press their case by creating discursive formations of another order. Exclusion from equal participation in white literary circles, for instance, impelled Native intellectuals to develop their own literary enclave, one which innovatively combined selected elements from Native and white worlds and from ancient and contemporary times, one moreover, which corresponded with their own unique experiential sense of reality. Motivated by the desire to harness the technical power of whites, while at the same time maintaining their autonomy, the Ojibwe literati, the first literary circle of Indians in Canada, contributed to the construction of a discourse which Petrone describes as:

...a protest literature, official in nature, taking the forms of letters, petitions, and reports, written to a variety of government agencies, British and American. [In which] the overriding theme is a sense of loss - loss of land, loss of hunting and fishing rights, loss of self-sufficiency and dignity, loss of nationhood (1990:60).

Accompanying the theme of dispossession, however, was an equally powerful assertion of cultural pride.

Ojibwe authors, who wrote to each other and to other missionaries, to Christian newspapers and the periodical press, vociferously asserted that together, Ojibwe language, and Ojibwe practices and traditions, comprised a coherent body, one moreover, that warranted attention and discussion in a public forum.

Printed Pride and Protest: Early Anishnabek Literature

Just as Ojibwe experiences of agricultural production involved a making sense of Methodist notions of work, time and value by using and retooling an existing set of cultural categories, Ojibwe authors' approaches to written communication drew on their familiarity with the conventional genres of Ojibwe storytelling and oration. It was by means of this interplay of forms, rather than in a total replacement of one set of forms by another, that Ojibwe authors sought to define Ojibwe culture in relation to, for instance, English culture, and in so doing were transformed by the process itself.

The confrontation of European and Ojibwe information systems produced syncretic⁹ or blended results. It was from the hybridization of Ojibwe forms of communication that the discourse of protest, based on comparison and contrast, could be derived. Much like earlier trading encounters either with Europeans or other Indigenous groups, Methodism encouraged those Native people it confronted to draw analogies, and to note incongruities, between their own familiar ways, and the ways of cultural others -- between Christian and Ojibwe modes of doing and being. Whereas many comparisons were made in terms of the content of Christian and Ojibwe religious discourse, for instance missionaries commented upon the similarities in Ojibwe and Hebrew renditions of the deluge, and on wars between different totemic clans, on the mutual faith in dreams and on similar customs of fasting and sacrifice (Smith 1987:74); it was the drastically different forms these elements took, that led even Ojibwe missionaries to see as dualistic, Ojibwe spirituality and Christianity. Perhaps more importantly, however, it was the reality of extreme political inequality which led them to posit the existence of two radically different realms of experience, namely, the

9

Hamid Naficy maintains that hybridity is a special case of syncretism by which a subject "hovers between subjectivities." Hybridity, the composite form, is characterized by contradiction and instabilities and leads to positional ambivalence, he says; while syncretism, an adoption of outer forms only, is about the creation of a new culture (1993:17,188,189). My use of the term hybridity, on the other hand, is more along the lines of Bakhtin's term "heteroglossia," as in the inevitable outcome of syncretizing activity. I would maintain that what one selectively appropriated from another culture would affect to what extent an internal resolution would be possible. There may be, therefore, different shades of hybridity. I concur with Naficy, however, that syncretism is a strategy employed by the oppressed under conditions of traumatic intercultural encounters to sheath their beliefs and thereby to ensure their longevity. I would add, however, that syncretism is also borne, under certain circumstances, of opportunity and not merely, therefore, of loss.

Indian and the white world.

Ojibwe Methodist ministers played a decisive role in objectifying Ojibwe ways. Native missionaries used their intercultural skills, for instance, to create a written historical record of their own lives. The form these autobiographies assumed was neither conventional of Ojibwe storytelling, nor a mirror reflection of the European heroic history genre that was popular at the time; Ojibwe autobiographies borrowed heavily from each. The life stories of Ojibwe missionaries were told in English and in written form. Ojibwe writers, moreover, subscribed to the European sense of biography, which as Bourdieu writes:

is an ideologically loaded construct with a number of unstated presuppositions; among them, that the "life of an individual is "a coherent and finalized whole," chronologically ordered, and thereby made meaningful..." "This way of looking at life...implies tacit acceptance of the philosophy of history as a series of historical events (*Geschichte*)...and historical narrative (*Historie*)" (cited in Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:261).

Unlike European heroic narratives, however, Ojibwe autobiographies seldom recount merely the life-story of the author, but read more like early ethnographies, detailing the beliefs and practices of a people.

Frequently they begin with a telling of the Ojibwe origin story, as in Peter Jones' *History of the Ojebway Indians*, in which he writes about his perceptions and recollections of Ojibwe: legends, languages, religion, marriage customs, place names, traditional land use and so on. Kahgegagahbowh (George Copway), one of the first Ojibwe students to attend the Methodist institution at Rice Lake, was the first Native person in Canada to write a book in English, *The Life, History and Travels of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bow*, which was published in 1847 (Schmalz 1991:152). Three years later in 1851, Copway would be the first Native North American to publish a tribal history in English, *The Traditional History and Characteristics Sketches of the Ojibwa Nation* (Petrone 1990:43).

In his first book, Copway describes the cosmology, customs, spiritual beliefs, language and history of fifteen Southern Chippewa communities. Much like Jones' *Life and Journals*, Copway's work offers a highly personalized account on his own, "traditional" Ojibwe childhood, his conversion to Methodism, and his subsequent evangelizing endeavours. These stories which present life-histories as the progression, along a moral trajectory, of a career of self-improvement, and later, Indian improvement in general, were offered

as arguments, albeit highly idealized ones, of the capacities of Indian peoples for “civility.” Despite what may, on the surface, appear as evidence of complete assimilation, the early Ojibwe autobiographical texts, bore the seeds of political dissent. In a phrase which casts light on what motivated perhaps one Ojibwe Methodist preacher’s entire career, Jones for instance, after presenting a grammatical analysis of Ojibwe language, in a somewhat challenging tone writes “The Ojebway language is capable of being arranged into grammatical order” (1861:179).

As an effort to redeem Ojibwe rights, at a time when Europeans were more apt to view all Native peoples as a mass of undifferentiated “children of nature” (Petrone 1990:2), that is, as incapable of achieving culture, Peter Jones defiantly included in his work chapters on “Ojibwe Tradition,” and “The Capacity of The Indians for Receiving Instruction;” anecdotes documenting instances of Ojibwe “wit and shrewdness,” “honesty,” “loyalty,” “capability to use their rights as British subjects,” “desire for instruction” and “generosity” (Jones 1861).

Copway’s writing asserts that the appropriation of the discourse of the other is not necessarily “an acritical, mechanical process but a dialogical and creative one in which certain values and propositions are rejected...and others...are reinterpreted and revindicated” (Hernández Castillo 1998:144). Although his writing is admittedly encumbered by the prevailing European and Methodist tropes of civility, employing words such as “heathens,” “pagans,” and “idolators,” to describe non-Christianized groups, for an Indian person to merely assert the *humanity*, as well as the distinctiveness, of Indian individuals and culture groups, and moreover, to use the colonizer’s weapons (the English language, and writing) against him, was, in early nineteenth century Ontario, nothing less than revolutionary.

The Ojibwe Methodist ministers spent as much, if not more, time orating, at council meetings, on lecture tours, and preaching, as they did writing. Consequently much of their literary activity consisted of documenting their own speeches and sermons, and inscribing such traditional oral narratives as myths and legends. Publishing their oratories in such forums as the *Christian Guardian* newspaper, functioned to

admit whites to the masses over which the Ojibwe clergy presided¹⁰. Newspaper sermons were an ingenious way of circumventing the social hierarchy which prohibited Native clergymen from instructing or offering moral guidance, in short from preaching directly to, white audiences. Newspapers, which allowed white readers to overhear conversations among Native peoples, provided a means of mounting an indirect criticism of white society, for instance, pointing out white complicity in the alleged moral degeneracy, or socio-economic deprivation of Indian peoples. In employing modern mass communications to disseminate their English writings, the Ojibwe literati were able to assert, therefore, that the root of reserve dystopia for instance, was not Indian peoples' incapacity for "modernity," but the settlers' refusal to conform to their own conventions of "civility."

For his part, Copway was convinced that creating a written record of Ojibwe oral tradition was a necessary component of social reconstruction. In his first book, for instance, he writes:

The *traditions* handed down from father to son, were held very sacred; one half of these are not known by the white people, however far their researches may have extended. There is an unwillingness, on the part of the Indians to communicate many of their traditions. The only way to come at these is, to educate the Indians, so that they may be able to write out what they have heard, or may hear, and publish it (1847:55).

Clearly, he saw both schooling and conversion to Methodism as crucial to societal reform. Moreover, Copway was mindful of the persuasive power public opinion might bring to bear on the Indian policy making process. When presented with petitions drawn up at a convening of the "General Council of the Christianized Ojebwas" concerning amongst other things, the construction of manual labour schools, Copway noted that the Governor General did not appear overly interested in the Ojibwe's concerns. He writes:

O mercy! Is this forever to be our destiny? Common humanity at least, might have induced his Lordship to speak a few consolatory words, if nothing else. Our reception was both discouraging and chilling. When we have a Press of our own, we shall, perhaps, be able to plead our own cause. Give us but the *Bible*, and the influence of a *Press* and we ask no more (1847:201-2).

10

According to Murray however, speeches by American Indian peoples were often published for distinctly white purposes -- often to represent what was inexpressible in white culture, for instance to present an evolved Indian Christian virtue preaching to primitive Indian vice (1991:46).

In addition to three books, Copway wrote for various newspapers, including *The Christian Guardian* (as did other members of the Ojibwe literary coterie), and the *Saturday Evening Post*.¹¹ Copway was the first of his cohort to have his writings widely circulated in white circles. Although it was while he was based in New York, and after he had been expunged from the Methodist Church following allegations of embezzlement, he is the first Native person from Canada to produce a weekly newspaper -- *Copway's American Indian*. His desire to secure support for the creation of an Indian homeland served as the impetus for the paper's creation (Petrone 1990:45). The venture was successful insofar as it acquired the attention of such well-known persons as Lewis Henry Morgan, Henry Schoolcraft, Francis Parkman, James Fenimore Cooper and Washington Irving, but was printed only from 10 July 1851, to October that same year, after which time Copway, who had come to be viewed as non-credible by unforgiving whites, and had been rejected by several Indian bands (Schmalz 1991:156, Smith 1987:230), surrendered to the unlivable contradictions of his situation, withdrew from the public sphere, and passed away shortly thereafter.

11

Members of the cohort often worked together either in Native communities or toward particular goals. The Ojibwe Methodist ministers were also able to meet at Grand Council meetings and when able, to attend and assemble at conferences which the church administration held annually.

CHAPTER THREE

ABORIGINAL AUTHORIAL AUTHORITY

This chapter inquires into the ways Aboriginal peoples were systematically excluded from the Indian policy making process, and therefore stripped of the authority to author their own affairs. It also addresses the considerable efforts enacted by Aboriginal scribes to resist these overtures. In attributing to themselves the prerogative of speaking and writing for, as well as about, Native peoples the Non-Native ministers effectively deposed such mediators as the Native Methodist authors. The decline in Aboriginally authored publications was not the only result of this power shift. Divested of their right to self-represent, and subjected to a system of assessment by outsiders, Native peoples would lose command over the creation or articulation of Aboriginality itself. By inscribing non-Native estimations of Indian people in legislation and in the popular media, non-Native church and government authorities sought to render Aboriginality readable, and Aboriginal peoples manageable. In overwriting Aboriginal discursivity, Indian administrators disrupted the conventional channels of information flowing within and between Aboriginal communities, and overrode customary connections between Native individuals.

Despite the fact that members of the Ojibwe intelligentsia had demonstrated their mastery over the means of mass communication, as is evinced by their numerous publications; a new generation of non-Native missionaries, with institutional support behind them, usurped the authority of the Native literati, and took over as the official voice of Methodist Indian country. Analogously, competent Native farmers, whose lands were increasingly coveted by newly arriving Europeans, were finding themselves excluded from the policy making process which facilitated the flow of settlers onto unceded Native lands. Gradually, the government implemented policies which facilitated the transfer of power from traditional leaders to government appointed Indian agents. Soon, Indian agents rather than chiefs mediated disputes with the public and managed all matters of communication with the federal authorities.

The creation of a government Indian department fanned the flames of already existing inter-church

rivalry, insofar as federal bureaucrats threatened the position of the ecclesiastics to control even the most mundane of Indian affairs. When the responsibility for Indian affairs was transferred from the British Empire to the Province of Canada in 1860, and thus from imperial to colonial control, any power missionaries once wielded over Indian policy was vastly diminished. Thus, whereas an effective contingent of Native preachers emerged out of the first half of the 19th century; none materialized in the second (Smith 1987:241). Consequently, the office of Methodist preacher which had provided Ojibwes with some leverage in their efforts to gain an audience with the government in the early 1800s, afforded little by way of privilege in later years. Mass settlement, pseudo-scientific theories asserting the “racial” superiority of whites, and increasingly restrictive government policies, amongst other factors, conspired to diminish Native rights, and with them Native peoples’ capacity to author their own lives.

A consequence of this tightening of control over Indian affairs, would be that information on, or stories about, Native peoples would be increasingly scripted and amassed by others. As Mitchell has argued, colonialism is as much about military, or the threat of military repression and pacification, as it is about making the colonized “legible,” “readable,” and “available to political and economic calculation” (1988:33). Administrative information concerning Native peoples, supplied by missionaries, Indian agents and school staff; fuelled the government’s civilizing discourse, reinforcing the theory that whites were naturally better suited to the administration of Native affairs than were Native people. In writing *for* Native peoples, therefore, white authors played a constitutive role in “inventing” a commonsensical Euro-Canadian superiority.

Schoolcraft’s *The Literary Voyageur*

Whereas Copway, Jones and other Ojibwe authors were actively involved in countering the effects of mass settlement by promoting the formation of a Native homeland, many non-Native writers, particularly those not associated with Methodist orders, tended to accept that the appropriation of Native lands by colonial powers was inevitable. Safely distanced from direct political involvement in the Native rights

battle, many non-Native authors who were themselves part of the colonial apparatus, focussed their attention on gathering and preserving accurate data regarding the very traditions mass settlement would render obsolete. The impetus for the creation of several Native theme newspapers at this time was to preserve in print what would presumably not be sustained in actuality.

For instance, inspired by a questionnaire that had been circulated in 1822 by Governor Lewis Cass entitled, "Inquiries Respecting the History, Traditions, Languages, Manners, Customs and Religion...of the Indians Living Within the United States," Henry Rowe Schoolcraft devoted himself to an "analytical" study of Ojibwe language and culture (Mason 1962:20). In his research regarding Ojibwe peoples, Schoolcraft sought to collect and preserve "accurate" data on Ojibwe culture and history, before its allegedly imminent disappearance.

In 1826, while occupying the position of Indian Agent at the American military post at Sault Ste. Marie, Schoolcraft formed a local reading society. The group sponsored the development of Schoolcraft's newspaper, *The Literary Voyageur*, which was later subtitled *Muzzeniegun*¹² (Mason 1962:26). In addition to his own articles, Schoolcraft's Métis wife Jane, English father-in-law John, and Chippewa mother-in-law Susan Johnson, served as the primary informants, interpreters and contributors to the paper. The paper was comprised by articles, letters, poems and announcements. While much of the material concerned Native peoples, Schoolcraft made an effort to elevate such stories to the same level of "scientific" information as those that he included regarding geology, geography, and philosophic studies. Schoolcraft's selection strategy for relevant issues was wholly idiosyncratic; one issue, for instance, was devoted entirely to poems and stories concerning the death of one of his sons (no.14, 28 March 1827). The articles on Native issues recounted legends and "lodge stories;" provided explanations of ceremonies, songs, totems, burial and marriage practices; and described the lives of prominent Native leaders. Schoolcraft collected many of the "lodge stories" himself, interviewing Native visitors to his agency headquarters, Native leaders at treaty

12

"Muzzeniegun" is a Chippewa word meaning "a printed document or book" (Mason 1962:14).

meetings, and the people with whom he came into contact on exploring expeditions (Mason 1962:21). Schoolcraft's affinal relations also collected data for articles; but the material was selectively edited by Schoolcraft, who signed the articles with various pen names. One gets the sense reading the various issues, that the predominant voice is that of Schoolcraft himself. Each of the various Native and non-Native authors employs the same writing style, whether in prose or verse, and expresses a suspiciously consistent degree of "enlightenment" regarding their prescriptions for Indian progress. The poems about white fish, birch canoes and intertribal wars clearly reiterate the theme of noble savages, pining for simpler times. The Native songs that are transposed for white consumption, moreover, once filtered through Schoolcraft's imagination, are more true to the conventions of bourgeois English poetry than to any Indigenous genre. The following is typical of Schoolcraft's translating:

Hear my drum, ye spirit high,
 Earth & water, air and sky
 Ye, to me, are common ground,
 Spirits, listen to my sound
 Walking, creeping, running flying,
 Near or distant, living, dying,
 Ye, are but the powers I sway, Hearken, to my solemn lay
 I compel you, hither--come
 Hear my rattle--hear my drum
 From your highest circles come (No.2 December 1826:22).

In the first issue, Schoolcraft includes an article on the Cherokee Christian convert and school teacher, Catherine Brown, whom he describes as the model of Cherokee civility. Schoolcraft uses the story as background to advance his theories on the proper manner of civilizing Indian people. Critiquing the position that civilization should precede Christianization, and attesting to the failure of the Jesuits in introducing any lasting modifications of Indian habits, Schoolcraft asserts that Christianity and civilization ought to be advanced together. It is clear that for Schoolcraft, civilizing was a question of inculcating corrective "restraints," or of re-inscribing the Native habitus. Merely exposing Aboriginal peoples to communicable white codes of conduct, he reasons, would reform Native behaviours. And eventually, through sustained contact, the Native populace would come to bear the "essential elements" of civil society.

The legends and lodge stories Schoolcraft selected for publication, are morally consistent with the

more overtly ideological articles he included in the paper. And, when the legend's moral is not immediately recognizable, Schoolcraft spells it out explicitly. In one issue, Schoolcraft corrects his earlier assertion that Native people were without moral sensibilities, writing, "...they were such as what the white man would call very moral, although unacquainted with the standard by which civilized moralists are guided" (No.7 February 1827:78). Subsequent issues set about to describe Indian morality. After a story about a vision quest, Schoolcraft adds: "The moral to be drawn from it, is perhaps the danger of ambition" (No.3 January 1827 :39). He interprets other legends as conveying the immorality of intemperance, self-conceit, stinginess and so on.

Schoolcraft produced fifteen handwritten issues of *The Literary Voyager* from December 1826 to April 1827 (Mason 1962:26). The absence of a press limited both the paper's form and content.

Schoolcraft reports in the 13 February 1827 issue:

Every undertaking to amuse, though the medium of pen, ink and paper, implies some degree of order in the employment of time, and some moral, or literary effort, however humble. And it can be known to those only, who have made the experiment, how greatly the labor is facilitated by the aid of the press--where it is the business of other, to decypher [sic], copy, and arrange. In fact, no inconsiderable part of the whole time we devote to this sheet, is taken up by the drudgery of transcribing (No. 8 in Mason 1962:90).

According to Mason, while often only a single copy was written; Schoolcraft managed to distribute the magazine to a select public. Each issue would be read aloud at the meetings of the literary society, circulated among Sault Ste. Marie citizens, then sent to Schoolcraft's friends and associates in Detroit, New York, and other eastern American cities (1962:15). Local Indian bands were not included on the receipt list.

Hurlburt's *Petaubun*

That non-Native authors were increasingly viewed as more authoritative on Native issues than were Native peoples themselves is evident in the following example. In 1833 the British immigrant, Rev. James Evans was assigned the task of re-translating hymns previously translated by Peter Jones. Evans, who was fluent in Ojibwe, was informed by the head of the Methodists' Canadian conference that he would

be responsible for all future translations, as Jones was “all out of tune.” (in Smith 1987:153). Evidence of increasing rivalry, both between and within Canadian and British Methodist factions, which officially split in 1840, is documented in such newspapers as the *Christian Guardian*.

Lacking a publication of their own and geographically separated from fellow missionaries, Ojibwe Methodist ministers, such as Henry Bird Steinhauer and Peter Jacobs at Norway House, and Peter Jones at New Credit, who were desirous of some form of social support often relied on such publications as the *Christian Guardian* to converse with their distant colleagues. The *Guardian* was first published in York (Toronto), in 1829. The young Methodist minister Egerton Ryerson was selected to serve as the paper's first editor. According to Sutherland:

There were very few newspapers in the country at the time, and the “Christian Guardian”...came at one to the front as a powerful organ of public opinion. Its objects were “defence of Methodist institutions and character, civil rights, temperance principles, educational progress and missionary operations” (1906:106-161).

The publication not only allowed missionaries in the field to keep abreast of current issues in the Methodist Church; but facilitated their participation in ongoing church debates. These debates were not always fuelled by contesting theological ideologies, however, as is apparent in the *Christian Guardian* Spring issues of 1843. Issues in March, April and May that year contain disparaging comments made by Ojibwe speaking, non-Native Methodist missionary, Thomas Hurlburt, concerning both Ojibwe people in general and the quality of Peter Jones' hymnal translations in particular. Hurlburt, who, according to Smith was jealous of the attention Jones received for his translation work, asserted that Jones' hymnal translations were vastly inferior to those translated by James Evans and George Henry.

Jones, who was disturbed that the attack came from within the very Canadian conference of which he was a member, defended the character of his people against the charges of “cannibalism,” “immorality” and “imbecility” attributed to them by Hurlburt (*Christian Guardian* 15 March 1843, 12 April 1843). While a few influential members of the Canadian Methodist Church rose to Jones' defence -- he was after all, the first person ever to produce a written form of the Ojibwe language -- Hurlburt's mean spiritedness took its toll on Jones and other Native missionaries. Much to the chagrin of Peter Jones, George Henry, for

instance, became so disillusioned with the Methodists' in-fighting, that he eventually left the church, took a group of traditional Ojibwe dancers on a performance tour of Britain, and became a Catholic (Smith 1987:188).

Almost twenty years later in 1861, the recently ordained Thomas Hurlburt began publishing *Petaubun*, an English and Ojibwe newspaper, in the Sarnia area. The paper performed a similar function to the Catholic Church sponsored paper, *Setaneoei* (1887-1934), which was a fifty to eighty per cent Micmac language paper produced for the Native Catholic mission community in Restigouche, Québec. For the most part mission papers¹³ mixed mission tracts with local news. The papers promoted literacy and Christianity.

Like Peter Jones, Hurlburt looked to the Cherokee, and consequently to the *Cherokee Phoenix* newspaper, as a prototype of, and for, Ojibwe advancement. In the July 1862 issue, Hurlburt petitioned fellow missionaries to aid in both circulating the publication as well as collecting and forwarding subscriber fees. Hurlburt writes:

Having seen the great benefit resulting from publication of this character among other Indians, I am fully satisfied that this agency may be made very powerful for good among our Indians in Canada...I am ready at any time to turn it all over free of cost to any one that is able and willing to carry on the enterprise. My wish is that some educated Indian would take my place, as it would be much more to their credit to carry it on among themselves without foreign aid (*Petaubun* July 1862).

As a proponent of the old missionary school, Hurlburt spoke and wrote Ojibwe fluently. And, the mostly Ojibwe language paper, received several letters of encouragement from Ojibwe readers. John Jacobs, for instance, writes:

I hope you will continue your Indian publication until the Petaubun [Peep of Day] shall be called the Noonday instead of Petaubun: for my father says that the commencement of the Christian

13

Church sponsored mission papers emerged later in British Columbia. *Nanakwa* (1893-1906) was a monthly bulletin turned newspaper initiated by Methodist missionary, Rev. George H. Raley for the Kitimat mission. The *Kamloops Wawa* (1891-1904) was printed by a group of volunteers comprised mostly of Native women under the supervision of Catholic missionary, Father LeJeune at the Kamloops mission. Finally, *Hagaga: The Indians' Own Newspaper* (1891-1960s?) was originally produced by Anglican missionary, J.B. McCullah at the Aiyansh mission in the Nass region (Knight 1996:159,160). Unlike Hurlburt's *Petaubun*, however, LeJeune's *Kamloops Wawa* was a monolingual paper printed in "an expanded form of Chinook jargon," as was McCullagh's which was published in Nisga'a (ibid).

Guardian was verry [sic] little larger than the Petaubun. Now the Guardian has become a great paper: we hope to see the Petaubun great also (July 1862 Vol 2 no 7).

Despite several positive responses to the paper, Hurlburt's call for an educated successor went unanswered.

In a later issue, Hurlburt reiterated his plea for donations and chastised Ojibwe readers for failing to become more involved in the paper's production:

I wish to say to the patrons of this paper among the Indians that 400 paying subscribers are necessary to sustain the enterprise. Hitherto a large share of the patronage of the paper has come from the white people, mainly with a view to assist in a good work. By the close of the present volumn [sic] I will have completed the account of my missionary labours and travels, after which I cannot expect much support from the white people...If the Indians want a paper they must support it...I am anxious some Indian brother should undertake to carry on the paper. There are two that are fully competent to the task: the Rev. Allen Salt, and the Rev. Peter Marksman...¹⁴ (*Petaubun* August 1862).

Hurlburt was unsuccessful in securing a replacement, however, and the paper was discontinued shortly thereafter. The unwillingness of school-educated Indian people to step forward and assume production of the paper was probably neither due to do a deficit of competent Native candidates, nor to a lack of interest, but rather to the threat that assuming such a position posed to a school educated Native person's Aboriginal status, not to mention to the territorial sovereignty of his/her band at large.

Only four years before the paper began production, the government passed the '*Act to encourage the gradual civilization of the Indians...*' which paradoxically, both established, and provided a mechanism for eliminating, Indian status. Though internally contradictory, the Act conferred on bureaucrats, rather than Indian people themselves, the power to decipher and hence to author Indianness. This piece of legislation promoted full citizenship or enfranchisement. It was designed to legislate out of existence Native sovereignty and self-sufficiency, most notably self-determination, self-representation, self-management and self-government:

The Act...stipulated that any Indian judged by a special board of examiners to be educated, free from debt, and of good moral character could, upon application, be granted fifty acres of land and

14

Like Peter Jones and George Copway, Peter Marksman, who was an Ojibwe Methodist missionary stationed at a mission in L'Anse, Michigan, actively promoted the idea of the necessity of securing Indian title to lands, and the creation of Native homelands (Pitezel 1860).

“the rights accompanying it.” In short he could become “enfranchised,” or legally equal to his white neighbours, with the same rights and privileges - but he must cut all his tribal ties and sign away his rights as an Indian forever. His land would be taken from the reserve, and he would be removed from band membership. The most successful Indians would be absorbed into the general population, and their links with their reserves would be broken (Smith 1987:239).

The Act targeted those, therefore, who were mostly likely to realize the aforementioned potentialities, namely, school-educated, alphabetically literate members of the Native population.

As legislation was the primary mechanism by which the government deprived Native leaders of their authority and Native peoples of their lands, languages and other resources, English literacy and print propagating capacities were crucial survival strategies in what had become a war waged with printed words. Although many Native leaders in 19th Century Ontario had either attained these skills themselves or ensured that selected band members had, it is not surprising that these school-educated individuals did not volunteer to involve themselves in the publication of such journals as *Petaubun*. At this time, advertising one's literary abilities would surely have invited unwanted attention from government administrators, who were eager to test the civilizing potential of the enfranchisement program.

The Indian: A Vision of Aboriginal Sovereignty

Particularly in the later half of the century, Ojibwe political polities had assumed the difficult task of keeping their communities apprised of new developments in Indian legislation. Aspiring to serve as mediators between the government and Indian communities, they attempted to explain to their communities the implications of new government policies and legislation. Peter Jones' son, Dr. Peter Edmund Jones, Secretary Treasurer of the Grand General Indian Council, expressed his frustration with the unnecessarily convoluted language of most Indian legislation, the deciphering of which, he argued, merely added to the already cumbersome responsibilities of Native political leaders. He writes:

For hundreds of years the laws of Great Britain have been framed and worded by the legal profession, and they have during that long time fallen into the habit of dressing the Statute in language which [is] suited to their particular kind of education. To show their superior wisdom, and to allow the “coach and four” to drive through conveniently, they with dogged persistency continue to veil the meaning of the laws in Latin, French and Greek terms, so that an ordinarily educated man is puzzled to know what they mean...The French Canadians are a conquered race.

The Indians are allies. The French Canadian have *their* legal documents, laws, etc., by the Government, printed in their own language. Should we not ask the same privilege? ...All that we ask is that the Acts respecting Indians shall be printed in the same plain language as the Moral Law of Holy Writ...Let the members of the Dominion Parliament begin with the Indian Acts and insist that the language used must be intelligible to the ordinary mind, and not mystified by legal phrases and use of dead languages! (*The Indian* 1886:39).

Already, Ontario Native political organizations had significantly, but strategically transformed their Councils' codes of conduct to accommodate the preferred governing methods of the dominant administrative regime. The mostly bilingual and bi-culturally literate Grand General Council¹⁵ chiefs, for instance, had begun to record their meetings in print rather than wampum, and in English rather than Ojibwe. By adopting the practice of electing a more hierarchical structure -- a Council president, Treasurer and Secretary, for instance -- the organization attempted to obtain official recognition from mono-cultural Ontario politicians who seemed incapable of recognizing governing competency in terms that lay outside their singular cultural register. Partly out of necessity, and perhaps also to harness the power of the State in pursuit of their own visions for the future, the Councils adopted state-like practices, those however, which

15

According to Peter Jones, prior to the arrival of Europeans, general councils of the Three Fires Confederacy were inter-tribal affairs that were usually held at various regions throughout present day South eastern Ontario at the beginning of May every year (1861:109):

At these councils federal unions are formed, war or peace is declared, treaties are made or renewed, and boundaries of territories established. There is no voting among them, but they give their decisions according to the opinions expressed by a majority of speakers (1861:106).

Common or band councils, on the other hand, were local tribal affairs (1861:107). Protean by nature, such governing bodies were constantly transforming to better cope with contemporary problems. Gradually a more rigidly structured organization came into being, made up of the same Chiefs that had taken part in the older Councils. This Grand General Council met every two years. At the 1840 Ojibwe and Iroquoian general council, for instance, Joseph Sawyer was chosen as the council president, and Peter Jones was appointed secretary. The creation of the office of secretary was an important innovation, as council minutes were thereafter recorded in print in addition to wampum (Jones 1861:114). According to Dr. Peter Edmund Jones, the first Grand Council was held in Orillia, Ontario in 1846. In addition to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs and a few Mohawk participants, the council minutes indicate that several members of the original coterie of Ojibwe Methodist ministers were present, including: Peter Jones and John Sunday and; as were such influential Methodist converts as Chief Yellow Head, and Chief George Pahdaush; and such high ranking Methodist officials as William Case (*The Indian*, 30 December 1885:7). By 1859, however, particularly northern Ojibwe peoples' faith in the capacities of the Methodist dominated Grand Council to protect their Aboriginal rights began to wane. Reserve residents deemed the conciliatory tone adopted by Jones et al in the first half of the century, to be ill suited to the task of directly confronting and challenging the increasingly coercive government policies formulated in the latter half.

did not threaten to dramatically alter their central directives. This does not mean that they did not also dismiss others, which suggested more profound alterations to their sense of what governing ought to entail.

That Jones, for instance, advocated for the use of the English vernacular (plain English), over “dead” languages,¹⁶ or scripts which were apprehensible to only a select few of the elite, was his attempt to undermine what he correctly perceived to be the selectively representative, and selectively exclusionary, practices of the Euro-Canadian legislative bodies. His criticism of the legislative discourse does not merely point out a lack of accountability to the average Native person, but to “ordinary educated” people in general. Interestingly, it was this same criticism of the monopoly on knowledge held by the Western European monastic orders that led to the development of what Anderson refers to as “print-language.” Print languages, Anderson advises, which exist below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars, admit a greater number of mediating sources than did the ancient sacred scripts, and therefore, provide greater public access to information. Mechanically produced texts that could be read simultaneously by many, and which had the capacity to create unified fields of exchange and communications, moreover, were useful tools in the creation of a sense of national consciousness (1983:25-52). Later in his political career, Jones himself would mobilize print-language to bring together on page and to widely cast, precisely what the government sought to proscribe through policy -- a vision of Native community. The particular community Jones envisioned, as will be discussed later, was based on an ideal of common Native suffrage, sovereignty, self-directed progress and on a particular form of Native fellowship that transcended band, clan and regional distinctions.

Understandably, Native political officials had a difficult time keeping up with the seemingly endless flow of new regulations. The Southern Ojibwe chiefs, however, were sufficiently dissatisfied with

16

The church Latin employed in legal contexts was the discursive residue of a European monastic regime. Just as early biblical Arabic and Latin scripts were mediated by a bilingual intelligentsia, incomprehensible legalese required that Indian legislation be translated by Euro-Canadian lawyers and politicians. In this sense, legislative language was itself a powerful tool of subjection, suggesting as it did the outside “expert” control of access to vital information.

the Indian act of 1876, to launch a public campaign in defence of their rights. Up until this point, their participation in the mainstream political process had been limited to merely receiving legislation and transmitting it to their constituencies. Although they must have objected to the idea of non-Native government authority in total, they were constrained to respond to the imposition of legislation in a register of government choosing -- for the most part, using the language of counter-government policy. Aside from discussing amongst themselves what might be done, appealing to the public was one of few possibilities available to them to make their voices heard. While their Grand General Council did not own a press, and therefore had no formal organ by means of which to disseminate its views, Peter E. Jones, the Council's Secretary Treasurer, published the council minutes in five consecutive issues of the weekly *Warton Echo* newspaper in June 1879 (Titley 1986:197), and in numerous issues of the *Pipe of Peace* journal¹⁷ (Schmalz 1991:296). The government ignored the council's print media protest. And, with what could be described as studious indifference to the Grand Council's concerns, moved in the opposite direction adding, in 1880, an amendment to the *Indian Act* which stipulated that any Indian man with a university degree would be henceforth, automatically enfranchised, or deprived of Indian status (Schmalz 1991:198).

In 1894, the council undertook to print its first private publication, entitled, *The Constitution of the Grand General Indian Council of Quebec and Ontario*, which was intended solely for Native reserve residents. By the turn of the century, the Grand General Council's inability to serve as a representative body for Native concerns had become undeniably evident. According to Titley, the council stressed loyalty to the government and seldom criticised the Indian administration. By 1894, the council was eventually forced to dissolve when the government prohibited the use of band funds for organizational activities

17

Aside from the Indian department, for the most part, council minutes were not intended to be circulated among a non-Native readership. The 1846 and 1870 General Council minutes, for instance, were printed, but not published, at Hamilton and Montreal newspaper offices -- the 1874 and 1882 Grand General Council minutes, at Sarnia and Hagersville print shops. The 1884 Grand General Council minutes were printed at Peter E. Jones' printing establishment, the "Indian Publishing Company," in Hagersville, and parts were later re-printed in *The Indian*, which was intended to serve a largely reserve based readership.

(Titley 1986:95-96). Schmalz intervenes, however, that the prohibition on providing for delegate expenses merely forced the organization further underground (1991:207). Today, Ontario Ojibwes continue to hold regular Grand General Councils.

In the latter half of the 19th century, amendments to Indian legislation were made gradually enough to render their cumulative effect almost imperceptible to those they affected. Notwithstanding the immediate impact of isolated *Indian Act* amendments, however, the legislation's composite effect was to inscribe irascibly in the ledgers of the Canadian political apparatus, Native peoples' structural inequality with the rest of Canada. Indian legislation ensured that the federal bureaucratic system, rather than Indian people themselves, were to be responsible both for defining Indianness, and for directing the path of Indian progress.

In assuming control over even the most mundane of local reserve affairs, the government all but eliminated any Native participation in the policy making process. The exacting control exercised by Indian agents and other Indian Department bureaucrats, whom legislation established as the new mediators between the state and Indian people, rendered the roles assumed by Native missionaries, and traditional chiefs, all but obsolete. The Indian agent lorded over council meetings, approved or vetoed band decisions, bought and sold reserve supplies and produce, served as a judge and school inspector, and policed the moral conduct of the band (Schmaltz 1991:208).

Consistently, the federal government policies directed at the educated sought to undermine tribal sovereignty. Policies directed at the educatable worked to sever inter-generational family ties and to diminish the strength of community-, in favour of Registry-based cultural affinities.¹⁸ The formerly

18

Under the constant supervision of Indian agents, and lacking in any official civil status of their own, mid 19th Century reserve residents occupied a rank in non-Native society similar to that of penal colony inmates. In some important respects, Native people were "structurally" similar to prisoners in Western Europe. It is surely not coincidental that similar strategies of controlling these populations were adopted by the power-holders in each context. Foucault notes that the aim of prisons in early 19th century Western Europe, for instance, was not merely to retrain delinquents for their eventual assimilation into civil society: ...but to regroup them within a clearly demarcated, card-indexed milieu which could serve as a tool for economic or political ends (1972:42).

effective coterie of Ojibwe Methodist preachers was powerless to combat either the structure, or the content of the legislative framework, by means of which Indian people now throughout Canada were subjected to non-Native authority. In its earlier incarnation (1846), the Grand General Council members pressed for title deeds to reserve lands. After the 1869 *Civilization Act* was passed, the council lobbied for the rights of Native women (Jamieson 1978:69-73). And, in the mid 1870's, the council vigorously opposed involuntary enfranchisement. Despite the fact that the organization lacked the political standing to ensure that its policy recommendations would be applied, they were somewhat successful at organizing resistance to Indian department measures. Later, the League of Indians would mount a highly successful campaign against enfranchisement. The success of this political action, coupled with government ambivalence and inaction, ensured that the reserves and "Indians" would continue to exist in the east as they do today.

Although the mid - 19th Century *Enfranchisement* and *Civilization Acts* represented a repudiation of the 1830 reserve policy which was implicitly premised on isolation, the government's approach to enfranchisement, and integration, was less than consistent. In fact, it was a segment of the very political system that had threatened to dissolve the reserve system that would recognize in its preservation, a definite political advantage. In 1885, John A. MacDonald's then ruling Conservative party, introduced and passed a Bill to shift the responsibility for electoral matters in Dominion elections from the provincial, to the federal legislature (Montgomery 1965:14). The effect of this Act was to relax the enfranchisement rule for Indian men in Eastern Canada.

In defining the term "Indian," the colonial government employed a similar administrative tactic -- the technique of registration. Foucault (1983) would call this strategy "subjection," for the reason that it created not only social classifications, in this case, "Status" (officially registered) and "non-Status" (non-registered) Indians, but also, new subjects -- individuals that were knowable or "legible" within the state's administrative schemata. In assigning any form of official status, the government exercised its power to redistribute the population, by installing an individual in a relative position to other "instated" individuals. Enlisting individual Indians was a method of acknowledging an official relationship between each individual and the state. For most state purposes, this relationship rendered ineffective and irrelevant Aboriginally defined structures of social solidarity (Smith 1993:43). The effect of such policy was to undermine the relationship between Native community members who would come to assess themselves within the logic of this regime of distinction.

Eliminating the threat of involuntary enfranchisement enabled Frederic Ogilvie Loft, a Mohawk from Six Nations, to pursue a career in the newspaper industry. Loft was one of the few Native people at this time to gain employment at a mainstream Canadian press. In 1885, he took a position as the Tuscarora correspondent for the *Brantford Expositor* (Petrone 1990:99). He wrote about local Six Nations community matters. On 9 February 1885, he reported on such events as horse racing, the formation of debating and literary societies and an Order of Foresters, recitals of the Kanyengeh choir, church tea meetings and the activities of the Forest Bailiffs, who protected reserve timber stocks from white wood smugglers. In 1886, Loft campaigned for the Liberal candidate in the 1886 general elections. It would be another forty years, however, before his real contribution to Native self-government would be made (see chapter five).

The *Electoral Franchise Act* of 1885 granted the vote to Native men, who held sufficient property on reserve, without necessitating a loss of Indian status or requiring the partitioning of the reserve. Members of the Liberal party openly criticised this plan, arguing that it was a self-interested measure undertaken to secure Indian favour, and to ensure the Conservative party's re-election. Dr. Peter E. Jones, who in 1874 became the New Credit Mississaugas' Head Chief, had a somewhat different reading of the *Franchise Act*. According to Jones, voting would secure for Indian people "a voice in the legislation of our country" (*The Indian*, 17 March 1886:49). He viewed joining the electorate as a means to actively participate in governing Indian affairs. Referring to an upcoming off-reserve election in the Oneida township, for instance, Jones remarked:

This will give our Indian friends...a chance of learning the political situation of the country, of thinking and deciding for themselves, of showing themselves *men* and *persons* not children, and of helping to send to Parliament the man they think will be best able to attend to Indian matters (*The Indian*, 28 April 1886:85).

Choosing a representative, who would advocate on their behalf in Parliamentary debates, he reasoned, was better than no participation whatsoever.

No longer threatened with the abnegation of his Indian status, Jones began publishing and editing

The Indian, the first Native controlled newspaper in Canada.¹⁹ In endeavouring to serve as a messenger, Jones was in fact, revitalizing a time-honoured Mississauga tradition. Smith, for example, submits that by the early 19th century, the Credit River Mississaugas had become renowned for their abilities to transmit information. On one wampum belt, the symbol for the Mississauga band at the western end of Lake Ontario is an eagle perched on a pine tree at the Credit River (1987:21). According to Peter Jones Sr., the symbol represented the band's:

...watching and swiftness in carrying messages. The eagle was to watch all the council fires between the Six Nations and the Ojebways; and being far-sighted, he might, in the event of anything happening, communicate the tidings to the distant tribes (Jones 1861:121).²⁰

The franchise provisions therefore merely removed one of the barriers to inter-community communication that former legislation had erected. Although it was not intended for this specific purpose, the *Franchise Act* enabled the former Credit River Mississaugas, now at their new residence in the Grand River territory, to engage in public exchanges of written information, without the fear of forcible enfranchisement.

With his publication, Jones aimed to arm the community with the information they required to successfully resist government attempts to break up the reserves. The paper was intended to serve as a forum, for instance, for an investigation and discussion of the meaning of recent Indian department legislation. While other Native theme papers at the time sought to integrate the Native population by

19

When Riel's Provisional Government assumed representation for the french-speaking Manitoba Métis, the *Nor'Wester* newspaper was suppressed and in 1870, the *New Nation* became the official party organ (Stanley 1960:85). While the paper championed the views of the Red River Métis and supported their allies, it was edited and published by Major Robinson, a non-Native American. Another Métis paper that emerged around this time was *Manitoba*, a french language paper that ran from 1871 to 1900. From May 1871 to September 1881, this St. Boniface based paper was published under the name *Metis*. Other newspapers at the time had Native sounding titles but were thoroughly Euro-Canadian in scope. The first newspaper published in the township of Iroquois in the Dundas County region, for instance, was entitled *The Chief* (1858-1860). It was a non-Native paper, as were the *Grand River Sachem* (1855-?) and the Lakefield *Kachewanookah Herald* (1855-59).

20

Jones Sr. wrote that the Credit River runners easily covered eighty miles per day. In the winter, they made the trip from Toronto to Georgian Bay in only four days. One day journeys from Toronto to Niagara were frequently made, moreover, and were considered short trips (1861:62,75).

fashioning an imagined community of Native Christendom; Jones insisted that raising political awareness provided greater empowering, elevating and unifying potential. If a sense of Native unity were to develop, he reasoned; it was toward occupying the parliament, not the pulpit, that Aboriginal energies ought to focus.

In a letter addressed to the public included in the first issue, Jones writes that a series of articles would also be devoted to an exploration of the ramifications of voting in dominion elections. He writes:

The whole tendency of the paper will be to Educate the Indians, not only as to the condition of their brethren throughout the country but also as to the desirable qualifications of Morality, Sobriety, and Industry. Now that the Indians of Ontario and Quebec are to be intrusted with the Franchise for the Dominion House, it is more than ever necessary that they should have an organ devoted to their interests, through which they can express their ideas and become acquainted with the nature of the Franchise and be able to use this long desired privilege in an intelligent manner ((*The Indian*, December 1885:4).²¹

According to Tobias, the 1885 *Franchise Act*, which enabled Native participation in the off- reserve political process, was designed by the government to encourage Indian people to request the form of on-reserve government proposed in the 1884 *Indian Advancement Act* (1991:134). The 1884 *Advancement Act* replaced the three year elective system in effect since 1869, with annual elections (Dickason 1997:262). Tobias submits that the Act granted the band council power to levy taxes on reserve members' property and extended the council's powers over policing and health. The Act also empowered Indian agents to call for and supervise elections and to call for, preside over, record and advise at band council meetings (1991:134). One gets the impression from these statutes, that the intent of these acts was to vest in non-Native officials the power to direct the political affairs of the band. An investigation of the somewhat unique political system existing at the Credit reserve prior to these provisions, however, may partly explain why the *Advancement Act* posed less of a threat in that particular context, than it did to bands elsewhere.

The practice of electing chiefs, for instance, was not unfamiliar to the Mississaugas. Peter Jones Sr. writes:

The office of civil chieftainship is hereditary, but not always conferred on the eldest son. When a

21

The letter is signed: Chief Kah-Ke-Wa-Quo-Na-By, M.D. (Dr. Peter E. Jones), Secretary, Grand General Indian Council. Hagersville, Ontario, November 9th 1885.

vacancy occurs, the surviving chiefs and principal men meet in council, and then select the most suitable person out of the family...The title of head chief is either hereditary or obtained by the election of the tribe in council assembled (1861:107-108).

Dr. Peter E. Jones, the New Credit Head Chief by election, provided medical services to the band, served as their Indian Agent, and held the position of Secretary on the Grand General Indian Council. He was responsible for the bulk of these duties *before* they were conferred upon him by the Indian legislation. With regard to the taxing provisions of the Act, while Jones deemed the already existing form of "direct taxation" to be a necessity; he viewed participating in the Dominion election as way to *eliminate* "indirect taxation."

He explains:

Taxes in Canada of two kinds. First --There is the *Indirect Taxation* -- which is a tax, or duty, on articles of consumption, by the excise, customs, post office, &c....Every man, woman and child in the country has to pay a share of this tax, Indian, negro or white, if they clothe their bodies, if they fill their stomachs, or if they write to a friend, must of necessity pay their part of the tax...We have been paying this tax for fifty years, and until now have not had a word to say as to whether the duty, which has been a tax upon us, is correct or not. The white men have been doing as they please with our money (17 March 1886:49).

With regard to the subject of *indirect taxation*, Jones explains that funds for on-reserve roads, bridges, ditches, public buildings, schools, and public officers had for some time been deducted from the interest money earned on the band's investments with the government. He writes:

The fact of the position is this, we have been paying for many years as much taxes as the white farming community. The tax of the Township of Tuscarora has been as heavy upon the Six Nations as that of Onondaga or Oneida townships amongst the whites. This being the case, where is the possibility of an additional tax being placed upon us? (Ibid).

By exercising the vote, Jones reasoned that band members might ensure that no higher form of government would impose any *additional* forms of taxation. He writes:

It is impossible for us to be more heavily taxed, unless the duty upon goods is increased by the councilmen sent to Ottawa...we now have something to say as to who shall go there and make laws for the country (ibid).

In Jones' view, under the *Advancement Act*, the council would be able to manage the road and bridge building projects, for instance, more efficiently than government agents. According to King, this indeed proved to be the case. The band council was able to complete a greater number of projects, with smaller expenditures than were the agents of the Indian Department (1999:6).

Jones may have overestimated the actual amount of Native governmental representation the franchise would confer; he did not, however, view the *Franchise Act* as transferring any more power to the Dominion government, than they already possessed. Rather, he viewed his band's participation in the off-reserve elective system, and adoption of the *Advancement Act*, as a way of entrenching in Canadian law the governing powers of the local councils, and as a way of promoting independence from government control that was, if not total, at least equal to that enjoyed by whites. It is worth noting that both the public and the parties of opposition vigorously opposed these Acts. Members of the public seemed particularly adverse to the Act conferring the Indian vote, which was passed four days before the outbreak of the Northwest rebellion. Critical indictments of the government's actions, to the effect that Indian people were being promoted "from the scalping party to the polls,"²² were not uncommon in the daily papers. Much like his father some fifty years earlier, to establish a modicum of confidence in the Native leadership, Peter E. Jones found himself in a position of having to prove Indian competency to the government and public alike. Without such confidence, Indian self-government had little chance of being realized.

Publishing a newspaper which featured Indian peoples' accomplishments, much like contributing to the various Native exhibits at fairs, was one way to publically exhibit the enormous capacity for innovation within Indian communities. The articles in *The Indian* relating to Indian exhibits and fairs, in fact, bear a close structural resemblance to the paper itself. Both represented cultural products, selectively including and juxtaposing certain Native honoured abilities. Both the Native fairs and *The Indian*, moreover, established marketplaces for Indigenous ideas. A piece on an Indian agricultural exhibit in Regina, for instance, offers a list of the prize winning Native farmers, stating "those who are on the watch to find something to say against the Indians of the North-West, and the management of them should copy this proof of their progress" (20 October 1886:210). *The Indian* regularly included Indian agent reports on the agricultural "progress" of industrious reserve farmers. An excerpt from the 1885 report of the

22

Parliamentary debates, 30 April 1885 in *The Indian*, 9 June 1886:125.

Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the US, included in a May issue, clarifies the “official” terms by which Indian progress was measured at the time:

It requires no seer to foretell or foresee the civilization of the Indian race as a result naturally deducible from a knowledge and practice on their part of the art of agriculture; for the history of agriculture among all people and in all countries intimately connects it with the highest intellectual and moral development of man. Historians, philosophers, and statesmen freely admit that civilization as naturally as follows the improved arts of agriculture as vegetation follows the genial sunshine and the shower, and that those races who are in ignorance of agriculture are almost ignorant of almost every thing else. The Indian constitutes no exception to this political maxim...Industry and education are the two powerful co-operating forces which, together, will elevate the Indian, and plant him upon the basis of material independence (12 May 1886:101).

While the tendency has been to view the “progressives” (like Jones) as unquestioningly accepting and internalizing this system of external assessment; it is important to note that the progressives coopted and combined in unique ways, only parts of this discourse, while rejecting others. The exercise of selecting, appropriating and revising certain concepts and dismissing others, evinces one of the many possible strategies for asserting Indian self-authorship, or for Indigenizing the extraneous, more than it exemplifies a case of mere brain- or white-washing. In the inaugural issue, for instance, Jones states that the paper aimed to advocate for the Christian religion, agriculture and industry:

But the whites along with good, [taught] bad habits and customs of which the aborigines many years ago knew nothing. These it will be the duty of *The Indian* to point out and warn our people against, viz. The sins of intemperance and immorality; two crimes which have, almost altogether, been introduced by the whites (30 December 1885:1).

The paper itself served as a testament to Native intellectual, as opposed to the more physically labourious agricultural, achievements. Moreover, in addition to reporting on agricultural production, *The Indian* included pieces on important legislation affecting treaty hunting, trapping and fishing rights. As integrationist as he might have been, Jones did not view either the elements, nor the practitioners, of the Native non-agricultural economic sector as inherently “less civilized.” The first issue, for instance, contains a transcript from the Queen vs. St. Catherines Milling and Lumber Company case. The article gives an account of the first attempt to bring the question of Aboriginal title before the courts (30 December

1885:8).²³ The findings from this case would have a profound effect on the Northwest Angle Treaty Ojibwes' access to hunting, fishing and timber resources. The same issue incorporates an article on over-hunting by non-Native sportsmen, and a piece entitled "Directions for Fur Collectors and Trappers: To Insure High Prices, Ready Sales, and Save from Losses through Ignorance," which explains how to prepare furs for market sales (30 December 1885:11).

Articles in the March 3rd and April 14th issues mark the dates for the closed season for fishing and gaming and outline recent amendments made to the Game Law (1886:47,77). Portions of a Dominion Parliament session are reproduced in the April 28th issue. During this debate, an MP for Algoma insists that the introduction of a closed gaming season infringes on Native treaty rights. Referring to several petitions submitted by Native communities on the north shore of Lake Huron and Lake Nipissing region, he argues:

By their legislation in regard to the fisheries, [the Government] have practically deprived the Indians of the fishing which they previously enjoyed, because they have issued licenses and encouraged in various ways the trade in fishing, which has destroyed practically the inshore fisheries which were for the benefit of the Indians (1886:88).

By including these texts in his newspaper, Jones was clearly attempting to develop among readers a political consciousness with regard to treaty rights. His notions of Native progress were founded, however, on an assumed continuity of "traditional" economic pursuits. Contrary to common government assumptions that agriculture alone would guarantee Native self-sufficiency, Jones suggests that a more diversified economic base, one which included not only commercial hunting and fishing endeavours but also ventures into such fields as politics and the media, offered greater opportunities for Native community prosperity.

In creating a newspaper, over which he held complete editorial control, Jones created a discursive world of Indian making -- a world of possibilities in which a hierarchy of a particular type of Indian interest prevailed. To readers, he offered an example of Indian self-assessment -- an alternative to the prevailing

23

In this case the Queen on behalf of the Northwest Angle Treaty Ojibwes upholds that Treaty rights imply the right to hunt and fish on surrendered lands.

government assessments -- which was itself, a subversive act. Experimental in its approach, *The Indian*, as well as the examples it provided, offered a model of and for what Native ingenuity, competency and self-styled progress might entail.

A March issue, for instance, reports on the items two bands would submit to the to an upcoming Colonial Exhibition. The Oneidas entered a self-acting railroad switch and a perpetual motion machine invented by William Doxtater. The residents of the Christian Islands sent "fine specimens of hay work...bead work, baskets, axe helvies, war clubs, autograph albums in birch bark, etc..." (31 March 1886: 64-5). Regarding the inaugural Indian exhibition at Cowichan, B.C., *The Indian* reports that in addition to livestock, cereal and root crop exhibits, "...to mark the progress of civilization exhibits were made of native hand-writing in the English language...." (8 December 1886:233). In analogous fashion, *The Indian* featured articles and correspondences written by "educated" reserve residents, the minutes of Indian councils, and letters from Native school children, editorial articles in the Ojibwe and Mohawk languages, and reports on the status of reserve agricultural projects. Each entry, moreover, was mediated under the competent editorship of a local Native leader. Jones explained that his motivations for producing the paper were "to promote the welfare of a large community, which, until now, has not had the advantage of a medium of their own through which they could be heard" (30 December 1885:1). *The Indian*, therefore, as a cultural product, represented a textual equivalent to the Indian exhibit. For, just as the fairs publicized what were generally under-appreciated forms of Native knowledge and cultivation *The Indian* was a forum designed to amplify the otherwise unheeded articulations of Aboriginal authority.

Jones had a unique vision for *The Indian*. It was promoted as the only newspaper devoted entirely to the "interests of the Aborigines of North America, and especially to the Indians of Canada." He elaborated on the paper's proposed composition as follows. The paper was to be published bi-monthly until the growth in subscriptions justified producing a weekly issue. It would furnish global²⁴ and reserve news,

24

News of the world features were discontinued by the fifth issue. In an Editorial note, Jones writes: Newspapers are so plentiful in the country that they find their way into nearly every house, Indian

the latter by securing articles from resident Native reporters and correspondences from reserve residents. The Editor promised to include thorough discussions of legislation respecting Indian people, reports of the Grand General Indian Council, other meetings of Native polities, and editorials in the Ojibwe and Mohawk languages. Statistics concerning financial and other Indian band conditions, biographical sketches of noteworthy Native historical figures, and archaeological and historical reports were to be furnished by Indian agents and missionaries, literary men, social scientists, and members of local historical societies respectively. Such practical concerns as agricultural, hunting, fishing and gaming techniques were to be discussed from the point of view of Native farmers and hunters. Finally, market reports on fish, furs and game as well as explanations of game laws and discussions of treaty rights were to be provided whenever applicable (30 December 1885).

In an editorial note, Jones asserts that while many of the current Native theme newspapers concern themselves with Indian peoples' religious interests;

the temporal welfare of our people...has not had the proper attention. The laws respecting Indians, their rights to lands, their position in respect to treaties, and their financial standing with the Government are all subjects which it is the duty of *The Indian* to pay immediate attention to. The worldly affairs of our people, must have the larger part of our attention for several months. Matters of grave importance to our temporal welfare are now before us. We have been granted the privilege to vote (after paying fifty years' taxes without it), and now we must make it a study to use this franchise in a proper way (1886:54).

After its first issue, *The Indian* received favourable reviews from such mainstream papers as: the *Hamilton Spectator*, the *Penetangushine Herald*, the *Orillia Times and Packet*, the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, the *Owen Sound Times*, the *Brantford Expositor*, and the *Hagersville Times*. The remarks in the *Owen Sound Times* review indicate that Jones was somewhat successful at establishing a sense of Native competency among the members of the non-Native print media.²⁵ The review reads:

and white, and our news respecting Indians and matters of special interest to our people are so numerous and of such importance, that we shall have to ask our friends to look to the white man's paper for the general news of the world (17 March 1886:54).

25

Disparaging reviews were also published. The *Detroit Free Press*, for instance remarked, "*The Indian*...will scalp all subscribers who don't pay promptly" (3 February 1886:6). The *Toronto Globe*

As the name implies, [*The Indian*] is devoted to the interest of the Indians of the Dominion; and the fact those who know the condition of our aborigines undertake to publish a journal of this kind speaks well for the condition of the Indians of this province, while a journal of their own, circulating among themselves, is the best elevating and civilizing agency that could be devised...The fact that Dr. Jones, Secretary of the Grand Council of Ontario, is editor, will be a guarantee that the new journal will be conducted with ability (in *The Indian* 3 February 1886:11).

As with the presses, and unlike many of his contemporaries, Jones did not view the Dominion government as an entirely alien entity. Just as his father had laboured to bring about change from within the Methodist institution, Peter E. Jones was dedicated to the idea that a measure of integration in the mainstream political sphere was a necessary step toward the realization of a truly operative system of Native self-government.

Overall, the activities of "progressive" band members comprised the larger part of *The Indian's* content. In an April issue, for instance, a report states that a Dr. Oronhyatekha addressed a gathering at the council house at Tyendinaga, urging them to "form an organization and to work harmoniously and unitedly." He advised that the Indian electorate held the balance of power in East Hastings (14 April 1886:79). In early August, much to Jones' disappointment, a reporter to *The Indian* informed that 69 Mohawk voters had been stricken from the voters list for the reason that they "did not occupy the land which had been allotted to them by the crown, and that they had not made improvements to the value of \$150" (4 August 1886:173). That some reserve residents refused to take possession of lands allotted to them represents another strategy of Native resistance employed at the time to undermine Indian Department control over band affairs. In the "Correspondence from the Reserves" section in a May issue, John B. Noah, who regularly submitted news items from the Moraviantown reserve, reported the results of the recent election for officers in council there (26 May 1886:115). In an August issue, *The Indian* reported

questioned whether the paper was designed to serve the interests of "Toryism," to which Jones replied: Long before the first issue of this paper was published, the *Globe* saw fit to make unkindly remarks respecting this journal. Can our Indian readers guess why such animosity should be shown to our paper? We think the reason is because the editor saw fit to thank Sir John Macdonald for giving us the long desired franchise for the Dominion House...Their remarks, however, will fail to draw us into political discussion. Indians, and only Indians, can use the columns of our paper for political opinion, and they, only upon subjects which directly effect the welfare of the Indians (3 February 1886:6).

that the Whitefish Lake band, in present-day Alberta, had been extended the federal franchise, based on the proposition of extending to them the provisions of the Indian *Advancement Act* (4 August 1886:176). By means of these reports a type of textual communion of like-minded communities was created. Although the members of these communities may not have known each other personally, because they shared a common vision for their future, which was expressed in the political ideology they adopted in the present, an image of their fraternity gradually coalesced on the newspaper page.

Jones consistently asserted that the paper was non-partisan in its approach. In this respect the paper departed radically from most newspapers of this time. Each of the mainstream papers relied for their very existence on the patronage of either a political party or a religious institution. The *Brantford Courier*, *the Mail*, and the *Orange Sentinel* for instance, were overtly Conservative; the *Toronto Globe*, *Toronto Telegraph* and the *Brantford Expositor*, decidedly Liberal; *Our Mission News* was a prominent Anglican organ. A letter to *The Indian* from the Georgina Island reserve notes that the political parties made good use of their papers at election time. The writer notes that aside from *The Indian*, few papers had previously been sent to the reserve. With the news of the Franchise, however, the northern community had been inundated with an unprecedented number of unsolicited newspapers from the south (9 June 1886:127).

Jones used the pages of *The Indian* to offer a self-appraised trajectory of Indian progress. In one issue, for instance, he included an article entitled "How Our Ancestors Wrote," that described ancient rock paintings and pictorial styles of writing (4 August 1886:176). This was contrasted with the story of Sequoyah, inventor of the Cherokee script, and inspiration for the first American Indian language newspaper (4 August 1886:173). The juxtaposition of these pieces points out Native peoples' readiness to embrace new communications technologies, but follows the actual deployment of a Native print-language towards a Cherokee-defined goal. Sequoyah employed Cherokee script and mechanized print to raise the political consciousness of the Cherokee speaking populace with regard to the United States Government's unlawful removal policies. That Jones' paper employed the English language, does not in any way detract from its nationalizing potential.

Horatio Hale's version of the Sequoyah story provides clues as to the rationale behind Jones' particular communicative strategy. Hale writes, for instance that among the Cherokee, English promised to be the next generation's language of general use; while Sequoyah's alphabet promised to become "a mere linguistic curiosity." Certainly throughout Canada, English was rapidly becoming the Native *lingua franca*. Jones arguably elected to employ this medium so as to be able to reach beyond the linguistic barriers of his own locality, which itself included seven Native languages, and to embrace as a whole an Indian nation of country-wide proportions.

Jones employed *The Indian* not merely to mark present forms of Aboriginal adaptability, but to build an image of antiquity, which was central to the idea of an Indian nation. Articles for instance, on the ancient "Mound Builders," on pre-historic "Indian relics," and on the common practice of substituting European for Native place names, challenged the state sanctioned, or "official" re-writing of history. It was by means of such historical revisionism and by asserting their discrepant localism, that Euro-Canadians, whose home was ostensibly "the state of civility," sought to establish themselves as *natives* and Indian people as comparative *latecomers*. By transforming or civilizing the social terrain, Europeans made themselves "at home." Although literally indigenous to the region, Native peoples, according to Europeans at least, were neophytes in the symbolic space of civility. Jones contested the very terms of the debate by shifting the discourse toward a discussion of natural or physical, as opposed to socio-moral, remains and by re-situating the starting point for a story of origins on North American soil rather than in the so-called "Old" country.

Jones also advocated for an Aboriginally authored history by supporting the development of a provincial museum -- one which featured ancient artifacts that irrefutably affirmed Indian peoples' exclusive claim to continental indigenoussness. Jones contrasted the idea of an Indian community looming out of an immemorial past, with accounts of successful Native adaptations in the present. He included, for instance, numerous population reports from various reserves, which offered hard evidence to refute the common assumption that the Indian population was atrophying, rather than increasing in numbers. In later

issues, he lent more attention to lateral or inter-tribal issues, publishing commensurate Indian news from other parts of the country.

Jones used the lack of consensus that existed within the state-supported scientific community to subvert state authority. The scientific articles Jones published, which were supplied for the most part by the non-Native “experts,” lent credence to the idea of a collective and continuous movement of Indian people from ancient times into a limitless future. This attention to Indian directed advancement challenged then popular beliefs which presupposed the “failure” of Indian progress, and which assumed that developmental incapacitation inhered in Native traditions. The story of Native peoples’ progress, moreover, underlined the non-universal, and therefore, non-neutral nature of the “official” version of human progress. The official story of Euro-Canadian beginnings placed whites in the roles of agents of change, and Indian people in the roles of objects to be changed. The history of Canada’s “founding peoples” thus began with the presumption of Native peoples’ general incapacity for agency, and their more specific inability to master conscientious conservatism *and* imaginative innovation.

By the first weekly edition (20 December 1886), Jones had promoted the Publisher, S. T. Wright, to the position of Editor. Jones added his own name to the list of contributors, no longer referring to himself as Head Chief. Prior to relinquishing his editorial post, Jones did attempt to encourage a particular form of skill development among school age children. The proposed subject matter of the essays he solicited from them suggests Jones was attempting to inculcate in younger people, skills necessary for securing positions as future Indian agents. Band self-administration in Jones’ purview, required that educated Native people re-claim from Indian agents the responsibility for directing domestic affairs and the ability to arbitrate between the reserve and the world at large. Under the new editorship of a non-Native journalist, the treatment of issues relating to children’s concerns in *The Indian* evinced a noticeably competitive ethos, focussing less on training a new generation of political activists, and more on the civilizing potential of manual labour school style education. Several pieces compared the aptitudes of the students at the Mohawk Institute and Shingwauk schools, Indian students in British Columbia and at the

Piapot reserve, using Cherokee students as models to measure against.

Jones did not have the authority to use band funds to subsidise the paper. In response to a critic who accused him of appropriating band funds for this very purpose, Jones offered a detailed accounting of the band's expenditures (17 February 1886:30). No band funds appear to have put toward *The Indian*, which may partly account for its eventual demise. Jones issued a formal call for agents in July, when he proposed to remit all of the profits for the first year of publication to "reliable energetic canvassers" (21 July 1886). He seems to have relied mostly on advertising and subscription money to produce the paper, which was printed at his own publishing company in Hagersville. With a subscription price of \$1.50 per year, *The Indian* began with an initial circulation of five thousand copies. By the sixth issue, the circulation base widened to include Europe. Nine months after its first issue, *The Indian's* circulation had tripled.²⁶

In the last weeks of its production *The Indian* reported that a European agency had been established in England, and a British agent had been appointed to manage subscriptions there. The paper's failure to secure a wide Indian readership, however, is indicated in the second to last issue, when *The Indian* made a final plea to Indian subscribers:

With our journal's future the public has much to do. We have plenty of philanthropy, but not sufficient to induce us to issue a journal for the benefit of a class of people who will not show a sufficient amount of *solid* appreciation to justify us in continuing...our ambition to publish a really excellent Indian paper, circulating *largely* among our people, is far greater than our desire to make money out of it...There are 130,000 Indians in Canada; *The Indian* is the only aboriginal paper in the Dominion, are we not quite reasonable when we say we feel intitled [sic] to a liberal patronage? (23 December 1886:252).

The December 29th issue was to be the last edition of *The Indian*. It is quite clear from the final appeal to subscribers that the publishers of *The Indian* were largely unfamiliar with the practical realities of Indian peoples further Northwest, for instance, where Native communities were battling starvation. Moreover,

26

Over time, various members were added to the paper's staff. With issue number 12, for instance a new business manager was hired, with number 14, a new journalist and publisher, and with issue 17, a new manager for the advertising department. Beginning in the first week of 1886, at which time there were enough subscribers to warrant an increase in production, a new eight (as opposed to twelve) page edition of *The Indian* began to be produced on a weekly basis. An extra page of advertising was added to each weekly issue.

Jones could not have anticipated the uneven development of Native alphabetic literacy across the country. While English was approaching the status of common language used in many inter-community verbal communications in the south, and in communications between the majority of Native polities and the state, syllabic literacy was by far, the most common form Native literacy in the Northwest. Such however, according to Anderson, is the very nature of emergent nationalism. He submits, for instance, that “a nation is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (1983:16). It is evident that Jones counted on the financial support of a country-wide Indian fraternity. That the paper was able to last a full year without using band funds, or relying on institutional support as did other papers, is truly remarkable.

It is also possible, however, that the members of Ontario bands who could afford to subscribe, were not sufficiently impressed with the content of the mostly English paper, to renew their subscriptions. *The Indian* claimed to be non-denominational with respect to religion, but clearly prioritized stories regarding Christian Indian communities. The paper was non-partisan with respect to any one political party, yet advocated for the acceptance of an *Advancement Act* style of on-reserve government, which surely raised the ire of the traditional leadership. The reserve correspondents who did contribute to the paper, moreover, were mostly, like Jones, members of the “progressive” segments of the reserves. And, the relationship between the various reserve associations was not always harmonious. Tensions, for instance, erupted from time to time between the New Credit’s two political parties -- the progressives, led by the Jones extended family; and the Herkimer family party who pursued a more “moderate” approach to socio-political affairs (Smith 1987:247). Some Native readers, therefore, may have objected to the paper’s general approach to “civilization,” or to the more specific direction for development the paper enjoined in terms of political and educational integration.

In 1886, Six Nations chiefs sealed copies of *The Indian* in the base of the Brant memorial statue in Brantford. Copies have also been preserved in various libraries. When it ceased publication, the paper became, like other Indian relics, an artifact. With the interment of *The Indian*, and the later repeal of the

Indian vote, two of Jones' visions for Aboriginal authorization vanished. A concerted attempt to produce Native newspapers would not resurface again in Ontario, until after the Indian vote had been re-established in 1960, nearly 80 years later.

Although *The Indian* met with an untimely fate; during its brief production, the paper was able to provide several possibilities regarding what path a collective, forward movement of Native peoples might take. Unlike the government directed course, to which Native communities were unwillingly subjected; *The Indian* represented a model of and for an Aboriginally inspired and activated form of agency. The paper provided the context for a debate in which Indian peoples deliberated among themselves as to the meaning Native community progress ought to assume and the direction it should follow. And, it would be by re-invigorating and revising these discursive strategies, that succeeding Native intermediaries would be able to imagine and mobilize their own plans for a unified nation of politically conscious Native persons.

Wilson's *Our Forest Children* and *The Pipe of Peace*

The missionaries' goal of Christianizing Native people would eventually be subordinated by government policies which aimed, through the implementation of education and agricultural programs, to amalgamate Native people into the dominant economic system. As with agricultural programs, however, the impetus for the creation of boarding schools originated among the ranks of the "progressives" in Native communities. At an Ojibwe Iroquoian council held in 1840, Peter Jones, Joseph Sawyer, John Jones and thirty-six other chiefs signed petitions to the Queen and the Indian Department calling for the construction of boarding and industrial schools (Jones 1861:124). Clearly, both the Native clergymen and Traditional chiefs present at the council envisioned the eventual Native control of these institutions as the ultimate goal. With Native people directing the educational process, it would be possible to apply the same selective strategy to schooling, that Native clergymen applied to Methodism. In short, Jones and other Native missionaries, viewed the development of labour (industrial) schools as crucial to the training of a future generation of Native rights activists, whose job it would be to not only to achieve prosperity, but to ensure

continued participation in the general councils. Ultimately, inculcating familiarity with the white social, political and economic system, he felt, would foster the formation of an Indian governing body -- one that would ensure land tenure, Indian civil rights, and generally, tribal sovereignty.

These leaders could not have anticipated that the new generation of white Methodist missionaries would not only refuse to adapt to Aboriginal cultures, but would actively seek to suppress their expression in any form. The subsequent failure of the boarding schools at Mount Elgin (1851) and Brantford (1859) in Southwestern Ontario and Garden River (1875) in the Sioux Ste. Marie region, was attributed by the Native clergy, not to the incapacity of Native students to learn, but rather to the administration of these schools by non-Native missionaries. By 1860, Native children in Ontario were taught almost exclusively by white teachers. Peter Jones was so disillusioned with the white administration of the Mount Elgin school, the very institution he had worked so diligently to establish, that he refused to send any of his own children there (Smith 1987:214). One of the primary objects of attack in the residential schools was the Indigenous language. At the Anglican run Shingwauk school in Garden River, the ban on speaking Native languages in school was not lifted until 1971 (Nock 1988:79).

Although diverse Aboriginal activists did not approve of these methods of cultural replacement, Native leaders identified schooling as crucial to the protection of Native rights. Hence, there was a consistent effort to secure school education for Native youth. In 1872, the Anglican priest Edward F. Wilson helped to publish Augustine Shingwauk's memoirs in a booklet entitled *Little Pine's Journal*. The story recounts how Shingwauk set about to secure a school for his community. It received a good deal of press attention and portions of this narrative were later reprinted in the newspaper Wilson edited entitled, *Algoma Missionary News and Shingwauk Journal* (Vol. 1 No. 8, 1 February 1878). In 1872, the following year, Shingwauk's brother, Chief Henry Buhkwujunene traveled to England with Wilson to raise funds for the industrial schools there. As a result of these efforts, the Shingwauk Indian Residential School was eventually built at Garden River in 1873.

Wilson trained the boys in publishing in the school's print shop -- the production site for the

Algoma Missionary News and Shingwauk Journal. Instruction in the printing trades, however, was not the standard pedagogy for later Native residential schools, although some exceptions are worth noting.

According to Miller, Newspaperman P.G. Laurie persuaded the principal Battleford Industrial School in Saskatchewan to offer instruction in typesetting and printing. The students there, produced a school paper called *The Guide*. The Students at Regina school worked on the monthly school magazine, *Progress*.

Students at Port Simpson produced *Na-Na-Kwa*; at Alert Bay, *The Thunderbird*; at Blue Quills, the *Mocassin Telegraph*; at Kootenay, *The Chupka*; and at Alberni, the *Western Eagle* (Miller 1996:160).

Miller writes:

At the Kitimaat institution 'a few of the girls learned something of the printing trade' while producing a six- or eight-page quarterly that combined local news with 'printed historical sketches, Indian legends, church news, shipping news, births, marriages, deaths and railway surveys.' *Northern Lights* at Chooutla had a similar mix, although once staff took over the selection of articles and compositor work it became noticeable more oriented to church than to schoolchildren's interests (ibid).

In an effort to augment public support for the Shingwauk residential school enterprise, Wilson began publishing the English-Ojibwe paper, *Pipe of Peace*. It ran from October 1878 to September 1879 (Petrone 1990:85). Though obviously intended, at least partially, for an Ojibwe readership, the articles are largely anecdotal, and inscribed by Wilson, himself. From 1887 to 1890, Wilson edited *Our Forest Children*, (*Published in the Interest of Indian Education and Civilization*). Whereas Wilson regarded his paper as a means of exposing the general public to Indian matters, much of the paper's content is expressly related to the raising of funds. Advertisements promoting the sale of, or subscription to, Wilson's other publications abound. In the July 1890 issue, for instance, Wilson announced his aim of establishing a "Canadian Indian Research and Aid Society" which he intended to finance with the proceeds of subscriptions to his new magazine, *Canadian Indian*²⁷ (Vol 4, No. 4: 211). The first and last two pages of each issue of OFC are comprised by a column entitled "The Stray Leaf," written by Barbara Birchbark.

27

This magazine, which was produced under the joint editorship of Wilson and Mr. H. B. Small of Ottawa, ceased publication after 1892.

Birchbark addressed herself to the Sunday school students to which the column in pamphlet form was distributed. The Sunday school students, who engaged in fund raising activities for the Shingwauk institution, were informed on such Shingwauk activities as baseball games, brass band recitals, and teas -- pastimes which were designed to replace the Native habits and customs associated with traditional games, dances, craft making and so on. In the February 1890 issue, Wilson wrote that he hoped Sunday school attendees would eventually subscribe to the full magazine.

In most editions, reports on improvements to the school infrastructure are coupled with appeals to the public for financial support. Wilson writes:

We want forty more Sunday Schools to undertake the support of our Indian pupils. We are always behind with funds...The Government, it should be understood, does not pay the cost of a child's food and clothing; it is almost all expended in the general expenses of the Institutions, such as salaries of teachers, fuel, house expenses, &c. (February Vol. 3, No. 11:).

With an eye toward securing regular contributions, Wilson included a section entitled "Receipts" in each issue, praising the schools patrons, and enumerating their donations.

According to Nock, by the 1880s, any deviation from the school curricula that was by then, supplied by the government, would have entailed a loss of financial support (1988:73). Wilson's selective inclusion of extracts from the students' exams in OFC, offered proof to the public that the curriculum was indeed being followed. The extracts are taken from standard subjects such as geography and bible study, and highlight the students' English language skills and writing abilities. Letters written in English by the students themselves, on the topics of: tidiness and punctuality; frugality, politeness, honesty and industriousness; constructive competitiveness in sports and academics; and on visits by "progressive" Indians were included to attest to the reformatory power of the school and the success of the cultural replacement program.

The values of tidiness and kindness that were inculcated at the schools, though seemingly superficial, struck at the very core of Native lifestyles, seeking to undermine hunting and the nomadic way of life, as well as fundamental attitudes toward the nature of human relationships with the natural environment. On the topic of "Kindness to Animals," for instance, Shingwauk student Joseph Stoney

writes:

The Indian boys are known as always being unkind to animals and to birds. This they do because its their habit. The old Indians have left all these to the Indians that are living now; and still they are following the customs and habits. The boys like to hurt things, although they know it is unkind. The Indians are very kind to their neighbors [sic], but not to animals. They will help anyone if they ask him. If an Indian boy meets a dog or sees a bird, he will surely pick a stone up or a stick to strike it. Not many white boys are cruel, but very few. The boys that are cruel are the boys that have not been trained in their ways. White people teach their children well before they are big; but some white parents do not teach their children to do what is right, so they are unkind and they do bad things. God made the animals and all things. He says in the Holy Bible to be kind to the animals, and we and everybody ought to be kind to the animals, because they are dumb; they cannot speak or talk as we do (OFC, Vol. 3, No. 4, July 1889:31).

“Domesticating” the unruly habits and bodies of Native “children of the forest,” was considered the primary step in the domestication of the “savage mind.” The validation of the Victorian model of middle-class white domesticity, required that Native students renounce their parents’ and grandparents’ teachings, including those concerning both the codes of personal appearance, and the ordering of domestic “Home” space. Eleven year old Willian Soney writes:

The white man he is a very tidiness, and he is a very smart; he will not like to see something untidiness. But the Indians are not so smart as the white man, and is not so tidey. The wite man he will clean it his own house, but the Indians, I never saw him not much to clean it. I always saw the Indian to hunting and fishing, but he will not make it tidiness in his own house (OFC, Vol. 3, No. 4, July 1889:30).

Abram, a sixteen year old Shingwauk student, writes:

Many people at present day are untidy because they were not brought up to be tidy. Untidy mothers nearly always have very untidy children and very untidy homes. Now, when children are sent to school, they are taught to keep themselves tidy, and be like gentlemen and ladies after they leave the school. And if a boy don’t try to keep himself tidy, the best thing to do to him is to punish him for it till he is tidy, if he don’t do it when he is coaxed (OFC, Vol. 3, No. 4, July 1889:30).

Wilson tended to reserve praise for those students who most closely approximated the habits and appearances of their white peers -- peers who attended different schools, and from whom Indian children were generally separated.

While student exam excerpts confirmed the ongoing inculcation of “mental discipline” in the schools; “before and after” photographs of Native students, which were advertized for sale in the paper, served as signs of the successful regimentation of students’ bodies. Buckskin, blankets, feathers, moccasins

and long hair were replaced with identical wool uniforms, hard-soled shoes, and bobbed- or crew-cuts. Much like student writings on tidiness and punctuality, “after” photos signified the success of school policies in transforming the students’ habitus.

That the seeds for an internal colonialism were being sewn is evinced by the practice of appointing student captains or monitors to police the activities of the younger students, and by student letters regarding the Shingwauk “jail.”²⁸ Eighteen year old Odawa student, Matthew Sampson, writes in a letter to his father:

I can read Indian letter just as well as English letter, so you can write to me in Indian if you like. I am at school half day and work half day at my trade shoemaking. I am in upper third class at present. Everything is going on well in the Shingwauk. Except P---- is in the jail yet--Shingwauk jail, and I am the jailer. I will not tell you what he done as you know all about it. I must now close my letter , (OFC, Vol.3, No. 6, 1889:120).

It is evident from the generally complacent tone of all the student letters published in OFC that either the students themselves employed a high degree of self-censorship in writing about the actual conditions of school life, or that Wilson employed a good deal of corrective editing. In the July 1890 issue, 17 year old Pottowatami student, Joseph Sampson writes to his mother:

The Christmas holidays have passed already. We are all been very plesent [sic], except two of the boys have ran away at last Saturday, five days ago. They were caught about eighty miles towards east, and so they got back again. Their trial will come upon them this evening at 7.15 o’clock; judges and jury are by the boys; no white people to be present...I will try to obey to all my orders that are set before me, also to the Christianity. We are all happy, and enjoying ourselves (OFC, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1890:209).

The remarkable consistency of each of the letters is likely due less to the students’ limited English vocabulary than to a calculated effort to appease school authorities. According to each of the students, the school is “nice,” and/or “pleasant;” the teachers are “kind;” the children are “happy,” and feel the school is not merely a “good place,” but their “home.” Letters challenging these assertions, if they were written, did not make it to print.

Wilson publicized the achievements of “progressive” Indian people in OFC, reporting on the

28

Following the program described by Foucault (1975:295), and much earlier, by Machiavelli, of teaching the art of power relations, the incarcerated were trained both to self-administrate and to discipline themselves, thus rendering superfluous the need for white surveillance.

appointments to government positions of Native individuals, the employment of Shingwauk and Wawanosh school graduates, the proselytizing activities of the Native clergy, and on the successful adaptations of other nations -- particularly the Cherokee and the Iroquois. When consistent with the assimilative agenda of the paper, letters of support for the school and opinions on current issues from the Native community were also printed. An 1890 issue of OFC featured an article entitled, "Disadvantages of the Tribal System," by Ojijatekha (Brant-Sero)²⁹, who was a graduate of the Mohawk Institute at Brantford. Brant-Sero writes:

...I do not wish to be placed on the list as opposed to civilization, or the education of fellow Indians from their present state of ignorance. No, no! but I cannot consider myself justified in voiceing [sic] for the elevation of my people, without acknowledging the good points possessed by the people whom we would deprive of their habits, because it is not now in harmony with the sweeping onward march of civilization. As an Indian, I wish to encourage all the advantages of civilization, not is disadvantages, far from it. In doing so, the present tribal system must cease (OFC, Vol.3, No.11, 1890:140).

Brant-Sero defends his position as follows. He submits that the tribal system "only allows the education of the few, consequently the elevation of the few must be the result." He argues moreover, that when one is subject to the dictates of the chief or Indian agent, and bound to the custom of acting only upon achieving "one mind" or consensus, no individual free will is permissible. In a letter to the Editor, Brant-Sero praises the progressive steps taken by the Six Nations people in appointing a committee of six chiefs to draft rules and regulations "for the guidance and information" of reserve residents. He submits:

There are several reasons why this may be regarded as important; in the first place, the affairs of the people can be carried on on business principles, more suitable to its present surroundings and educational tendencies...This project of having well-defined rules and regulations will transfer what responsibility remains from the verbal or memory record, to records in black and white (OFC, Vol 4, No. 6, 1890: 248-249).

Much like Jones' *The Indian, Our Forest Children* served as a forum for the expression of "progressive" ideas.

In addition to fund raising and fund retaining, the paper served as a primary organ for an emergent

29

Brant-Sero (Mohawk) was of the opinion that in the interest of mutual understanding, Iroquoian oral histories ought to be shared with Europeans, in print. In an article concerning "the unwritten constitutional law and government of the Caniengahakas," published in the anthropological journal *Man* (No. 134, 1901), he recounts the story of the invention, by Dekanawideh, of wampum.

administrative complex. Submissions from other residential school papers including: *The Word Carrier*³⁰, *The Morning Star*³¹, *The North Star*³², and reprints from *Pipe of Peace*, as well as letters from Native pupils at other institutions and clippings on the residential school theme from mainstream, missionary and other “friends of the Indian” papers; allowed for a comparison of strategies to be conducted.

The paper provided a forum for a discourse concerning the common problems experienced by school staff and as such, served in the development of a support network, and an imagined community populated by school administrators. After reporting on school locations across the prairies, and in northern Ontario, Wilson remarks:

The chief difficulty just at present--a difficulty which will doubtless be acknowledged [sic] by all who have Indian Institutions under their charge, is to induce wild Indian parents to give up their children to be educated. They do not themselves see the advantage of it; they are suspicious [sic] of the White man's motives; are unwilling for their children to be parted from them, and are only too ready to accept a bribe or price before giving up a child. We feel sure that all our readers must feel that it is a very unwise thing to give an Indian parent a bribe for yielding a child to be educated; for ourselves, we are entirely averse to any such proceeding; still our friends will, we are sure, see the difficulty, the great difficulty, that stands in the way of filling our Institutions, when built, with a suitable class of Indian children, and the difficulty again in keeping them when once we have got them. The merest pretext is often sufficient for a child to decamp, or for his parent to come and take him away. All this is, we know, *very trying* to those who are doing their best to secure and educate the little wild Indian children (OFC, Vol. 3, No.2, 1890:141).

That the paper served to gather, at least on page, the members of an otherwise dissociated administrative apparatus, accounts in part for its substantial subscription base among school employees across the country.

In addition to inciting a general interest in Native issues, Wilson intended that his paper should have some scholarly significance. Like Schoolcraft, he drafted a “Circular of Enquiry” that he distributed to roughly 30 missionaries in the Northwest, British Columbia and the Hudson Bay region. The purpose of the survey was to elicit information on, and a vocabulary of 20 words from, Native communities in the

30

Published by the Santee Agency School of Nebraska.

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Published by the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania.

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Published by the Indian School, Sitka, Alaska.

vicinity of residential schools (Nock 1988:126). Wilson published the responses in *Our Forest Children*.

In this project, and in his visits to the Plains to collect information on Native people there, Wilson was advised and supported by anthropologist Horatio Hale. According to Nock, Hale's writings inspired Wilson to re-think his ideas regarding erasing and overwriting Native with white cultural practices:

Hale suggested that the Indian race actually had more innate potential than the "Aryans" of Europe and thus turned completely on its head the evolutionary idea that Indians were at the bottom of the civilization ladder. From Helen Hunt Jackson³³, Wilson learned that the whites (including and sometimes especially their governments) were often to blame for the Indians' regression. Thus increased contact might actually hurt the Indians rather than improve them (Nock 1988:128).

Wilson's subsequent writings, particularly for *The Canadian Indian*, reflected this transformation in his most basic assumptions about assimilation. Wilson's was a dramatic conversion. In the April 1877 issue of *Algoma Missionary News*, for instance, Wilson had asserted that compulsory attendance ought to be enforced by either federal or provincial legislation. Fourteen years later, in a series of articles entitled "The Fair Play Papers," he revoked his earlier call for directed cultural replacement programs, of which the Shingwauk and Wawanosh schools were stellar examples. Instead, much like the Ojibwe intelligentsia, he advocated for a policy of non-directed cultural synthesis, political autonomy, self-government and the development of an independent Native church. Wilson focussed on the Cherokee as models for the resolution of "the Indian problem." According to Wilson, while the Cherokee adopted some white institutions, they employed them in uniquely Cherokee ways. Moreover, they maintained their language, their system of holding land in common, and their own political infrastructure. Wilson writes:

If the civilized Indians in Canada had more of the management of their own affairs, I believe education and civilization would advance among them, and not retrograde. What I feel so strongly is that the civilized Indians of this country ought to have more voice in their own affairs, that the time has passed for treating them as children, doling out to them their presents and their annuities, and taking their children away from them to be educated, without allowing them to have any voice in the matter (Paper No. 2, *The Canadian Indian* Vol. 1, No. 7, April 1891).

And does it not seem a little strange, and a little out of place, that we white people should be forcing upon these free children of the forest and prairies the various peculiar religious tenets

33

American author of the book, *Century of Dishonor*, which dealt with broken treaties, forced removal, illegal settlement on Indian lands and massacres of Indian people (Nock 1988:117).

which we have brought with us across the Atlantic Ocean? Were it not better that these Indian should be free to have their own form and style of worship if they elect to do so? (Paper No. 3, *The Canadian Indian* Vol. 1, No. 8, May 1891).

However much Wilson may have come to agree ideologically with the Ojibwe activists, he chose to protect his anonymity, writing under a pen name, and thus never personally endorsed these ideas. Nor did he suffer the political repercussions associated with espousing and expressing ideas that were antithetical to current government, missionary, and humanitarian reform policies. His earlier participation in the development of the Shingwauk and Wawanosh school enterprise, moreover, laid both the material and ideological foundation for institutions that had as their principle mandate the replacement of Native, with white middle-class, culture -- structures which would remain operative over a century, with or without Wilson's authorization.

Despite the growth in Native literacy, the number of publications concerning Native peoples authored by non-Native individuals soared in the second half of the 19th century. Publications by Native authors radically diminished. Therefore, particularly in large white settlements, where there existed a notable absence of any social contact with Indian peoples themselves, settler perceptions of Native peoples came to be shaped by information that been filtered through other whites.

The exceptional literary contributions of Dr. Jones, Shingwauk, Brant-Sero and Loft, all of which were achieved outside the missionary complex, signaled that the era of the Indian missionary as medium had ended. The development of increasingly invasive Indian legislation allowed the Indian missionary's roles as educator, scribe and social policy administrator to be usurped by mostly non-Native Indian agents and school administrators. Native leaders correctly perceived that the new battlefield had shifted from the religious to the political realm. The new generation of Native political activists, such as those noted above, would initiate in their lifetime a pattern of struggle which would influence the very specific form of protest that Indian people would employ for the next one hundred years. According to Kulchyski, this specific form of structured non-violent opposition to the Canadian State would become the primary organizing principle for Native activism in the early 20th century, and would serve as the predecessor to the types of

Indian organizations that currently exist (1988:96).

Dr. Peter E. Jones, for one, engaged in the war of printed words, fighting to retain authorship over Indian affairs and Aboriginal authority over Indian homelands. He strategically employed *The Indian* to perform or enact and therefore, to assert, Native competency. He authored a vision of Indian modernity during a time when Aboriginality was heavily under fire by the proponents of evolutionism. He inscribed Native sovereignty during a time when the nature of nation to nation relationships was seriously undermined by Indian Department policies. These policies sought to subjugate Indian knowledge and technologies, sacrificing Aboriginally authored modernities for the sake of Canadian progress.

Despite Jones' efforts, the government legally entrenched its own prescriptions for the management of Indian resources, and for the social organization of Indian communities on reserves. And, as the self-appointed assessors of Aboriginality, church and government officials continued to speak for, as well as about, Native peoples. These external evaluations served to convert Indianness from an essentially lived reality, into a codified set of legible, and therefore, manageable, qualities or "textual realities" (Smith 1990). Silencing Native authors and eroding Aboriginal authority ultimately undermined relationships between Native individuals and between Native communities, disrupting Indigenous communication corridors and invalidating the information carried along them as I will demonstrate below.

CHAPTER FOUR

TRANSFORMATIVE STRATEGIES IN THE HUDSON'S BAY TERRITORIES

In the late 19th Century, Henry Bird Steinhauer, an Ojibwe Methodist minister stationed in present day Manitoba and Alberta, became the first Native printman. This chapter examines the work of cultural mediation in which he was engaged, including the translation of biblical texts and the invention and dissemination of the syllabic system. It addresses his pedagogy for proffering literacy, an awareness of the non-Native political system and media activism. It also attends to the Methodist discourses on literacy and religiosity, and to the importance of printing to the Methodist Christianizing enterprise. While Aboriginal peoples' adaptive approaches to their changing environment varied from community to community, Crees subscribed to the common strategy of conscripting and indigenizing selected non-Native technologies when opportune. Because Cree groups annexed introduced messages and technologies to local discursive formations, however, the practice of Indigenizing the extraneous had a diversifying rather than a homogenizing effect. Cree Methodists, for example, would deploy their acquired skills to enhance conventional forms of communication and to express and to preserve Cree sovereignty. The government worked diligently to disrupt the flow of information in and between tribal groups by enacting legislation which prohibited forms of Aboriginal assembly.

By the mid 1800s, the public's desire for a transcontinental telegraph fuelled government efforts to consolidate British rule over a continuous stretch of land between the Canadas and British Columbia (Stanley (1960:31). The settlement of the plains and negotiations with Western Indian nations, therefore, become government priorities. The Methodists followed suit. Unlike Ontario Indian country, however, the Saulteaux in Rupert's Land rejected Methodism as a survival strategy, even though Henry Bird Steinhauer,

and Peter Jacobs³⁴ worked labouriously that it might take root. Originally from the Lake Simcoe region of present-day Ontario, Steinhauer joined the first contingent of Wesleyan missionaries to work in Rupert's Land in 1840. Steinhauer (Shahwahnegezhik), who would later become the first Native teacher in present-day Alberta, was active in promoting literacy and print technologies in early mission schools in these areas.

Steinhauer's initial proselytising efforts met with little success in the Rainy Lake district of northwestern Ontario. Unlike Southern Ontario, white settlement in the Lac La Pluie District had barely begun. In addition to ample game stocks, moreover, the Saulteux of this region procured various agricultural products. Prior to 1820, the HBC had relied on the Boundary Waters Ojibwe for agricultural produce in addition to hunting products (Waisberg & Holzkamm 1993:200, fn9). Waisberg and Holzkamm assert that as the Company's dependence on the Saulteaux declined over time, the "gardening" practices they had adopted during the fur trade provided enough of a food surplus to fuel a rapid population growth between 1822 and 1875 (1993:178). Before 1881, at which time the government introduced restrictive regulations on the commercial sales of produce by Indian peoples,³⁵ Saulteaux agricultural practices rivalled hunting and trapping pursuits for importance (Waisberg and Holzkamm 1993:200, fn9). Missionaries, therefore, had little to offer the Saulteaux of Rainy Lake, who had their own traditions of cultivation and ample amounts of food.

34

Peter Jacobs' memoirs of his trip from Ontario to the Northwest were published in 1858. Jacobs lectured extensively throughout Canada and the US on the customs and manners of Indian peoples, and raised support for the northwest missions among British audiences. He was widely published in Methodist publications, but like Copway, was later expelled from the Methodist Church and died in destitution. According to Petrone, when Jacobs passed away, "the *Orillia Daily Times* (4 September 1890) wrote that 'at one time Peter Jacobs was probably the best-known Indian on the continent'" (1990:51).

35

Waisberg and Holzkamm submit that:

Amendments to the 1880 Indian Act, and further regulations passed in 1881...deterred produce sales to non-Indian customers through a stipulation that purchase from Ojibwa farmers was illegal without written permission from an Indian Agent. The chiefs referred to this restriction as the primary cause of failure in reserve farming. They observed that agriculture without a commercial component was an unremunerative, and therefore, unattractive, occupation for band members (1993:186).

That Methodist missionaries began to apply more systematized efforts to reconstruct the habits and habitus of their charges had little effect on the Saulteaux. Having a prior history of interaction with the HBC, Saulteaux polities were dynamic, not closed, structures that were transformed in complex ways over space and time, through long distance trade relationships with both Native and non-Native traders. Their rejection of Methodism was thus not simply a renunciation of the new or the foreign in favour of the traditional or the familiar, but rather a calculated decision to pursue one form of strategic adaptation over another.³⁶ Given the choice, the Saulteaux preferred the HBC's system of debts and credits which allowed them to pursue commercial hunting and gardening, to an agriculturally based Christian subsistence economy, which seemingly offered few practical material rewards. Government pressure to adopt agriculture, moreover, was virtually non-existent in the HBC territory, as agricultural reform was antithetical to Company interests. The Methodists were therefore obligated to readjust the program of Christianization and civilization that had proven so successful in the Upper Canada social and political context.

The Methodists achieved greater success approximately 500 miles northwest, at the Rossville Cree mission, where Steinhauer was stationed from 1844 to 1849. Contrary to their experiences in Lac la Pluie, the Methodists were welcomed by both the HBC and the Crees to the Norway House region. The Company's financial support, however, was not wholly munificent. To ensure a steady supply of labour, the Company needed to stop the Cree migration into the Red River colony (Mabindsa 1984:220). The HBC, therefore, encouraged the Crees in northern areas to practice a limited form of sedentarism, and supported Methodist literacy and agricultural programs, apparently at Cree people's request.

Despite the unsuitability of the climate and terrain for farming, the missionaries attempted to plant crops of barley, potatoes and turnips at the mission (Mabindsa 1984:229). The ability to provide food

36

According to Francis and Morantz, (1983:53) during early fur trade giving presents, applying fixed rather than market driven prices for furs, and advancing credit to the James Bay Cree represented reluctant accommodations by the HBC to the Cree way of life. The Saulteaux, like the Cree, presumably had a hand in shaping trade relations and were able to infuse trade practices with their own notions of reciprocity.

afforded the missionaries an opportunity to engage the Cree in reciprocal exchange relationships. In return for his teaching, Steinhauer, who was raised in missionary schools, was taught by the Cree to hunt and fish (Mabindsa 1984:230). He also undertook to learn from them the Muskego Cree language (Mabindsa 1984:225). Although Steinhauer also imparted agricultural and mechanical skills, from which it was held, thrift and industry followed; it was as a school teacher that he was able to make his most lasting contributions to northern Cree transformational strategies.

Operating under the assumption that any language could be made to bear the Methodist message, teaching for the Methodists was largely a question of translating the Bible's literal meaning from English to Cree. By teaching "the Word" through syllabic literacy training, the Methodists assumed that both language and Christianity, the medium and the message, would transcend socio-moral differences. What the Comoroffs have argued regarding the Methodization of the Setswana speech field, holds for the Cree language:

...the "fever for translation"...expressed a growing conviction that language could be made the universal medium of human communication...Because language was seen to consist of words whose referents were self-evident properties of the world, those of Setswana simply had to be synonymous with those of basic English (1992:253-55).

Never questioning the epistemological assumptions underlying and informing the Cree linguistic world, it did not occur to the missionaries that the cultural register of the Cree language, as much as the Cree people themselves, would have to be recreated in hybrid form in order to be able to accommodate and convey the cultural logic that the biblical word implied.

Missionary translators were primarily concerned to address the problem of representing Cree sounds not found in the English language by constructing an orthography. Grammars and word lists, moreover, were considered neutral or "scientific" technologies, despite the fact that English categories did not always correspond to Cree forms. Translators, therefore, were less concerned to address the problem that what the Methodists considered knowledge did not necessarily transcend cultural differences. The incommensurability of Cree and Methodist ontologies was not viewed as problematic, as the missionaries acknowledged only one order of logic -- their own. For the missionaries, Native minds were merely

awaiting the imprint of reason, and they were more than willing to inscribe on what they considered to be “empty space,” the form of biblical texts.

“Birchbark Talking”: The Printing Press and Cree Syllabary as Instruments of Official Methodist Discourse and Ideological Imperialism

The first step the Methodists took in implementing the twofold project of Christianization and civilization in the Norway House region, was to establish communication with their charges. Charged with the duty of standardizing Ojibwe translations, in 1837 James Evans had published the “Speller and Interpreter in Indian and English” (Young 1965:35). It was also intended as an aid to missionaries in the field in the apprehension of the Ojibwe language. Regarding Ojibwe language as an object, and therefore, as something separable from Ojibwe cultural practice, he states:

The author’s object during several years of attentive investigation has been to discover first the true position of the organs of the various sounds of the Ojibway language; and secondly, to select from the Roman letters such characters as in their English sound are most analogous to the Ojibway” (cited in Scott 1940:13).

That early Methodist missionaries who did not already speak Native languages, were required to learn them, accounts in part for the high output by such missionaries, of grammars, translations and transcriptions. That such translation tasks were often undertaken with only a minimal grasp of the language, suggests that missionaries tended to view Native languages, as they did Native mentalities, as lacking in complexity; unlike Hebrew, Latin and Greek which warranted longer term systematized study. The Methodist missionary team who lived in the Norway House region began their work on the translations of the Bible into the Cree language shortly after they arrived. They drew on their studies of normative grammar, and used the categories of Indo-European languages to produce wordlists and spelling books which reflected the empiricist epistemology inherent in nineteenth century English “for which positive knowledge lay in the definitive separation of the construct from the concrete, the word from the thing or the act” (Comoroff and Comoroff 1992:255). Aside from the noteworthy exceptions of the Ojibwe literati, Grant concedes that Methodist literary output consistently:

...reflected a concern for transmitting rather than receiving messages...for the most part missionary publications consisted of Bibles, prayer books, and catechisms that were designed as instruments in their program of change. Their very considerable usefulness to linguists and ethnologists and later to Indians in search of lost fragments of their heritage were by-products of their primary functions (1984:223).

The Methodist Rev. James Evans' co-invention of a Cree syllabary departed radically from the strategies employed in the Red River district by Anglicans, who assumed English language training was the fastest route to Indian conversion, and by the Catholics, whose language of instruction was French. According to Grant, "the triumph of syllabics represented a dramatic admission that the traditional formula of Christianity and civilization could not be applied without modification in the north" (1984:111). While Methodist praxis differed significantly from the other denominational approaches; all proponents of the Christianizing project were, nonetheless, ideologically linked through the shared aim of linguistic (cultural) transformation.

Evan's syllabary was a wholly phonetic system, comprised by nine characters that could be written in four positions, corresponding to the four vowel sounds in open syllables. Terminals or finals, were added to compete the vowels to form words (Scott 1940:19). According to Murdoch, the characters were derived from pre-contact Native designs (1985:9). The syllabary was praised by other missionaries for its "simplicity" which undoubtably would prove suitable for Cree people who were deemed to be incapable of sustained attention. Mission reports claim that the system was easily mastered by Cree speakers, as no prior grasp of either English, or alphabetic literacy, was required to attain syllabic literacy. Cree syllabics were not, however, initially designed to promote two-way communication between the Methodists and the Cree, or to facilitate intra-cultural communication regarding non-religious matters between Cree groups. The system was devised principally to provide Methodist missionaries with a script and to facilitate the dissemination of Methodist devotional materials, including: hymns, scriptures and later, the Cree Bible.

By reducing it to a written form, the Cree language was reordered and represented, transposed and transported, to the Cree by white authors. Missionaries tended to view the new orthodox Cree they were establishing as their gift of civilization to Cree people, as is evinced by such missionary publications as Rev.

Nathaniel Burwash's "The Gift to a Nation of Written Language," which states:

A piece of birch bark and a charred stick are the implements, and in half a day an Indian who has learned the secret of 'making birch-bark talk' transmits it to his companion. Seventy years ago nothing of this kind existed among these tribes. They had an extremely imperfect picture writing which was significant only as a prompter to the memory of their old men, but they had absolutely no means of putting their language into written form. Now it can be easily written and read by even the women and children, and already a considerable literature has grown up among them as a result of this newly-acquired power. This is, we think, a fact unique in the entire history of civilization (cited in Scott 1940:22).

This self-congratulatory myth of Euro-Canadian technological superiority and benevolence would hold well into the 1960s. A 1965 *MacLean's Magazine* article entitled, "This is Canada's instant language" for instance, refers to syllabics as "one of the white man's finest legacies -- the gift of a written language." The author insists that the introduced system was significant for the reason that "Before the white man came to Canada, the Indians had no written language beyond the symbols on their totem poles and the sing-and-picture drawings that decorated their wigwams" (Young 1965:25).

Interpolating itself into the politics of Cree systems of knowledge and communication, the syllabary, which "organized" language as well as communication, became an important tool in the colonization of Cree consciousness. The subversion of Native signs was perhaps the unintended result of missionary efforts to rescue Cree language from its "primitive disorder," but was nonetheless an important feature of symbolic domination at large.

It should be noted that birchbark writing was not introduced to northern Cree and Ojibwe peoples by European missionaries, but probably diffused via Native channels along with Midéwewin religious practices. Dewdney submits, citing Kohl who visited an Ojibwe settlement at the west end of Lake Superior in 1855:

"The Indians...call a piece of birch bark to be employed for writing 'masinaigun'...The word is derived from the verb 'nin masinaige' (I make signs), and means something on which signs are made. They also give our paper and books the same name" (1975:20).³⁷

37

According to *The Alberta Elders' Cree Dictionary*, writing, drawing, painting, embroidering, carving, marking, branding, and owing a debt are derived from the same root -- "masin" (Waugh et al 1998:72-78).

According to Dewdney, whereas both Algonkian and Athapaskan-speakers employed birchbark extensively as a medium for pictography; Midé priests used birchbark almost exclusively to transmit complex rituals and oral traditions to their disciples or candidates for initiation (1975:13). He notes that birchbark scrolls contained information regarding Ojibwe origins, migrations, rituals, medicines, and the diffusion of the Midé religion³⁸ (1975:21-22). The scrolls also served as valued song and dream records which were often sold or traded. Northern Crees also frequently used bitten birchbark patterns to record their dreams, employing designs for communicative rather than merely decorative purposes.

As the Berens River area at the north end of Lake Winnipeg was a Midé centre, it is reasonable to assume that the Berens Ojibwe trading partners to the north at Norway House, and south at Lac La Pluie had some knowledge of the power of birchbark scrolls prior to the dissemination of missionary birchbark literature. Birchbark syllabic writings, on the other hand followed the opposite course. According to Murdoch, Crees from the Norway house region transmitted the syllabic system to York Factory Crees, who then passed the system along to Fort Severn peoples on the Berens River. Fort Severn peoples subsequently transmitted the system to Moose Factory (1985:9).

The missionaries, who were unable to find order or see textuality in the narrative genres of Algonkian orality, set about to "furnish a literature" for the Cree using Evans' syllabary. Scott, a United Church minister who compiled a biography on Evans writes:

Little was available from medicine man or orator. It had to be borrowed from the white man. So, translations of the Scriptures, liturgies, hymns and catechisms furnished the body of it. Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist alike employed the Cree syllabary for such work (1940:21).

The presumed absence of a writing system, and hence, of a literature was generally equated by the

38

The Midé initiation was comprised by eight stages, usually only four or five of which were actually pursued owing to the necessity of transmitting information regarding 'bad medicine' in the later stages. Those who pursued initiation into the highest rites of Midé practice were often suspected of maliciousness and deemed to be highly susceptible to malevolence. According to Dewdney, it was possible to reach a high status in the Midéwewin without being initiated, through instruction alone and by the purchase of birchbark song records (1975:88). This style of initiation was conducive to the formation of an elite of Midé scholars, who regularly consulted with one another exchanging interpretations of the Midé birchbark literature.

missionaries with an indigenous technological deficiency. The ideology underpinning Methodist discourse about literacy, clearly situates “literacy” as a potent symbol of Euro-Canadian modernity. That the Cree understood the social powers of script, relating syllabic writing to their own pictographic systems, which were also inscribed on birch-bark and employed to transmit messages between those who were temporally and spatially separated, however, precluded the sense of writing as something novel, incomprehensible, or superior to Native abilities (Worgan 1994:413).

As with writing, preachers were of the opinion that Cree students ought to be taught, not merely the “proper way” to sing, but to sing at all, as if they possessed no “official” forms of musical expression prior to learning Christian hymns. Scott asserts:

Birch Bark Talking! It was a new idea and an exciting one. Here was a mystery. The Indians became anxious to know the secret for themselves, - anxious to know the white man’s religion, too. His knowledge and his tools were superior to theirs - his religion must be superior also. Birch bark music was good, coming as the discovery of a new faculty to the Indians, who previously did not know that they could sing. Nor did they wait for teachers or for schools. They taught each other. The new art spread with amazing rapidity (1940:16-17).

Worgan submits that the Jesuits (like the Methodists), tended to exaggerate the importance of writing because they were so heavily invested in literacy:

Especially when trying to justify their fledgling missions, the Jesuits generally saw writing as one of main benefits they could bring to non-Europeans. The Jesuits were therefore inclined to see literacy as a central symbol of their identity, an attitude that probably influenced their accounts of native cultures (1994:422).

Rather than acknowledging the superior communicative capacities of the syllabic system, however, syllabic literacy was culturally mediated in the Cree context, or construed within the system of Cree “pragmatic rationality.”³⁹ Cree individuals rationalized the decision to adopt or reject syllabic literacy based on individual as well as culturally defined interests. It is possible that Cree people were of the opinion that new opportunities were to be gained by supplementing their own forms of communicating with additional modes. Moreover, they may have viewed the Methodist inscribed documents as valuable in and of

39

See Obeyesekere, who deploys the term to designate a culture-bound rationale for sense making and problem solving (1992: 19-22).

themselves. Grant suggests, for instance, that the Cree linked literacy with material reward owing to the general affluence of the missions, and to the delivery of supplies which resulted from the practice of sending letters:

Christianity can be understood as the quest for a grail with some very distinctly material aspects. The view of northern Indians as essentially 'tobacco Christians,' whether crudely brought with bales of clothing or more subtly enchanted by the promise of unimaginable wealth somewhere out there, acquires a good deal of credibility (1984:116).

Indeed, current translations of the Cree root "*masin*" clearly relate the concepts of "debt," and "employment" to "inscription." The Cree word *masinahamawew*, for instance, translates "S/he writes for her/him or s/he owes her/him or is in debt to someone." The terms *masinahikâew* and *masinahikehiwew* translate respectively: "It is written" and "S/he is hired" (Waugh et al 1998:72). Euro-Canadian interpretations of, or investments in, writing were thus not necessarily shared with the Crees. The Methodists' ultimate Christianizing goal, moreover, was often subverted as they found themselves enrolled in plans of Native making, and cast in roles they were unable to anticipate (Chute 1998:49). According to missionary publications, many Cree from distant localities visited the Norway House region, particularly during times of scarcity. Many of these visitors stated that the primary purpose of their journey was to learn syllabics (*Christian Guardian* 8 October 1862). For the most part, however, syllabic literacy was transmitted by Cree people themselves; and within less than a decade the system had spread from the Rockies to the Atlantic Coast (Murdoch 1985:10).

The Methodists, wary that their sudden popularity could easily be co-opted by their competitors in the Anglican and Catholic missions, were eager to quickly disseminate the syllabic orthography. To this end, Evans fashioned a printing press:

To make type, Evans carved the characters in hardwood then made molds in soft clay. Into the molds he poured lead melted from the lining of the Hudson's Bay Company tea chests, plus a few spent bullets. Chimney soot mixed with sturgeon oil was used for ink, and large sheets of birchbark for paper (Young 1965:34).

As there was no printing press, he borrowed a jack screw or fur press from the HBC with which he printed five thousand birchbark pages in Cree syllabics which were stitched into sixteen page booklets and bound

with deerskin covers. Each booklet contained the alphabet, Bible passages and a few hymns. The booklets were in high demand and were circulated widely throughout the region and beyond (ibid). It is conceivable that those in possession of sufficient resources to venture to the region, had no interest whatsoever in Methodism, but intended to supplement their own stores of birchbark wealth with these analogous missionary scripts.

Printing, according to Mabindsa, was difficult owing to the lack of a suitable press. Steinhauer worked with a blacksmith to punch the characters onto copper pennies and brass wire. Instead of a proper ink ball moreover, he used a deerskin stuffed with lamb's wool. Despite their limited resources, by 1848, they had printed 450 copies of the Wesleyan Discipline in Cree syllabics (1984:242). While stationed at the Rossville mission, Steinhauer wrote letters to other missionaries in the field, some of which were published in *The Christian Guardian*. The following are excerpts from a letter written in 1849 to the Editor of the paper, which detail the importance of print activities to the spread of mission work. Steinhauer writes:

Although buried as it were, in this waste howling wilderness, I bless God, that thus he has been, my helper, that he can even here manifest himself to all that love and call upon him. I am truly happy to learn, by means of some few odd numbers of the *Guardian*, which by some means or other found their way into this country, that our beloved Wesleyan-Methodism is progressing, and that its members are prospering in godliness. I am happy to be able to say (though I can say but little) that it is also prospering at this mission station. The members of the society are endeavouring to walk worthy of their profession, holding fast that whereunto they have attained...We have a very nice chapel built by the Hon., the Hudson's Bay Company. Our Mission school is also in a state of prosperity, there are upwards of 73 attendants on the Day, but more than that number attend the Sabbath School. In this mission we have a printing establishment, and all our printing is in Indian, in the Syllabic characters, founded by the late superintendent of this mission, which is very simple and easily learned. We know that the few little works that have been issued from the press tend greatly to increase the interest of the mission. It must be remembered that the field of labour is great; the labourers are few, and in his our day of small things, by means of the books that have been printed is knowledge spreading (in Petrone 1983:95-6).

The Methodists sought to teach "proper" Christian comportment by example. With a limited capacity for agricultural training, however, the missionaries placed greater emphasis on literacy as a means of promoting conversion. Toward this end, the Methodists divided the adult Cree population into classes, each with its own class leader and routinized class meeting schedule (Mabindsa 1984:222). Rossville Cree adults were encouraged to attend Sabbath school in order to learn to read and write syllabics, and engage in catechismal

discussions. Their children attended day school, where they were subjected to a vigorous religious indoctrination. With Steinhauer's tutelage, the higher ranking Methodists hoped that a new generation of Native evangelists would emerge. Therefore, in addition to spinning, gardening and mechanical skills, Cree children received instruction in reading and writing English and Cree and arithmetic (Mabindsa 1984:230). The remarkable continuity of traditional practices, in spite of conversions to Christianity, lends credence to the proposition that only some aspects of Christianity were accepted by the alleged converts, and what was deemed acceptable would have been appropriated in distinctively Indigenous ways.

The missionaries deemed printing to be highly important to their proselytizing efforts. For this reason, they continued to visit remote regions so as to spread syllabic literacy, as well as to create markets for their printed products. To the newly literate, they sent translations of scriptures and other devotional materials, with the hope that these booklets would inspire scriptural discussion in the missionaries' absence. According to Steinhauer, owing to the fact that Cree syllabic literacy was attained and passed on from one Cree speaker to another with such facility, printed devotional materials were often made to serve as surrogates for the missionaries themselves. He writes, "Several works of a religious character had also been translated and printed in the Cree language, and had gone farther into the interior than the Missionary could go" (*Christian Guardian*, 20 December 1854). Nearly a decade later, on his journey to the Oxford House mission, George McDougall, who had been appointed Chairman of the Methodist missions in the Hudson's Bay Territories, made the following entry in his journal, 8 March 1861:

Most of these wandering families possess parts of the word of God; in this way the noble James Evans "being dead yet speaketh." The very simple yet practical character of his syllabic letters can scarcely be realized. Not infrequently the pagan procures a part of the New Testament, and learns to read and write in these characters, before he has received the teachings of a missionary (in McDougall 1888:84).

Evidently, it was possible for the Cree to appropriate the medium, without necessarily espousing the message. Even within the mission, that hunting practices persisted, coexisting with the cultivation of crops, suggests that the Methodist interpolation into the Cree socio-cosmological and material world was less than total.

While syllabic literacy rapidly diffused, printing activities remained localized in such mission centres as Rossville. An Inuit man would take on Steinhauer's printing duties after his departure from the Rossville mission in 1885. According to Murdoch, Inuit peoples on the Hudson's Bay shores were, by the early 1850's, also learning and spreading the syllabic system (1985:10).⁴⁰ Without access to a press, however, printing proved to be of little immediate use to the Crees even within the Rossville community. Moreover, as mail routes typically followed transportation channels that were designed to move goods from one centre to another; the infrastructure was simply not yet in place in northern regions, to make mechanized printing a practical endeavour for Native people. Often the missionaries, themselves, complained of their inability to send and receive printed messages to each other with any regularity (Steinhauer in the *Christian Guardian*, 17 October 1849). Mail was delivered in the region only twice yearly.

It is not surprising that Cree people did not see the mass production of syllabic characters as a practical alternative to already existing communicative strategies. The mobile Cree previously possessed highly efficient means of communicating messages by word of mouth over vast distances. The "moccasin telegraph" was a swift and reliable method of information sharing, which relied for its efficiency on the memory and motor skills of runners who carried messages without recourse to writing or to printing.

There is evidence to suggest, however, that some Cree people did employ syllabic handwriting on birchbark to correspond with other syllabically literate Crees (McLean 1890:205). An article in the *Manitoba Free Press* submitted by the American consul in Winnipeg reported on the "extraordinary" diffusion of syllabics throughout the region citing the following example: "parties descending rivers would exchange messages by inscriptions on banks or bars of the stream...." Syllabic messages were also inscribed on media which had previously been made to bear pictographic messages. According to Young,

40

According to McGrath, Nain, Labrador began publishing the first Inuit language newsletter, *Aglait Illunainortut* in the late 1800s. It ceased publication in 1903. He writes that there are few early Inuit papers in the archives today owing to the scarcity of paper in the north and the demand for paper in the use of hand made cartridges (1991:95).

“Indians created post offices by blazing trees and writing the syllabics on the white surfaces. Sometimes they left birchbark messages under piles of stones, each with a peeled rod set up to attract attention” (1965:34). Significant numbers of Cree people, therefore readily adopted the syllabic system, employing handwriting, however, in distinctly Cree ways.

The wide circulation of the Methodists’ printed materials threatened HBC officials sufficiently to warrant their adoption of dissuasive measures. Up until this point, the HBC, apart from some few free-traders, held a monopoly position in the market of goods. A Methodist owned press posed the potentiality of private trade between the Methodists and Indian peoples. Although preserving the monopoly on trade relations was important to the HBC, preserving the company’s political control over the area was the principle motivation for their opposition to Methodist printing activities. According to McLean, the HBC feared that the printing press might be used by the Methodists, to encourage dissent to company rule. In his biography of James Evans, McLean writes:

Sir George Simpson could not allow another master in the territory owned by the Company, and he chafed under the growing influence of the missionary who could win men to obey the laws of God (1890:193).

Evans, who was largely successful in persuading Indian hunters and trappers to refrain from work on the Sabbath, was upsetting the work routine established by the HBC. According to Young, he had also attempted to promote local manufacturing among the Crees, which appeared to the HBC as interference in the fur trade (1965:35). It was the rapid spread of Evan’s influence by way of the syllabic system, though handwritten and on birchbark, however, that most worried the company officials. According to Grant, Crees from localities as distant as Churchill, Lac la Ronge and Berens River began to travel to Norway House to learn syllabics (1984:114). A printing press, the HBC surmised, would only hasten the spread of Methodist influence. According to Scott, “...the Hudson’s Bay Company had forbidden the use of [a printing press] in the country, fearing, doubtless, that with the spread of knowledge their fur monopoly could not readily be maintained” (1940:19). McLean rationalized this fear as follows:

Naturally enough, the Hudson’s Bay Company officials objected to the introduction of a printing press, lest that might censor of modern times, the newspaper, should find a location within the

domains of the Company, and a powerful antagonist to its interests arise (1890:166).

In an attempt to undermine Methodist influence, and to stifle possible political agitation as well as economic competition, the HBC deliberately impeded the delivery of a new printing press, and insisted that all reports to the Methodist Society be submitted to the Company prior to publication (Scott 1940:15).

In a letter to the British Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in London, published in an 1845 edition of *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, Evans asserted that printed materials, and therefore the press, were crucial to the Methodist prime objective -- the *Christianizing* process. He writes:

About the Press and type -- This is a most painful disappointment. Without this we are crippled in our endeavours. [Various devotional materials] might be given to the Indians had we the means of printing them next summer. Without the scriptures, and other little books our people must remain ignorant (in Mabindsa 1984:240).

A printing press was eventually delivered, owing partially to the intervention of the Aborigines' Protection Society in England, and to the Methodists' pledges that the press would be used, "only for mission work" (McLean 1890:170). It was the first press in the North-West.

In addition to their use as instruments of Christianization, however, printed products were becoming increasingly important as fund-raising devices, and thus to developing partisanship for the Methodist missionizing enterprise. The missionaries capitalized on the positive attention the news of their printing practices received at annual meetings, and in such publications as the *Missionary Outlook*, the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, and the *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*. Fund-raising speeches at annual meetings are replete with references to the capacity of the Word, printed words and literacy in general, to bring about societal and religious transformation in Native missions. In a speech delivered at an annual meeting of the Branch Missionary Society in England, which was later printed in the *Christian Guardian*, Steinhauer reported:

[I] believed the Roman Catholics were not making very great progress...the Indians would not go and listen to them, because they would not teach them to read, as the other Missionaries did. (Applause.) Someone belonging to the Roman Catholics once said to [me], "Your way is the proper way of searching; because, when you come to the people, you have your books, and while you tell them about God and Jesus Christ, you do not stop there, after baptizing them, but you teach them to read for themselves; but our Missionaries, our praying chiefs, never teach us to read so that we are as ignorant as we were" (*Christian Guardian*, 20 December 1854).

The Methodists considered direct access to Biblical Scriptures, and hence literacy, inherently transformative, and conditional to proper conversion.

While visiting Britain, Steinhauer actively solicited funds for a new press by delivering speeches, in which he ensured potential benefactors of his proficiency in printing activities. He asserted, for instance, that he was a competent “compositor and pressman, and [had] occupied all the other departments of the printing business, as well as being a type-founder” (*Christian Guardian*, 20 December 1854). Although he acknowledged that printing was a by-product of his Christianizing work, he was one of the first Native people in Canada to become a skilled printer. Furthermore, although the materials he printed were undeniably meant to serve in the larger project of Indigenous cultural replacement, the literature contributed to a dissemination of Cree syllabic literacy, which, a century later, would play a crucial role in Cree cultural revival.

Possibly owing to a less than impressive number of conversions in the Rupert’s Land region, as well as to the fact that the clergy were required to report to the profit-minded HBC administrators, the Methodists placed increasing importance on the quantity of their printed scriptural translations (rather than baptisms) when measuring the progress of their Christianizing enterprise. Literacy, unlike Christian devotion, was easily measured. As such, missionaries of various denominations vigorously competed to produce the first syllabic Cree Bible, a commodity whose marketability even the HBC could not ignore.

The first Cree Bible, to which Steinhauer contributed his translations of portions of the Old and New Testaments, was published in 1861 and 1862, by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Whereas the Methodists’ detractors insisted that literate Native converts understood little of what they read, or recited; the Methodist missionaries continued to emphasize the theme of literacy as a crucial stage in, and indication of, Methodist initiation. John McDougall’s biography of his father (1888), Methodist missionary George McDougall, for instance, serves as both a chronicle of Methodist “civilizing” accomplishments in Indian missions, and as a tourist brochure, designed to attract prospective settlers to the North-west. In addition to providing information on travel routes, descriptions of select land tracts, and reports on the abundance of

natural resources, the book attempts to assuage European fears of the Indigenous population with accounts of an alleged growing tendency, among Indian individuals, for Methodist generated transformation.

McDougall writes:

...I will briefly relate a circumstance showing the ardent desire of a native Christian to read the word of God. I had noticed that the father of Ka-be-o-sense always brought his Bible to church, and followed the reading of the lessons with marked interest, and the circumstance excited my curiosity. I knew he was what we termed an inland Indian, and that no school teacher had ever penetrated the wilderness where he was born. Approaching him after service, I said, "You can read?" and his answer was, "Yes." "Who taught you the letters?" "I do not know them," was his reply. "Then tell me how you can read." Without any embarrassment he replied, "This is the way. I observe that when you pronounced any of our words that they were broken up into small parts...When the white man says "Indian," you write it "Un-ne-she-nah-ba." When I went to my tent, I would take a hymn-book, and ask my wife to repeat one of the hymns she had learnt by heart, and I soon became acquainted with the form of all the syllables." ...May not something of this kind have first suggested to the ingenious and indefatigable James Evans, the first idea of the syllabic character (6 January 1876).⁴¹

McDougall prominently features such accounts of learned literacy, much in the same way as he employs tales of the elaborate welcomes extended by various Native chiefs to Methodist missionaries, and testaments of the ardent desires of western tribes to treat, to indicate Native peoples' desire for "civility," -- their openness to persuasion, and thus their imminent and inevitable Methodization and pacification. Later, John McLean who had become chief archivist for the Methodist church would assert that syllabic literacy and the biblical literature to which it granted access were instrumental in ensuring the neutrality of Plains Cree groups during the Riel uprising (Young 1965:25).

The Methodist emphasis on literacy training derived from the assumption that it was not always necessary for a community to initially accept the narrative of Christianity to become acquainted with Methodist ideology. Steinhauer, for instance, posited two types of knowledge necessary to the elevation of Indian people in the scale of being -- one moral, the other, religious (in Mabindsa 1984:444). The ethos of Methodism -- "productive enterprise" could be implanted, it was held, via such non-narrative media as exposure to routinized agricultural labours, proper household organization, or habitual class attendance -- in

41

Excerpts from a letter written by George McDougall to James Ferrier (in McDougall 1888:222).

other words, by means of practical innovation. Methodist proselytization was thus a battle as much for mastery of the mundane, as it was for sacred sites. *Reading* the Bible, *communicating* with syllabics, *cultivating* a field and *occupying* a Methodist class, were for the Methodists, moral activities that were metonymic of Methodist religiosity, in so far as they were considered steps along a path toward “civility.” Literacy, as such, was for the Methodists, evidence a definite achievement in moral improvement, if not yet, of religious transformation.

For Native peoples, on the other hand, syllabic literacy was synonymous with neither Christianity nor Methodism. Cree, Inuit, Ojibwe and Dene peoples continued to spread syllabic literacy amongst each other, without adopting agricultural practices, Christian beliefs, nor the Methodist usages. Syllabic literacy was taught usually by a family member and often alongside hunting and trapping skills, which did not dramatically alter already existing socio-cosmological beliefs or economic practices. By selectively appropriating the syllabic technology, Native peoples themselves were able to bring about near universal literacy in many Native and Inuit communities -- a situation which would prevail until shortly after the Second World War (Murdoch 1985:11). The meanings attributed to syllabic literacy by Native peoples, therefore, derived from “the individual’s struggle for voice” within Indigenous, not missionary, institutional and ideological, contexts (McLaughlin 1992:20).

Steinhauer’s Methodism: An Oji-Cree-ative Hybrid

The current trend, both in academia and the wider public, of equating the adoption of agriculture and/or literacy with acculturation and culture loss, ignores the practical reasoning behind some of the initial positive responses by Indian individuals to certain carefully selected technologies, in the 19th Century. In adopting some practices and rejecting others, Plains peoples employed syncretization in the sense that Naficy employs the term, namely, as “a means used by oppressed people to ensure the survival of their beliefs and way of life” (1993:229). That some Cree groups of present-day Saskatchewan and Alberta voluntarily began to farm and send their children to day schools, thus retaining the central value, but

impregnating the “form” of “living off the land” with new meanings, may have had much to do with Henry Bird Steinhauer’s unique methods of Methodist proselytization.

After his ordination in 1855, Steinhauer was appointed to a new mission in Lac la Biche (in present-day Alberta). Lac La Biche, in particular, had become a field of intense Roman Catholic activity. In an attempt to counter the growing influence of Roman Catholicism in the area, in 1855, Steinhauer opened a day school -- the first school for Native children in Alberta (Mabindsa 1984:404). During the day, Cree children were exposed to a primarily religious education, but were also instructed in Cree syllabic literacy. On weekday evenings, Steinhauer delivered sermons to the adults. He also sought conversions from the more nomadic plains groups, with whom he camped during the Spring months, at which time the Cree gathered in large groups to fish and hunt buffalo (Mabindsa 1984:406).

In 1862, McDougall wrote to the Rev. Enoch Wood, from Maskepetoon’s camp in the Battle River country, reporting that:

By many a camp-fire, and in many a smoky lodge, our faithful missionaries [Robert Rundle, Henry B. Steinhauer and Thomas Woosley] have taught these natives the message of salvation, and who can estimate the fruit of their labor [sic]? Many of the pagans understand the syllabic characters, and have procured parts of the Book of God; and in this way in many hearts the heavenly leaven is spreading (in McDougall 1888:96).

Maskepetoon (Broken Arm), according to Dickason, was probably the best known of the western converts to Methodism, moreover, “he was one of the first on the Plains to learn the syllabic script, which he used with great proficiency and which may have aided his activities as a roving diplomat” (1997:298). As early as 1843, he was engaged in correspondence in syllabics with the Rev. Rundle, who was stationed at Rocky Mountain House (Murdoch 1985:11). The extent to which Maskepetoon was actually converted to Methodism, however, is questionable. The following account in which Maskepetoon explains to Paul Kane his aversion to selecting one Christian religion, is telling. Kane recounts:

Mr. Rundell (Rundle, a Methodist) has told him that what he preached was the only true road to heaven and Mr. Hunter (Anglican) told him the same thing, and so did Mr. Thebo (Thibault, a Catholic), and as they all three said that the other two were wrong, and as he did not know which was right, he thought they ought to call a council among themselves, and then he would go with them all three; but that until they agreed he would wait (cited in MacGregor 1975:96).

Although the Bible was alleged to have been written in stone, little unity of opinion existed between the Christian denominations with regard to a singular narrative of Christianity as *meaning* was not given in the scriptural texts themselves. Rather, each Christian sect presumed to exclusively possess the authentic *interpretation* of these raw scriptural materials. Maskepetoon's unwillingness to participate in this disunified realm pointed out what he considered to be the fundamental deficiency in Christian approaches to the production of authority. The missionaries' inability to persuade the other denominations to arrive at some form of consensus with regard to the meaning of these texts, as well as their claims to sole possession of truth, their devaluation of other forms of knowledge and other factors signified to him, that their decision-making methods, and therefore, their capacities for leadership were critically flawed. Maskepetoon was not adverse, however, to appropriating the form of communication missionaries called syllabic literacy; he simply preferred to derive from his relationship with these texts, his own unique readings.

Steinhauer's efforts to create a sedentary agricultural community in Whitefish Lake⁴² met with some success (Mabindsa 1984:408). For at least seven years prior to the signing of Treaty Six, Whitefish Lake residents positively responded to Steinhauer's projects to develop the necessary literacy and agricultural skills with which it was felt, residents could defend their community from outside control. In the Spring of 1869, owing largely to a petition written by community members requesting the full-time services of a teacher, Adam Snyder was sent to the settlement (Mabindsa 1984:441). Snyder's first teaching duties were conducted in another of Steinhauer's innovations -- the "movable camp meetings." Despite the minimal interest in Christianity, Steinhauer's mobile school ensured a diffusion of syllabic literacy. That adults were simultaneously receiving literacy training at class meetings, ensured an inter-generational sharing of information and skills. Moreover, long after assimilation became the government's explicit goal, and English had become the standard language of instruction for Indian schools in the East, Steinhauer's

42

Not to be confused with the Whitefish Lake First Nation in the Treaty 8 area of Northern Alberta.

brand of pedagogy continued to promote a mixed Cree and English curriculum (*Edmonton Bulletin* 24 May 1884).

That Steinhauer's mission attracted some to settlement is attributable to the voluntary aspect to participation in the Methodist social re-organization project, as well as Steinhauer's personal relations with the band members. The positive response to agricultural and literacy practices under Steinhauer's direction diverge widely from later responses to the forced education and farming projects that were introduced by government institutions after the treaty signing.

Peter Erasmus, a Métis free-trader, and later government translator, suggests that the members of the Whitefish Lake settlement did not reject agricultural training outright, for the reason that they foresaw the possibility of attaining material gain in adopting some cultivating activities:

[Steinhauer] had been successful in persuading the Indians to cultivate some few plots of grain, barley and vegetables. Their farming tools were very crude, mostly homemade of wood...Once the Indians learned of the value of the grain and the increased relish that vegetables added to the fish and meat diet, there were few who did not try to cultivate some land. They pooled their power in ponies to pull Steinhauer's plough...(1976:189).

That the Crees were not opposed to adopting some cultivating practices was due in part to what Sliwa refers to as their "opportunity-based economy." Plains Cree, he submits, were prone to utilizing all the resources in their local area, rather than exploiting one resource, such as the buffalo. Cree survival depended on this capacity for innovation and adaptation (1995:4-5). The adoption of some agricultural practices did not at first produce a qualitative shift in the focus of the Cree economy away from hunting. Farming, in fact, served to enrich hunting capacities. Agriculture therefore, and arguably Methodism, were not so much imposed on Crees at *this* historical moment, as they were selectively appropriated by particular interested groups to strategic effect. That farming enhanced Whitefish Lake inhabitants' hunting capacities was an unintended outcome of the Methodist agricultural project.

That Methodist social intervention was less than total is further evinced by the fact that the Whitefish Lake residents would reject the principle of individual self-interest that was expected to follow from agricultural reform. Despite the fact that land tracts would come to be "formally" held by household

heads, for instance, lands continued to be worked and farm implements shared communally. The products of cultivation and hunting moreover, continued to be circulated throughout the community rather than hoarded by nuclear family units. The *Edmonton Bulletin* reported that during a particularly harsh winter, in spite of the fact that “the majority of the [Whitefish Lake] band are not badly off...each [having] a little crop of wheat, barley and potatoes...” Chief Pakan was running a “soup kitchen,” requesting flour and beef from the Indian agent and taking up collections of potatoes from band members, and a load of wood from each head of a family to be distributed to the “aged and helpless of the band” (12 February 1881). Thus, collective community prosperity and the system of reciprocity continued to dominate Cree social relations in spite of Methodist efforts to promote utilitarian “individualism,” private property and market production.

Steinhauer’s style of cultural brokerage, derived from his strategy of stressing the similarities between the lifestyles of the Biblical Jews and the Cree people, rather than their differences. Whereas European missionaries tended to highlight the alleged deficiencies of Indigenous lifeways, and the supposed superiority of Christian civility, Steinhauer, who now found himself without a resident supervisor, was able to advance, with some measure of freedom, his own interpretations. Like Peter Jones, Peter Jacobs and other Ojibwe Methodist evangelists before him, Steinhauer adopted a discourse which combined selected elements of official Methodist doctrine, with certain carefully gleaned Ojibwe, and for Steinhauer, Oji-Cree socio-cosmological principles.

Drawing largely from his personal experience of mass settlement in Ontario, as well as from his own bouts with discrimination within the Methodist ranks, Steinhauer was fully aware, however, that “Christianity” alone, without economic and political power, would not ensure the “elevation” of Indian people to a position of equality with white settlers. He envisioned agricultural skills and literacy as instruments of empowerment, rather than subjugation -- as tools that might be used by Cree people to gain, rather than relinquish, control over their territories. And, his experiences with Plains groups confirmed that neither he, nor they, saw hunting and cultivating, nor political education and religion, as mutually exclusive.

There is good reason to believe that Steinhauer was incorporated into the Cree social organization

as a kindred member, owing to a perceived “internal social need” According to Sliwa:

While the nature of some kinship ties with outsiders was at times nothing more than metaphoric or figurative, the reciprocal responsibilities and obligations associated with being considered “kin” were far from symbolic (1995:5).

Steinhauer’s contribution to the prosperity of the group was by way of imparting agricultural and literacy skills, and thus, the means of adapting to a rapidly changing resource base. While on the Plains, he did not actually participate as a buffalo hunter, as these prestigious positions were reserved for those with experience. Instead, Steinhauer remained in the camp with the women and the elderly (Erasmus 1976:205). The camp meetings he organized on the plains provided a context for instruction to be imparted to both adults and children. By contrast, by the mid 1870’s schooling in the East typically focussed solely on children as in the estimation of church and governmental administrators, the isolation and Euro-Canadian styled socialization of Indian youth presented the most efficacious manner of at least internally blanching Indian children through “temporal, intellectual and spiritual improvement,” thus rendering them more palatable for eventual public consumption (Grant 1984:178).

In the Whitefish Lake community, where every able household head also engaged in bush hunting, it was the practice to make regular contributions to the teacher, the minister, and the old people (Erasmus 1976:231). That Steinhauer was incorporated into the system of reciprocal exchange, indicates that the community was not only fully capable of, but not adverse to, integrating selected extraneous elements, even when the inductee served no immediate practical function within the hunting paradigm -- the central principle of social organization for Cree men. Clearly, Steinhauer saw himself, and was seen, as a provider, though of another sort of sustenance.

Although he did not discourage camp members from hunting buffalo on the Plains, once Methodized, Steinhauer believed the Cree would “naturally crave and desire the blessings and comforts of civilized habits” (Mabindsa 1984:416). He saw no moral contradiction in mixing hunting with farming practices, however, drawing from his experience of settlement in the east, he correctly foresaw that game would diminish, and crop cultivation would become a skill necessary less for prosperity than for mere

survival. In Ontario Native communities, when the presence of settlers rendered hunting an impossible means of subsistence, Ojibwe settlements found themselves having to choose from a very narrow realm of possible livelihoods. They could disperse and take up residence on the outskirts of white towns, on whom they would come to rely for rations. They could re-locate to more northerly regions, often having to leave their relations behind. Or, they could diversify their economy through farming, and maintain a semblance of independence on their homelands.

Steinhauer encouraged the latter. With this end in mind, he set about to inscribe on the bodies and habits of Whitefish Lake residents, Wesley's rubric -- and to create a Methodist world durable enough to prevent the social disintegration that was expected to follow when the mass settlement of the area would preclude Native peoples from pursuing their traditional livelihoods. He attempted to renovate the social order by dividing the Whitefish Lake community into classes. He attempted to rewire what he considered to be untutored "dark and chaotic" minds, by providing teachings for adults and children on agricultural and mechanical skills as well as instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic and geography. According to Mabindsa, Steinhauer endeavoured to teach an understanding of Euro-Canadian ways, but:

...he felt they were to be selective in this process. Only those aspects of the White man's culture conforming to the Methodist view of the world were desirable. As a result, he tried to keep his charges away from the corrupting influences of certain Whites who were hostile to the missionaries. This was especially true of the free-traders who peddled intoxicants while selling other wares to the Indians (1984:430).

Proving that he was not prone to making Manichean racial distinctions, Steinhauer asserted that White traders were no less "heathen" than non-Methodized Indians. In this sense, his notion of "civility" was ostensibly at odds with the official settler sensibility, in which all settlers, by virtue of their European descent, were presumed to occupy a higher moral standing, and mass European and Euro-Canadian immigration into the area was considered an inherently positive moral prospect. Although he used the language in which they were encoded; Steinhauer clearly rejected white assumptions concerning an innate Indian immorality and an ascribed non-Aboriginal authority.

Steinhauer did however divide people into two distinct moral categories -- Methodists and non-

Methodists. The Brandon Manitoba newspaper reported in 1884, for instance, that at the annual Methodist conference that year, Steinhauer had commented on the differential treatment he, as a Methodized Indian would receive from the audience than what could be expected by the “pagan Indians seen on the streets of the town” (cited in Young 1897:364). Offering himself as the product of Methodists’ labours, he notes the inherent contradiction in this distinction, yet accepts it nonetheless. In his view, however, it was the imbrication, rather than the whole scale replacement, of the Indian by the Methodist world that offered Indian communities the greatest chance to resist absorption by the settling masses. Methodists aimed to transcend tribal or ethnic distinctions and to unite Indian people nationally under the banner of Methodism. Owing to the diverse ways that Methodism was appropriated and localized by specific regional and cultural groups, however, Methodist proselytizing efforts unintentionally often produced multiple Methodisms (Brooks 1977:50).

The Methodist “civilizing” project therefore introduced added intra- and inter-tribal distinctions rather than affinities. As the terms for a discourse between nations were generally set by a government that was intent on dissolving Indian territorial sovereignty; unity of purpose at this historical juncture was more often based on the shared territorial concerns among both the “progressive” and “conservative” members of Indian bands than on any shared appreciation for, or rejection of, Methodist ideological principles. Methodist farmers and plains hunters of the Treaty Six region, for instance, held councils to discuss the creation of a communal Indian territory comprised of linked reserves. No analogous meetings of regionally diverse Methodist Indians were convened at this time.

Steinhauer, who had experienced first hand the lack of any unified mentality in Methodist circles, whose experience with non-Native free traders precluded any belief in the existence of a singular white enclave, and whose intimate awareness of the cultural complexity among Indian peoples led him to reject the idea that Indian peoples constituted a distinct racial category, was disturbed by simplistic rationalizations of white or European supremacy. Typically such reasoning, which issued forth from Methodist as well as from wider spheres of Euro-Canadian dominion, was based on the erroneous

assumption of Native cultural homogeneity and on Native peoples' alleged innate intellectual inferiority. In a letter, which appears in the *Western Missionary Notices* (1 August 1872), for instance, he assertively dismisses the race based differentiating discourse. Steinhauer writes:

We speak of our Missions in this country as being a power of renovating the condition of those people who have come under their instructions; and in my estimation the school has been of equal power in elevating the scale of being those who, in the estimation of many a white man, were irrecoverably barbarous, -- too degraded to acquire knowledge, either moral or religious (in Mabindsa 1984:444).

Steinhauer's insistence that Aboriginal Methodists were adapting well to new social and economic environments, was offered as evidence that Native Methodist farmers, at least, were qualified to govern their own affairs and ought to be granted title to their lands.

In addition to pursuing an avowedly hybrid approach to proselytization, Steinhauer continued to correspond with his colleagues in Ontario, and subsequently apprised his Cree contemporaries of developments in the virtually inseparable political and religious spheres of Methodist Ojibwe missions there. In addition to Christian and Western educations, Steinhauer therefore, offered a political education, one which included the history of Indian-white relations in Ontario.

Peter Jones' letter and newspaper article writing campaigns, in particular, which aimed to secure land titles to the Saugeen tract in 1832, provided a useful methodology for coordinating effective political activity. Had Jones been successful, Ojibwes would have acquired the power to set up their own educational, political, and economic institutions, without interference from outsiders. Like Jones' efforts on behalf of the Ojibwes, and later somewhat strategically different attempts by Big Bear, Piapot and Little Pine,⁴³ Steinhauer advocated for the establishment of an exclusively Cree homeland -- though one founded

43

Although these Cree leaders were also willing to explore the alternative of agriculture, Tobias submits that they sought primarily to guarantee the preservation of the buffalo-hunting culture for as long as possible (1983:523). Sluman and Goodwill submit that, "It was Big Bear's contention that none of them should consider signing any kind of treaty unless the government first promised immediate action for the protection and conservation of the remaining buffalo" (1982:9). In treating with the government, part of their strategy included requesting a series of reserves that were contiguous to one another, in order to effect a sizeable Cree territory in the Cypress Hills area. Such a concentration would enable the inhabitants to engage in concerted action to defend their autonomy and their treaty rights (Tobias 1983:527).

upon a unique combination of Cree and Methodist organizational principles, and one based on an economy that included both hunting and agriculture.

After the annexation of the Northwest Territories to Canada in 1869, Steinhauer served as a political advisor to Pakan (James Seenum) -- the Chief of the Whitefish and Goodfish Lake bands. In political disputes which arose between the band and the federal government, he acted as an interpreter, and wrote letters on behalf of Whitefish Lake residents, in terms which White government officials would understand (Mabindsa 1984:480). Like Jones, Steinhauer thus facilitated direct communication between Cree leaders and the agents of the crown (rather than with the Indian administration) long before the standard treaties were brought to them (Mabindsa 1984:535). Petitions from the Whitefish Lake band were often drawn up following council meetings. A letter to Lieutenant-Governor Archibald, signed by Peter Erasmus, Henry Bird Steinhauer and his sons Arthur and Egerton, among others, calls for the recognition of Indian title to the land. The petition dated 9 January 1871, reads:

We as loyal subjects of our Great Mother the Queen whom your Excellency represents, wish, that our privileges [sic] and Claims of the land of our fathers be recognized by Commissioners whom your Excellency may hereafter appoint to treat with the different tribes of the Saskatchewan...our friends the plains Crees, who have not been taught as we have, think that their lands and hunting grounds shall be taken from them without any remuneration. As loyal subjects of our Great Mother the Queen, we pray that all the privileges [sic] and advantages of such subjects may be granted to us as a people by your Excellencies [sic] Government (cited in Mabindsa 1984:496).

This letter hints at the divisions introduced by missionaries between the "progressives" and "conservatives" and indeed uses such distinctions to argue for the sufficient preparedness or "advancement" of Whitefish Lake residents to commit to the process of formalizing relations between the band and the federal government. The letter also indicates the strong influence Steinhauer had on Pakan⁴⁴ and his band, who did seem to have some comprehension as to what treaty-making, at least ideally, implied.

Throughout the 1870s the Native inhabitants in the Treaty Six region continued to hold council meetings and to discuss strategies for dealing with squatting settlers, government surveying teams, and the

44

Pakan was about eleven years old when Steinhauer established his mission at Lac La Biche (Mabindsa 1984:558).

demise of the buffalo herds. At some of these meetings, several of the participating chiefs drafted letters to the government setting out their demands. According to Sluman and Goodwill:

Chiefs Sweetgrass and Pakan...one a Catholic convert and other a Methodist joined with local whitemen in requesting the government to get on with the treaty negotiations. Harry [sic] Bird Steinhauer, the missionary at Whitefish Lake where Pakan had settled tried to tone down Pakan's enthusiasm, warning him that the land was all that the Indians really owned but the Chief ignored the advice of this native-born missionary. Some of the other chiefs were more wary. Mistawasis (Big Child) had a letter written for him to Lieutenant-Governor Morris in January of 1875 in which he stated; "I do not wish it to be understood that I and my people are anxious that the Governor should come and make a treaty but if he is coming we do not say to him not to come" (1982:8).

Written addresses were made by or on behalf of Pakan to Lieutenant-Governor Archibald in 1871, and later, to his successor Alexander Morris from 1872 to 1876 insisting that negotiations begin before any further land surveys be conducted, telegraph wires set, or lands be appropriated by settlers (Mabindsa 1984:510). Mabindsa offers a somewhat different interpretation of Pakan's eagerness to treat. He submits that the Whitefish Lake band had a reasonable comprehension of what was entailed in land surrenders, because Steinhauer, who had experience of what this meant for the Ojibwe in Ontario, had educated them as to the implications of treaty-making and the establishment of reserved lands. Before the treaty negotiations, Pakan had discussed with Steinhauer the exact boundaries of the reserve. The reserve they envisaged would serve as a home for other bands of Cree who would not have an opportunity to be directly represented at the negotiations (1984:513). Pakan was insistent that such a territory would be governed in the Indian way, and thus not necessarily in accordance with Euro-Canadian customs. The Whitefish Lake band, therefore, wanted more from the treaty process than mere lands reserved for their hunting grounds. They wanted to establish their proprietary rights to a territory they claimed as their own, on which, they would determine their own affairs.

Attempts to control access to lands, such as interfering with land surveys and tampering with telegraph wires, reflect this change in the sense of land as common area, to a perception of land as private property (Sliwa 1995:8). At Whitefish Lake, private property was not an entirely alien concept. From the time of his arrival, Steinhauer had been actively promoting the notion that farm land ought to be both cultivated and owned on an individual rather than a communal basis (Mabindsa 1984:532). Evidently the

Crees had their own ideas about how to employ this information to their best interests. Steinhauer's attempts to impart "individualism," contrarily, had the effect to strengthen the sovereignty of the Cree nation. The information he provided was appropriated and employed by various Cree bands, working in concert, as a weapon against governmental policies that were designed to undermine Cree unity and independence.

Despite Steinhauer's accomplishments, his dream of a Native clergy never emerged. The all white senior Methodist officials refused to relinquish their control, and would not consent to the formation of an Indian branch of the church that would be independently controlled by a Native agency (Mabindsa 1984:575). Steinhauer's efforts to promote a stable reserve economy based on agriculture, moreover, were directly undermined by the government's agricultural reform policies which were introduced shortly after the treaties were signed. The *Indian Act*, for instance, permitted local agents and farm instructors to assume greater control over cultivating activities. The 1878 Model Farm experiment, moreover, placed patronage appointees from Ontario, none of whom had experience in prairie farming, and many of whom had no familiarity with Native peoples, in positions of authority over all reserve farming matters. The program provided for the organization of bands in the treaties 4, 6 and 7 areas into farming agencies, and for the installation of a permanent resident farm instructor in each one (Carter 1990:79,82).

Settlers, who were indignant that such programs gave an unfair advantage to Indian farmers, voiced their dissent in the prairie presses. Frank Oliver, employed both his newspaper, *The Edmonton Bulletin*, and his political position to press the point that any efforts to educate Indian people posed a threat to the public interest. During the 14 June 1897 parliamentary debates, Oliver insisted, "we are educating these Indians to compete industrially with our own people, which seems to me a very undesirable use of public money, or else we are not able to educate them to compete, in which case our money is thrown away" (in Hall 1977:134). The model farm program was shelved in 1884 due to administrative problems, increasing criticism from the non-Native residents of the North-west, and an increasing concern for economy in the Indian department.

In 1889 a new program was introduced, which had as its intended goal the exclusion of Indian farmers from competition in the commercial farming industry. Hayter Reed's Peasant Farming program, was designed to deliberately arrest Indian agricultural development, and to hasten Indian enfranchisement. It was hoped that these measures would appease settlers and attract new immigrants to the North-West. The program called for the subdivision of reserves into individual farms, a reduction in the acreage of crops under cultivation and of herds held, a prohibition on the use of labour-saving technology, a focus on production for self-sufficiency rather than for profit. Rather than communally owned cattle herds, for instance, the program allowed for one or two cows per household. Joseph Dion writes:

The large herds of band cattle and horses soon disappeared. Our own stock were reduced in numbers to practically nil and for the second time the Crees saw their meat supply vanish into thin air (1979:132).

The cultivation moreover, of root crops as opposed to wheat was encouraged, as root crops required weeding by hand at the time of year Native people would have been away hunting. Wheat farming on the other hand, was carried out with machinery, and required no special efforts during the hunting season (Carter 1990:211). According to Reed, labour saving farm technologies such as self-binders or threshing machines, which were generally purchased and used by Indian people cooperatively, discouraged individualism and promoted idleness. Carter writes:

...Reed argued that Indians should not make an "unnatural leap" from barbarism to a nineteenth-century environment, including all of its appliances...While labour-saving machinery was necessary and suitable for white farmers, then, Indian farmers had first to experience farming with crude and simple implements. To do otherwise defied immutable laws of evolution. In Reed's view, Indians had not reached the state at which they were in a position to compete with white settlers; therefore they should not be equipped with the machinery that would allow them to compete (1990:213).

It was as a direct result of such policies, rather than an allegedly innate Indian distaste for agriculture, that agriculture failed to form the basis of a stable reserve economy.

By the turn of the century, settler fears of Indian competition were successfully assuaged. Government and journalistic discourses officially agreed, Indian people themselves, had authored their own misfortune. In 1904, Clifford Sifton, the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, would remark, "The

Indian...cannot compete with the white man...He has not the physical mental or moral get-up to enable him to compete. He cannot do it" (Parliamentary Debates 18 July 1904 cited in Hall 1977:134). The institutionalization of Native farming would produce its desired results, and from 1896 to 1911 immigrants, mostly from Ontario, flocked to the prairies (Stanley 1960).

In his final years, Steinhauer would be forced to relinquish the small measure of control over Indian educational pedagogy that he was able to assert in his on reserve day school. This was particularly evident after the government began to implement some of the recommendations of the 1879 Davin Report,⁴⁵ which called for a standardization and institutionalization of Native education. The abandonment of the farm program in 1884, thus coincided with the introduction of an industrial school system. According to John A. MacDonald, Indian people were "naturally" unsuited to agricultural pursuits, and were more likely to become blacksmiths, carpenters or mechanics (Carter 1990:106).

Steinhauer soon found out that the informal and personalized style of education he was able to offer through local day schools and camp meetings, was to be replaced by a much more militantly routinized system of large, off reserve, government regulated institutions. This system would alter the nature of Indian family life for generations to come.⁴⁶ From this point on, the churches began to concentrate their efforts on the enterprise of Indian education. And, as Grant has noted, "The collaboration of Indians in planning and support, so conspicuous in early Upper Canada, was as conspicuously absent later in the century" (1984:182). That Native people might desire an alternative future than that prescribed for them in the government's plan for Indian progress, was not a consideration in the development of residential school

45

Nicholas Flood Davin was a former journalist with the *Toronto Globe*, the *Toronto Mail*, and an unsuccessful Conservative candidate for the House of Commons. In 1883, Davin founded the *Regina Leader*, Assiniboia's first newspaper (DCB 1945:151).

46

The same year the industrial school system was introduced, the government passed the *Indian Advancement Act*, which linked education with obligatory enfranchisement. It was amended ten years later when regulations were added to provide for compulsory school attendance. According to Persson, "punitive regulations were provided for parents and children who did not cooperate with the department in this regard" (1980:29).

curricula, nor in the day to day operation of the schools.

As part of the their expansion plan, the Methodists constructed an industrial school in Red Deer, Alberta which officially began operations in 1893. The school was administered by an all white staff (Miller 1996:115). Although the reserve day schools at Whitefish and Goodfish Lakes continued to operate, Cree children were sometimes sent by their parents to the Red Deer institution, with the hope that they would receive a better education there. As the voluntary quality of school enrollment was surpassed by more coercive measures, however, resistance to forced schooling began to mount, even in the previously enthusiastic Whitefish Lake community. According to Grant:

Resistance to enrolment was widespread, and school burnings were more common than mere accident would explain. Arthur Barner, appointed by the Methodists in 1907 to revive their ailing industrial school at Red Deer, reported such hostility at Whitefish Lake that no one would undertake to drive him to the reserve. Yet this was Henry Steinhauer's old mission, and one of Steinhauer's sons was then in charge of it (1984:179).

The final affront to Steinhauer's efforts to promote the establishment of an independent, self-determined, Cree Methodist homeland, came from within the Methodist Church itself. In his new supervisory role, John McDougall, who openly advocated and indeed, facilitated western expansionism, quickly curtailed Steinhauer's political activities. In 1884, the Whitefish Lake band council asked Steinhauer to serve as Pakan's translator on a trip to Ottawa, where he hoped to press the matter of the large reserve. Steinhauer was required by church protocol, to ask McDougall's permission. He later sent a letter to *The Missionary Outlook* explaining his frustration at having been refused the opportunity to help his people. It read:

...urging as a plea that Chief Pakan's band were my people, I ought a least to ask leave of absence from the proper authorities; I did so by sending the message that I did, and the answer to it puts an end to the idea of doing as the band desire (August 1884).

Steinhauer was thereafter expected to suspend his political opinions, to concentrate his efforts on mission work, and to refrain from involvement with the band council. Like George Copway, Peter Jones and other Ojibwe ministers before him, Steinhauer was without any official possibilities, outside of publicizing his displeasure, for recourse. Like them, he was forced to accept the irreconcilable contradictions of his existence as an Ojibwe Methodist. In December that year, Steinhauer contracted influenza and quietly

passed away.

Steinhauer's syncretic strategies for Cree survival involved providing Cree bands with an agricultural, academic and a political education, while upholding the central principles of Cree social organization and the sovereignty of Cree territory. At first, Cree syncretization was borne of opportunity. Farming enhanced hunting and syllabic literacy improved one's diplomatic capacities. These initial positive responses to Steinhauer's innovations proved that the Cree were not adverse to integrating selected extraneous technologies. With the threat of massive settlement that soon followed, however, the Cree at Whitefish Lake strategically blended hunting with agriculture and school education with traditional knowledge systems so as to protect traditional institutions, and ensure their longevity.

At a time when all Cree communication with the outside world was mediated through Indian agents, Steinhauer encouraged the literate to write directly to the newspapers and to government officials outside the Indian department, in defence of Cree rights. Steinhauer reasoned that adapting such technologies as literacy and agriculture, which were guaranteed under the treaties, would render Cree territory and culture impenetrable to outside forces. Economic stability and the capacity to engage with the non-Native political system offered means of ensuring Cree political autonomy and Native control of strategic resources. The preferred government interpretations of the treaties, however, engendered an obverse trajectory, one which would propel Crees, against their wishes, into subjugation.

Impediments to the Formation of Regional Cree Political Organizations

The treaty texts carried profound social and political implications for Indian people in 19th Century Canada. Treaty signings, however, were productive of more than mere legal documents. One might view treaties, for instance as *modernizing projects*, or road maps, laying out a direction or course for the future of Indian communities. Pomedli submits that in treaties, "we have not merely European secretarial recordings, but early Native literary forms, a body of Native...literature" (1995:333). Whereas the agents of the 19th century Indian administration considered the written documents to be of primary importance, however,

Native leaders tended to focus on the production of ritual texts which carried their own type of legal and binding force. That Native leaders also demanded written copies of the documents and often prepared written statements for the government administrators suggests that they understood the symbolic weight attributed to these texts by the Europeans. Native scribes were able to redeploy the very media the government employed to establish dominance to contribute to the historical record their own treaty discourse. That Europeans tended to view the ritual context created by their Native hosts as meaningless “pomp and ceremony,” however, would suggest that government officials lacked the capacity to read Native performative texts, and as a result, underestimated the extent to which the framework and content for the treaties were in fact determined by the Native participants.

Rather than passive recipients, Native participants were active negotiators in the production of a treaty literature. The following is submitted as grounds for the argument that it was the English-speaking government officials, rather than the Native signatories, who as strangers to traditional Cree council protocol, and invited guests to a Cree fashioned negotiation context, missed the full import of the treaty-making process. According to Pomedli, whereas the government officials’ approach to treaty making demonstrated a concern for a particular legal form:

...housed in writing and propagated through printing...their legal framework does not predominate....[Instead,] the hosts, the Aboriginals, fitted their guests into their own place and space that harbored inklings of the diplomatic, the political, economic, and social, but bore the trappings and substance of religious ritual (1995:333).

Native leaders, thus, did not accept a subordinate position in relation to government scribes; rather, they elevated the terms of treaty signing from a mere administrative venture to a sacred rite. They did this, according to Huntinghawk, by employing elements of the ritual apparatus, including: the sacred pipe, sweetgrass and tobacco, invoking powers that were deemed to reside beyond human capabilities in Mother Earth (1998:40). Taylor insists, however, that at the Treaty Six signing, Morris mistook the pipe ceremony as an informal gesture of comradery (1987:18).

Native leaders constructed the context for treaty negotiations using an amended form of the traditional council format. In the Treaty Six regions, Native leaders sent runners with notched sticks and or

letters to government officials and other chiefs in the area to convene the treaty council. Government officials and Native leaders met over council fires, exchanged gifts, camped together and feasted. Native political leaders, who were often also spiritual leaders, officiated over opening ceremonies which included: praying, drumming and singing, dancing, demonstrations of horsemanship and speech making. And, perhaps most importantly, the treaties were not immediately accepted, but deliberated over days to allow for consultations with community members and consensus making. In these respects, the form and content of the treaty process were by no means dictated by Europeans to Native peoples. Rather, Native leaders asserted their influence on the treaty process, infusing it with their own understanding of inter-cultural alliances.

Chiefs and headmen pursued a myriad of approaches to treaty making, which reflected the geographical and cultural diversity of the prairie region as well as the leaders' differing views of what would be best for their people in the present and the future. Using their knowledge of promises made in other treaties as leverage, the chiefs of the Treaty 6 area were determined to ensure that the injustices suffered by Ontario Indians, who had been denied title to their lands and were displaced by white settlers, would not be replicated in the North-West. This strategy proved to be of crucial importance for these Native negotiators, who were successful in persuading the government to consent not only to the standard treaty provisions, but to several important additional clauses. These articles secured for their respective bands, for the first time in any of the numbered treaties, medical care and famine relief.

The government, moreover, was unaware that many of the Whitefish and Goodfish Lake residents were already literate, and had been successfully farming for at least a decade prior to treating. Pakan capitalized on the government's ignorance of particular local conditions, and insisted that these bands be provided with farm instructors as well as implements, and with schools as well as teachers. He was certainly not duped by government officials who prided themselves on offering as few inexpensive and short term benefits as possible, in return for surrendered lands.

That successive governments would strategically reinterpret treaty clauses to their own advantage

would eventually effectively destroy any faith in the treaty process Native leaders may have initially held. Maskepetoon, for instance, lamented "We should have understood that it was not the Whiteman's gun or disease that would end our living as we did, no no, it would be his words that would destroy us" (cited in Wieb and Beal 1985:10). It was not, as it is conventionally held however, the clash between the written and the spoken word that he was referring to. The reluctance of Native leaders to sign treaties is proof of their awareness that to give one's word, whether in writing or verbally, represented an agreement that was only as binding as the intentions of the giver. A reporter to the *Edmonton Bulletin* would later opine, for instance:

...for the government or its agents to seek to avoid the obligations this entailed by a mere quibble on words is most disgraceful. If the Indians agreed to the clause mentioned really understanding its meaning in English it must have been under the impression that the commissioner in whom was vested such discretionary powers would always be an upright man (4 August 1883).

It was not words on paper that Native leaders distrusted, but rather the integrity or intentions of the men who offered their personal assertions (their Word) that treaty promises would be honoured. At the Treaty Six negotiations, Pakan insisted that his words be written down.⁴⁷ After signing the treaty, Pakan told Morris he expected to receive a one hundred square mile block of land on which to settle his people:

According to Pakan, Dr. A.G. Jackes, who was one of the witnesses to the treaty, wrote something down which Pakan believed to be a statement of what was said. Pakan asked for a copy of what had been written because he felt that, if some one else replaced Morris as Lieutenant Governor, Pakan's "word would be no where among the white men without it" (cited in Mabindsa 1984:518).

It is probable that Pakan was aware that other treaties had been re-negotiated at a later date to conform with oral or "outside promises" made at treaty time. Moreover, as Tobias has suggested, many of the Chiefs who had long term dealings with the Hudson Bay Company tended to view the treaties in the same way that they viewed their yearly agreements with the Company, namely as re-negotiable arrangements (1986:242). Thus while the treaty signing ceremony may have been elevated to the level of sacred rite, the document itself

47

Similarly, before Poundmaker agreed to surrender during the Métis insurrection, he wrote to General Middleton on 15 May 1885:

...I am met with the surrender of Riel. No letter came with the news, so I cannot tell how far it may be true...I and my people wish you to send us the terms of peace in writing, so that we may be under no misunderstanding from which so much trouble arises (in Wieb and Beal 1985:137).

remained very much in the realm of the mundane -- subject to the rules of trade rather than to some immutable, inviolable spiritual law.

The refusal to join forces with the Métis in the Northwest rebellion, the tremendous restraint displayed in times of famine, and the genuine efforts to engage in agricultural activities, however, testify to the resolve of Native leaders to honour their agreements with the Queen. Conversely, the Canadian governmental institution was by definition depersonalized. Government policies did not arise out of the idiosyncratic actions of individuals, nor were individuals responsible for ensuring that treaty promises were honoured. Individual Native leaders thus found themselves battling a vast administrative system, one moreover, which was plagued as much by internal conflict as by contests with Aboriginal peoples. The fluidity with which government officials in the field were appointed and dismissed, coupled with Native leaders' lack of direct access to the source of government power in Ottawa,⁴⁸ created a situation whereby the government was able to implement its own selective interpretations of treaty clauses with virtually no accountability to Native peoples whatsoever. Government interpretations of treaties were informed, moreover, by a fundamentally different view of the original intention of the agreements.

Native leaders envisioned the process as a means of creating long-term formal links with the federal government, as a way to attain formal guarantees of their rights to lands and self-governance and commitments of governmental assistance in their transition from hunting to farming. Aboriginal leaders envisioned modernizing projects for their people, moreover, which were often coeval, but by no means identical nor even parallel to non-Native paths of progress. The notion of forming an exclusively Native homeland by linking consecutive reserves, for instance, was premised on the idea of retaining political and

48

The North-West Council, for instance, the appointed governing body for the North-West Territories, was designed to function as a colonial administration, and thus to implement federal policies rather than to address local concerns and grievances (McLean 1986:81). That the administration of Indian affairs, the control of the Mounted Police and veto power over the drafting of local legislation by the North-West Council remained with the federal authorities, reflected that the West was merely a colony of Eastern Canada. In the end, the centralization of federal authority in Ottawa, coupled with the selective memory of its ever changing bureaucracy, proved inordinately convenient when it came to interpreting treaty promises.

cultural independence from the Canadian state and non-Native society. According to Pomedli, the ritual actions of Native participants at treaty time, coupled with the style of Native metaphoric oratory which assumes ongoing deciphering rather than the precise and finalized references of English legalese, speak to an emphasis on creating alliances rather than on attaining a codified document -- on "developing and establishing relationships rather than an arrival at an atomized finished product..." (1995:334). Native signatories did not therefore necessarily accept the treaties as they were written.

Much like alliances with selected traders and missionaries, the Cree expected to gain otherwise unavailable opportunities by creating kinship-like relationships with "the Queen Mother." According to Sliwa, in the Treaty Six region, the alliance was regarded favourably by many as it appeared to be founded on the principle of reciprocity:

The frequent use of kinship terminology during the negotiations between the two parties, such as "our Mother, the Queen" or referring to the other party as "brother," led chiefs to believe that the commissioners accepted the inherent reciprocal obligations of such kinship terminology which was both the language and substance of inter-group meetings, alliances and treaties (1995:9).

Moreover, it was the Native authors of the treaty who insisted that land surrenders were conditional to their receiving agricultural assistance and famine relief, which effectively rendered the treaties subject to re-negotiation at a later date. As such, Cree leaders themselves determined the framework and content for this inter-national agreement, employing their own understandings of the meaning of a formal covenant.

Federal authorities, on the other hand, approached the proceedings viewing the numbered treaties as a means for accomplishing the surrender of Indian lands to the Crown, and the subjugation of Indian peoples to Canadian laws. Western expansionists considered the alienation of Indian lands and the pacification of Indian peoples necessary preconditions to the large-scale settlement of the prairie West, the construction of a railway, and the construction of a political and administrative infrastructure which would politically and economically integrate Canada as a nation (Dyck 1986:123). For the most part, government officials viewed both ritual activities and "outside" non-inscribed or verbal promises as entirely peripheral to the treaty signing event. Assuming they had determined the framework and content of the treaties, federal officials presumed they had asserted, by way of a legal contract, the sovereignty of the Canadian

government over Cree territories. In the end, the government employed an army of bureaucrats and a police force to enforce readings that privileged non-Native economic and political interests. Neither Native self-government, nor self-determined progress, had a place within the government's plan for Canadian nationalism, which, despite its roots in the mixing of cultures, was premised on an unstated but nonetheless normative "whiteness."

In the interests of Canadian nation-building, therefore, Native peoples were expected to break their links with their own nations' pasts and to join the march of progress toward a singular Canadian future. Aboriginal pasts were thus rendered subservient to the Canadian present. Relegated to an inferior political-legal status, moreover, and deprived of any direct political representation as a nation, or individual votes, Native people were effectively prohibited from participating in the governing process of this new order. Joseph Dion, for instance, would later write:

The treaty promise that wise understanding men would be sent to teach us the white many's way of making a livelihood turned out to be anything but the success anticipated. We Crees, anxious to play our part in the treaty, freely offered our strength of body, endurance and clear minds in exchange for whatever our instructors would have to give. We willingly submitted to many forms of regulations in the firm belief that everything imposed on us was for the best and that it would be just a matter of a short time when, with a bit of assistance, we would be able to work out our own salvation. Alas, our absolute trust in the white man's ability to carry out his promises so freely given was due for a rude awakening (1979:81).

The "decade of death" that immediately followed the Treaty Six signing was marked by prairie fires in the south, increasingly scarce wildlife in the north, and ultimately starvation and destitution for the majority of Native inhabitants in the treaty area. Despite specific treaty clauses outlining governmental responsibilities to Treaty Indians, Edgar Dewdney, the first Indian Commissioner of the North-West Territories, deliberately withheld rations from hunger-stricken bands; sent inadequate farm implements and incompetent farm instructors, or none at all, to those willing to farm; and decided not to build or staff state schools, handing off the responsibility instead, to the churches. When withholding rations was not successful in subduing recalcitrant bands, the government began to issue fines (Sluman and Goodwill 1982:25).

In other cases, the words of the treaties were more or less honoured, but the intentions, or spirit behind them was defiled in the process. Those who signed Treaty Six, for instance, could not have known

at the time of signing that the government was in the process of moving away from its promises of providing “schools on the reserve...whenever the Indians ...desired them” toward developing off-reserve residential facilities (Miller 1996:100).

Strict adherence to the exact wording of treaty clauses for the provision of farming implements, moreover, proved that the government’s alleged concern for Native agricultural reform was utterly disingenuous. According to Carter, Treaty Six stated that farming implements would be provided to bands who had settled or were cultivating the soil, however:

Aboriginal people could not settle until the surveys were complete, and in some cases this took many years. They could not cultivate until they had implements to break the land, yet these were not to be distributed until they were settled and cultivating (1986:452).

Indian policy was shaped so as to ensure that the economic and political interests of settlers dominated, generally at the expense of Native interests. Native people, therefore, were expected to acquiesce to the government’s interpretation of the treaties for the public good; even though these interpretations often functioned as escape clauses, absolving the government of any responsibility to Indian people. Viewed as impediments rather than contributors to Canadian progress, they were to derive few benefits from these extensive sacrifices.

As with promises concerning farming and schooling, the government “creatively” interpreted other treaty clauses. By 1880, for instance, Ottawa was enforcing a work for rations policy, and the Treaty Six famine clause was reinterpreted by the government to mean that free rations would only be distributed in the case of a “general” famine (Dickason 1997:303). Big Bear, for one, was deeply dismayed that Treaty Six was altered without the consent of those Native leaders who had negotiated it in the first place. He asserted that “...half the sweet thing[s were] taken out and lots of sour things left in” (cited in Dickason 1997:304). In 1895, Piapot told a visiting Oblate priest, “In order to become sole masters of our land they relegated us to small reservations as big as my hand and make us promises, as long as my arm; but the next year the promises were shorter and got shorter every year until now they are the length of my finger, and they keep only half of that” (cited in Petrone 1983:65).

That addresses made to the government requesting the amelioration of reserve conditions, and appeals to the public through the presses, were on the rise, indicates that Native peoples were willing to exploit any available avenue, short of violence, to advance their quest for justice. Written addresses to officials both in- and outside the Indian administration in Ottawa were carefully prepared. In 1884, Whitefish Lake band councillors Samuel Steinhauer and John Hunter and chief Pakan drafted a letter to Edgar Dewdney on behalf of the Whitefish Lake band members at Whitefish, Goodfish, Floating Stone and Saddle Lakes. The letter clearly sets out the band's position on the size of the reserve (Mabindsa 1984:521). The authors insist that the aforementioned lands were promised at treaty time by Lieutenant-Governor Morris at Fort Pitt, and ask that the government ratify this promise and formally recognize the band's entitlement to these territories (Mabindsa 1984:522).

In addition to written protests, Native leaders continued to devise ingenious methods to gather in secret, often using spiritual gatherings to convene councils of a political nature. In the Treaty Four area, Piapot attempted to gather together a Grand Council in 1883. Hayter Reed feared such a meeting would result in a concentration of the Treaty 4 bands. Anxious to inhibit the mobilization of a unified political force, or in official government discourse, to stem "an Indian war,"⁴⁹ the government responded by threatening to cut off the band's rations, to arrest Piapot, and to depose any chiefs who attended the meeting (Tobias 1983:532). Piapot eventually convened a council on the Pasqua reserve in 1884, by holding a Thirst Dance. Undaunted by the government's insidious attempts to alienate him from his peers and to rob him of his authority, in 1883, Big Bear working with Little Pine, sent messengers to Pakan and other chiefs in the Edmonton, Carlton, and Duck Lake Districts to enlist their support for the movement to concentrate the Cree (Tobias 1983:533, 23 December 1883 *Edmonton Bulletin*). In 1884, Big Bear convened a well-attended council of all the chiefs in the Treaty Six area, and a Thirst Dance on Poundmaker's reserve. It was, according to Dickason:

49

Edmonton Bulletin, 21 October 1882.

...the largest united effort managed by the Cree...Big Bear's aim was to get Amerindians to select a single representative for a term of four years who would speak for all; he also wanted the Cree to join in obtaining a single large reserve on the North Saskatchewan (1997:303).

Though strategies varied among these Native leaders, their focus on issues relating to concentrating the Crees, and improving what they considered to be inadequate treaty promises was remarkably consistent. All were intent to guarantee the preservation of Cree autonomy and sovereignty.

Because Native leaders did not accept the treaty texts as necessarily finalized, they did not consider that the *Indian Act* and other related legislation would extend unconditionally into their lives. The government certainly never informed treaty signatories that the imposition of a vast administrative complex, and the reduction of their status from allies to wards would immediately result from such agreements. Leaders could not have anticipated that by virtue of some legislative fiat, for instance, their ceremonial gatherings would be prohibited. Yet, according to Pettipas (1994), the government, who correctly perceived the connection between religious ideology and expression and the survival of Indian groups as distinct societies, quickly set about to undermine these mobilizations and expressions of Cree tribal solidarity.

Much of the historical literature regarding the suppression of the Sun or Thirst Dance, as well as the introduction of the pass system, points out the tremendous affront to religious expression these measures entrained. Just as important, however, was their egregious effect on intertribal communication and by extension, political organization. In discouraging, and in some cases prohibiting, Native ceremonies and other gatherings, church and government officials were interfering with diplomatic relations between Native nations. Participating in regional ceremonial was a crucial mode of intertribal communication. By denigrating such gatherings, officials sought to invalidate the information channelled through these corridors.

As early as 1882, missionaries of various denominations began to discourage such Native spiritual gatherings as the prairie Sun, Thirst, Rain, and Chicken dances (Ahenakew 1995:118). Missionaries, for instance, insisted that the gatherings had the effect to revive the very "customary" associations they had

attempted to replace with “progressive” affiliations, through schooling, farming instruction and Christian training. Travel to such gatherings, moreover, removed band members from the watchful gaze and moral influence of local priests who laboured relentlessly to maintain their authority and to exert behavioural controls over their charges. Farm instructors also complained that the dances interfered with farming activities.

Officials in the Indian Department had other cause for discouraging the gatherings. Hayter Reed wrote in 1882 that the dances “unsettle” the Indians, drawing them away from their reserves and “tend to create a spirit of insubordination among the young men of the bands” (cited in Stanley 1960:241). Such ceremonial events reinforced Cree customary modes of earning public recognition, bestowing prestige, conferring authority and renewing intertribal social ties. The dances unnerved department officials for the reason that they empowered the participants, who were able to access and exchange information that was crucial both to the socio-cosmological and politico-economical well-being of their communities, while employing traditionally valued skills. In this sense, the dances were ideologically inimical to the mentality of progress that settlement projects were designed to inspire. Reserve settlement was intended to isolate and silence or subdue Native individuals, and to prepare them for their eventual absorption, albeit as subordinates, by the Canadian masses. It is understandable why Plains people passionately protested when their rights to assemble were revoked: religious ceremonies, though primarily spiritual, offered important opportunities to gather information and plan concerted action in defence of their political, religious and cultural autonomy.

Department officials also employed the pass system, which remained in place from 1882 to 1935, to control the free flow of information intertribal networking facilitated. According to Carter, the pass system was introduced as a temporary measure by Dewdney to discourage Indian people from joining the Métis insurrection. By means of an amendment to the Indian Act which took effect in 1885, however, the pass system became law. Although it was a clear contravention of treaty rights, it provided the Indian department with an important means to “preserve an appearance of control,” and to monitor Native peoples’

movements (Carter 1990:153). By refusing to award consecutive reserves and by drafting legislation which made it illegal to leave reserves without the permission of an Indian department official, the government effectively ensured that inter-reserve communication was kept to a minimum, and political mobilization outside reserve boundaries was all but impossible.

The Indian department successfully employed interested interpretations of the legal discourse to impede Native leaders from both concentrating Cree in one area, and from challenging the government's readings of the treaties. Other legislation would contribute to the "illegalizing" of traditional Native political organizations. When the elective process was imposed on western bands by means of *The Indian Advancement Act* of 1884, for instance, it did not contribute to of any sort of political independence. Although traditional leaders were often elected as band chiefs, according to Pettipas, the government ensured that final authority remained in the hands of department officials:

The governor-in-council had the right to dismiss leaders and councillors on the ground of "dishonesty, intemperance, immorality, or incompetence...The definition of competent leadership provided the Department with considerable latitude to undermine leaders who were not supportive of their policies (1994:72).

By 1885, moreover, the Indian department was using the pass system to arrest any person who attempted to attend a council at another reserve without official permission. The Canadian government recognized only its own mode of modernizing as valid. Officials strategically targeted Native leaders who pursued other paths. Their "intransigence" was viewed by the department as "non-progressive." Simply attending a traditional Grand Council therefore, rendered chiefs liable to charges of "incompetence," and subject to dismissal. Despite his loyalty during the Métis uprising, Piapot was deemed "unprogressive" by the department, and was eventually deposed as chief. According to Watach, after holding a Rain Dance⁵⁰ in 1899, "he was imprisoned on a false charge of drunkenness and deprived of the chieftainship he had held

50

In defiance of the ban on Sun Dancing, Cree people altered the structure of the ceremony to bring it within compliance of the law. It was shortened from three days to one, and ribbons were used to symbolize the piercing of flesh which was temporarily abandoned. Watach writes, "The white man never knew that it was the same ceremony" (1959:45). To enable inter-reserve interaction, the dances were held at the boundary of adjacent reserves, where they existed.

for half a century” (1959:45). Band members protested by refusing to elect a new chief.

Blatantly disregarding the treaty provisions which guaranteed a band’s freedom to select their reserve location, Dewdney petitioned the government to pass an order in council “to make it a criminal offence for a band to refuse to move to a reserve site the Commissioner suggested” (Tobias 1983:535). He then ensured that Big Bear’s reserve was situated in virtual isolation (Mabindsa 1984:303). By the end of 1885, Big Bear, who had been charged with treason was in prison. His son, although too young to be jailed, was also condemned to institutionalization. At his trial, the judge told Big Bear, “I cannot sentence your son Horsechild to prison, but I can sentence him to a residential school” (cited in Weib and Beal 1985:177). Convinced justice would not be forthcoming from the legal sphere, Big Bear appealed to the general public as follows, “I ask this court to print my words and scatter them among white people. That is my defence.” The government’s strategic use of the legal and judicial system to advance its own interpretation of the treaties and other Indian legislation in terms favourable to its own notion of progress, effectively deprived the Cree of their principal leaders, their autonomy and their voice.

Owing partly to the prevailing assumption that Indians in North-West were “less advanced” than their eastern counterparts, the written submissions to the government by western bands were treated differently than those issuing from bands in the East. Despite the fact that many members of Pakan’s band were comparatively better educated than their white neighbours, the Indian Department tended to ignore Native petitions from the Western bands, unless they were corroborated by a white man. Consequently, no action was taken by the government either to acknowledge the legitimacy of Pakan’s claims concerning “outside promises,” or to remedy the reserve matter. In the end, the Whitefish and Goodfish Lake Bands did not acquire the full territory they desired. Instead, they were offered by Dewdney and Hayter Reed a slight increase in farm lands. Government officials withheld farm implements that had been promised to the band in the treaty, until Pakan accepted and signed the proposal (Mabindsa 1984:549).

The Government’s unwillingness to take petitions written by Native bands seriously became more pronounced with each successive administration. Clifford Sifton, who would become Superintendent

General of Indian affairs for the Laurier government, wrote in 1900, "It is possible to get the Indians to sign almost any kind of statements, if a little excitement and agitation be got up beforehand, and we are unable therefore to rely to any extent upon written statements that come in signed by Indians" (cited in Hall 1977:136). Samuel Steinhauer and other Whitefish Lake Band councillors, however, continued to deploy the pen as their principle weapon of resistance, and sought out alternative forums to express their grievances. At a time when Native communication with the outside world was largely mediated through Indian agents, they wrote letters to the prairie newspapers, and enlisted the support of prominent missionaries and politicians in their petition writing campaigns. They also refused to limit their appeals to government officials in the Indian Department, often playing departments and parties against one another.

Whitefish Lake residents were eventually constrained to government controls on the territory they did get. Section 32(1) of the *Indian Act*, for instance, prohibited Native farmers from selling or trading their produce with non-Natives without written permission from the Indian Agent. Another of Henry Bird Steinhauer's sons, Arthur, who had been successfully farming long before the government's "instruction" programs were implemented, protested the permit system, as it was more commonly called, arguing that he should be able to sell his crops at current market prices. The government rationalized this policy, however, by insisting that Indian people were incapable of husbanding their resources nor of handling financial transactions, which would result in their being swindled and having to turn to government rations (Carter 1990:157). According to John Tootoosis, the permit system was like a loaded gun, useful for hunting, but dangerous when used against a person. He writes, "Robbed of pride, independence and initiative, many willing and honest workers had been destroyed by the "loaded gun" in the permit system meant to protect them" (in Sluman and Goodwill 1982:127). Like Samuel, Arthur Steinhauer sought redress by publicizing the matter in the presses.

By separating, silencing and subduing Cree bands, the government created an optimum environment for white settlement on the prairies. Consequently, with the completion of the rail link from Calgary to Edmonton in 1891, and the transfer of the major transshipment point from Winnipeg to

Edmonton, mass immigration to the area quickly followed. Sections of the *Indian Act* prohibiting trade between Native farmers and settlers, in addition to the constraints placed on Native peoples' freedom to engage in any off reserve activities, impeded communication both between Native peoples, and between Native peoples and newly arriving settlers. The presses represented one of the few avenues available to Native people to interact with settlers and thus to mobilize support for their efforts to secure justice outside their communities.

Cree Methodists would use the practical skills that Henry Bird Steinhauer helped to impart in unexpected ways -- to push for a homeland over which they would retain control, to protest their treatment by the government and to use their crops for the collective benefit of the whole tribe, rather than just for nuclear Christian families. The syllabically literate would use syllabics to write acceptance speeches and petitions to spell out their treaty demands. Cree Methodist leaders, like Pakan would use the information provided by Steinhauer on Eastern missions, to determine what he wanted from treaty.

Aboriginal treaty negotiators actively contributed their own treaty discourse to the process of treaty signing. They tended to emphasize the social relations that inhered in the ritual contexts of treaty production, rather than the written texts themselves. Crees, moreover, assumed there would be an ongoing process of re-negotiation. Government officials, on the other hand, for whom the fixity of the texts was the operative principle, were empowered to assert their own preferred readings. When applied, the government's interpretations seriously undermined Native political autonomy and Aboriginal authority regarding land use, social organization, intertribal communication and education.

Consequently, by the turn of the century, Indian people in the Treaty Six area had unwittingly become an administratively legible, or manageable, people. Ultimately, this would be accomplished not though military force but by subjecting Native peoples to a deliberate and systemic process of domination by bureaucratic regulation. It was by subjecting Native communities to Canadian legal, political, educational and religious institutions that local polities were subordinated to Canadian governmental control. It was by deploying a series of legislative manoeuvres, not bullets, that white governmental

authority would be inscribed, Indian political autonomy would be proscribed and Cree sovereignty would be eclipsed by Canadian nationalism. As McClintock suggests:

Violence in colonized cultures is not always unlettered...Rule by gunpowder and whip is blended with forms of cultural cajolment which create an atmosphere of deference and complicity immeasurably easing the burden of policing (1987:601).

Missionaries, residential school staff, and Indian agents worked together to coax Indian people into accepting the legitimacy and inevitability of Indian subordination to white rule, and the inescapability of an Indian modernity derived from the *definitive* Canadian model. With or without their acceptance, however, Native treaty signatories were subsequently subjected to modernizing projects of non-Native making.

CHAPTER FIVE

COMPETING INDIAN IDENTITIES IN THE MAINSTREAM PRESSES

This chapter investigates the creation of “newspaper Indians” (cf. Coward 1999) by partisan pressmen and self-interested settlers, and attends to Aboriginal strategies of dissent. Canadian immigrants to the prairies performed modernity through the presses by articulating a vision of themselves as progressive. They did so by positioning images of themselves against constructions of Indian indolence, thriftlessness, primitiveness, and moral deficiency. Settlers thus defined themselves and the narrative of Canadian nationhood in contradistinction to the images they invented of Aboriginal otherness. The Indian administration effectively placed Indian ecriture under erasure by enacting legislation which arrested Native media development in its tracks. In pressing a Canadian-centric discourse, the settler media marginalized Aboriginal voices and essentialized a rendition of Indianness as “non-Progressive.” This version of Indianness influenced the creation of new social policies which sanctioned settler privilege and institutionalized Aboriginal inequality.

Settler Discourse in the Prairie Presses

We use media to destroy cultures, but we first use media to create a false record of what we are about to destroy -- Edmund Carpenter 1972:99.

A significant portion of the newly arriving prairie settlers possessed little knowledge of the previous history of Native/Euro-Canadian relations in the area, and often little experience with any Native peoples whatsoever. Submerged in the comforting myths of their own society, settlers learned little about Native issues, past nor present, from reporters, editors and newspaper owners had just as little interaction with, and understanding of, Native peoples’ unique circumstances. In creating images of Native peoples, therefore, newspapers often merely reproduced or recycled the very notions of Aboriginality which had already been sanctioned by popular ideology. Settlers commonly assumed that Native people occupied the

margins of the normal moral universe and were non-enlightened cultural outsiders who were incapable of advancing at an appropriate pace. They tended to view Aboriginal peoples as obstacles to economic progress and, therefore, as annoyances who were undeserving of respect or justice (Coward 1999:3). The arbitrary selection of human characteristics included in representations of Native people in prairie papers firmly establishes that prairie newspaper "Indians" were Euro-Canadian cultural products that corresponded with perspectival, as opposed to empirical, truths.

In the absence of an alternative frame of reference these literary fabrications took on a cogent existential reality in the imaginations white settlers, who were heavily invested emotionally, economically and politically in a particular version of the reality of their circumstances. One of the problems with the newspapers' Indian images, however, was that they did not refer to fictive characters, as did dime store novels, but to actual Native persons. Images of Native peoples appearing in the newspapers, therefore, made historical-realist claims, which engendered concrete consequences for real people. Their attitudes toward Indian people, profoundly affected the way settlers treated Indian people. Settlers, particularly around election times, could be a powerful lobby group. Therefore, performing almost as ventriloquists, newspaper editors often employed "newspaper Indians" to motivate and direct social practice toward their own desired ends as I will show below.

The local papers provided information, generated and consolidated opinion and consequently fostered a sense of settler fellowship by defining a speech community. Newspaper subscribers developed a sense of fraternity by sharing, or participating in debates about, local and national concerns and interests. The North-West rebellion of 1885, served as a particularly unifying campaign insofar as it successfully transcended local in favour of nationalist concerns. White settlers, according to Silver:

...were united in cheering on the troops, worrying about their safety, trembling at the news of Indian massacres, and hoping for the reaffirmation of Canadian authority. And the consciousness of sharing those concerns created a certain sense of solidarity (1986:40).

News from the North-West, which was reprinted in eastern papers, had a similar effect among settlers there:

...reports regularly spoke of battalions from different parts of the country meeting, cheering each, marching and fighting together - and this reinforced the sense of a common effort in a common

cause (Silver 1986:40).

This unity was not to last however as English and French Canadian nationalisms were pitted against each other both in the presses and in the streets. The assimilation of the latter by the former, some English papers argued, was necessary to the development of a single Canadian identity (based on uniculturalism), the pursuit of national political goals (or nationalism), to an indivisible patriotism and thus, to the national unification of Canada. According to Carey, this middle-class ideal of universalism included the belief in a universal human nature and:

Communication was the engine that powered this ideal. Each improvement in communication, by ending isolation, by linking people everywhere, was heralded as realizing the Universal Brotherhood of Universal Man (1989:208).

By the time white settlements on the prairies became established enough to render newspaper development remunerative, the eastern presses, owing to the actions of such newspapermen as Joseph Howe and William Lyon Mackenzie, had asserted their independence from the government and were developing along the lines of private enterprise.⁵¹ As such, newspapers, though still largely funded by the political sector, came to reflect the spectrum of political factions, each paper preaching to its adherents, while attempting to mobilize political support from new converts (Siegel 1996:93). In the absence of such national concerns as the Métis uprising, local newspapers often worked to decentralize authority. The Liberal and Conservative papers,

51

The first newspapers in Canada served a mostly administrative function. As colonial extensions of British rule, newspapermen, as the "King's printers" were essentially, civil servants who printed royal edicts, laws, and so on. Those who aspired to enlarge the scope of their profession, and who printed political opinions contesting the status quo, were quickly labelled "political agitators" by conservative government officials, who were interested in preserving their precarious authority. In 1835, however, newspaper owner Joseph Howe questioned the ethics of public law enforcers and governmental officials in his paper *The Novascotian*. He was subsequently tried and acquitted in Nova Scotia on the charge of libel for "seditiously contriving, devising and intending to stir up and incite discontent and sedition..." (in Siegel 1996:90). The case set a legal precedent which revolutionized the role of the presses. Newspapers became legitimate forums for a public debate which no longer precluded criticism of the authorities. Like many newspaper owners, Howe later became a representative of the same government apparatus that he had initially challenged, serving as the Indian Commissioner (Dickason 1997:230) and Premier of Nova Scotia. In 1868, the Federal Department of Secretary of State was formed and assumed responsibility for Indian peoples. Howe was named the Secretary of State and the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, a position he held until 1873, when the Department of the Interior assumed responsibility for Native administration (Dickason 1997:232).

for instance, attacked each other and their respective parties. Papers in the North-West consistently questioned the assumptions made by Eastern organs and vice versa. This often introduced a general sense of instability to the carefully constructed status quo. Thus, the newspapers that were made possible by settlement, ironically had the effect to “unsettle” the masses.

In general, there existed little consensus in the papers on such issues as responsible government and municipal development. Native issues, on the other hand, commanded a more limited repertoire of opinions. The inevitability of Native displacement by mass white settlement, for instance, went unquestioned. As white settlers came to identify themselves as the central actors both in the construction and the contestation of a unified social, political and economic entity -- a Confederated Canada; they increasingly tended to view Native people as entirely peripheral to the debate. Without their former status as military allies, and with virtually no civil status, Native peoples, in the opinion of both governors and settlers, were simply superfluous or worse, impediments to the master narrative of progress. The presses consistently privileged a Eurocentric discourse by featuring articles on how best to facilitate white settlement, economic progress and governmental responsibility, which tended to reaffirm, rather than to contest the existing racial hierarchy. While attempts to explain or explain away the presence of Native peoples in the future plans for Canadian progress took on numerous forms, Indian peoples were unvaryingly identified as a problem. Settler discourse in the presses concerning Native peoples effectively generated borders by pushing Indian voices to the margins of the debate. Settler socio-discursive and political borders would prove remarkably congruent. Native people were successfully “pressed” to the periphery of white political, social and economic processes.

Operating for the most part as instruments for promoting selected business and government interests, early prairie newspapers were also usually owned and operated by members of an elite class of businessmen, industrialists, politicians and bureaucrats, with powerful institutional alignments. News and editorials, Coward argues “tended to reproduce an “official” point of view--dominated by mainstream...ideals of moral improvement, economic growth, and western expansion” (1999:18). The

newspaper industry, therefore, comprised an important part of an administrative framework that was taking shape to address the business of nation-building. Constructing a national communications network was essential to this process. As such, newspaper reporting was often guided by narrow industry interests. Because it became their primary method of receiving information from a distance, for instance, prairie papers were intimately interested in the status of road, railway and telegraph line construction. In the *Edmonton Bulletin*, a writer demands, for example, that a road be built to the Peace River, and the region “thrown open” to settlement, in order that geological researches and exploratory surveys might be conducted. He writes:

The interests of science demand that this road should be built at once, thereby opening up communication with the interior of the Dominion and the polar regions, and offering better facilities for observations (5 July 1884).

For geo-politically interested businessmen and industrialists, that a national communications network would develop at the expense of intertribal Native communications, was considered a necessary sacrifice for the public (settler) good.

By gathering and producing “news” about Native peoples, journalists contributed significantly to the manner in which images of Native people were created and Native cultures were interpreted. As stories about Native people were based on dominant values and assumptions, Indian representations often functioned to sanction a social order and a racial hierarchy. The images of the Indian as deficient other, for instance, were eminently useful instruments in the Canadian project of progress. That Native newspaper identities could be created, controlled and manipulated at the convenience of the dominant culture reinforced the settlers’ sense of mastery over Canada’s “raw” resources.

The image makers alone regulated the terms by which value could be extracted from Indianness. Therefore, while settlers used images of Indian people to shape or create their own identities, newspapers reflected, and may indeed have partly structured, the social relations of inequality by *attributing* collective Native identities *to*, or *contriving* them *for*, Indian peoples who were consequently deprived of the opportunity to speak for themselves.

Such factors as the political and economic climate affected the sorts of Native imagery newspapers produced. Competing images were sometimes subsequently created by the same papers when a strategic advantage availed itself by mobilizing one image rather than another. Although the substance of the images varied, the papers routinely engaged in the general process of “othering” Indian people. According to the Comaroffs, “in as much as collective social identity always entails some form of communal self-definition, it is invariably founded on a marked opposition between “ourselves” and “other/s”; identity, that is, is a *relation* inscribed in culture” (1992:51). As proponents of settler interests, and as co-constructors of collective settler identities, newspapers used Indian imagery as a diacritical marker. By writing about Indians, settlers were able to tell stories about themselves to themselves by relating themselves to Others. Consequently, such newspaper stories, although “about” Indians, reflected a distinctly European cultural structuring of the discursive universe.

Images of Native peoples provided settlers with convenient models against which they could measure their own circumstances. According to Coward, “the blessings of progress and civilization were more sharply drawn against the backdrop of the savage (1999:7). Framed by the margins of a Eurocentric moral universe, the discourse in the presses on Native peoples contributed to the creation of a distinct national identity by shaping a parallel image of the Canadian nation as a victory over immorality, economic stagnation, ineffective governance and primitiveness. Settlers possessed the very attributes they deemed to be lacking among Native peoples: a progressive mentality, civility, a work ethic, responsible government, and the technological and scientific accomplishments of the Enlightenment, in short all that was deemed necessary to be modern. Settlers therefore, effectively performed their own sense of modernity, enunciating it through the presses, by displacing obsolescence onto Indian peoples.

Newspapers as cultural institutions and proponents of settlers’ interests, tended to generate information about Native people by measuring Indian ways in terms of Victorian moral sensibilities. The alleged moral degeneracy of Indian peoples, for instance, is consistently invoked in the prairie presses to explain the poor conditions on reserves. The image of “the lazy Indian” informs the argument that Indian

peoples are the authors of their own misfortune. The image of “the wild Indian” fed the notion that Native peoples were almost feral creatures, wandering aimlessly over empty lands. Those who had settled on reserves were often portrayed as making poor use of the lands they did occupy. In an 1899 issue of the *Manitoba Free Press*, for instance, the agricultural accomplishments of a Native band in Assiniboia are compared with those of a neighbouring white farmer and found to be wanting. The article insists that the presence of two white farm instructors on the reserve should have contributed to greater productivity and concludes that “these Indians were not only perfectly worthless themselves, but they completely destroyed the usefulness of a white man sent to instruct them in ways of industry and thrift.” By implying that the alleged Indian “laziness” is communicable, the article conveys the idea that white progress is imperiled by the proximity of Indian to white settlements. The underlying message is that Indian peoples ought to be removed from the area, as white farmers would make better use of these desirable lands.

Often papers themselves were created to serve more specific and immediate goals. The *Nor'Wester*, for instance was originally founded in Winnipeg in 1859 to attack the Hudson's Bay Company rule, to further the cause of Canadian annexation and to function as the official organ of the Canadian Party. The newspaper Indian first mobilized in this paper, functioned to alert prospective settlers as to the appropriate pace of change. They were warned to quickly join the march of progress, or risk the fate of the indolent -- certain extinction.

The first copy contained the significant remark that “such a colony cannot now remain unpeopled” and in 1860 the paper began to predict ominous changes: “The wise and prudent will be prepared to receive and to benefit by them; whilst the indolent and the careless, like the native tribes of the country, will fall back before the march of a superior intelligence” (Stanley 1960:52, including quotations from the *Nor'Wester* 14 January 1860).

When non-official or idiosyncratic views did appear in prairie papers, they were generally linked to settler, rather than Native, political agendas. Therefore, though a wide range of political ideologies were represented in the prairie presses, early reportage on Native issues was remarkably consistent. Native stories were designed to serve Canadian interests.

The Liberal and Conservative papers regularly employed Indian imagery to admonish each other

and their respective parties. P.G. Laurie's Battleford based *Saskatchewan Herald* (1878) was the first newspaper published in the Northwest territories (Stanley 1960:428, fn22). A Conservative paper, the *Herald*, pursued a policy of systematically denying reports of starvation to assure prospective settlers from the east that Indian peoples themselves, rather than Conservative government Indian policies, were to blame for the poor state of reserve affairs. Carter writes:

Editor P.G. Laurie declared that in the winter of 1878-79 the Indians' source of food supply was no more restricted than in former years, but that the Indians had "not made the usual effort to help themselves" and had "contentedly resigned themselves to idleness, claiming to have the assurance that if they were hungry they would be fed" (1990:72).

Nicholas Flood Davin's the *Regina Leader* (1883), was the first newspaper in the prairie district then called "Assiniboia." As a Conservative paper, it tended to praise Indian Department policies, to favour reports of successful Indian economic and moral "progress," and to downplay Native claims of government malfeasance and rumours of unrest. The only journalist permitted on the scaffold at Riel's execution, Davin romanticized the event writing of Riel, "Nothing in his life so became him as the leaving of it" (*Regina Leader*, 19 November 1885). In 1886 a correspondent to the *Leader* reported:

I wish those who read in the *Globe* [a Liberal paper] that the Indian is not well treated, would visit this reserve. He will leave it to your correspondent's conviction that he is too well treated...[The Indian agent] showed us the store house, where we saw every possible implement for farming ready for the Indian's use. There is a school on the Reserve, and a clergyman, a farm instructor, Mr. Sutherland, a most capable man, and altogether these 800 Indians have only to put forth 30 per cent of the energy required from white farmers to be the wealthiest and happiest little community in the world (re-printed in *The Indian* 18 August 1886).

Conservative papers, in general tended to convey the message that Indian department officials and policies were contributing to an environment of prosperous contentment on reserves. Poor agricultural production, on the other hand, was attributed to an alleged innate incapacity among some Indians for industriousness.

The second paper in the Territories, Frank Oliver's *Edmonton Bulletin*, also began publication in the wake of treaty signing, following the establishment of a sizable white settlement in the Edmonton area (Stanley 1960:184). First published 6 December 1880, the *Bulletin* followed the pattern of other Liberal papers, pursuing a somewhat contradictory approach to reportage on Native issues. The *Edmonton Bulletin* generally acknowledged that starvation on Western reserves was a problem, but attributed privation both to

the Conservative government's mis-administration and to an alleged lack of Indian industriousness. When Aboriginal peoples' loyalty was paramount to settler safety, however, the Liberal newspapers, particularly in the regions most vulnerable to attack, did publicize more empathetic views of Indian circumstances, sometimes providing confirmed Native allies with a forum to express their grievances against the government. In 1881, the *Edmonton Bulletin*, for instance, published an interview with Pakan regarding the contested reserve question. The paper reported:

The [Whitefish Lake] Indians are doing well, having taken more kindly to farming than any other band in the Dominion...[The Chief] says that the stock and implements promised him have not been delivered yet. The question of the reserve for these Indians is likely to cause some ill feeling. They say that when ex-Governor Morris made the treaty with them he promised them any reserve they should pick on, and they accordingly chose the country extending from Dog Rump creek on the east to White Mud creek on the west, a distance of about sixty miles, along the north side of the Saskatchewan, and extending back indefinitely, embracing one of the finest tracts in the North-West. Of course it is impossible to give one band of Indians such a reserve as this and yet the terms of the treaty, as they understand them, allow it to them. This is a specimen of the way Indian affairs have been conducted to a good extent in the North-West. Promises have been made in a hurry to smooth over matters at the time, which the authorities did not understand or never intended to fulfil, and that there has not been serious trouble before this time only proves the peaceable character of the Indian (17 December 1881).

While this article demonstrates some sympathy for Native peoples' concerns self-interest also fuelled settler involvement in Native affairs. In an article in the 21 October 1882 paper, Peter Erasmus, who had been employed by the Crees as their translator during the treaty signing, was accredited with averting "a first class Indian war." Erasmus had persuaded Treaty Four bands to vacate the Cypress Hills area. He also supplied the paper with a translation of and explanation for Big Bear's intransigence. The article states:

During the time that the trouble was going on it was all laid to Big Bear and his band, and he was described as a very bad Indian. Mr. Erasmus gives us Big Bear's side of the story...Big Bear said... "There was a time when we had faith in the white man and believed his word. I am sorry to say it is far from being the case now. When the white man says anything to us we listen, and in the meantime say in our hearts he is lying...Although we have trusted to the law to help us we never got the benefit of it, because our word is as the wind to the white man..." (21 October 1882).

Rumours of growing Native resentment, raids, and assaults on farm instructors by "starving Indians" warned townspeople of the potential threats to their safety if some form of restitution for broken promises was not made.

Supplying the promised farm implements and rations was generally thought to be the less

expensive alternative to fighting an Indian war.⁵² A letter signed by chiefs: Bob Tail, Samson (Maskepetoon's successor), Ermineskin, and others⁵³ which was addressed to the Minister of the Interior, appears in the 3 February 1883 issue of the *Edmonton Bulletin*. The letter outlines a long list of broken treaty promises including the government's: unfair prosecution of Indians for crimes committed due to starvation; failure to supply farming equipment, cattle and seed; refusal to remit back pay and unwillingness to supply famine relief. The letter conveys clearly the sense of utter desperation experienced by Cree and Stoney peoples in the wake of treaty signings, and concludes with the following:

We have been calling during several years for the means allowed us by treaty to work for ourselves and we can get no satisfaction. Shall we still be refused, and be compelled to adhere to the conclusion...that the treaty is a farce enacted to kill us quietly, and if so, let us die at once? ...The government then can break every article of the treaty in detail or in globo and we have no redress...We conclude by saying that the half is not told yet.

The *Edmonton Bulletin*, whether it sympathized with the circumstances of Indian peoples or not, was an avowedly Liberal paper, and seldom missed an opportunity to criticize the Conservative government, or to embarrass the administration with bad publicity.

Like the Conservative papers however, the *Edmonton Bulletin* also promoted the seizure of Indian reserve lands for the benefit of white settlers. By 1883, Frank Oliver, like Hayter Reed, occupied a seat on the North-west Council. He used his status as a politician and a newspaper man to promote settlement and the expansion of agriculture in the area. His paper served as a convenient forum for publicizing his

52

An editorial in the 21 October 1882 paper states:

Each time a promise made to the Indians is broken the moral influence of the government over them decreases...moral suasion is cheaper than force. For as moral suasion ceases to have effect, forcible persuasion will have to be applied and the latter has always been found to be infinitely more costly.

The 7 July 1883 issue reports:

Even a small Indian war is an expensive luxury, and if one were started there is no certainty that it would remain small. The chances are, considering the widespread dissatisfaction that exists, that it would be both large and expensive.

53

Woodpecker and Maminonatan, Agowastin, Siwiyawiges, Iron Head and William also signed this letter.

personal visions for regional progress. Situated some distance from the town of Edmonton, the Whitefish Lake community, for instance, was not competing with the white community for shared resources. Stories in the *Bulletin* about the Whitefish Lake band were generally focussed on the theme of the band's continued agricultural success. Papastayo's band, on the other hand, was in the process of claiming lands within the Edmonton township. The 17 January 1881 issue of the *Bulletin* insists that if Papastayo were unwilling to settle immediately with his people on a reserve located in present day Southwest Edmonton, the land, and indeed anything of exploitable value belonging to these peoples, ought to be confiscated and offered to white settlers. The article implies that those who desired to "work" the land, in the Euro-Canadian sense of the term, were more deserving of its possession:

If this country was given by the Indians to the Government then it would be right for the Government to be thankful for whatever they might get; but if the Government has bought the land it is surely their right and duty to look after the interests of the settlers, both present and future, for whom the land was bought, and out of whose earnings it is expected ultimately to be paid for, as well as those of the Indians, who will be a bill of expense and a drawback to the country for an indefinite period...Now is the time for the Government to declare the reserve open and show whether this country is to be run in the interests of the settlers or the Indians (17 January 1881).

Oliver reiterated his complaint in an editorial printed in the 2 August 1884 issue, asserting that the block of land claimed by Papastayo is the "choicest part of the district." He insists that the band is made of "stragglers" from other reserves, that the chief and councillors are not "pure Indians" and that a large portion of the residents subsist by "begging" in town. He writes:

What right this band of Indians (if such they can be called) has to a reserve, even in this part of the country, is hard to conceive...It is a matter of the greatest importance to the town that the Indians should be induced to remove from their present situation. It would be for the benefit of the Indians to remove them further from civilization...[and throw their reserve open to settlement] at the earliest opportunity thereby enhancing the future prospects and value of the town and in reality doing the Indians an everlasting service.

Oliver's campaign to remove Papastayo's people from the Edmonton area was finally realized in 1901, with the surrender of the Passpasschase reserve. His paper reported:

The lesson of this reserve may very well be applied to the case of others similarly situated. The Indians make no practical use of the reserves which they hold. Where the land is good and well situated for market white men can turn it to much better account than the Indians do. A township in a good hunting country and near a fishing lake is more valuable to the Indians than a township of prime agricultural land near a railway station. It is a loss to the country to have such lands lying

idle in the hands of the Indians when white men want to use them and are willing to pay for them. It is a loss to the Indian to compel him to remain in uncongenial surroundings to which he cannot adapt himself when he has the opportunity to remove to congenial surroundings, and by the sale of the land ensure himself a comfortable annuity (*Edmonton Bulletin* 1901).

The *Edmonton Bulletin* generally reserved its most scathing moral indictments for the “half-breeds,” whose mixed racial constitution was itself interpreted as an affront to Victorian notions of purity. In one editorial entitled “Indians?” Métis people are characterized as having integrated the worst of both worlds, “having the grasping nature of the whiteman and the indolence of the Indian” (15 April 1882). The author opines:

The Lac Ste. Anne band, also mostly half-breeds, before the treaty were doing pretty well...but since then they have quit farming and working and gone into the business of starving and dunning the Government for grub, occasionally making threats of violence...(15 April 1882).

The author asserts moreover, that the distribution of free rations was merely “putting a premium on laziness,” and that granting the band reserve lands close to Edmonton would most certainly prove injurious to the “public benefit,” which, he argues, should naturally outweigh Métis concerns. Both the Papastayo and Ste Anne bands were situated in close proximity to white towns. Oliver insisted that both ought to be ceded with our without Native consent, in order to provide for the white population which was sure to grow as the towns progressed.

That written treaty promises were not being honoured, and oral promises categorically denied, did not seem to figure into the journalists’ calculations of fair exchange. In the same region, more than ten years after Treaty Six was signed, Pakan travelled with Peter Erasmus to Regina to meet with commissioner Dewdney to protest surveying activity, and to re-assert his land claim. Although an apology was printed in a later issue, the 5 July 1884 issue of the *Bulletin* portrayed Pakan as an inveterate swindler, and the conservative government as a witless dupe:

That this Indian chief is a man above the average intelligence is well known, and he should have known what he was doing in signing that treaty. Why, therefore, should he complain?...The only way it can be accounted for is that the knockneed policy pursued by the Government towards the Indians of the southern districts is breeding discontent, and this old shark Peccan is cunning enough to know that their demands are likely to be complied with, therefore this is his opportunity to present his supposed claims and grievances, which, if allowed or entertained will result in incalculable injury to the country along the Saskatchewan, and will be the signal for a general stampede to Regina by every indigent descendant of the once noble red man on a similar errand (5 July 1884).

Thus, in addition to the hardships imposed by white encroachment, Native people were increasingly made to suffer the harsh judgements of settlers, who attributed their misfortunes to personal, individual, attitudinal and moral problems such as “indolence” and “moral turpitude” rather than to a larger configuration of power. Settlers generally neglected to consider such systemic causes as the sudden decline in buffalo herds, fish stock and other wild game, and the unsuitability of some regions for farming. Nor did they take into account the government’s failure to provide promised farming implements and instructors and the imposition instead, of policies designed to impede Native productivity. In focussing attention on and fuelling these didactic debates, newspapers contributed significantly to the popular perception that such traits as laziness; simple-mindedness and arrested social, economic and political development were essential qualities of Indianness. Poet-journalist Ernest McGaffey, for instance, would later write that the “natural” weakness of Aboriginal peoples had destined them for extinction. Clearly referring to Darwinian law, his *Canadian Magazine* article (1910) reads:

For it is so that the wilderness falls before the axe, that the old order passes as the new regime comes in; that you cannot stay the current development by a dogged refusal to go with the tide; and that the iron pen of history has written time and time again, the survival of the fittest is the law of the nations (cited in Haycock 1971:21).

Confusing cultural truths with empirical or “natural” reality, and without contact with real Indian people, which would have raised questions about such assumptions, these fabrications fuelled a self-reproducing discursive apparatus which required images of an Other to properly position Euro-Canadian identity, front and centre. With no real voice in prairie papers and no newspapers of their own, Indian people had little choice but to live with this alienating and debilitating Euro-Canadian-centric discourse.

An article which appears in the *Edmonton Bulletin* several years after the establishment of a reserve system in the Northwest, clearly prioritizes the rights of white settlers who are deemed more “progressive” than the Whitefish Lake residents. The article also points to other sources where “Indian imagery” was generated to strategic effect. The author makes concessions to the “adaptability” of Indian peoples (under ideal circumstances), yet evinces the persistence of race based tropes in the settler discourse

which sought to differentiate immigrant settlers from Indigenous peoples, and assign each to his appropriate place in the emergent social hierarchy. The article states:

The settlement at [Whitefish Lake] is the oldest established and about the only purely Indian settlement in the Upper Saskatchewan country. Its history and present condition show plainly that under favorable circumstances the Indian is neither so shiftless nor so lacking in adaptability to civilization as is generally supposed. Although the settlement is not a pattern for the more progressive and energetic white man yet it explodes the theory that the only way to civilize the Indian is to kill him as well as the parallel theory that civilization will of itself cause him to disappear. It shows that there is a possibility of Indians becoming self-supporting, provident and industrious; although only to a limited extent still sufficiently to leave a wide margin between them and the Indian of the dime novel or the specimens seen around towns and white settlements (*Edmonton Bulletin* 24 May 1884).

Insinuating that Indian people were naturally, or racially deficient, moreover, was a common strategy employed both in the presses, and other forms of popular literature, to establish settlers as the rightful heirs to the Canadian government's patriarchal benevolence. Settlers consequently deemed Indian peoples to be less deserving of government attention, owing to their "unnaturalized" (non-civil) status as mere *adopted* wards. Thus, despite the fact that Steinhauer was more highly educated and more skilled in farming in both prairie and bushland climes than the majority of newly arriving settlers; racial occlusions of "the Indian race" precluded any accounting for his individual capacities, which went by unnoted by the secular presses for obvious political reasons.

In rare instances, the *Bulletin* bestowed praise on individual Indian persons. Accolades were reserved, however, for those who were perceived as possessing white virtues; and for those who accepted their subordination, died in battle, or were reduced by the indignities of reserve life, and thus posed no threat to settlers. The paper credited the late Chief Sweetgrass, for instance, with having "adopted an exemplary Christian life." According to the article:

He was always a staunch friend of the whiteman, and did not hesitate to acknowledge his superiority. Being far-seeing, he foresaw that the whiteman was destined to become master of his country, and, somewhat after the manner of a fatalist, calmly submitted to what he considered the inevitable (19 July 1884).

The same article romantically laments that Crowfoot, who also evidently "acknowledges the superiority of his white brother" had been "unable to resist the tide of moral destruction" that came about with the arrival

of the American whiskey trade and the Mounted Police in the area, and had become irredeemably debauched.

The stories of Sweetgrass and Crowfoot were employed to promote acceptance of the inevitability of western expansionism, the necessity for white rule, and the certain demise awaiting those who failed to follow the civilizing program prescribed for them. Other Native leaders, such as Big Bear and Piapot were also occasionally celebrated as virtuous, but nevertheless doomed to certain ruin. Depictions of Native peoples were therefore not always overtly “negative,” but certainly conveyed the notion of Indian peoples’ structural subordination to those who were allegedly biologically determined to become the “masters” of Canada.

That the *Edmonton Bulletin* also published stories on thirst dances, potlatches and features on Chiefs Sweetgrass and Poundmaker indicates that there was some interest among the public in Native issues. However, while Native people sought to employ newspapers to influence public opinion so as to seek redress for unduly restrictive government policies; newspaper owners, like Oliver covered Native issues in such a way as to promote narrowly personal as well as broader settler interests. On the topic of the potlatch, for instance, the *Edmonton Bulletin* (6 October 1883) determined that North-west Coast Native peoples, who are “so thrifty as not to depend like our Indians on the government to feed them” ought not to be “persuaded to give up their time honoured observances.” The religious practices of the Indian people in the vicinity of Edmonton, on the other hand, were deemed “in a commercial aspect” to be “demoralizing.” The *Bulletin* appeared to be more concerned, however, with the potential for competition the proclamation discouraging the potlatch itself proposed. The paper sarcastically remarks:

But extraordinary as the custom is it is easily exceeded in wonderfulness by the means the government has taken to put a stop to it. They have issued a proclamation which is published in the *Canada Gazette* [newspaper] calling the attention of the Indians to the utter foolishness of giving away their hard earned savings and advising them not to do it any more...if the experiment does succeed...it will be in order to introduce a few hundred copies of the *Gazette* into this part of the North-West... (6 October 1883).

The paper insists that it would be more advisable to appoint a commission to determine if the potlatch is “actually as thriftless as it appears,” before “flooding the country with *Gazettes*.” That commercial self-

interest, more than a concern with religious freedom was indeed the principle motivation for this article is clear in the concluding remarks. The paper urges that if the government were to suppress such Native religious practices as were customary in the territories of the North-west, "it will find a wide and varied field of usefulness for its official newspaper, and will make its pages much more exciting and interesting than we have usually found them" (ibid).⁵⁴

That stories were often coloured by the nature of personal relationships between these journalists or editors and an Indian band, by the paper's political leanings and by larger issues of community self-interest, severely restricted Native people's ability to use the presses to their own ends. When settler and Native interests were found to be competing, particularly in relation to contests over lands, prairie papers unvaryingly propagandized the "progressive" perspective.

In cases where interests conflicted *within* the settler population, however, Native people were sometimes able to persuade one of the contending parties to support their efforts. Toward the turn of the century, for instance, Native peoples in the Treaty Seven area successfully enlisted the aid of Methodist missionary John McDougall in a public campaign to assert their religious freedoms. An amendment to the *Indian Act* in 1895 had allowed for the prohibition on potlatches to be extended to dances on the plains (Tobias 1991:166). McDougall responded by writing a letter to the *Winnipeg Free Press* (22 November 1907) which asserted that the dances ought to be permitted in the spirit of religious liberty.

By the beginning of the 20th century, owing partly to the popularity of such spectacles as Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, country fair organizers had begun to invite Native peoples to perform their dances as a form of entertainment. When it suited settler economic interests, the papers tended to report positively on Native activities. According to Titley, the fairs provided Native participants with:

54

Under pressure from missionaries and Indian agents, in 1884, the government officially banned the variety of feasts covered by the term "potlatch" along with the dancing that was associated with Tamanamous rituals. Eleven years later, in 1895, the government banned the endurance rituals associated with the prairie thirst (sun) dances (Dickason 1997:261). Rather than causing the demise of such ceremonies, however, the legislation merely forced them underground.

...an opportunity to evade, if only temporarily, the oppressive regimen of work imposed by agents and farm instructors. And it must have been reassuring to know that not all elements of the dominant society perceived their dances, songs, and costumes as relics of a barbarism that ought to be ruthlessly stamped out (1986:172).

That the fairs, and Native peoples' participation in them were highly publicized in the newspapers⁵⁵ contributed, according to Indian Department officials, to the dissemination of the "wrong" image of Canada abroad. Up until this point in history, the Indian Department had been endeavouring to ensure that stories on Native *agricultural* contributions to such fairs were publicized in the press. In 1893 Hayter Reed, for instance, staged a media event by displaying pictures of Native farmers that he had assembled for the Chicago fair, in the House of Commons reading room. According to Carter, this photo opportunity of sorts achieved its intended purpose:

...the correspondent for the *Montreal Gazette* congratulated Hayter Reed for having "portrayed to all visitors the splendid treatment and the intelligent supervision and provision of the Canadian Government for these wards of the country..." (cited in Carter 1990:232).

In a letter to the Minister of Agriculture which called for the exclusion of Native dances from fairs, Frank Pedley wrote, "the display of apparently uncivilized savages seems a very questionable form of advertising in the best interest of the country" (cited in Titley 1986:172). According to Burgess, the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, for instance, symbolically mapped a pilgrimage in time, or the march of Western Canadian history:

Articulated at first to representations of the British Empire and technological progress, it was eventually fixed with the introduction of the Stampede's "wild west" theme in the binary opposition of two mutually exclusive "historical" moments; the "pre-historical" distant past of Native life, associated with nature and wholly pre-existing white colonialism, and the "historical" recent past and present of white habitation (1993:353).

The image of Aboriginal "primitiveness" advanced by such spectacles was inconsistent with the image of Canada's technological modernity, and hence with the narrative of progress that the government, and the Indian Department in particular, wished to convey to prospective settlers and investors. In an article in the

55

The *Globe* 4 September 1912; *Winnipeg Telegram* 18 February 1904 and 11 July 1906; *Winnipeg Free Press*, 22 November 1907; *Calgary News* 22 August 1910; *Lethbridge Herald* 25 August 1910.

nationally circulated *Canadian Magazine*, Marshall Scott, a journalist and co-founder of the *Montreal Star* insists, for instance, that Canadians ought to revile any form of “paganism” as indicative of primitivism. He writes that Indian people ought to cast off what is anachronistic, in which case they would be supported by “missionaries, the mounted police and the advancing waves of progress, with the help of Section 114 of the Criminal Code of Canada which forbids and punishes certain pagan rites...” (July 1900:206).

For the Native participants in fairs, however, appearing in Stampede parades in their traditional outfits inscribed very different meanings. Combining their own cultural narratives with the discourse on Euro-Canadian progress, represented an attempt to regulate their own participation in that very “march of time.” It may have been an attempt, moreover, to *transform* this Canadian narrative of nation, by insisting not merely on Aboriginal peoples’ inclusion as contemporaries in this performed historical trajectory, but on the progressive capacity of neo-traditionalism in general, and on the nation’s hybrid nature, as opposed to its alleged essential Euro-Candianness. Again, John McDougall intervened, personally making the arrangements for Native appearances at the Dominion Day celebrations at Banff and the Provincial Exhibition in Calgary.

Owing to the absence of specific legislation relating to the prohibition on Native dancing, fair organizers and local politicians, who had a vested interest in the success of these events, generally ignored the Indian department’s appeals to exclude Indian participants. Eventually, however, fair organizers were forced to acquiesce to the department’s demands, when in 1914, the *Indian Act* was formally amended to include a clause prohibiting Native peoples from attending dances outside the boundary of their reserve, and from appearing in Aboriginal outfits at fairs or exhibitions (Titley 1986:175). According to Tobias, this section was later amended to prohibit participation in such dances in any type of dress, unless prior written approval had been given by the Department of Indian Affairs (1991:138).

That newspapers promoted local political interests, often at the expense of national ones, resulted in little objectivity or consensus regarding solutions to “the Indian problem” in the prairie presses. Often, the failure of the government’s Indian policies provided a convenient foil for self-serving editors and

journalists, who were more concerned to advance their own political careers than to address the actual human consequences of treaty violations. Whether these “news” stories reflect the sentiments of the public or merely those of the newspaper’s editors is impossible to deduce. The latter certainly greatly influenced the former.

Non-Native papers were powerfully influential because they appeared to convey commonsensical information related to the public interest. Generally, however, newspapers operated as the voice of individual owner/editors -- a small group of partisan would-be politicians and businessmen with personal political and economic gains to be made in persuading the public to accept certain opinions of Indian people. It is significant to note that some of these newspapermen took on prominent positions in, or had significant influence with, the Indian administration. Newspapermen Nicholas Flood Davin (*Regina Leader*), P.G. Laurie (*Saskatchewan Herald*), Joseph Howe (*Nova Scotian Times*), William Lyon Mackenzie (*Colonial Advocate*) and Frank Oliver (*Edmonton Bulletin*) all contributed, in some measure, to the development of Canadian Indian policies. As a precursor to policy development, each of these individuals was able to shape public opinion by contributing to the formulation of popular conceptions of Indianness. Indian policies acquired their air of legitimacy precisely because they were alleged to represent national, rather than local or individual, interests. Duncan Campbell Scott, who also became a poet of some renown, occasionally published non-fictional prose in Canadian magazines. In November of 1906, *Scribner’s Magazine* published Scott’s article “The Last of the Indian Treaties” describing the treaty signing at Moose Factory. He writes that the merging of the Indian and the white races, and hence the assimilation of the latter by the former was inevitable. This would be accomplished, he writes, by “treaties, teachers, missionaries and traders -- with whatever benefits or injuries they bring in their train...” (cited in Haycock 1971:19). Scott’s would be the single most influential voice in Indian policy development and administration for the next thirty years.

Throughout his newspaper career, Frank Oliver consistently used his editorial section to champion the idea that reserves ought to be thrown open for settlement, with or without Native peoples’ consent.

Cognisant of only one model of progress, and therefore unable to appreciate Native ways of altering, managing and controlling resources; he asserted that Native people were not making practical use of their lands which, he believed they held far in excess of their needs (Carter 1990:447). Whites, according to Oliver, were naturally superior, and would exploit the full potential of arable lands. Oliver portrayed Indian people as miserably failing at progress due to innate Aboriginal inabilities to adapt to progressive influences, rather than owing to policies that were designed to deliberately impede their agricultural productivity. He used the persistence of traditional dances and the alleged inefficient form of Native farming as evidence of enduring Aboriginal primitiveness. As a newspaperman and a member of a largely impotent local political organization, however, he lacked the capacity to officially enact his program for prairie progress. He was constrained to merely contribute to the ongoing debate regarding “the Indian problem.” This would change in 1905, when Oliver replaced Clifford Sifton as the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.

By 1906, he would introduce an amendment to the *Indian Act* which was intended to facilitate the alienation of uncultivated, “undeveloped” or so-called “surplus” reserved land. Administrators rationalized such incursions onto Indian lands as promoting the economic growth of the country, by removing impediments to regional development. Consequently, the Superintendent General assumed the power to “lease Indian land without taking surrender for the purpose of mineral explorations, to expropriate for right-of-ways for highways and provincially chartered railways, and to lease for revenue farm lands said not to be used by Indians” (Tobias 1991:137). Oliver’s promotion from the press to the Parliament heralded a new era in which attempts to assimilate Indian peoples and to appropriate Indian lands would reach unprecedented levels (Hall 1977:146).

By 1911, Oliver would introduce the controversial *Oliver Act*, which permitted the removal of Indian peoples from reserves that were next to, or partly within, a white community with a population of eight thousand inhabitants or more with the permission of the Exchequer Court of Canada (Titley 1986:21). Three years later, the *Indian Act* was amended to make available, without Indian consent, “idle band funds”

for investment in agriculture intensification schemes (Titley 1986:41). This legislation, which threatened to further erode the Native land base would inspire outrage among Indian people from all parts of the dominion. Protests were generally organized at the band level. Privately, Indian peoples continued to hold potlatches and sun dances, to acknowledge their own leaders, to formulate their own notions of Indianness and modernity.

At the level of the “public transcript” (cf. Scott 1985), reserve residents resisted Departmental controls by writing letters to politicians and the presses. The Indian Department pursued a general policy of dismissing Native authored petitions as the workings of either anti-nationalist agitators or non-progressive malcontents. Well into the twentieth century, the Indian Department conveniently refused to consider any Native leader who questioned its authority as a representative voice of his people. Particularly during and between the War years, however, once provided with images of communist and Nazi villains against which to measure the virtues of liberal democracy (and Canadian identity), Canadians became increasingly interested in their formerly vilified Indian compatriots. When the first national Indian political organization formed at the end of the first World War, therefore, the presses could not ignore the challenge to Indian Department tyranny the national Indian coalition represented.

Native Nationalizing Discourse: Inscribing Indian Dissent

By the turn of the 20th century, Indian peoples had been pushed to the margins of every conceivable white domain. Secluded on remote reserves, subjected to regulations which affected virtually every aspect of their lives, prosecuted for pursuing their own political-economic practices yet prohibited from participating in the white economic and political systems, denied a voice in the public debates which concerned them, they were rendered metaphorically invisible and silent. It was as if the government had finally succeeded in its plans to solve “the Indian problem” by prohibiting Native participation in any form of public intercourse whatsoever. On the plains, Indian people who were unable to hunt buffalo, to sing nor to dance, to speak their own languages in residential schools nor to consult with spirits in ceremonies, were

essentially prohibited from using either discursive or non-discursive means, to author a meaningful world into being. The social engineering projects to which Indian peoples were subjected effectively imprisoned them in liminal space. The authors of these modernizing projects had neglected to devise a mechanism for Aboriginal re-integration. Aboriginality was in this way fraught with contradiction. Indian people were physically and symbolically exiled from both the Euro-Canadian and their original Native habitus.

For their part, politicians outside the Indian Department generally ignored the socio-economic crises experienced by reserve populations because they were excluded from the electorate, and therefore could provide no votes in return for political support. By the turn of the 20th Century, however, even the Indian Department was forced to concede that the reserve policy, which promoted segregation, had outlived its usefulness. Impugning isolation as an obstacle to national unity, and cultural distinctiveness as a threat to the principle of uniculturalism, which was usually euphemised as “equality,” the Department set about to apply its new policy of assimilation for western bands through such measures as allotment in severalty, forced enfranchisement, mandatory residential schooling, leasing of “surplus lands” and so on. It was by means of such measures that the Department sought the dissolution of reserve boundaries, and the absorption of Indian peoples into the lower echelons of the dominant Canadian socio-scape.

Enlisting for service in the First World War provided one segment of the Indian population with a temporary escape from the degenerating social and material conditions that government policies produced on reserves.⁵⁶ While abroad, Native soldiers developed a consciousness of the common and systemic means by which Indian peoples from across Canada were subjugated at home. Many of the returning veterans, who were seized by a nationalizing impulse, actively suspended their sense of local and/or cultural particularity in order to focus on their common predicament as an oppressed or colonized people, deploying what Spivak calls “strategic essentialism” (1988). While in the past Native activists had fought the homogenizing discursive tendencies which facilitated their dismissal as racial inferiors now pitted against an

56

This would be the second time selected Native individuals, in this case veterans, would be conferred the right to vote without loss of Indian status (Titley 1986:39).

emergent Canadian nationalism, many activists strategically activated an identity politics which was implicitly premised on the very categories they had earlier rejected as essentialist or homogenizing. Some activists, therefore, mobilized "Indianness," as opposed to Creeness, for example, toward particular strategic ends. This would mark the beginning of the intertribal or "pan-Indian" movement.

In contrast, regional intertribal polities in Ontario and British Columbia, focussed more intently on creating discursive formulations with more of a centripetal pull or "localizing" tendency. The hereditary polities of the Six Nations reserve in Ontario, for instance, mobilized a protest movement which was based on the sovereignty of the Iroquois Confederacy -- an intertribal union of a more regional than national (in the sense of Canada-wide) scale.

Rochester lawyer, and long time legal advisor to the Six Nations peoples, George Decker accompanied Cayuga Chief Deskaheh (Levi General) to London in 1921 and to the Hague in 1923 to seek international arbitration in the legal contest between the Six Nations' and the Canadian government. He wrote an article for the *Current History Magazine* (Vol. 18, September 1923) which provides historical background to establish a sovereign "nation within a nation thesis." In the article, he insists that since 1870, the Canadian government had steadily discouraged unity and efficiency in the hereditary tribal government structure, by means of enfranchisement policies and the imposition of the *Indian Act* elective system. He argues that the Canadian government sought to deprive Iroquoian peoples of their few remaining lands by eliminating independent Iroquoian political rights and absorbing Iroquoian polities into the surrounding body politic. To punish the hereditary chiefs for airing their grievances in an international forum, moreover, members of the Indian Department accused them of crimes they did not commit, served them with court summons which were refused, and used the RCMP and a company of militia to raid the reserve and arrest them. Decker referred to this event as "a hostile invasion of the Grand River Country and an act of war" (cited in Haycock 1971:26).

A petition published in 1924 by the Iroquoian Confederacy entitled, *The Red Man's Appeal For Justice*, while making overtures to "Red Indians"-- a nationalistic term and the label by which North

American Indigenous peoples were known internationally -- makes specific treaty based claims for the regionally or territorially based Iroquoian nations. The text thus employs the term "Red Indian" as an assertion of entitlement or empowerment, referring to a type of solidarity which encapsulates all Native treaty signatories. The tone is far less conciliatory than that of the Ojibwe literati almost a century earlier, who had appropriated and redeployed the term "Poor Indian" to make certain claims, while expressing the less threatening idea of a shared Aboriginal experience of dispossession. Nearly a year after *The Red Man's* printed protest was disseminated, Chief General addressed the American public electronically, from the studio of a Rochester radio station (10 March 1925). Chief General asserted that Canadian officials had erroneously presumed that depriving the allegedly "superstitious" hereditary Councils of their wampum strings would discourage their attachment to self-government. He insists that the ideology of self-rule rather than the medium of wampum, was itself the operative principle for the hereditary system and:

Any superstition of which the Grand River People have been victims are not in reverence for wampum belts but in their trust in the honour of governments who boast of a higher civilization...(cited in *Ontario Indian*, November 1980:34-8).

He advises that while much voluntary mutual cultural borrowing has occurred between Euro-Canadians and Iroquoian peoples;

We want none of your laws of customs that we have not willingly adopted ourselves... We are not as dependent in some ways as we were in the early days. We do not need interpreters now. We know your language and can understand your worlds for ourselves and we have learned to decide for ourselves what is good for us (ibid).

Deskaheh proposed a type of sovereignty that was based on shared socio-cosmological and historical beliefs and experiences, not the least of which were the treaties the Iroquoian nations had made with the Canadian and American governments. As such, the unity he proposed was necessarily regionally based.

Meanwhile, activists in British Columbia, whereat no treaties had been signed, carried through with an already mobilized land rights protest movement that incorporated a wider range of culture groups and which was derived from the notion of Aboriginal rights. Like the Iroquoian movement, however, when attempts to bring grievances before international diplomatic audiences failed to bring about any resolution, the BC protesters, as will be discussed later, superceded the government, conducted their own public

relations campaign and used mass mediated communications to directly address members of the non-Native public, as well as geographically and often culturally distant Aboriginal peoples.

As the aim of this growing transnational or intertribal ("pan-Indian") union was political mobilization on a national or Canada wide scale and ultimately, self-representation; organizers necessarily de-emphasized regional and socio-historical particularities in order to embrace all embattled groups. The focus on nationalism also elided consideration of issues relating to cultural, gender, age and class distinctions in and between tribal entities. Ultimately, this nascent nationalism found its expression in the creation of the first national Indian organization in Canada. It was the intent of this organization to promote and channel an *Aboriginal* identity into the explicit pursuit of political objectives and to do so in the, now increasingly common, English language.

In 1918, Frederick Ogilvie Loft resolved to organize "League of Indians of Canada." The first meeting was held at Six Nations that year. The League adopted its constitution, and elected Loft as President at a second meeting, held in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario the following year (Sluman and Goodwill 1982:131). Western bands soon joined The League, and subsequent meetings were held in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta (Cuthand 1978:38). Edward Ahenakew, who later became the League's president for Saskatchewan, delivered a speech to a women's auxiliary missionary meeting, which was printed by the Battleford press. He spoke to the motivations behind the organization's development:

The Indian feels that he has proven that he has done a man's work and he will never again be content to stand aside, giving no voice to matters that affect him. The spirit of unrest has taken hold of him, has stirred up in him desires that he never felt before.⁵⁷ He chafes under the circumstances that render him dumb before the public; from the Atlantic to the Pacific a feeling of brotherhood and the need of union has arisen among all the scattered Indian people. Tribes far removed from each other, unknown to each other and uninterested in each other now correspond and exchange opinions (address delivered 16 June 1920, cited in Petrone 1983:150).

Loft plied his skills as a former newspaper man to mobilize support for the organization. His familiarity with, and mastery of, the public relations apparatus enabled him not only to widely publicize League

57

In *Voices of the Plains Cree* this phrase reads "...desires he never dared to express before." (Ahenakew 1995:84).

meetings, but to disseminate the organization's mandate via the mainstream press network. Having campaigned for a Liberal Candidate during the first election to include an Indian electorate, and having worked for a Liberal paper in the past, Loft had established connections in the Liberal press network, which he now used to strategic advantage. Such Liberal papers as *The Toronto Star Weekly*, *The Toronto Sunday World* and *The Edmonton Journal* praised Loft's efforts, and publicized Loft's cause from coast to coast. Several Conservative papers also added his words to their columns. The *Regina Leader* for instance, quoted Loft as saying if anything is responsible for the backwardness of the Indian today, it is the domineering, dictating, vetoing method of the Indian Department" (11 September 1920). Loft's strategy of contesting Indian Department authority by employing the papers to mediate an Indian discourse on Native issues was carefully calculated.

The newspapers often served as the settlers' sole source of information on Native peoples' circumstances. The Indian Department had for years been not only justifying its existence, but propagandizing its achievements by publishing its annual reports in the newspapers. The annual reports, according to Titley were the Department's "principle vehicle for disseminating the statistics of progress" (1986:91). In this way the department was able to select and prioritize a narrow range of issues, or to represent a hierarchy of "relevant" Aboriginal actualities, which in the absence of an alternative frame of reference, the public often mistook for veracity. This colonial project of essentializing, enumerating and bounding Aboriginality, according to Appadurai, was principally a form of domesticating difference:

The unruly body of the colonial subject (fasting, feasting, hook swinging, abluting, burning, and bleeding) is recuperated through the language of numbers that allows these very bodies to be brought back, now counted and accounted, for the humdrum projects of taxation, sanitation, education, warfare, and loyalty (1996:133).

Numbers functioned to depersonalize, or excise Indian individuality and to transsocialize, or appropriate the social landscape - hence to subdue and to enclose. The "officialness" of Department authored pronouncements, which was carefully constructed through a consideration of the so-called "facts" or, what could be enumerated (such as Indian acreage under cultivation, bushels of wheat produced, school enrolment and so on), had the added advantage of appearing objective and hence authoritative. These

accounts of Native circumstances effectively rendered any competing or relativising non-institutionally and non-statistically or subjectively based Native discourses suspect by virtue of their apparent lack of empiricism, or surplus of narrativity.

Loft, however, was a highly educated and articulate man, who hailed from what the public considered the “more advanced” eastern Native nations. He was also a newspaperman, a veteran and founder of the organization. As he met many of the criteria that were used to measure non-Native political candidates’ individuality as well as their professional competency -- possessing sufficient amounts of Nateness and political acumen -- the presses could not easily disqualify him as a legitimate representative for the Native political organization. The participation of Aboriginal peoples in the World War One also contributed to the change in perceptions regarding Native capacities. In a 1926 *Canadian Magazine* article entitled, “How Indians Blazed Our Trails,” geologist Arthur Coleman writes that the invention of the snowshoe and canoe for instance were triumphs “of Indian skill in shaping his surroundings,” and tools that had made possible the exploration of the country (October 1926:8). An editorial note added to the article reads:

Indians in Canada have fought side by side with the white man for the glory of Canada and the integrity of the Empire...For all these things how has the Indian been repaid? Has he been recognized as the absolute pioneer? ... Has a place of honour been given to him in our social life? Has he had a chance to compete in equality for a seat in the councils of the nation? (cited in Haycock 1971:17).

Speaking on behalf, or as the voice, of the Native population, Loft, who was a veteran himself, sought to repatriate from the Indian department authority over Indian representations and control over the expression of Indian identity -- to claim for Native polities jurisdiction over the right to speak about Native realities. The necessity of Native self-expression lay at the very core of the League’s mandate.

In addition to mediating League messages by means of a sympathetic mainstream press, Loft drafted his own circular (dated 26 November 1919) which he disseminated via band channels. In pursuing a nationalist approach, Loft was indeed an innovator. His first circular, for instance, draws attention to the success of the Ontario Farmer’s union in influencing the government and Legislature of Ontario. The

political organization he envisioned would harness this power of collective action to attain justice for all Indian peoples:

Union is the outstanding impulse of men today, because it is the only way by which the individual and collective elements of society can wield a force and power to be heard and their demands recognized by governments. Look at the force and power of all kinds of labour organizations because of their unions...The day is past when one band or a few bands can successfully -- if at all -- free themselves from the domination of officialdom and from being ever the prey and victims of unfair means of depriving us of our lands, and even deny us of the rights we are entitled to as free men under the British Flag (26 November 1919 in Petrone 1990:100).

Scholars have portrayed Loft's League as representing a clear break with such previous political ideologies as those espoused by the Grand General Indian Council (Titley 1986), or as an unprecedented or revolutionary and reactive strategy to particular Indian department legislation. In some respects, however, Loft's critical discourse is clearly reminiscent of the critical assessments made by Native activists, particularly those of the Ojibwe literati, who had preceded him. In calling for the "absolute control" by Native people over their lands, improved access to education for Native youth, the protection of Native rights, improved conditions on reserves, and for renewed efforts in agriculture as farming represented "the most independent way of living," Loft reiterated sentiments that had been vociferously expressed by Peter Jones et al in Ontario and Henry Bird, Arthur and Samuel Steinhauer further west. By expressing discontent with current Indian legislation, moreover, Loft, like his forerunners, called attention to the processes by which the Indian department constructed "official knowledge," and concomitantly "subjugated"⁵⁸ Native ways of knowing.

Moreover, although the League was successful in attracting defections from the Grand General Indian Council, of which Peter E. Jones was a member, several of the goals Loft identifies bear a striking resemblance to those earlier proposed by Jones in the pages of *The Indian*. Jones' peculiar vision of Native modernity, for instance, finds expression in Loft's plea for "a great national policy of progress and

58

Foucault uses the term "subjugated knowledge" to delineate those ways of knowing that are dismissed as non-authorized, and consequently silenced, while others are established as true, official and therefore, credible.

advancement to lift ourselves up by our own effort to better conditions, morally, socially, politically and industrially" (ibid). Loft also recycled the idea of returning to band councils the power to represent Indian communities in dealings with the government. Finally, just as the Grand General Council turned to the mainstream presses to print its council meetings after direct entreaties to the government proved fruitless, so did Loft use newspapers as a tool for narrowing the gap between dominant representations of Native peoples and Native self-representations, when he could not make his voice heard by the parliament. Aside from its nationalist scope therefore, the League ought to be apprehended as a mechanism for recasting the notions of Native sovereignty that had been transmitted from one generation of Native activists to another.⁵⁹ While the strategies, particularly of alliance, differ among these activists, the fundamental issues remain, even to this date, remarkably consistent.

Throughout his involvement with the League, Loft carried out extensive correspondence with Native leaders from across the country (Kulchyski 1988:104). To increase membership in the organization, Loft requested that bands pay a five dollar registration fee, and remit to the organization five cents per person annually (Titley 1986:103). This was considered a pre-emptive measure owing to the continuing control over band funds exercised by the Indian department, who could technically refuse to remit funds for travel to League meetings. Loft intended that membership dues would be put toward the purchase of paper, postage and other communication costs.

The government was sufficiently threatened by Loft's activities, which were allegedly brewing discontent among the Indian masses, to attempt to use legislative means to immobilize him. An amendment to the Criminal Code, introduced after the 1919 Winnipeg Strike, forbade participation at meetings of organizations which were deemed to be subversive (Titley 1986:109). This clause empowered the RCMP

59

One important interruption in "traditional" council protocol must be noted. A gerontocracy generally prevailed in the pre-War era councils; whereas in later years, a younger group of men, usually those educated in residential schools, began to challenge the exclusive authority of elders to speak for the band (Dobin 1981:146). Residential school educated men increasingly contested the authority of band councils, and of some non-school educated chiefs, whose power largely depended on the disposition of the local Indian Agent.

to actively monitor politically active Native individuals, who were no doubt intimidated by this incessant surveillance. According to Dobbin, RCMP officers regularly harassed, followed and arrested John Tootoosis, Saskatchewan League leader (1981:148), but were unsuccessful in excising the message of resistance inscribed in his acts.

Loft's circulars, and his successful use of the mainstream presses caused "considerable unrest" among Indian peoples as well as bad publicity for the government (Kulchinsky 1988). Much like sacred prairie dances, the circulars had the effect to inspire "insubordination" among the Indian masses. They worked to directly contravene acceptance, among this second generation of reserve residents, of the mentality of acquiescence to authority that was intended to flow from settlement. Loft inscribed then circulated narratives of dissent to inspire or awaken political consciousness, to provide a rallying cry or powerful incitement to action. As such, he entrained "movement," by encouraging a transcending of the boundaries of authority the state had laboriously erected to circumscribe the expression of Indian identities. To some extent, the constraints placed on Native peoples' capacities for physical mobility influenced Loft's strategy of deploying letters, circulars and newspaper columns, which were capable of circumventing barriers to communication that Indian individuals, physically, could not.

It was his failure to concede authority to the Indian department, however, that most annoyed Duncan Campbell Scott, who tended to treat Loft's alleged transgressions as a personal affront. In an effort to curtail the power of his public campaign and to discredit him in the eyes of fellow Indian peoples, therefore, Duncan Campbell Scott attempted to forcibly enfranchise Loft. By 1920 Scott had introduced Bill 14, amending the *Indian Act* to permit department officials to enfranchise Native individuals without their consent (Tennet 1990:100). Although Duncan Campbell Scott failed to have Loft enfranchised, he continued to attack Loft's credibility by insisting that requesting membership fees was exploitative, and that Loft was a mere opportunist.

In 1927, owing to Scott's urging, section 141 was added to the *Indian Act* which made it illegal to solicit funds from Native bands or individuals (Kulchyski 1988:111) or from outside sources (Dickason

1997:298) without the express permission of the Indian Department. The original clause appeared by way of an amendment in the 1924 *Indian Act*, and had initially been designed to prohibit Native people from using band funds for land claim actions without the Department's consent. The effect of this legislation was to effectively prohibit the use of subscriber funding not only for the pursuit of land claims and for Native political organizing, but also for Native media development. The legislation applied to any person, Native or not, who raised funds from registered Indians for such things as research or travel expenses, postage or printing supplies -- all of which were essential to newspaper production -- if any connection could be drawn by the Indian Department between said activities and the possibility of pursuing a legal claim. Tennant submits that section 141 was not restricted to land claims. He writes, "except with the minister's approval, no chief or band council could now use funds contributed by band members to pursue claims of the everyday sort that might arise against persons harming band property, persons doing business with the band, or the department itself" (1990:258,fn62). Therefore, while the legislation did not legally ban political organizing as Ponting and Gibbins (1980) have suggested, nor did it outlaw creating newspapers as such, it criminalized the collection of subscription fees from or for Native peoples -- the only means of carrying out these activities -- for virtually any purpose the Indian Department could link with legal claims related activities.

That discretionary power to veto requests to collect subscriber funding was vested in a body that had very little to gain, and much to lose by approving Native media development, meant that the phrase "for the prosecution of any claim" was open to wide interpretation. The department, for instance, was not likely to approve fund raising for projects or activities which would either cause further embarrassment for itself, or bring about its own demise, whether or not they were directly related to the pursuit of legal claims. The direct effect of this legislation, therefore, was not to criminalize, but to discourage the development of self-supporting, politically and religiously independent forums for free Native expression.

With section 141, the Indian Department vociferously reiterated its exclusive right to produce and validate knowledge about Indian people and to control the mediation of Indian identities. It was not simply

from mediating their own cultural expressions that Indian persons were prohibited, but from accessing the documentary evidence compiled about them by others. With regard to the leaders of the Allied Tribes instigated land claims movement, Tennant writes:

In their internal correspondence federal officials at times discussed the benefits of withholding information from Kelly and Paull, and the two were in fact prevented by Scott and others from obtaining a copy of the vitally informative *Papers Connected with the Indian Land Question*, the compilation of documents published in 1875 that provided the authoritative record of the land question's early years (1990:102).

Just as legislation had been adopted to deprive bands of farm machinery to curtail Native agricultural productivity when Native farmers proved competitive with settlers; Indian administration inspired legislation, combined with other officially erected roadblocks functioned to undermine not only the authority, but the very existence of Native political organizations and other forums for Native self-representation, when their influence challenged that of Indian Department to direct reserve affairs.

By the time of the World Wars Native English literacy had grown substantially, syllabic literacy had been widely diffused, and instruction in print technologies was available at several residential schools. Printing presses were to be found in all major towns and perhaps most importantly, Native peoples had expressed a desire for a Native controlled organ with which to combat, as Ahenakew put it, "the circumstances that render [Indian people] dumb before the public" (1995:84). Despite all this, no independent Native newspapers were created.

Throughout this time, moreover, League members were not only deprived of an organ with which to express their views to the public, but were prohibited both from exchanging information with each other and from accessing the very information that would have enabled them to counteract these silencing measures. The Indian Department channeled all information through Indian Agents and refused to deal with League leaders directly. Petitions and letters written to the department bearing the League leaders' names moreover, were treated as their personal requests and grievances rather than as the collective voice of the organization (Dobbin 1981:148). Augustine Steinhauer, for instance, President of the Alberta chapter, chaired the League's Saddle Lake meeting in 1932 (Sluman and Goodwill 1982:155). Following the

council, Steinhauer wrote a letter to the Deputy Superintendent General, which outlined the resolutions adopted by the participants and requested that a meeting take place between members of the Department and representatives of the three western branches of the League. Steinhauer also asked for a permit to visit reserves throughout Alberta in order to discuss League matters. Via the Indian agent, Steinhauer received the vague reply of “sometime” to his first question and no reply to his second (Sluman and Goodwill 1982:157).

At Saddle Lake, the League had resolved, among other things to call for the abolishment of section 45 of the *Indian Act* concerning permits. Despite their efforts, the permit system continued to serve as a powerful impediment to intertribal communication and freedom of action, so much so that in combination with the prohibition on subscriber funding, Native prairie polities were confronted with nothing less than an official ban on political organizing. Both sections would not be officially excised from the Act until 1951. The re-enactment of compulsory enfranchisement by means of the 1933 *Enfranchisement Bill* also contributed to the ambient environment of fear and intimidation on western reserves. The looming threat of losing one’s Indian status served as a further disincentive to active politicizing and public vocalizing for school educated band members in the western provinces at this time.

In addition to impeding the flow of information between Native polities, maintaining centralized control over reserve affairs in Ottawa required agents in the field to ensure a steady supply of intelligence from, rather than to, the reserves. In 1935, Joe Sampson, the newly elected Alberta League President, requested twelve copies of the *Indian Act* from the Indian Department. He was concerned that many Native persons had little familiarity with the very regulations by which their lives were governed, and consequently lacked the tools to recognize and resist the methods by which they were subjugated. The reply he received from A.F. Mackenzie, the Secretary of the Department, stated that a wide distribution of the Act was “unnecessary” and that Individuals desirous of clarification as to particular provisions ought to rely on their Indian agent’s reading of the Act (Sluman and Goodwill 1982:163). The tight control the Indian Department maintained over such information effectively prohibited the League from achieving its ultimate

goal of establishing itself as the official intermediary between Native people and the state.

Like *The Indian*, the League's influence would diminish proportionately with the decline in its founder's involvement. After 1931, Loft withdrew from League activities, having been threatened with the charge of fraud for an earlier attempt he had made to raise travel funds to take the matter of game law restrictions to the Privy Council in England (Sluman and Goodwill 1982:138). The drive to form a national entity had been premature. While there was a consensus on the major issues facing most provincial groups, ideological divisions between geographically and culturally distinguished groups motivated the splintering of the League, for instance, the East from the West, (Saskatchewan from Alberta chapters in 1933)⁶⁰ as well as Status Indian from Métis organizations within Alberta. Although the League was never resurrected as a national entity, the western branches of the organization remained quite active. These polities formed the organizational foundation for later Aboriginal associations in each of these provinces.

The Alberta Indian Association, which was founded, among others by Henry Bird Steinhauer's great grandson, Ralph Steinhauer⁶¹, in the early 1940s, would face the same barrage of administrative affronts it had experienced in its former incarnation as the Alberta League of Indians. Indian department

60

The League of Indians of Alberta was based almost exclusively in the northern two thirds of the province and was dominated by the Cree. The Stoney, and the nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy in Southern Alberta did not participate in League events. Northern and Southern nations met at a meeting of the Indian Association of Alberta in 1944, however, to discuss the Indian Department's increasingly concerted efforts to forcibly enfranchise treaty Indians (Dobbin 1981:152,153).

61

The Union of Saskatchewan Indians' newspaper, *Saskatchewan Indian*, reported that Ralph Steinhauer (1908-1986) was the first Native person to be appointed lieutenant governor in Canadian history. The article reports:

Mr. Steinhauer has been active on his reserve and in the province for many years. He served as a councillor on his reserve for 34 years and as its chief for three years. He was also a founder of the Indian Association of Alberta, president of the Alberta Indian Development Corporation, a member of a federal subcommittee on Indian Economic Development. As chief and councillor of his reserve, he introduced the Saddle Lake Centennial Development Association that is now a successful farming operation on the reserve. The association, structured like a corporate farm, employs all Native people...The new lieutenant-governor said he accepted the position mainly "for the sake of non-Indian people, to let them know that people have faith in our abilities" (May 1974 :17).

officials deprived Association members of travel permits, intimidated them with threats of arrest, denied them access to information and censored them when they attempted to publically express their concerns. The Department justified prohibiting the organization from incorporating on the grounds that officially recognizing provincial Indian political organizations would not be “in the public interest” (Sluman and Goodwill 1982:176). In 1944, AIA President, Malcom Norris, drafted a “Memorial” stating that the political organizations representing the prairie Indian nations, which had always been referred to by the Department as “less advanced” than their Ontario and BC counterparts, deserved the same official recognition from the Indian Department. The petition, which Norris sent to MPs and newspapers across the country in addition to the Indian Department, also called for a Royal Commission investigation into socio-economic conditions on reserves (Dobbin 1981:131), for improved health and educational facilities, for an end to forced enfranchisement and for a re-definition of the term “Indian” along lines that were more in keeping with Native sensibilities (Dion 1979:181). The Alberta organization continued to operate outside the officially sanctioned band council system, which depended on the Indian Agent’s ultimate authority. It is quite evident that the challenge to Indian department authority the organization represented, rather than any threat to the public interest, was what motivated efforts to silence this voice of Native political dissent once and for all.

Writing Strategies and the Sprit of Self-authorship among World War and Residential School Veterans

Although Indian Department legislation arrested the development of independently administered channels for the cultural mediation of Aboriginal views, western Native peoples did not simply give up and abandon writing altogether. A group of second generation reserve residents, the first of their people not to hunt buffalo on the plains, graduates of residential schools, and veterans of the first World War, did find their way into print. This small coterie of Plains intellectuals were, like the Ojibwe literati, bilingual, bicultural and highly literate. Like their contemporaries in the east, these men viewed literacy as crucial not

merely to the struggle to maintain control over their physical and cultural domains, but as an effective weapon of social re-construction. Each of the following writers sought to create a written historical record of Plains Indian cultures and traditions, to compare and contrast Native and white ways, and most importantly to provide insider or experiential accounts of Native realities.

Because these scribes were well aware that neither the public nor the government was either willing nor able to respond to arguments framed in an Aboriginal oral idiom, they fashioned a unique communicative form -- an Aboriginal English -- which wedded the aesthetic values of two seemingly incongruent worlds. They also sought to negotiate the gap between the dominant construction of Indianness with their own self-perceptions, by framing their interpretations in formats the public associated with the construction of knowledge and meaning -- newspapers and books. Their writings, therefore, attest not to a mere replacement of Cree or Blood orality by white literacy, but to a creative synthesis of selected metaphoric, allegoric and other narrative conventions of Native oration with an English language journalistic prose. Their writings also combine elements of two culturally informed communications systems -- the mocassin telegraph (comprised by Native kinship and community networks) and mass print production and dissemination (comprised by owners/producers and consumers). In employing this new language, these authors were engaging in a culturally sophisticated endeavor, one which involved both lingual as well as cultural translating. It was certainly more complicated than what non-Native authors were attempting at the time, in their writing on Native themes and issues. Ironically, it was this spirit of innovation, and consequent pushing of the English language form which would be used as proof of Indian peoples' lack of civility. They were certainly communicating in English, but not, as white authors would have it, in the "right/white" way.

Nonetheless, League members, Edward Ahenakew, Joseph Dion and Mike Mountain Horse, each found a way to infiltrate the newspaper industry through collaborative efforts with non-Native institutions. Each took a unique approach to combining institutional alliances and literary strategies. Their starting point, however, was the same -- the articulation of Native experience. Edward Ahenakew (1885-1961),

who served for a time as the President of the Saskatchewan League, pursued a partnership with the Anglican Church. A graduate of the Emmanuel College Boarding School in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Ahenakew, Poundmaker's grand-nephew, was of the opinion that the only profession an educated Cree person could aspire to at that time was the clergy. Eventually, he was ordained as an Anglican minister. While teaching at John Smith's Day School in 1904, he wrote a newsletter in Cree syllabics which served as a precursor to his newspaper, the *Cree Monthly Guide*. Ahenakew wrote, mimeographed, and distributed *The Guide* himself to a network of members of the diocese in surrounding reserves. Where previously he might have visited to impart this information orally, he now circulated printed Cree syllabics among the members of this speech community. Unlike the mainstream circulation model, however, Ahenakew retained a certain amount of control over who received this information, as he delivered the newspaper to individuals personally. According to Buck, an issue emerged in September 1923 which:

...consisted of sixteen pages and included articles on agriculture, health, the Indian Act, the League of Indians of Canada, the work of the University of Saskatchewan, and world news. Some of these articles Ahenakew wrote, others he had to revise in simpler form; all of them he translated into Cree syllabics, and then set into type himself (1995:6).

The *Cree Monthly Guide*, which was sponsored by the Missionary Society of the [Anglican] Church of Canada, was published first in 1925, and continued until Ahenakew's death in 1961 (Cuthand in Buck 1995: xi). Stan Cuthand a "fourth-generation reserve Indian" who knew Ahenakew personally, writes that he:

...Used the newsletter to promote Christianity...He intended to have an editorial, "talks" on spiritual matters, lessons on the catechism, and teachings by various colleagues who could write syllabics or who would allow him to translate their words. He intended to include newly translated hymns, for which he believed there was a great need, and information about health and other practical topics (1995:xvii).

The provision of "news" that occurred in mainstream papers had become by this time the definitive character of the newspaper format, but Ahenakew did not use his paper to disseminate this type of cultural product. In the Cree discursive universe, there is a distinction between news and stories, and separate social roles for messengers or Criers, who impart news and storytellers, who recount stories. According to Ahenakew, information from newspapers "lends authority to [one's] opinion whenever [one] is given the chance to discuss problems that concern the people" (1995:52). Rather than as an announcer, however,

Ahenakew aspired to serve as tribal storyteller. He writes, for instance:

Old Men have had a responsible and important position to fill with the band. In a sense they have supplied our moral code, taking the place both of historians and legal advisers. Theirs has been the task of firing the spirits of the young men through stories of daring deeds in times past...It was the Old Men who were the influence for good, who sought to right wrongs and to settle disputes; it was the Old Men who were qualified to speak, for they had passed through most of the experience of life, and their own youthful fires were burned out (1995:10).

Ahenakew's newspaper did not attempt simply to announce what was novel, new, and therefore non-historical -- the very function mainstream news had come to serve -- but rather to educate, redeem and emancipate Indian people with stories of their pasts, *their* history, and possibilities for their future.

Although it was explicitly Christian in its orientation, unlike other religious and non-religious newspapers at this time, Ahenakew's *Guide* promoted social reconstruction, or what contemporary Native people call "community healing." On a direct continuum with social action for Cree socio-cultural, political and economic recovery therefore, the type of information Ahenakew's paper imparted had little in common with the Euro-Canadian notion of "news."

In 1923, Ahenakew also began to transcribe stories told to him by Chief Thunderchild. He intended that the manuscript he was writing would be read both by non-Native and Native peoples in order that the Native views of matters respecting their lives be made known to the former, and to preserve the memory of the buffalo hunting days for the latter. Ahenakew completed a series of fictional stories, over twenty of which were published in the *Journal of American Folklore* (1929). Some of the stories featured the character "Old Keyam," a Cree storyteller. After Ahenakew had passed away, Ruth Buck edited and published the collected Thunderchild stories as well as those culled from Ahenakew's imagination in a volume entitled *Voices of the Plains Cree* in 1973.

Ahenakew's Old Keyam stories deal in part with Aboriginal participation in the First World War and with the formation and goals of the League of Indians. The League, he offers, represents an opportunity for Indian people to "give expression to our newly-stirred consciousness of nationhood" (1995:84). He writes:

In one way or another, we have earned the right to have some say in the management of reserve

affairs, in the disposal of proceeds from our own work. More particularly, the Indians of Canada should have a voice in the character of legislation that is passed in Parliament when it concerns ourselves, for that is the privilege of all under our flag - personal freedom. As an Indian, I am in sympathy with the idea of the League, not so much for what it is now, as for what it means. At last I see what I have always wanted to see -- the Indians dissatisfied with themselves, hoping to better their condition, dropping that stoic indifference to their fate, showing practical interest in measures that affect their progress (1995:85).

Much like members of the Ojibwe literati, Ahenakew sought to present the *collective* socio-historical experiences of Indian peoples in his vicinity, as opposed to his own individual autobiography. To do this he undertook ethnographic research, visiting with and recording the words of members of the Onion Lake reserve and other Plains and Woods Cree reserves in the region. It was by means of this unique articulation of a collective Cree identity that Ahenakew hoped to translate Indianness to the masses, and to instill in members of the public a sense of the cultural specificity of the meanings of such concepts as law, religion, economy and government. He thus asserted the relative nature of cultural competency, and modernity. He spoke for instance about the meaning of such social roles as warrior, storyteller, leader and, of the import of such practices as spiritual ceremonies, subsistence activities and community decision making in terms of Cree conventions and sensibilities.

His aim, it would appear, was not to rigidify cultural differences, as he strove to compare what he treated as distinct yet analogous Cree and Euro-Canadian attitudes (for instance toward work, morality and rationality) but to re-align or render coeval and equal, two seemingly incongruent social orders, and two seemingly incommensurate national projects. By discussing the aspirations of contemporary Cree people, he fashioned a vision of a distinct Cree modernity struggling to exist simultaneously alongside or intertwined with, rather than as a pale reflection of, or impediment to, Canadian progress. In so doing, Ahenakew sought to re-draft the terms of the public debate on Native issues, shifting the focus away from "the Indian problem," and toward the problematic relationships between Cree and Canadian peoples and their respective formulations of modernity and sovereignty.

Joseph Dion, an active member of the Alberta League and the Indian and Métis Associations of Alberta, was one of the first of his reserve to attend the Onion Lake Boarding School. Dion became a

devout Catholic, and later, a teacher. He began collecting and recording Cree stories in 1912, some of which he was able to publish in local mainstream newspapers. In 1950, he began writing a book, portions of which were published in the *Bonnyville Tribune* from 1958 to 1960 -- the year he passed away. His full manuscript was published under the title *My Tribe the Crees*, nearly twenty years after his death in 1979. Writing in English and using the regular newspaper distribution network, Dion's writings transcended the borders of his reserve finding their way into the living rooms of settlers throughout the vicinity. Like Ahenakew, Dion attempted to awaken non-Native peoples to their complicity in the projects which brought about social malaise and economic underdevelopment on western reserves. He writes:

The right thinking class of white people will admit that there is a moral obligation which rests squarely on the shoulders of all white Canadians. In other words, it is not up to the Indian alone to try to overcome his difficulties. It is an Indian and white problem, and we should all deal with the matter as such (1979:190).

Dion discusses, for instance, how the introduction of liquor by whites demoralized Native peoples, and how unrelenting Indian agent meddling contributed to the wide-scale abandonment by Native peoples of farming. Dion asserts that in order for meaningful social reform to occur, non-Native peoples must be supplied with the necessary correct information so as to be disabused of their erroneous assumptions about Indian peoples. Dion, like other members of the Plains literati, hoped that disseminating collective Native self-representations would remedy the common misreadings of Canadian history. He writes:

A great deal has been written by various white historians in their own style dealing with the western Indians. A lot of these writers have been carried away with themselves and mixed fiction with truth....Let us then, consider the following account as history seen through the eyes of the Indians, revealed at long last by the native people themselves (1979:ix).

Like Peter E. Jones, Dion was concerned more with the practical matters of Native peoples' daily lives than with strictly religious matters. As such, he devoted considerable attention to Cree habitus, discussing hunting and fishing, warring and brave-making, in addition to traditional religious practices. Dion's writing more closely approximates the mainstream autobiographical model than does Ahenakew's. Dion recounts his personal experiences, for instance, at residential school, as a Catholic, and as a teacher. He discusses contemporary Native political activities at length, noting the contributions of selected individuals, whom he

characterizes as modern day heroes, in the development of the Alberta Indian Association and the Alberta Métis Association. Like Ahenakew's, therefore, Dion's work is thus intended not only to inspire the generation of literate Native youth with the stories of the "daring deeds" of their predecessors, but to supply non-Indian readers with a corrective representation of western Cree history and life.

Mike Mountain Horse (1888-1964) was also actively involved in League activities. Hailing from the Blood Reserve in southern Alberta, Mountain Horse, was one of the first children on his reserve to attend the St. Paul's residential school and the Calgary Industrial school. Mountain Horse experimented with a variety of religious affiliations. He was first "an Anglican, then a Mormon, then a traditionalist, then a member of the Salvation Army, then an Anglican again" (Cuthand 1995: xx). During the 1920s, having returned from service in the First World War, he wrote a regular column for the *Lethbridge Herald*.

Mountain Horse also wrote a manuscript which he completed around 1936. He was, however, unable to find a publisher during his lifetime. The book was eventually published under the title *My People the Bloods* in 1979. According to Hugh Dempsey who edited the document:

When Mountain Horse wrote the manuscript in the 1930s, he was aiming for a non-Indian audience which he realized was prejudiced against the old time pagan Indian. As a result, he tended to apologize for his own people's religious or warring practices, or hastened to assure the reader that things were different now that his people had become good Christians... (1979:x).

Mountain Horse attempted to provide an "accurate" or perhaps empirical, account of his peoples' "habits, customs, mode of living, and...some of the mental processes....," however in so doing he tended to treat selected elements of the traditional past, most notably Native spirituality as incompatible with Blood modernity. In the preface to his manuscript Mountain Horse states, for instance, that it is his intention to chronicle "...the feelings of the aborigines as they put aside their native garb and customs and began to take up life as civilized beings."

In a *Lethbridge Herald* article entitled "The Blood Tribe," Mountain Horse explains treaty protected hunting rights to newspaper readers. Employing a strategy of careful diplomacy, he embeds a plea for the recognition of treaty rights in congratulatory remarks which extol Church and State efforts to "civilize" his people. He writes, "This clause is unequivocal in its meaning because it guaranteed

unrestricted movement of hunting parties.” Later, he concedes, “...the Blood tribe was allotted their present reserve...where they settled down to the prosaic pursuits and abandoned their nomadic...existence”

(*Lethbridge Herald* 19 June 1937). First, he justifies the right to hunt, then he lauds the choice to farm.

Thus while he is undeniably proud of his Blood heritage, he is not necessarily convinced there is future for the traditional Blood economy. The preface to his book provides some clues as to his choice of discursive strategies, and conveys a sense both of the status of literature concerning Native peoples at the time, and the ambient moral climate pervading prairie towns in the 1930s. He writes:

The facts related in the following chapters concerning the lives of my people are presented from the viewpoint of an Indian. Often, in perusing supposedly authentic historic volumes, I have read of the Indians as being bloodthirsty individuals, yelling, whooping, and seeking to destroy. I have become increasingly aware, as I continued reading, that very few of the good points of the Indians were chronicled. Hence it became my desire to narrate as accurately as possible some of the true facts concerning my people, without exaggerations of their virtues or glossing over of their faults (1979).

Mountain Horse did not advocate for a complete replacement of Blood by Euro-Canadian ways. He singled out several “traditional” cultural attributes worthy of retaining. He included, for instance, accounts of Native peoples’ contributions to the First World War, retooling the notion of warrior, and investing it with a contemporary relevance.

With any form of collaboration, however, there is inevitably some compromise. Ahenakew, Dion and Mountain Horse certainly rejected those messages in mainstream narratives which denigrated Indian peoples on strictly moral grounds. They also sought to retool the signs of “traditionalism” by means of which Indianness had been rendered anachronistic by both church and state officials and the popular media. Imbuing selected elements of the traditional with significance for the present, these authors re-invested the signs that had been inscribed on their lives by Other authorities, with meanings they could live with -- their own. Like their counterparts in eastern Canada, therefore, these authors contributed to the discourse on *neo-traditionalism*. As Friedman suggests, “the authentically constituted past is always about the transition from today to tomorrow” (1992:846). Establishing a sense of continuity between the past and the present, and imagining its extension into the future allowed these individuals to determine to some extent, what

being Native and modern meant to them. For these authors, Indian modernity was essentially a practice of infusing old ways with contemporary relevance, or neo-traditionalizing and of transforming old ways by combining them with necessary or useful Euro-Canadian practices, or syncretizing. Whatever strategy or combination of strategies each author chose, however, each was led, voluntarily or not, to relocate somewhere outside the habitus that they themselves defined as being “original” to their peoples. Psychologically, if not yet physically, they were what Naficy (1993:17) calls “exiles”; the two strategies described above, moreover, represented what Naficy calls “the faces of liminality.”

Although they consciously adopted the outer forms of the new culture, only to invest them with meanings derived from their own value systems, the Plains authors were profoundly influenced, nonetheless, by the form of the debate about Indian identity itself, and were forced to represent themselves within the terms of its restrictive framework. “The unequal power relations embedded in Westernization,” Naficy submits, “represent a grave threat not only to traditional political and economic structures, but to the way indigenous people produce and consume meaning” (1993:21). The debate, which was framed by the most part by non-Native authors, was itself partly an affirmation of the Euro-Canadian version of literacy. It was a mostly written discourse that was carried out in newspapers, novels, travel journals, history books as well as being inscribed in films. That alternative forms of literacy or another logic of practice might exist, was never really at issue, nor did the Plains authors advance the argument that they might just as appropriately have *danced*, or *beaded*, their defense of Aboriginal dignity, as have *written* it.

Ironically, what can be gleaned from the numerous stereotypes created by Canadian scribes and image-makers, who were rarely able to decipher either rhyme or reason in Native practices, was the non-Native writers’ inordinate ineptitude at “reading” Native peoples. This is perhaps attributable to the idea that where a situation of dominance prevails, according to David Murray, “cultural translation is all one way and the penalty to the subordinate group for not adapting to the demands of the dominant group is to cease to exist” (1991:6). The “stoic Indian,” which may indeed be a variation on the “vanishing Indian” theme, is perhaps the most obvious example of this phenomenon. The character’s alleged incapacity to provide signs

of his condition (apart perhaps from gender and race), in its most extreme form was expressed in the idea that he lacked a language. An alleged Aboriginal aphasia proved quite useful in non-Indian justifications for colonial rule as well as in non-Native assertions of scribal authority. White authors considered themselves to be beholden, or burdened with the task of attributing characteristics to, and speaking for, otherwise unintelligible, or illegible figures. As a consequence, the figure's expressionlessness often became a mark of his incapacity to feel; and his motionlessness and silence, of his incapacity for meaningful expression and agency. Perhaps most important is that, this failure of communication is attributed to the genetic deficiency of the Other, rather than to a problem of cultural difference. And, as Murray submits, it is this alleged innate incapacity for dialogue which functions as "the imperial alibi for domination" (1991:6). The stoic, or for that matter, blood-thirsty or even civilized Indian, provided Euro-Canadians with categories into which real living Native people could be expediently deposited and subsequently dismissed without having to learn how to engage in meaningful social intercourse on *Aboriginal peoples'* terms. The unequal power relations embedded within the discourse on otherness, resulted in the positing of *eurocentrism*, not Plains Aboriginality for example, as "base, foundation, ground" (Michaelsen 1999:75).

The Native authors above attempted to re-direct the debate somewhat by concentrating on the everyday practices of their peoples. Their intention, it would seem, was to supply Euro-Canadians with the basic vocabulary necessary to formulate an elementary understanding, or to commence a rudimentary reading, of Native peoples' circumstances. They felt compelled, nonetheless, to devote considerable attention to the dominant stereotypes currently in circulation regarding the so-called "Indian race." For Mountain Horse, this meant attempting to appeal to the prevailing attitudes of "positivity" in the 1930's, and amounted to offering evidence or proof of Indian "progress" as well as "positive" representations of traditional Native practices. To subvert the negative stereotype of Aboriginal "primitivism," for instance, Mountain Horse provides a counter-image of his people as "a fine race of farmers." "The tentacles of civilization have engulfed the Indian," he writes; and, while the traditional people "disappear, in their place is a different race of Indians who have embraced the faith, also the habits and customs of the white race"

(*Lethbridge Herald* 19 June 1937). He describes Red Crow, a traditional leader moreover, as an “outstanding statesman” and a “great warrior,” but also as the man who signed Treaty 7 and placed “his people’s future in the hands of *Stamix-oto-kan* [Lt.-Col. James McLeod], a white man” (*Lethbridge Herald* 19 June 1937). Thus, while the image of his people he offers is accompanied by no traits that are overtly objectionable or “negative,” the aesthetic is still deeply ensconced in popular white sensibilities. The image he offers of Blood traditionalism is therefore “positive” but not necessarily empowering, as the traditional past is portrayed as, for the most part, inconsistent with the modern present.

Native authors at this time were largely constrained to this practice of replacing so-called false formulations with so-called correct ones. In the writings of Dion, Mountain Horse and Ahenekeew, this took the form of providing evidence of Native intelligence, rationality, civility and progress. The image Dion offers of Riel, for instance, replaces a negative with a positive representation. He writes:

Mr. Riel has been called a renegade, a fanatic and other degrading names. Human nature, such as it is, makes it very easy for a conqueror to ridicule and condemn his adversary after he has him down -- regardless of where the actual wrong existed. The children of today, who will often swear by what they see in the movies, have taught that the bad man in fiction is often a half-breed...We say and will repeat always, that Louis Riel is one of the real fathers of the West. He is a hero (1979:108-9).

Although he may indeed have been confronting a racist discourse on its favoured ground, addressing such stereotypes with a counter-discourse, rather than employing a register of Native choosing, this was a necessary concession for a Native author at this time, the bulk of whose readership was limited by a singular (white) moral frame of reference.

In attempting to unmask and replace *erroneous* images with *accurate* ones, Dion and his fellow Native authors each engaged in a passionate defense of a unique experiential version of reality. The attempt to legitimize Native peoples’ own renditions of reality was a powerfully redemptive strategy, for as Friedman has pointed out, the stakes associated with mediating cultural identities are enormously high, “Not just individuals, but populations have been known to mysteriously eradicate themselves from the face of the earth after losing their ontological foundations” (1992:846). In newspapers, which are cultural products, what is really real is routinely subordinated to the culturally real. It is perhaps more instructive, therefore,

to examine who such representations empower, liberate or repress, than to mine them simply for historical “accuracy.” Cruikshank, for instance, has pointed out that Aboriginal storytelling may be less about facts or causality than it is about asserting the authority to attribute meaning to events, and therefore, “claiming the legitimacy” to make sense of and thus to shape the present world (1994:161).

Despite the limitations placed on their capacities to tell the stories they wanted to tell, these authors did successfully disprove the common implication that Native people were unable to speak for themselves. By providing accounts of Aboriginal involvement in World War One, moreover, these scribes conveyed the idea that Native peoples continued to be important military allies, and that their traditional strengths as warriors had an enduring contemporary relevance. In combatting hegemonic representations of Indian people, and in countering an objectifying discourse with a vision of themselves and their reality from within, Ahenakew, Dion and Mountain Horse sought to dispel the popular image of the unreadable or incomprehensible, illiterate, simple-minded savage. In offering their own versions of both Native traditionalism and modernity, they were protesting dominant imagery based on their own experiential sense of reality. In offering contingent, qualified, perspectival truths or their own sense of the real, moreover, they were rejecting the notion that dominant versions of modernity were universally applicable. What these authors were repudiating, therefore, was not merely their powerlessness to control their own representations and hence their own versions of Cree and Blood historicity, but their inability to direct their own course into the future.

In proudly articulating their nations’ storied pasts, they sought to “fire the spirits of” or inspire the younger people to similar daring feats, and thus to counter the silence that had characterized Indian people’s part in the public debate until that point. The Plains literati lacked the institutional support and the public relations capacities that membership in the Methodist clergy and/or the Grand General Indian Council had offered the Ojibwe coterie of writers. Consequently, they were not as prolific as their eastern precursors. In many ways the atomized Plains writers clearly reflected the effects of the legislation that had been designed to segregate and silence western Native polities. Like their eastern counterparts, however, their writings

prepared the way for a new generation of Native scribes who were able to build on this narrative foundation. The writers who would follow, would eventually emancipate themselves from the limitations of this positive - negative discourse. In his political manifesto *Prison of Grass: Canada from the Native Point of View* (1975), for instance, Howard Adams would expound on the futility of choosing this type of battle.

He writes:

It is useless for us to become involved in a struggle to improve our image, because native people did not create these images, and they should not be concerned with trying to improve them so that whites will respect them. The society would simply create new racist images for us to work at..." (1975).

In the ensuing years, new generations of Native activists would create truly subversive representations of Indianness, employing images of Aboriginal peoples' anger, revolt and empowerment, which while not necessarily "positive," drew attention to the structural inequalities inherent to the debate, and provided clues or possibilities as to their eventual deconstruction.

In the decades that would follow, stories of the worldwide struggles of colonized peoples to achieve independence from their overlords would come together on the newspaper pages of local prairie presses. A new more militant generation of Aboriginal activists, who saw their own local struggles as part of a larger international movement of colonized peoples, would emerge to challenge the power differentials between Indian and Canadian peoples at home. Once again, employing the emergent Aboriginal public relations apparatus would be their strategy of choice for undermining local social inequalities and for asserting Aboriginal and treaty rights.

CHAPTER SIX

NATIVE POLITICAL PRESSES: THE POST-WAR ERA OF NATIVE MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Aboriginal mediators have deployed communications media and their skills in public relations in unanticipated ways. This chapter examines the use of newspapers in land rights protests, as extensions of newly forming political organizations and as tools of community building. The development of a new point of mediation, or platform, from which to engage the opposition represented a considerably innovative organizational accomplishment and an elaboration on the form of Native protest. Urban activists in the 1960s focused their energies on developing new modes of organization and communication, on indigenizing urban areas and on reframing issues related to identity negotiation. They attempted to create community solidarity by combining elements from multiple Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal models, and inscribed hybridity in the process. This set the stage for the beginnings of the intertribal or pan-Indian movement. Urban based Native newspapers were crucial tools in fostering inter-First-National alliances as well as in narrowing the gap between Native self-perceptions and non-Native images of Aboriginal modernity.

Native participation in the Second World War (1940-5) awakened public interest in local Native affairs to an unprecedented degree (Tobias 1991:139). A global consciousness regarding the inviolability of basic human rights also began to slowly coalesce finding expression in the rise of the “welfare state,” in the creation of the United Nations, and a growing acceptance by the liberal democracies of the inevitability of decolonization, the reality of insoluble cultural differences and ultimately in new approaches to cultural relations. A quickening sense of Canadian national identity led parliament to consider establishing Canadian citizenship beginning in 1946. Still, Native people were not extended citizenship status.

Prior to the mid 1940's, state and Church reformation projects among Indigenous peoples, while not necessarily concerted, often worked toward the same goals, most notably, cultural replacement. When the government passed compulsory education legislation in 1921, considerable control over matters of

Indian children's primary socialization⁶² was placed in the hands of priests and residential school administrators. For their part, the churches obliged the Indian department by discouraging Aboriginal political activities. In 1933 at the government's request, for example, a Catholic bishop commanded Edward Ahenakew to desist from all political involvement with the League of Saskatchewan Indians and to concentrate solely on religious matters (Cuthand 1995:xviii). To publicize their own versions of the preferred path for Indian progress and to channel expressions of Native identity along this narrow trajectory, the churches produced several Native theme newspapers during this time. Although these publications explicitly promoted Christianity, following the Second World War, their perceptions changed somewhat and they also advocated for Native self-government.

The Catholics produced: *The Cree Review* (1939-1979); *The Indian Record* (1938-70's); *The Link* (1945-?); *The Arctic News* (1948-76?); *Tipachimowin* (1955-1974); and *Nana* (1960-64)⁶³. The Protestants produced: *Wampum* (1940-?); *Spiritual Light* (1943-?); *Eskimo* (1944-1979); *Teepee Tidings* (1946-?); *Ahtahkakoops Indian Day School Birch Barks* (1955-1960?); *Nainemiok* (1955-?); and *Cree Witness* (1959-78).⁶⁴ Each publication was designed to serve as an instrument for the promotion of Church

62

According to Barman et al (1987:3) primary socialization usually occurs through child-rearing practices in the home and within the family. Secondary socialization generally occurs through more formal institutions. Children in residential schools, received training in the cultural values, beliefs and roles of their primary guardians, Euro-Canadian priests and nuns.

63

The *Cree Review* was a Cree language paper serving Lac La Biche, Hobbema, Saddle Lake and Edmonton areas. Rev. Romeo Levert, the same man who published the calendars which Father Albert Lacombe used to promote among his charges European notions of time, edited the paper (Dion 1979:170). *Indian Record* was based first in Lebreton, Sask, St. Boniface, Manitoba and finally in Ottawa (Hady 1984:198). Father Gontran Laviolette, the Editor, founded the Catholic Indian League in 1956, which established branches in Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario (Sluman and Goodwill 1982:202). *The Link* was produced for the Churchill Manitoba area. *Tipachimowin* was a mostly Cree paper, based in Moosonee, Ontario. *Nana* was published in Cambridge Bay, NWT.

64

The United Church published *Wampum* in Muncey Ontario and *Spiritual Light*, a Cree language publication, in Norway House. *Eskimo* served the Churchill, Manitoba area. *Teepee Tidings* was an Anglican Indian school administration publication from Ottawa. Willard Ahenakew edited *Ahtahkakoops Indian Day School Birch Barks*, a Sandy Lake Saskatchewan Day school newsletter. The Moravian Church

preferred images of Native or Inuit Christianity, and consequently functioned more in the dissemination of a model for the Euro-Canadianization of Indian and Inuit readers, than in the negotiation of Aboriginal issues or representations specifically selected by Native and Inuit peoples, themselves. From the 1930's on, the majority population in Canada became increasingly secular in orientation (Lower 1958:417). As the Christian-Pagan dichotomy weakened, Canadians became slightly more interested in matters of a more cultural than merely religious tenor. Whereas in 1800 Nathaniel Burwash would refer to syllabics as the white man's gift of written language to a people; in 1942, a journalist for *Saturday Night* magazine would comment on the lingual contributions Indian people had made to Canadian society. According to Haycock, in "Sign Language is the Greatest Gift of the Indians," for instance, F. Niven described various signs and their meanings asserting that no where else in the world had Indigenous people invented a language that was understood by as wide a variety of culture groups. He submitted that sign language had greater chance of becoming an international language than such hybrids as Esperanto, and that Canadians ought to adopt it (1971:34). Some Canadians were thus willing to explore Aboriginal practices for their own merit, rather than simply to promote salvation through Christian redemption, or progress via Euro-Canadian assimilation.

The British Columbia Aboriginal Point of Mediation

Among politically conscious Native peoples, the post war period was a time when the pressure to excise the impediments to Native political organizing and to Native communications would reach its peak. In British Columbia, former key members of the Allied Tribes would return to the political fold during the 1940s to occupy executive positions in the Native Brotherhood of BC (NBBC) which formed in 1931 (Whiteside 1973:30-4). Dr. Peter Kelly (-1966) of the Haida Nation, became Chairman of the Legislative Committee. Andrew Paull (1892-1959), of the Coast Salish (Squamish) nation became the political

in Labrador produced *Nainemiok*, an Inuit language publication. The Northern Canadian Evangelical Mission in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan published *Cree Witness*.

organization's business manager.⁶⁵ Both men had appeared before a the special committee that had been convened in 1927 to hear provincial Aboriginal land claims, and had withdrawn from political involvement when the Allied Tribes lost their case, and was prohibited by law from pursuing any future claims.

When the NBBC materialized the organization would continue to fight for the issues the Allied Tribes had earlier identified, with the important exception of pursuing land claims. In its incarnation as the NBBC, moreover, the BC political organization was not subjected to the invasive attention of the Indian Department that the Allied Tribes and prairie organizations had garnered, perhaps for the reason that from the outside, according to Patterson, the NBBC closely resembled non-Native trade unions that were forming at the time (1962:211). The NBBC represented Native bands on the British Columbia coast which shared a common economic interest in the commercial fishery. The organization was able to collect "subscription fees" or dues therefore, as did other unions, without interference by the Indian Department. As the dues were not intended to fund land claims, the organization did not seem to interfere with the well established work ethic operative in North West Coast Native fishing communities, and the Indian Department wished to avoid accusations that it was "undemocratic;" no action was taken to prohibit the collection of fees by the NBBC.

It should also be noted that Duncan Campbell Scott's involvement with the Indian Department ended in 1932 (Titley 1986:22). After his retirement, several of the legislative tools he had developed and used as weapons in his own personal battles, as with Loft for instance, soon became inoperative. Frank Pedley, Scott's successor, did not appear have taken as active an interest in controlling band funds as did Scott. In general, as Tobias suggests, from 1933-1945 the government and civil servants responsible for the newly named "Indian Affairs Branch," paid little attention to Indian matters (1991:139). Section 141 of the

65

Like their Cree and Blood contemporaries, Kelly and Paull were among the first on their reserves to attend residential schools. A member of a highly influential family, Squamish elders selected Paull for what was at the time considered the upper class privilege of acquiring instruction in, and hence possession of, the Catholics' privately owned knowledge (Patterson 1962:44). Paull graduated from residential school in 1907, fluent in English, literate and as a devout Roman Catholic (Patterson 1962:31). Kelly eventually earned a PhD and became a Methodist minister.

Indian Act, concerning collecting subscriber fees, therefore, was not rigorously enforced during this time.

Andrew Paull, who as NBBC's business agent, was responsible for managing the organization's funds, remained with the NBBC only two years before he was elected President of the national North American Indian Brotherhood (NAIB).⁶⁶ During his political hiatus after 1927, Paull established personal relationships with members of the mainstream media industry and traveled extensively throughout Canada. He coached lacrosse teams and announced games over the radio. He wrote articles on Indian affairs for, and was interviewed by, the *North Shore Press*; *Vancouver Sun*; and *Vancouver Province* newspapers. To extend his professional connections, he joined the *North Shore Press*' Old timer's Club. According to Patterson, Paull also played a role in a radio series as well as bit parts in movies and has been credited with helping to launch Six Nations' Jay Silverheels (alias Harry Smith a former lacrosse player), into the role of Tonto (1962:190).

In cultivating considerable favour with newspapermen, and by ensuring that an interest in Native affairs persisted in the press, Paull was sustaining the neo-tradition of media image management, or public relations, that had been passed down to him by amongst others, Squamish Chief, Joe Capilano. In the first decade of this century, Chief Capilano had helped to coordinate the drafting of a petition which asserted Aboriginal title, among various Coast Salish and Interior, mostly Catholic tribes. The petition and subsequent trip to England by the Native delegation, represented the first major effort to coordinate Native protests on a province-wide basis (Galois 1992:7). Although upon receiving the group in 1906, King Edward VII instructed the delegation to present their grievances to Ottawa, Galois insists that the trip to London was far from a failure:

Its real significance lay in the realm of public relations where it played, with considerable success, to both Native and White audiences. There can be little doubt, for example, that the delegation provided a focus for the expression of Native grievances; it also helped legitimize such

66

NAIB, which was originally called the Brotherhood of Canadian Indians, was founded in 1943; the name was changed to the North American Indian Brotherhood in 1944 (Patterson 1962:225). The National Brotherhood met its demise in 1959 when leader, Andrew Paull passed away (Sluman and Goodwill 1982:202).

expressions. Most significant, though, was the stimulus it provided for further organization (1992:7).

The petition's authors sent the full text to newspapers in Vancouver, Victoria and Kamloops, where it was printed along with full coverage of the delegation's journey abroad (Galois 1992:27). Appealing to the mainstream press to disseminate information, which helped to sustain protest activity, became a course of common action for organized Aboriginal protesters throughout BC.

Paull was able to use his well-honed public relations skills to his advantage when he returned to politics. Throughout his political career, Paull was successful in accessing the upper echelons of parliament, and was considered by the press to be a newsworthy figure who consistently provided good copy. Journalists portrayed him as an intelligent, hard-working and Westernized individual. It was an image which corresponded with their prescriptions for the ideal path of Native progress. Paull's coverage in the BC papers was consistent with mainstream attitudes toward Native peoples in general -- for the most part the non-Native press tended to dismiss Aboriginal ways as anachronistic; whereas it was assumed that Western Euro-Canadianness was synonymous with modernity. Vancouver's *North Shore Press* (4 October 1946), for instance, described Paull as the very model of Aboriginal progress: "He is the personification of his own burning belief that his people are perfectly capable of adapting themselves to modern ways of living" (cited in Patterson 1962:182). Paull managed his public image deftly, using this "positive" press to nurture interest in cultural mediations or socio-communicatory forums of Native making, such as NAIB. Paull employed NAIB, an organization accountable to Aboriginal peoples' interests, to amplify his own views as to possible futures for Native education, economic development and land claims in British Columbia, and to press for his own visions of justice for Indian peoples on a Canada-wide scale. Eventually, Paull published his own newspapers: *The Thunderbird* (1949-55) and *The Totem Speaks* (1953), both of which were supported financially by the Roman Catholic Church (Patterson 1962:223).

In the mid-1940s', the NBBC, NAIB, the Saskatchewan and Alberta Indian Associations, along with church and citizens groups were advocating for a Royal Commission into the administration of Indian Affairs and conditions on Indian reserves. Although an independent Royal Commission was not convened,

in response to their petitions, MacKenzie King's Liberal government did appoint a joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons to revise the *Indian Act*. The committee planned a three year hearings schedule: 1946, would be devoted to Indian Department officials; 1947 to Native, church and other organizations. The final year would be spent preparing revisions to the *Indian Act* (*The Native Voice*, December 1946:1). For the first time in Canadian history, it appeared as though Native people might actually be involved in the process of Indian legislation formulation.

Several months after the hearings began, the British Columbia based newspaper, *The Native Voice* (1946-1969) would emerge. Although the paper was touted as "the official organ of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia Inc." and membership in the NBBC included an automatic subscription; it was originally owned and operated by a white woman, Maisie Hurley (Tennant 1990:119). However, the Editor, Assistant-editor and Directors were all Aboriginal people as were the principle contributors to the paper. They were generally members of the NBBC and other Native political groups based in the province. The paper was edited by Jack Beynon, a Tsimshian man from Port Simpson (LaViollette 1961:156). By 1948, Ruth Smith had taken over his editorial duties, making her one of the first Native women ever to occupy such an office (Harrington 1948:22). Like its father organization the NBBC, *The Native Voice* relied for its existence on subscriber fees. Neither forum for Native expression, however, was suppressed by the government, despite section 141 of the *Indian Act* which might have been mobilized to prohibit the fund raising activities that were indispensable to their very existence. The Indian Department must have resigned itself to the futility of silencing BC Aboriginal organizations at this time, owing partly to the impending hearings, at which members of the NBBC and the producers of *The Native Voice*, were scheduled to appear.

Chief William Scow, President of the NBBC, was a member of the Kwagiulth Nation who had contributed significantly toward ensuring a sustained general opposition to, and organizing formal protests of, the Potlatch Law for which he was convicted in 1922 (LaViolette 1961:98). The NBBC's newspaper, which was printed in English and circulated intertribally, provided a new medium both for continuing and

consolidating the various protest movements throughout the province. For *The Voice's* inaugural issue (*Native Voice* December 1946:1), Chief Scow penned the president's message in which he urged readers to support the paper. For Scow, the editorials and reports in the paper offered a means to harmonize the sentiments of Indian and non-Indian people throughout the province, and to create among them a spirit of cooperation. The paper would also bind the Native nations of BC together, he writes, "into that solid NATIVE VOICE, a voice that will work for the advancement of our own common native welfare...The NATIVE VOICE will be the voice of the Native Brotherhood of B.C. in action which in turn is the voice for ALL the natives in B.C." Like the political organization, the newspaper would be employed as an agent of collective bargaining -- as a means of persuading both the Native and non-Native public to accept Aboriginally produced meanings, by publicizing particular Native interpretations of selected issues and events.

Just as the political organization had altered the system of Native communication in BC by employing English -- the only common language of BC Native nations, and by usurping the role of Indian Agents as intermediaries between Indian people and the State -- the paper sought to replace missionaries, humanitarian groups, and non-Native journalists as the official point of mediation between Indian people and the outside world. The first page strategically juxtaposed two columns -- one was an editorial entitled, "The Indians Act" the other, an article called "The Indian Act" (December 1946).

The Indian Act article describes the upcoming committee hearings at which revisions to the *Indian Act* were to be discussed. The authors strategically used the very discursive techniques regarding mainstream institutions that the press had used to portray Native institutions as unadaptable or anachronistic, as simply symbolic and thus non-agentive, and as non-representative and thus irresponsible. The article implied that the Canadian government, for instance, which had failed to take any action to revise the *Indian Act* since 1868, was the very pillar of inactivity. The newly appointed committee however, which was brought about partly due to Native peoples' own efforts, signaled the potentiality of a new relationship between Native organizations and the government. The committee's terms of reference related

to the following issues: treaty rights, band membership, taxation, enfranchisement, the Dominion franchise, the protection of Native lands, and day and residential schools (*The Native Voice* December 1946:1).

In providing the records of the Joint Committee session in the first issue, the editor's strategy seems to have been to report on, or inform readers of the Canadian and Native governments' activities while at the same time to provide an analysis of the terms or process of engagement, as it were, an understanding of the nature of the political battle which was to be fought in a wholly administrative realm. The portions of the hearing selected to represent the Indian Affairs Branch reveal it to be an inflexible, overly tradition-bound foe, which bureaucratic by nature, is incapable of administrative discretion nor adjustable to social change (LaViolette 1961:168). The sections relating to such Native polities as the NBBC, however, show its members to be vibrant, virile and progress-driven innovators, who were capable of working successfully within the Canadian political system as Aboriginal peoples' chosen representatives (*The Native Voice* December 1946:1).

The "Indians Act" editorial outlines the NBBC's activities and the paper's aspirations among which were several goals already identified in the NBBC's constitution, namely: to improve the social, spiritual and economic conditions of Native people; to promote communication and cooperation between Native and non-Native peoples; and to work with the Canadian government toward these ends (*The Native Voice* 1946:1). The paper's news and views, according to Benyon, the editor, however, would be presented "in our way, catering always to the Native people." The paper would aspire, nonetheless, toward a non-denominational and non-political orientation, and would incorporate comments "from all races." That the paper was conceived of as a powerful instrument of protest, rather than as a statement of surrender to the inevitability of assimilation or non-Native styled progress, is clear from the ways the paper was deployed. Statements like the following were not uncommonly featured on front pages:

A square deal for the Native Canadians will mean a revolutionary change in so far as Native people are concerned...We do intend to have changed the attitude and governing methods employed at present in respect to the code at present in use. Methods that should have been voluntarily changed by one of the successive governments of the past on their own initiative, instead of waiting for the challenge of protest, that is heard now (ibid).

Amplifying the common Native technique of public shaming through mass print-production, *The Native Voice* staff, and other Native journalists, sought to divest Canadian nationalists in general and BC citizens in particular, of their sense of complacency with the status quo. Andrew Paull, for instance, employed this tactic in article for the *Vancouver News-Herald*. In the 12 February 1945 issue, Paull called attention to New Zealand, whereat Maori were able to self-represent in parliament while retaining their Aboriginal rights, as an example of how affairs ought to be conducted in Canada (Patterson 1962:311). In the February 1947 issue of *The Native Voice*, a writer compares the superior status of Alaskan Aboriginals to Native Canadians on the Northwest Coast to shame the government into changing its administration and policy.

The author writes:

The sharp contrast is that all members of the Metlakatla Choir are "people." They are free, voting responsible citizens of the United States of America. In Alaska they are running their own Native candidate for the House of Representatives...Canadian Indians are 'wards' or 'minors.' United States Indians are 'citizens' or 'people.'" (cited in LaViollette 1961:170).

In the first issue of *The Voice* it is implied that the accomplishments of the Maori, moreover, are attributable to New Zealand's more humane policies toward its Aboriginal inhabitants. An article which informs that two Native women from Alberta are attending nursing school in New Zealand reports:

The two Canadian girls will be in direct contact with the most progressive Native race in the world. The Maori race of New Zealand has shown the world that they are able to hold their own in this world of progress. Those natives have their own members of parliament; they also have their own native members in many of the leading professions in that sister Dominion (December 1946:1).

The repertoire for possible progressive role models had extended considerably from the time of publication of *The Indian*, when one looked no further than the Cherokees for models of and for Aboriginal community development. Although now global in both reach and capacity to grasp, however, the author's vision of progress was not informed by an assumption of the inevitability of *integration*. He writes:

The most encouraging angle of the whole picture regarding our progressive-minded girls is their avowed determination to WORK AMONG THEIR OWN PEOPLE when they return to Canada (ibid).

While in step with the march of time; this author locates the path on which Native people are progressively traversing somewhere off the beaten track. At the same time, the author asserts the notion that being

Canadian, while not necessarily incompatible with being Aboriginal, was by no means an alternative to being Native -- a point which the 1966 *Hawthorne Report* would reiterate in terms of the "citizens plus" concept (Dickason 1997:363).

In the same issue, the editor characterizes the very pillars of Canadian progress -- democracy and freedom -- as "a guise," insisting that the citizens of BC had not shown concern for Native peoples' welfare in the past, that Native inhabitants were "prisoners of a controlling power," who were subjected to gross inequalities and were denied a voice with regard to their own welfare. The editor insists that "...our Dominion is not in a position to point a finger of scorn at the treatment meted out by other countries toward their people, until she liberates her own original and subjected race." The newspaper thus provided a new platform from which to engage the opposition, by modifying an old strategy for restoring balance (shaming), with "modern" techniques of mass communication.

According to Benyon, given the social, political and economic environment in BC at the time, offensive measures were of indubitable necessity. Redressing institutionalized inequality effectively, therefore, would not be accomplished if tribal insularity were to endure, and Indian peoples were to withdraw from all involvement with the non-Native masses. Equality would require more aggressive overtures, including such means as "invad[ing] the privileged sanctum of the press, heretofore not occupied by our people," and by providing a previously excluded and silenced minority with direct access to an increasingly important source of power -- public opinion (*The Native Voice* December 1946:1,7).

As the century turned, progressively organized Native responses to those bureaucratic procedures which were designed to control BC bands began to mount. Three Native land rights organizations formed, for instance, prior to 1920⁶⁷. The subsequent decade was marked by the consolidation of intertribal or regional organizational alliances, and by a period of preparation. LaViolette submits, however, that "it was not until 1946, with the appointment of the Joint Committee and the appearance of Mr. Andrew Paull and

67

The organizations were: the Nisga'a Land Committee, the Interior Tribes and the Indian Rights Association (Galois 1992:14).

Mr. Kelly before it, that the offensive was [officially] launched and the campaign consolidated through the establishment of the *Native Voice*" (1961:161). With the elimination of the linguistic and some of the cultural barriers to inter-cultural communication, so-called "neo-traditional" leaders, who spoke English, were literate and familiar with the dominant political system, effectively stormed the barricades and secured both access to, and an unprecedented degree of control over, information relating to Native peoples and affairs. It is true that Aboriginal peoples were more than able to communicate intertribally prior to the spread of the English language. Chief Gary Williams of the Mississauga Curve Lake reserve in Southern Ontario, for instance, informs that among other modes of communicating, non-discursive forms of inter-cultural "sharing" have been commonly employed for some time throughout Indian Country. He provides the following example:

This concept of sharing is very evident in the way the traditional songs were arranged for our social gatherings. Many of these songs contained vocables [the Aboriginal equivalent of doe rae me]...So the vocables were used to accommodate for the many different dialects and languages of the people that came to our socials. So we have always welcomed different people to our ceremonies and to our socials. These vocables were simply so that people could sing along without knowing the words. Now, there may be, you know, some other spiritual connections that flow from them, but I have been told that that is one of the reasons for them (7 February 2000).

While a type of socio-spiritual communication between groups already endowed with the requisite shared cultural information is possible by means of vocables; a shared spoken language offered the common ground for the engagement of culturally-distant Aboriginal peoples, the government and the majority population alike, in negotiations of a more political nature. For the first time in BC, Aboriginal people were able to widely disseminate information about themselves, in a register that most of Canada's inhabitants could understand. From this point on, missionaries, Indian agents, and other outsiders were no longer indispensable intermediaries between Indian peoples and Canadians. Aboriginal peoples, themselves, were able to manage their own public relations campaigns.

In the post-war years, Native people in BC successfully sustained a presence in the public eye. In 1948, *The Native Voice* printed an interview with the paper's new editor, Ruth Smith. The article comments on a recent Indian Arts and Crafts exhibition in BC, noting:

In the arts, Mrs. Smith feels strongly that the Indians should not lose their ancient skills but they should adapt them to modern life...“Assimilation is not the answer,” she said earnestly, “but a restoration of pride in ancestry, pride in being Indian” (5 June 1948:22).

Smith, who was pursuing journalism courses at the University of British Columbia, was insistent that Native peoples’ continued control over the organ was crucial to its central purpose, which was to mobilize more unified efforts among Indian peoples. She warns, “It must not fall into the hands of those who would use it to divide the Indian people against themselves or undermine their courage in speaking for themselves” (ibid).

In 1949, sixty-four years after Peter E. Jones had announced the extension of the franchise in *The Indian*; *The Native Voice* was able to announce that Aboriginal peoples in BC would be afforded the opportunity to vote in the provincial elections, and therefore granted the right to run as candidates in the elections while retaining their rights (*The Native Voice* February 1949). In the May 1949 issue, *The Voice* announced that NBBC Secretary and Nisga’a activist, Frank Calder would run as a candidate for the Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation. He would later become the first Native representative elected to the provincial Assembly (Knight 1996:326).

In 1950, Native political organizations in BC immediately rejected Bill 267, which was the textual result of the Joint Committee hearings. On behalf of NAIB, for instance, Paull used *The Thunderbird* to urge Native peoples to protest the bill *en masse* (November 1950:5). As a result of Native print protests, the government invited nineteen Native leaders from across Canada to Ottawa to discuss drafting a new bill (Patterson 1962:319). In the end, however, the Native leaders’ objections to particular clauses of Bill 79 (the new *Indian Act*) were ignored. They were thus denied any decisive part in the formulation of this legislation.

The expansion of Native political organizations through such organs as *The Thunderbird* and *The Native Voice*, and the infiltration of Native individuals into the “privileged sanctums” of the press and the Canadian political system, therefore, ought not to be viewed as mere reactive or defensive maneuvers, nor as examples of Aboriginal acquiescence to (nor assimilation into) a hegemonic print-capitalist and/or liberal

democratic system. This development of new platforms for Native mediation, was about more than simply responding to government initiatives, representing instead, a considerably innovative organizational accomplishment. The growth of Native mass media represented an elaboration on the form of Native protest. It was more akin to a bold but increasingly well-organized intertribal advance into familiar, but nonetheless hostile, territory. It was an advance moreover, made with the aim of repatriating the right to identify, frame and/or clarify the issues in dispute, and to propose Aboriginally crafted solutions.

Peter Kelly, a proponent of, and contributor to, the mobilizing potential of BC Aboriginal protest literature,⁶⁸ regularly submitted articles to *The Native Voice*, in addition to the many public addresses he made on behalf of the NBBC. When speaking on behalf of the Allied Tribes in an address to the 1927 committee, for instance, he insisted that the BC Indian protest movement was not a recent development, "...but the culmination of about fifty years of endeavour on the part of the Indian tribes of British Columbia to obtain a hearing" (cited in LaViolette 1961:112). The development of a Native controlled media with which to amplify the voices of Aboriginal peoples in BC had been just as long in coming.

The Voice claimed to speak for all Native peoples of BC. It could, however, more accurately be described as the voice of the organization for which it served as official organ, and possibly more specifically as the voice of its Executive -- a decidedly progressive lot. *The Native Voice* would eventually endure a two year lapse in publication from December 1968 to October 1970, when Frank Calder and Guy Williams two members of the NBBC's executive, shut the paper down. According to Tennant, immediately preceding the suspension, other members of the executive and the editorial staff of the paper had accused Calder and Williams -- both of whom were affiliated with mainstream political parties in addition to the

68

Peter Kelly along with Andrew Paull, Lewis Gosnell and Joseph Stewart served as members of the IRA executive. Described as the first generation of "neo-traditional" leaders (Tennant 1990), these men directed their protest activities, which were comprised largely by coordinating petitions, letters and delegations from a large portion of the province, beyond the bureaucratic channel of the Indian Department. In addition to using forms of protest that were readily intelligible to mainstream politicians, they sought access to the centres of white political power -- imperial, federal and provincial governments (Galois 1992:23).

NBBC -- of engaging in self-aggrandizing, dictatorial actions that were destructive of unity (1990:136).

The paper resumed publication in 1970 beginning its new run with Volume 1, Number 1. The paper was therefore created and suppressed by the same organization, for ostensibly political reasons. While in circulation, it was the only Aboriginal news medium serving the province.

The Native Voice was the first Native controlled newspaper to follow the *North B.C. News* which was founded in 1891 and formerly published by the Rev. McCullagh and the Anglican Church under the title, *Hagaga: The Indians' Own Newspaper*. By 1907 the Nisga'a renamed the paper "*Aiyansh Notes*," printed it exclusively in English and used it, much to McCullagh's chagrin, as a vehicle to organize the Land movement by promoting land claims in the Nass region (Knight 1996:160). It would appear that Aboriginal peoples have seldom used introduced communications media in the ways that missionaries, and later, ethnographers, journalists and government broadcast policy makers had anticipated. Missionaries, for instance, assumed Native communities would use newspapers as a means of cultural preservation and as a teaching tool. They seemed primarily concerned with the potential of the medium to promote Indigenous language retention, and to foster Christianization. Later, ethnographers assumed that Native communities would use electronic media principally to document their cultural ceremonies, just as those from a communications background assumed the media would be used to exchange information on current affairs which involved Native people, but was of primary interest to Euro-Canadian audiences. When Native people immediately applied these media as political tools, as agents of political communication -- recording community meetings, printing policy briefs, reporting on the activities of Native political organizations -- in short, as a means of holding their leaders accountable and of ensuring the participation of the whole community in the dynamics of the decision making process, they effectively rejected the social organization of production that was assumed to accompany these media into all contexts.

Aboriginal Mobility and Organizational Media Mobilizations

In the years leading up to, and immediately following the passing of the revised *Indian Act* of

1951, which guaranteed amongst other provisions that Native people would no longer be enfranchised without their consent; that Native women could vote in band elections; and which eliminated prohibitions on pursuing land claims, collecting subscriber funding, potlatching and sun dancing (Dickason 1997:305); Native political organizations began to proliferate. NAIB, for example, spurred several regional chapters -- one in Saskatchewan (1944) led by John Tootoosis; and another in Manitoba (1946), led by Edward Thompson (Whiteside 1973:32). The Union of Ontario Indians which had formed in 1949 to replace the Grand General Council⁶⁹ was also affiliated with NAIB. The Saskatchewan NAIB chapter would eventually merge with three other Saskatchewan political organizations⁷⁰ to form Union of Saskatchewan Indians (Whiteside 1973:18).

If Native political organizations evolved as extensions of the state, and are structured in such a way as to make them responsive to federal or provincial authorities, as Warry suggests (1998:57), then newspaper development certainly represented one means by which these organizations might achieve a sense of accountability among their constituents. With the regulations forbidding the collection of subscriber fees now relaxed, newspaper development appeared imminent. Many Native political leaders at the time were conscious of the pressing need for social reconstruction, and felt improved communication was required to bring this about. Sluman and Goodwill write that the general consensus among Indian

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Partly owing to Indian agents, who refused to allow band funds for travel to meetings, after the 1936 Grand General Council meeting at Wikwemikong, the Council remained dormant until 1946. High enlistment rates during the Second World War by Native people in Ontario also contributed to a the lack of involvement in Ontario regional Native political organizations at this time. In 1947, however, Vice President Harry Williams of Walpole Island and Secretary James Fox of the Chippewas of the Thames organized a Grand General Council meeting at Walpole Island to discuss the proposed revision of the *Indian Act* and the future of the organization. When the Union of Ontario Indians formed, replacing the Grand General Indian Council, the organization fought for the election of Native peoples to Parliament, the protection of treaty rights and the revision of the *Indian Act* (<http://www.anishnabek.ca>, 12 February 2001). The UOI often partnered with NAIB, Henry Jackson, served as General Secretary for both organizations (Patterson 1962:291).

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The three organizations were: the Treaty Protective Association, led by a small group of Chiefs in the south; The League of Saskatchewan Indians, which had become dormant in Tootoosis' absence; and the Association of Saskatchewan Indians, led by Joe Dreaver from Mistawasis (Dobbin 1981:159).

peoples during the 1950s was that:

[The] system had to change for the better and the Indian people *themselves* had to find the way to do it...they had to stop listening to what others - and their books and movies, television and journalism told them they were. They had to relearn and understand and accept what they really were and then try to communicate that knowing to a society that for so long had neither cared or take the time, or to be fair, had never had the opportunity to listen to them. Strong organizations and well educated Indians must learn to speak with a good, loud voice. It was their only chance for a future (1982:204).

Although the organizational infrastructure was now present to produce and disseminate official political organs, what impeded newspaper development, and stability or longevity at this time, was both a lack of funding and of training for such undertakings. By the end of the war, reserve economies had been reduced or *underdeveloped* to such an extent in many areas, that were funding from outside sources not provided for such activities as travel to organizational meetings, politicizing would have been virtually impossible. Appeals to the federal government for funding to support the development of Native communications at this time were refused. Though Native individuals and organizations were largely unable at this time to communicate regularly with the public through their own independent presses, they began to infiltrate the public sphere in other ways.

Throughout the 1950s, Canada adopted a series of "open door" or "integration" policies toward Aboriginal peoples. Dobbin cautions, however, that these were not the result of any sudden acknowledgment of the plight of Native people. What had changed, he insists, was the "exposure of Native peoples' situation to the general public" (1981:202). On the prairies, for instance, improvements in health conditions contributed to a 37% increase in the Native population from 1949 to 1958. The lack of economic opportunities on reserve, however, precipitated a drop in the reserve population, as Native people set out for the cities in large numbers in search of work (ibid). The sudden appearance of Native people in the cities served as a jolt to the middle-class' carefully constructed sense of complacency. Up until that point, and with little evidence to the contrary, the urban Canadian public had been led to believe that Native peoples were simply dying off, or were quietly but conveniently vanishing, only to be replaced by the superficially distinct, or *ethnically* Native Canadians. Their arrival en masse in cities spurred some liberal

groups to action on their behalf, opening friendship centres for instance, and thus enjoining a spirit of collaboration. For others, the abrupt entry of Native people into white centres, the change in liquor laws, and the integration of schools posed a discomfiting threat not merely to the values that governed and preserved the well-established racial hierarchy, but also to the very idea of white privilege itself. Between these malcontents and Native city migrants, tensions intensified dramatically.

While the policies of integration translated into access to better educational facilities for Native children, the schools continued to be administered by, and still catered to, the formation of a dominant or mainstream population. Mediating a nationalizing agenda by way of the class rooms, for instance, took the form of issuing a standardized curriculum, which privileged a selected set of historical, social studies and religious materials. The ethnocentric basis of these discourses implicitly excluded voices from the margins or minority narratives. Subsequently, neither tribal lore, Native languages nor Aboriginal writing systems, were taught in public schools. Thus, while near universal syllabic literacy in many Native and Inuit communities prevailed until shortly after WWII; integration policies “spelled the decline and often death of many aboriginal writing systems because...this literacy was rarely taught in a school...[but] learned alongside traditional hunting and trapping skills” (Murdock 1985:10,11). While many Native children became functionally literate in English at residential schools, the prime focus of most schools was on vocational skills training for low end labour jobs and domestic work. Consequently, few Native children received the quality of education required to carry out endeavours that either proponents of English or Native literatures would constitute as “literary.”

Despite the lack of journalistic and print training, several Native newspapers began publication at this time; some of which were community based forums such as: the Ottawa based Indian and Inuit Affairs Program’s *Indian News/Nouvelles Indiennes* (1954-82); the Ottawa area’s, *The Thunderbird* (1963-?); Kahnawake’s *Kahnawake News* (1964-75?); Port Aurther Ontario’s, *The Lightbulb* (1967); and Thunder Bay’s *Kenomadiwin News* (1968-72). In the late 1940’s or early 50’s, Ernie Bennedict of the Akwesasne Mohawk reserve, began publishing a community mimeograph called, *Raweras* (which means the

Thunderers) from a former chicken coop in his back yard.⁷¹ Others, such as: *Indian Time* (1950-59), published by the Pan-American Indian League, Vancouver; *Indian Outlook* (1960-63), by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians; *Indian Brotherhood News* (1961-?), in Kamloops BC by the National Indian Brotherhood⁷² operated as organs for the newly forming political organizations.

During the 1960s, the system of Native education changed considerably. The government began to phase out the residential schools, and Native children began to attend integrated public schools within their localities which were not controlled by the religious orders. Despite the social and cultural devastation they caused, the residential schools had contributed to the transmission of a lingua franca by means of which numerous Nations could communicate with each other, and hence organize on a regional and indeed national scale. Thus, Native students would use the very skills that rendered them eligible for assimilation -- literacy, the English language, an understanding of the dominant political system, and so on -- to assert their Aboriginality. According to Tennant, however, in the 60s the school system ceased to be a factor in what he calls, the "pan-Indian movement," since children from distant points and different tribal groups were no longer collected together (1990:140). The colleges and universities soon took their place as the foci, in the educational realm, for province-- and indeed Canada-wide Native nationalizing activities⁷³.

In 1961, for the first time since the mid 1940s, an attempt was made to form a national Native political organization. The National Indian Council of Canada (NIC) was founded by a university educated

71

Bennedict later founded the North American Indian Traveling College, a "School on wheels." And in 1968 along with Rorihkwats, he created the activist organ, *Akwesasne Notes* (Private Communication with Dan Smoke, 4 August 2000).

72

George Manuel, co-author with Michael Posluns of *The Fourth World* (1974), served under Harold Cardinal in the Alberta Indian Association in the early 1960s, on the Executive of the National Indian Council and as the NIBs President for 1973. He edited the paper from June to July of 1973 (Hady 1984:408).

73

Whatever accomplishments in Native nationalism that were achieved by students at these schools were victories in spite of, not because of, the schools' stated purpose -- which was to inculcate Canadian cultural nationalism and to excise Indianness.

group comprised by: William Wuttunee, Jean Cuthand and Marion Ironquill [Meadmore] (Dobbin 1981).⁷⁴ At the first meeting, George Manuel, then head of NAIB, was elected to the executive (McFarlane 1993:61). Together, the founding members hoped to facilitate more effective communications and exchanges between tribal and regional groups. The organization pursued several strategies. It promoted traveling exhibitions of Native arts and crafts. It supported cultural ways by sponsoring such events as pow wows. It attempted to popularize Native philosophies and visions for the future through the media, "in a way that would provide a positive image to counteract the negative stereotypes of the past" (Sluman and Goodwill 1982:212). Despite Manuel's urging that the NIC ought to be tackling policies of pressing political and economic import, such as the establishment of a land claims committee, the organization continued to function as a strictly social and cultural organization, "promoting the culture of Indian people" (*The Native Voice* December 1962). While the organization successfully secured a considerable amount of attention from the mainstream press, little communication occurred between the Executive and the Native masses, which caused the former to lose touch with the needs of, and hence to forfeit the support of, the latter. According to Sluman and Goodwill (1982:219), in 1968 with the full support of AIA leader Harold Cardinal, FSI President Walter Deiter and Manitoba Indian Brotherhood head Dave Courchene; the organization was replaced in 1968 by the National Indian Brotherhood for Status and Treaty Indians (NIB) which would later become the Assembly of First Nations (AFN).

Aboriginal nations strategically weighed the benefits of trans-nationalizing, of promoting their "Indianness," against asserting local, tribal and regional identities in particular circumstances. In 1959, for example, community members from Six Nations vociferously re-asserted their own nationhood, based on the idea of an Iroquoian geo-polity. Framing their petitions so as to acknowledge Six Nations' cultural and territorial sovereignty, or Iroquoian unity and Grand River area treaty based rights; Six Nations community

74

John Tootoosis served for a time as the organization's Vice-President, but left in 1965 asserting that the mixed Status, non-Status and Métis organization had become elitist, and no longer reflected the views of the Registered grassroots community (Sluman and Goodwill 1982:217).

members once again sent letters to national and international authorities declaring the reserve to be an independent and sovereign polity. This time they were directed to Queen Elizabeth, Diefenbaker, the US President and the United Nations. To assert the authority of the local hereditary chiefs, moreover, “Traditional” community members dismissed the elected Indian officials (Haycock 1971:53).

The government responded to these strategies the same way it had to the Six Nations’ stand in the 1920’s. The RCMP were deployed to dispel the protestors by force and foreign dignitaries were advised that because this was a domestic matter, the petitions they had received ought to be re-directed to the Canadian Indian Affairs offices. With the RCMP to enforce its policies and with no interference from wider Canadian, or international, communities, the Indian department had little trouble quelling Aboriginal dissension. This was especially the case where Native communities remained not only geographically isolated from one another, but uninvolved politically in each others’ struggles for independence. Participants in the treaty rights movement, however, pursued a wide variety of strategies. In 1960 for instance, *Time* magazine reported that the Blackfoot in southern Alberta attempted to sue the federal government. The Blackfoot charged the government with having breached Treaty 7 by failing to provide medical and educational services, by deliberately underdeveloping the Blackfoot economy and by eroding the reserve land base by means of illegal sales (*Time* “On the Warpath” LXXVI 14 November 1960). 19-20. 67).

Invariably, the federal government refused to acknowledge either the legitimacy of these traditional confederacies or the authority of their hereditary leaders, alleging that having failed to adopt modern (European) democratic principles and organizational features, the confederacies represented mere anachronistic relics of a bygone era. Having been disqualified from any sort of meaningful intercourse with, or participation in, the wider political processes of the Canadian nation, some “traditional” leaders responded by seeking out more negotiable arenas for political action. In some instances, hereditary leaders assumed positions of authority in the newly forming Aboriginal provincial and regional political organizations, while continuing to participate in the older style councils. They were able to sufficiently

infuse these newer organizations with many of the customary values and some of the procedures marking the council meetings and longhouses, to narrow the gap between Canadian government and Native community expectations with regard to governance. In other cases, such as the Three Fires Confederacy, although the Anishinabe governing principles continued to inform the organization's central policies, some changes had been made, for instance in the rules of order and methods of manning the organization, which placated federal authorities, but which had the effect to add a whole new level of bureaucracy through which regular community members were forced to wade to take any form of action. The Aboriginal community members who involved themselves in local politics fought to ensure that such alterations had little effect on how relationships of power and responsibility were negotiated within their communities. One significant common attribute of the organizations was that it was Aboriginal people themselves who determined who, for the purposes of membership at least, was "Indian" and eligible for membership. Often their determinations posed a direct challenge to government defined qualifications for Indian status under the *Indian Act*.

During the 1960s in addition to political organizations, Native communications societies, and cultural organizations formed with amazing rapidity despite their lack of financial resources. Indian Friendship Centres were developed in earnest, and a spate of conferences and workshops focusing on such topics as Native education and urbanization were organized to provide forums for discussion and interaction with the wider public. In a letter to the Edmonton based *The Native People*, which later became the first ever weekly Native newspaper, Mrs. J. Daryl Sturrock an Irish-Cree resident of Lethbridge writes:

I am the person who started Friendship Centres in this province, with the sole purpose of breaking down or minimizing prejudice and discrimination which was and still is, rampant in this province. At the time, 1959, there was no such thing as a Human Rights Bill or the Individual's Rights Protection Act. This meant that persons who were victims of prejudice and discrimination had no place to go...[Now] there are eight Friendship Centres...The real purpose of a Friendship Centre is to program it in such a way as to bring people together as persons...Knowing one another, definitely will remove discrimination and prejudices... (1 June 1973).

The centres were established not merely to provide a refuge for Native peoples in the midst of their transition to urban living, but to communicate to non-Native residents the idea that urban Indian peoples

need not necessarily choose between being Aboriginal and joining the larger society. In Indigenizing city spaces, urban activists sought to construct a collective identity concerning Native modernity, and to build a sense of solidarity and indeed, a community that was derived neither solely from mainstream nor Aboriginal models. An article submitted by UOI Board Member, Peter Kelly to *The Calumet*, for instance, insists that Aboriginal peoples ought to have access to institutions providing educational programs in their own languages. The author reasons:

Posing “either or” choices, between good guys and bad guys, between “civilized” and “uncivilized,” is part of the value system of Western Europe and Euro-Canada. That value system is changing, I think. We now have “adult westerns” on the motion picture screen which contain good bad guys and bad good guys. We’re learning to recognize that there are many shades of gray between black and white, we’re learning that black and white can’t necessarily mean “bad” and “good” (31 October 1968).

What transpired in the liminal environments friendship centres produced, reflected neither original Indian habitus, nor middle-Canadian white rites. Friendship centre boards, for instance, are notoriously hybrid formations, not merely because of the Native and non-Native individuals who sit on them, but owing to the syncretic styles of organizing programs and administering services they have innovated. In the 1960s communal cohesion itself, was not a prior condition among Native urbanites who generally hailed from a vast diversity of regions, cultures and colonial experiences. Rather, it was a discursive formation awaiting evocation, and one moreover, that would have to be continually reconstructed if it were to retain any kind of vibrancy.

Friendship centres provided a safe context for the working out of the specific forms Native cultural competency might take by a heterogenous group of Aboriginal peoples, in a variety of urban environments. For, according to Robert Fox, Director of the Canadian Indian Centre of Toronto for instance, “Everything every Indian in the city does is contemporary Indian culture” (*The Calumet*, 31 October 1968). Urban Aboriginal culture was thus not viewed by Indian people as necessarily uniform. Rather, as Sarris has suggested regarding Pomo peoples, “the individuals who make and remake the culture are complex and different; they make and remake culture as they [consciously and unconsciously] negotiate and mediate a range of cultural and intercultural phenomena in a variety of ways to fashion a sense of identity and self”

(1993:179).

Newspapers, which served both as tools of cultural mediation and social artifacts or cultural products, like the centres and organizations were arenas wherein the gap between the dominant perceptions of Indianness and the self-perceptions of Indian people could be negotiated. The centres, the newspapers and the political organizations, all instruments of cultural mediation, provided Native peoples with vehicles to assert the idea that they were quite capable of innovating lifestyles without exclusive recourse to white values. Gradually, a sense of community was developing in urban centres between Aboriginal residents who participated together in social and political events, and informed themselves with common sources of information. Whether gathered around a brass band or a traditional Drum, and learning from an English language newspaper or a council fire gathering; it was this emergent sense of unity, rather than the tools which brought it about, that was significant. As each new form of social agency represented a syncretically inscribed Aboriginal invention each in its own way simultaneously inscribed Aboriginality and hybridity.

The first friendship centre was established in Winnipeg in 1959, with the help of the Community Welfare Planning Council of greater Winnipeg and by a number of grants. Members of the Toronto Native community opened the Canadian Indian Centre (now the Native Canadian Centre) in 1963 (*Globe and Mail* 13 February 1963). When non-Native urbanites proved reluctant to attend Centre events, the Centres' boards attempted to reach out to them. Because of the religio-ethno-linguistic diversity of the urban Native population, the centres' Boards also used such media as newsletters to discursively link the otherwise fragmented Native community. Serving as a source of information, friendship centres, like Native newspapers and political organizations became a most constructive vehicle for producing a sense of solidarity among Native city residents⁷⁵. This was achieved by appealing to discourse, as opposed to

75

The influence of newspapers and political organizations, however, extended well beyond the city limits, to promote regional (and sometimes national), in addition to local forms, of solidarity. As with discursive spaces, the Indigenization of certain physical city spaces, such as selected schools, places or forms of employment, bars, restaurants, housing units, parks and so on, also contributed to the formation of a sense among some urban Aboriginal peoples of urban Indian solidarity.

biology or shared territory, and by mobilizing or motivating adherence to a common construction of a strategically essentialized, "Indian" (as opposed to Mohawk, Cree or Abenaki) identity.

In 1961, the Indian Council of the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg began publishing, *The Prairie Call*⁷⁶. The Native Canadian Centre of Toronto published the *Beaver Tales* which was later incorporated into the 1968 publication, the *Toronto Native Times (TNT)*. Founding TNT editor Jim Dumont, spoke at N'Amerind, the London, Ontario Friendship Centre in 1992. He explained to the mixed audience that non-Natives commonly understood the idea of *equality* to mean *sameness*.

Strategically employing trans-essentialized- or "pan-Indianism" to highlight a greater degree of difference than mere "multi-cultural" or ethnic variants of Canadianism would allow, he insists however:

We are distinctly, fundamentally different people. We have different beliefs, different values, we think differently, we act differently, we have a different psychology. Our whole orientation in life is different, and that's good. That's the way the Creator intended it. And if anything, we should celebrate, we should celebrate that difference. And how we can make that a good relationship between us is strengthen the respect that we have for one another because we are different. And we like that difference. That's the only way that we can bring about brotherhood (28 November 1992).

Friendship Centres and such organs as TNT provided a forum which was conducive to the development of new social ties and thus a sense of community, indeed of Nation, and hence of *communitas* for liminal Aborigines -- those who had voluntarily or involuntarily "relocated outside their original *habitus*."⁷⁷ and temporarily exilic, were engaged in the process of creating a home and a way of living in it.

Métis journalist Terry Lusty recounts the origin story of the Calgary Friendship Centre's newsletter, explaining the innovative means by which he circumvented funding shortages:

⁷⁶

By 1972 numerous Friendship centre newsletters and other bulletins existed such as: the Canadian Indian Friendship Centre's *Edmonton Native News* (1963-?); the Calgary Indian Friendship Centre's, *Elbow Drums* (1966-81); Pincer Creek Alberta Napi Friendship Centre's, *Napi News* (1969-?); the Regina Friendship Centre's *The Moccasin Telegraph*; The Prince Albert, Saskatchewan Indian and Métis Service Council's *The Moose Call* (1963-70); the Brandon, Manitoba Indian -Métis Friendship Centre's *The Scout* (1966-1982); The Vancouver Indian Centre's *The Telling Stone* (1968-69) and so on.

⁷⁷

I borrow this phrase from Naficy (1993:16) who employs it to characterize Iranian exiles in Los Angeles, California.

...In Calgary 1966, in the Spring of '66, I'd been talking to a few people at the board level. And they were saying how it would be nice to develop a newsletter for the Friendship Centre. So we went through the process. And we had an old Distetner duplicator at the time with one of those hand cranks, and you've got to ink it and everything, the whole bit. That's where we started...I used my contacts...at the *Calgary Herald* to get free newsprint. And when they'd get the butt end of the rolls, you know, the rolls of paper, they used to make them into note pads. And they had some that were standard letter size, eight and a half by eleven sort of thing. So we used that. And that was how we started. And it was called, *Elbow Drums*. And I'm very happy to see that now, it's what, now, thirty-one years later, that paper, that newsletter still exists as a tabloid paper (6 July 1997).

As with Friendship Centres, the impetus for the development of communications societies initiated with Native peoples themselves, and not therefore, as some have argued (Demay 1991b, Raudsepp 1984, Rupert 1983, Smith and Brigham 1992), with government prodding nor outside funding.

Prior to 1968, as no formal procedures were in place to administer funds to Native organizations, several groups applied to the Secretary of State's Centennial grants fund (available by 1966), and used funds designed for such Centennial celebrations as pow wows to fund the political organizations and communications projects. Some of these funds, however, were also employed by a team of Aboriginal individuals to design a pavilion for the national Worlds Fair exposition in 1967. It was a massively effective public relations strategy, which demonstrated the penetrative and interactive, as opposed to passively integrative, capacities of Indian peoples who successfully represented themselves as an increasingly unified force to be reckoned with. This demonstration of Native capacities, inspired a lengthy magazine article in *Time*, which congratulated the architects of the pavilion for their enlightenment, for acknowledging, apparently for the first time, their membership in a "single ethnic group," as opposed to their identities as "disparate tribes" (*Time* 9 May 1967:15). Although the pavilion garnered a fair amount of media attention, journalists failed to concede or perhaps to comprehend, that the pavilion was intended as a statement of Aboriginal nationhood and political autonomy, as opposed to merely an expression of superficially multiculturalistic or ethnic difference. The article's author insists, for instance, that the elimination of the "Indian problem" would only occur when Indian peoples attained a level of education equal to that of other Canadians, and therefore achieved intellectual equality (*ibid*). It seems more likely, however, that it was a public education campaign that was required, if the general public was ever to grasp

the crucial distinction between both passive assimilation and actively selective penetration as well as the fundamental differences in terms of socio-political status between the members of Canadian ethnic groups and Aboriginal Nations.

At the conclusion of the Centenary celebrations, the Citizenship Branch of the Secretary of State established the Native Citizen's Program (NCP). For the first time in Canadian history, an administrative funding process for Native provincial and national associations was in place. This is not to say, however, that the Indian Department had finally capitulated on its long running war with Native political organizations. According to Sluman and Goodwill (1982:219), when the DIA was informed that funding from the Secretary of State's NCP had facilitated the formation of the National Brotherhood, for instance, a nasty inter-departmental turf war began between these government branches.

Then, in 1971, the Secretary of State established its "core and communications" funding program for ethnic minorities. According to Tennant:

Core funds were intended to cover the basic, or core, aspects of operating an organization, including the payment of full-time salaries to executive officers; communications funds were intended to provide for publication of the newspapers, purchase of audio-visual equipment, and salaries of field workers engaged in community development (1990:168).

Using core and communications funds, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, for instance, began to publish *Nesika* (by 1972). Other organizations employed the funds toward already existing publications such as the *Toronto Native Times* paper.

Some of the publications which emerged at this time were: *Kainai News* (1968) out of Standoff, Alberta by Indian News Media; *The Native People* (1968) Edmonton, Alberta Native Communications Society; *Tekawennake* (1968), Brantford, ON by the Woodland Cultural Centre; *Akwesasne Notes* which was published in New York but widely circulated in Canada (1969); *The Indian Voice* (1969-) published by the British Columbia Indian Homemakers' Association, Vancouver; *The First Citizen* (1969-72) a newsletter published in Vancouver; and *New Breed Journal* (1969-), in Regina by the Métis Association of Saskatchewan. In 1970, *Indian Outlook* was replaced by the FSI's *Saskatchewan Indian*; the DIA began to publish *Tawow* (1970-80), although with all Native editors; *Micmac News* (1971) took root in Sydney,

Nova Scotia; Whitehorse's Ye Sa To Communications Society published *Yukon Indian News* (1974-); Wawatay Communications Society published *Wawatay News* (1974) out of Sioux Lookout, Ontario; and the National Association of Friendship Centres began printing *The Native Perspective* (1975-8).

Speaking at the first-ever Native Journalists Association (NJA) of Canada meeting, held June 25-27, 1993 in Ohsweken, Ontario, Abenaki activist, Roger Obomsawin reminisces:

I remember the *Toronto Native Times*...the first start of the Core Communications Program in '71, '72...And at the same time as they provided monies to organizations they said, "Now you do some communications." And mainly the interest of government was to promote those organizations...And people didn't really have the flexibility to go beyond the boundaries of that organization...Core funding has had some blessings, it's allowed our organizations to grow and develop and operate, but it's had its down side. And that is that, our leaders have come to accept that the power of Indian Nations emanates from Ottawa...What they have failed to recognize, is that Ottawa has no power in respect to our Nations. The power is in our communities...[However] our rights as individuals include the right to information. And without that, we have no power in our communities (cited in Buddle 1993:74-75).

The Calumet and the Evolving Form of Aboriginal Protest

In 1968, the Union of Ontario Indians (UOI) began to employ *The Calumet*⁷⁸ as its official organ.

In the first issue, the UOI's aims and objectives are outlined as follows:

1. To determine and express common needs and concerns of Indians in Ontario.
2. To maintain and secure fulfilment of all Indian treaties and treaty rights.
3. To preserve the history and native culture of Indians.
4. To protect all Indians against abuse and injustice (30 September 1968).

In 1968, as part of Pierre Trudeau's experiments with "participatory democracy," the government sought to consult Native people about possible *Indian Act* amendments, and mailed out booklets ironically entitled "*Choosing A Path*" to every status Indian household, band council and Aboriginal organization in the

78

The Calumet which means "Peace Pipe," was Ontario's second Native newspaper to receive a name on this theme (E.F. Wilsons, *Pipe of Peace* in the 19th century was the first). The significance of the name is discussed in the first issue:

The Calumet was once a most sacred and significant object among many tribes. It was widely used in many ceremonies, not only for war and peace. It has always been a sign of "friendship." When the Calumet was held out to a party or individual, this was a gesture of welcome and friendship. We would like to think that this symbol will have just such a meaning to all of our readers (30 September 1968).

country. The booklets posed questions as to how the *Indian Act* should be amended, and set the terms of reference for the public consultations which were to follow. Numerous Native newspapers immediately sprung up with the principle aim, it would appear, to document the “consultation” process. *The Calumet* was one of them.⁷⁹

The Calumet’s first issue reports on the consultations in southern and northern Ontario held in August that year (30 September 1968). While several differences of opinion were evident between the southern and northern participants⁸⁰; all participants agreed that the government’s time limits for the meeting schedule were utterly insufficient for a proper consideration or discussion of the issues. In the North where Cree and Ojibwe language translators were employed to translate the proceedings, participants complained about the incomprehensibility of the language employed in the legislation itself (30 September 1968). The March issue reports on subsequent consultations held in Toronto in January 1969. During these meetings Native leaders attempted to shift the terms of reference away from the questions posed in the *Choosing a Path* booklet, toward a discussion of Treaty Rights. At the national conference in April 1969 which was to be the last consultation with Native groups on this matter, Native participants requested that more time and funds be allocated to research treaty rights and that further meetings be held before any decisions were made with regard to the *Indian Act* (31 May 1969). *The Calumet*’s February issue for 1970,

79

What the government offered at the culmination of the consultation process in June of 1969 was the much maligned policy paper, best known as “the White Paper” which proposed in general terms, an abolition of Indian status as a legal concept, the transfer from the federal to the provincial governments of the responsibility for the provision of services to Native individuals, and the transfer in ownership of reserves from the Crown to Indian people as private land holdings (Tennant 1990:149). The policy paper also promised that the federal government would provide funds to Native bands and organizations to consider policies and programs relevant to Native peoples (Tennant 1990:152).

80

In the south, for instance, leaders felt the *Indian Act* name should be retained, as should the clauses concerning Native women’s rights upon marriage, and bands should decide if adopted-out children out to retain their status. Leaders in the north, favoured a name change to the *Citizenship or Treaty Act*, were more inclined to allow women to retain their Native status in mixed marriages, and were emphatic that adopted children retain their status. Southern Chiefs determined that the section on enfranchisement should be entirely eliminated from the Act; while those in the north opined that individuals should retain the option to enfranchise.

contains extracts from policy briefs provided by the National Indian Brotherhood, the Union of New Brunswick Indians, the Manitoba Brotherhood, Native women's organizations and the Anglican Church which unanimously rejected the government's new policy. *MacLean's Magazine* referred to this strategy as an effective "surprise tactic" from the "new" breed of "shrewd" and "able" Aboriginal leaders (Tennant July 1969:1). UOI's submission to the government insisted that "no further steps be taken until the Treaty, Aboriginal and Residual rights of the Indian peoples have been clearly defined to our satisfaction" (*Calumet* February 1970).

In several important respects, the publication differs from BC's *Native Voice*, launched some twenty years earlier. While the *Native Voice* championed the pursuit of civil rights for Indian peoples -- the prime preoccupation of the BC Native Brotherhood; *The Calumet* was employed as a tool for bringing about civil, and more importantly, Native rights, which was also the central concern of the North American Indian Brotherhood and other national organizations at the time.

The first issue of the *Calumet*⁸¹ included the caption "...supported and approved by the Executive of the Union of Ontario Indians." By 1970, the paper carried the inscription "compiled and edited in Toronto for Indians by Indians...[representing the] views of the Indian people of Ontario." The UOI itself was touted, moreover, as an "all Indian" organization. The general tone of the paper had begun to reflect the more radical identity politics of the emergent Native nationalism, in which Native independence, and/or that intensified form of boundary-defining activity known as "exclusivity," played critical roles.

While the *Native Voice* staff often looked to international models to bolster their claims, the *Calumet* remained focused on the inner workings of the principle institutions governing Native affairs in Canada. Instead of other developing countries, *The Calumet*, for instance, pointed to successful development projects in other provinces to challenge the Ontario government's inattention to local Aboriginal affairs. In 1965, the Aboriginal residents in the Kenora Ontario region staged a march to call

81

The paper was published by the Union of Ontario Indians President, Omer Peters; Vice President Wilmer Nadjiwon; Treasurer, Terry Bigwin and Editor-Secretary, Helen Domenchuk.

attention to the lack of jobs, to racial discrimination and other social problems. While the march was publicized nationally by the mainstream media; a year later, having receded from public view, little had improved for the Aboriginal communities involved. Printing follow up stories in such Native presses as the *Calumet* was one strategy for keeping these issues alive in the popular imagination. Writing and publishing a protest literature was also a means of circumventing the constraints on Native peoples' capacities for extensive travel. The distances between Native communities, and the expenses involved in traversing them often effected individuals abilities to engage in other nations' local struggles. Circulating newspapers, on the other hand, was a strategy which spoke to the increasingly common situation in which Aboriginal peoples found themselves, namely, hopelessly enmeshed in red-tape and endlessly waiting while provincial and federal government departments argued over jurisdictional matters.

The *Calumet's* second issue features a speech made by Alberta Indian Association President, Harold Cardinal (30 November 1969). Cardinal received a fair bit of attention from the non-Native media as well. He was distinguished as one of Canada's most extraordinary people in 1969 and lauded in the mainstream presses as one of a new genre of Indian leaders. Cardinal, later provided the timely *The Unjust Society*, which analyzed the operations of the Indian Affairs Branch. Together, *The Unjust Society*, and the presentation of *Citizens Plus* (The Red Paper) by the Indian Chiefs of Alberta to the Canadian Prime Minister, alerted the public that Indian people were not prepared to excise either their legal or their cultural distinctiveness. Cardinal, who was considered a moderate, insisted for instance, that Indian people would continue to resist all attempts at whitewashing or assimilation, but were quite willing to assume a role as the "Red Tile" in Canada's cultural mosaic.

The Calumet reviewed Cardinal's book, which also touched on his generation's changing attitudes toward the Churches' authority in Indian Country. As the residential schools began to close, little by little the terror that was often associated with, and produced by, those institutions began to fade. Activists such as Cardinal, Vine Deloria Jr., and George Manuel, many of whose prime preceding influences had been strong adherents of Christianity, began to vociferously express the view that the Churches were not in fact,

the champions of the oppressed, but themselves, agents of oppression. In *Unjust Society*, Cardinal intones, "If the Great Spirit is dead, the Indian knows who killed him. It was the missionary" (quoted in *The Calumet* February 1970). In keeping with this theme, a *MacLean's Magazine* article recounts the story of Charlie Wenjack, an Ojibwe student, who died of exposure while attempting to run away from a residential school in Kenora, Ontario (Adams, February 1967). Whereas a century earlier, such a story may have elicited calls from the public for an improved methodology to the teaching of Indian children at such institutions; by the late sixties, concerned members of the public questioned the appropriateness of the residential school system in total (ibid). It appeared as though increasingly secularized segments of the mainstream, who were sufficiently removed in time and sentiment from their colonial precursors, were finally able to hear and to appreciate anti-colonial criticism, even if they were not yet moved to act on it.

In producing the *Calumet*, it was clearly the intent of the UOI Executive to empower Native communities in cities and on reserves, by providing information as well as a context for the exchange of informed views on Aboriginal matters. The paper went a step beyond the mainstream presses in providing well-articulated models derived from the process of protesting, which served as step by step instructions for mobilizations of assertive action. The paper reported, for instance, on the successful strategies being employed by Native political activists in Ontario. The 31 March 1969 issue reported that to protest the poor medical treatment meted out to reserve residents in the north, for instance, Andrew Ricard, Moose Factory Band Council Chief, compiled a petition in which he stated "We are tired of being made second-class citizens by middle class whites." He promised to begin making a record of the complaints issuing from Native people concerning their treatment at northern hospitals and to send copies each month to local and national newspapers until medical care improved.

A *MacLean's Magazine* article which focused on Ricard's strategy of having "lured a national TV crew" to the region to cover the story suggested that this tactic of employing "exposés" successfully prompted a government investigation of northern hospital services (Tennant July 1969:1). Hal Tennant's article suggests that this "new" type of Native leader possessed "the determination and communications

know-how to beat the white man at his own game" (ibid). Several of the other strategies of protest reported on in the *Calumet*, were also noted by the *MacLean's* journalist. Tennant refers, for instance, to Cape Croker Band Council Chief and UOI President, Wilmer Nadjiwon's resignation from the advisory committee to the Ontario Indian Development Branch, as a "power play." Nadjiwon's tactic prompted the subsequent resignation of several civil servants who did not wish to appear to support the Federal government branch's policy of inactivity. Tennant also comments on speed or "fast footwork" which enabled Native observers to correct erroneous statements made in the Legislature by the Minister of Social and Family services, using telecommunications technologies.

It is significant that each of these stories was covered in *the Calumet*, which may have been used a source of information for the magazine article. The Native paper, however, did not treat the uses of electronic technology, the strategies of petitioning the media and politicians, nor the walkout as particularly novel or revolutionary. An oxymoronic image of primitive bush dwellers mastering high-tech equipment, or of country bumpkins conquering complicated political manoeuvres, is nowhere to be found in Native publications at this time. Modern Aboriginal journalists, many of whom were politicians themselves, saw themselves as links in a long chain or tradition of leadership in which versatility and innovation were selectively incorporated with conservatism, with little controversy.

The Aboriginal activists who preceded these journalists, had been exploiting the mass media to their own ends for some time. The accomplishments of Loft, Paull, the Steinhauers and Jones -- all prolific petitioners and influential lobbyists -- would indicate that this type of leadership and the strategy of employing the media for the purposes of public relations had evolved over a much longer history of protest activity⁸². Indian leaders, if not media literate themselves, were certainly aware of these model mediators

82

While a new style of Native leader was clearly evident in the 1960's it was not due to any suddenly developed intellectual capabilities on the part of Aboriginal individuals, but to newly removed legislative impediments and public receptivity to Aboriginal action for justice. Native women were also achieving positions in various political offices at this time, in the Indian department. A February 1961 *World Affairs* article entitled, "Women chiefs head twelve Indian Bands in Canada" locates the impetus for Native women's entry into the realm of politics in the Indian Department's in the removal of several prohibitive

and masters of re-invention. It was not, therefore, that Native leaders had only recently achieved competency, as Tennant suggests, but that their capabilities had recently become *imaginable* to government administrators and the public alike. Consequently, despite their own cultural ineptitude in Aboriginal contexts, Government representatives were becoming progressively more receptive to the idea of conversing *with*, rather than dictating *to*, peoples they believed had recently become conversant or competent with regard to the civil affairs of the state.

While Canadians tended to view these “developments” as cases of successful Aboriginal adaptation to Canadian ways, what they were witnessing was in fact the indigenization of those ways. And just as the decolonization of Native spirituality would require that Native people first engage the dominant historiography of Christianity in the colonial era, a truly distinct form of Native governing -- self-government -- would require a temporary immersion, an extended quest one could say, in the ways of the mainstream political system. By the same token, however, bi-cultural Native peoples had little faith in Canadians’ capacities to approximate Aboriginal ways.

A letter submitted by Councillor Simeon McKay to *The Calumet*, asserts that members of the Native community of Kasabonika in northern Ontario, who were struggling with the high price of food in the north and the low return on their furs, felt that non-Native journalism, for instance, was not appropriately responsive to this particular community’s unique demands. It reads:

Last year on October 11 a CBC film crew came in here to make a story of Kasabonika to show on the program (the way it is) they only wanted to talk about medicine, we wanted to talk about how to get enough food and better clothes for ourselves and our children but the woman who was the director would not listen to us. It is the same stupid way that the white man always does. We wrote to ask the CBC to send a television crew to talk about the things that are really important to us but they don’t even answer our letters (31 May 1969).

The mainstream press, however, was somewhat susceptible to the spectacle effect, or to events which were

factors. After considerable lobbying on the part of such Native political organizations as NBBC, NAIB and the IAI, in 1945, Indian Affairs made family allowance cheques payable to women. Then in 1951 the branch formalized Native women’s right to vote and to assume office in tribal elections. It should be noted that while Iroquoian women had always been actively involved in traditional community political life; this was not necessarily the case in other Native nations.

staged or performed rather than merely lived by Native community members. Staging live media events, moreover, seemed to have a much more profound and immediate effect on the spectating public than the strategy of petitioning MPs or appealing to the international community. The following story, recounted by Terry Lusty, concerns an organized protest over the same issues as those identified by the Kasabonika community. This strategy successfully attracted wide media coverage. Lusty recalls:

Stan Daniels...became the President of the Metis Association of Alberta, and Johnny [Sampson] was President of the Indian Association of Alberta...those two, they hitch-hiked all the way to Ottawa from Alberta here with two pounds of stinking sausage to decry...the expense people had to go to, to purchase things like meat products and dairy products, especially in northern communities and remote communities - because the prices were just astronomical. And their point was well taken by the time they got to Ottawa with two pounds of stinkin' sausage, believe me! (5 July 1997).

In the mid-1960's in Cowichan BC, where George Manuel was working as a Community Development Officer, community members invited the press to investigate the substandard housing on the reserve. According to McFarlane, as a result of the national publicity that resulted from this strategy, the new DIA minister, Authur Laing was sufficiently shamed to promise to immediately improve the local conditions (1993:82). While he was leader of the Grand Council of the Cree, Matthew Coon Come also conducted an enormously successful media relations campaign, dramatizing the Great Whale Hydro Project protest by canoeing from James Bay to New York with news cameras in tow. Particularly in the post-1960s era, this strategy of providing the mainstream news apparatus with the rousing sound bytes and stirring visual imagery required to attract and secure its selective attention, or of engaging in media *performances*, has proven infinitely more successful for Aboriginal Activists than have the strictly *discursive* ventures into mainstream mediascapes. Consequently, many contemporary Native protestors have selected the enacted rather than the written protest as the register or vehicle of choice for publically expressing messages of Aboriginal dissension. Aboriginal protestors have also begun to conceive and plan protests as media events in order to tap the political resources available through Canadian and international public opinion.

That communications between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations had been impeded up until this point, therefore, had more to do with a Euro-Canadian technological deficiency -- an inability to

decipher Aboriginal articulations and consequently, an incapacity to acknowledge the divergent paths Aboriginal modernities had taken -- than any aphasia, inactivity or technological ineptitude on the part of Aboriginal leaders who for some time have been, by necessity, bi-culturally competent. Miles Morrisseau, former publisher and founder of the Kettle Point, Ontario based *Nativebeat* newspaper writes in an article titled "Our People Speak, Listen to their Voices":

The stereotype of "the quiet Native" came out of the colonization experience, which is where many misconceptions were formulated. Of course, when you think about it it's difficult to maintain any kind of dialogue when you don't even speak the same language. Even if understood Native people's language is based on values and concepts that the mainstream society still has difficulty comprehending. So it wasn't as if Native people didn't have anything to say, just that the Europeans didn't have the capacity to understand.

Morrisseau insists however:

Throughout this whole process and the history of Native-Euro-Canadian relations the most telling cause of Native's mythical silence has been ignored. The real reason that the Native voice has not been heard, is not so much that Native people weren't saying anything it was just that -- NO ONE LISTENED (in *Nativebeat*, November 1992:1415).

Unlike the popular national media, Aboriginal papers such as the *Calumet* and later *Nativebeat*, were often marked by critical discourses which drew attention to the processes that have subjugated Aboriginal knowledges. In authoring their own images, Aboriginal journalists challenged the mainstream monopoly on defining the nature and meaning of events and reproducing the relationship between those in control of the technology (generally the dominant society) and those written about (subordinated groups). Mediating Aboriginal articulations via *The Calumet* represented an effective contest to the exclusive Eurocentric reference and significance of such concepts as technology, progress, and modernity. The paper publicized the UOI's preferred program for Native progress, for example, which required that Treaty rights, which were to some extent co-inscribed, take precedence over the Euro-Canadian authored *Indian Act*. In promoting Native articulated and operated educational programs, moreover, *the Calumet* suggested strategies for repatriating Aboriginal authority from the state -- the allegedly neutral arbiter of Aboriginal affairs. Writers for *The Calumet* sought in fact to *decode* the *Indian Act*, challenging, for one, the government's authority to apply seemingly arbitrary hunting and fishing regulations which impinged on

treaty rights.

Much like *The Indian*, which was published nearly a century earlier, *The Calumet* promoted a type of political literacy, by offering translations or interpretations of such texts as the *Indian Act*; clues as to the means by which Aboriginal people were governed by non-Indians; and evidence of the ways in which various Indigenous interests were subordinated to those of the greater public, to such special interest groups as non-Native businesses, and finally, to the state. By exposing Eurocentrism as the discursive residue of colonialism, *The Calumet* thus promoted an understanding of the ways in which colonial processes continued to underwrite contemporary Native politics.

Just as diminishing the threat of forcible enfranchisement had the effect to remove the very barriers to communication that Indian legislation had erected, the closing of the residential schools, the newly enacted Human Rights legislation, and the growing inclination of some non-Native groups to work collaboratively with, or at least listen to, Native peoples signaled a fissuring of the seemingly impenetrable Euro-Canadian power structure. What appeared to be a loosening of the internal coherence of the Euro-Canadian master narrative of progress, moreover, posed new possibilities for Native strategizing. The repertoire of resources from which Aboriginal people in Canada selected possible futures for themselves, what Appadurai (1996) calls the “ideoscape,” had expanded considerably during the integration era. This occurred owing not merely to Indian peoples’ increased access to the world at large via electronic mediation and migration, but also due to increased interaction with different groups of Native and non-Native peoples in Canada.

When the *Calumet*, for example, began to look to other Native papers for alternative models, publishing stories from Alberta’s *The Native People*, Saskatchewan’s *The Moose Call*, and northern Ontario’s *Kenomadiwin News*, it provided Ontario readers with access to non-local forms of knowledge and information, which made possible a sort of cultural nationalism among these culturally and regionally diverse Aboriginal peoples. At the same time, new types of lateral syncretism, or intertribal cultural borrowing were becoming more and more and more common. Although in many cases never having

actually directly interacted, Native peoples from across the country increasingly acquired the distinctly modern sense of belonging to a sort of virtual community, to a territorially based nation (Turtle Island or North America), and consequently, of sharing a national tradition. This weaving together of traditions and discourses was simply part of the ongoing hybridization of Aboriginal cultures. These notions of Native nationalism or visions of a virtual community, were linked to (but not determined by) new systems of communication.

Other realms of Aboriginal expression were also poised to embark upon this boundary-defining activity. It appeared to be no longer absolutely necessary, for example, to indigenize Christianity in order to ensure the survival of Native spiritual practices. Rather, it was possible to imbricate for example Plains Sauteaux with Cree, Lakota and Ojibwe spiritual beliefs and ways. The relatively recent trend toward a “pan-Indian” blending of healing traditions and socio-cosmological beliefs and practices particularly in urban areas, would confirm the theory that the Aboriginal syncretization of Western spiritual beliefs and practices was in fact a cultural strategy specific to a particular set of social and historical circumstances. For, once the threats engendering the syncretization of these dominant forms were removed; a plethora of non-syncretized, and laterally- syncretized⁸³ beliefs and practices began to flourish.

The emergent sense of cultural nationalism permitted Native peoples to turn to other Indian peoples and to begin, or in some cases to continue, to innovate intertribal spiritual forms and hence to experiment with what Appadurai (1996:110) calls, “the means of modernity.” This was not, therefore, a case of a massive re-turning to pre-contact traditions. In fact, many Nations in the North and South had come to accept reserves, pow wows, farming, hunting with guns and trapping, fiddle music, syllabic writing, Christianity and other attributes incorporated or innovated since contact as *traditional*. This active process of syncretizing and/or Indigenizing, which some have mislabeled “misreading” (Naficy 1993) or

83

By lateral I mean to point out that unequal power relations are embedded in the process of incorporating Euro-Canadian beliefs and practices, but not necessarily in the process of borrowing from other similarly situated, or lateral Native nations.

“inventing” (Keesing 1989, Handler and Linnekin 1984), the past, was what had sustained the very notion of *Aboriginality* for peoples who were in the midst of rapid cultural change.

In the process of being indigenized, some of these instruments or practices moreover, became emblematic of *Aboriginality* at the same time that they became inscribed as practices onto Aboriginal peoples’ bodies. It is important, therefore, to appreciate the considerable and selective cultural filtering that accompanied all these incorporations and innovations. It is also important, moreover, to recognize the continuity in the use of many pre-contact artifacts, artifices or techniques and practices, and beliefs among Aboriginal peoples into contemporary times (Wenzel, 1991).

Throughout Indian Country at this time, neo-traditional Native healers and/or spiritualists, for instance, began more openly to bring forward, or to re-invigorate what had been forced underground, and in some cases to piece together what had been almost entirely forgotten (Waldram 1999). While Native peoples were reinvesting value in these Indigenous socio-cosmological belief systems; Christian tenets often appeared to be in abeyance, just as traditional forms of spirituality appeared to be fading during the era of Christianization. In practice, the various spiritual beliefs were not always as rigidly distinct as cultural purists like to think.

Although non-First world peoples are commonly presumed to share a common failure to replicate the European trajectory of progress; modernity, as Mitchell (2000:1) points out, is in fact created out of the *interaction between* Europe and its cultural others. Religion much like the media later on, would provide a critical field in which the struggles of modernity would be fought out. The multiple Methodisms, for instance, that were practiced by various Native communities cannot be dealt with as creations simply of Euro-Canadian or European cultures, as the bulk of the work of cultural interpretation was carried by Native practitioners themselves. Moreover, ignoring the role of such Aboriginal cultural interpreters as Native clergymen, Michaelsen (1999:2) advises, leads to an “essentializing of difference.”

The colonial experience had altered Indian peoples’ social and physical environment sufficiently to make a full return to “old ways as they were,” or some idealized pure state an utter impossibility. There

simply was no racial essence nor original unified traditional sensibility which could be merely re-invigorated nor reproduced. This is not to say, however, that “neo-traditional” (as opposed to post-traditional) elements, values, practices and beliefs were not continuously re-created. Mohawk historian, Jack Norton suggests for example, that honouring the old ways:

...does not imply... that we return “to the blanket.” It means simply that we place the things of this world in a harmonious balance, as we did traditionally. All things, life and its natural elements, should interact with no part exaggerating or dominating the whole (1974:30).

Contemporary Aboriginality is an irrevocably plural, and infinitely creative construct. Contemporary Native spirituality is also a necessarily “heteroglossic” configuration of voices which were never exclusively “traditional,” nor expressly Aboriginal. Norton implies that the authority to articulate Aboriginality ought to be re-claimed by individual Aboriginal peoples themselves. Aboriginal self-representations would be made to infuse the dominant constructions of contemporary Indianness, however, only through conscious design and political will. Ultimately this would occur through dialogue, and thus by engaging with the dominant historicity, rather than simply de-Canadianizing all Aboriginal content.

Nonetheless, nostalgia for a pre-contact or primordial past is apparent in several Aboriginal mobilizations at this time. The stressing of total integration and unity, “strategic essentialism,” and the suppression of the hybrid, the bi-cultural or the acculturated is understandable,⁸⁴ however, when one considers that notions of lost unities evoked images of a time when history itself was owned and authored by Indian peoples alone. Given the tireless historical efforts to bring about Aboriginal assimilation, it was perhaps the prerogative to determine one’s people as wholly ‘other’ that was of importance to some at this particular historical juncture, to focus on the contrastive as opposed to the substantive properties of Aboriginal cultural forms. It was partly this sense of natural affinities and primordial proclivities, which contrasted sharply with the so-called “civilized” stance of the “newcomers,” that allowed adherents to

84

It should be noted that manifestations of hybridity, moreover, necessarily changed with historical and socio-political circumstances. It is crucial to acknowledge hybridity, according to Shohat and Stam (1994:43), in all of its modalities: “colonial imposition, obligatory assimilation, political cooptation, cultural mimicry,...” as well as selective appropriation and so on.

symbolically create a sense of communal cohesion and solidarity -- a collective identity over which adherents alone retained ultimate authority. Ethnographers at this time too, were ideologically interested in transforming Aboriginality -- which was a temporal process -- into a form, but so as to create an *object of study*, instead of a *subject of difference*. Aboriginal media, it must be stressed served as a site for bringing all these conflicting discourses and competing voices together.

It is important to consider that re-configurations of the past, and investments in "traditionalism," by Aboriginal activists, were more about charting a path into the future than establishing an accurate or empirical historical record. Inscribing the past with Aboriginal authority, although it was a process rife with ambiguities, was a means of coming to terms with the disruptive tensions brought on by colonization, modernization and liberation. For, as Fred Plain the newly elected UOI President asserted in 1969:

We, the Indian people, know ourselves better than the most educated white man. We understand the basis of our fears and frustrations. We also know that we must be the masters of our own destiny (*Calumet* 31 October 1969).

Charting one's own way into the future in the contemporary Aboriginal universe required asserting some measure of control over collective imaginings of the past. Serving as a guest on the London area Aboriginal radio show, *Smoke Signals*, over twenty years later, Plain would reiterate this notion of directing one's own course into the future. He submits:

If they change the *Indian Act*, re-write it completely, and place in it instead of restrictive phraseology, they place in it phraseology that gives you more room to manoeuvre, is that self-sufficiency? Is that self-government?...I firmly believe...our only way of self-government is for us to go out and live it ourselves. We believe we're Aboriginals, then let's act like Aboriginals. We believe we have inherent rights, let's believe and act like we have inherent rights (on *Smoke Signals*, 15 August 1992).

Fred Plain concedes that this Indian legislation provides some protection for Native peoples, but clearly sets out the limits of its reach into the lives of Aboriginal individuals.

In 1971, after Native groups had unanimously rejected the abolishment of the *Indian Act*, the government formally retracted the policy. As a result of the consultation process, a political network had developed, as had numerous organs. *The Calumet* was eventually replaced by the *Ontario Indian* (1978-), and then, by *Sweetgrass* (1984-6) (Riggins 1983). During these years, Native cultural mediators became

increasingly adept at employing elements of the non-Native political and communications apparatuses to their own advantage. They were also actively engaged in articulating an alternative discursive formation -- an Aboriginal mediascape. As *Ontario Indian's* assistant editor, *Sweetgrass's* founding editor and contemporary writer, Lenore Keeshig-Tobias remarked, Native peoples were strategically deploying, among other devices, written English -- "a language which has been used as a weapon [against them] as a tool to empower" (6 February 1992). To Canadians, who had only recently become capable of acknowledging Aboriginal adeptness, and only because Indian people did the work of cultural translation for them, it appeared as though Aboriginal people were finally becoming Canadianized.

Ironically, it was the very process of cultural blending, which on the surface appeared to be a story about inevitable cultural homogenization or assimilation, that made collective assertions of Aboriginality, the social achievement of narratives of locality and thus decolonization, itself, possible. The principle sites of such blending -- Native political organizations, friendship centres and the emergent Aboriginal mediascape -- operated as megaphones, mediating Aboriginally preferred self-representations and self-renderings of Indian identity that were deeply engaged with the dominant historiography. For, as Appadurai asserts, it is the dialogue with the colonial past, not the simple dismantling of colonial habits and modes of life, that constitutes and enables decolonization (1996:89).

CHAPTER SEVEN

RED TAPED: NATIVE COMMUNICATIONS SOCIETIES AND COMMUNITY CASTING

This chapter inquires into the invention of Aboriginal radio and surveys the academic literature related to globalization and Native communications. It traces the development of Aboriginal broadcast policy and examines the contemporary funding structure for Native communications. Native media practices are contiguous with social action for Aboriginal rights. Aboriginal media practices are an important form of social agency and function as a means of achieving and of asserting political self-determination, self-styled modernity and cultural competence. Aboriginal communicators are narrowcasting and broadcasting to preserve and to enhance Aboriginal languages, to invigorate and to build on traditions, to create alliances and to engender political, historical and cultural enlightenment. The Aboriginal mediascape, therefore, has not been homogenized through Aboriginal exposure to such things as globally circulated communications content or mainstream modes of organizing a cultural industry. An investigation of the Native media discourse on community building reveals, instead, that spheres of cultural mediation serve as loci for the creation and re-creation of materials that compose Aboriginality and communality.

Technology as a Discourse and Native Narrowcasting

Contemporary academic approaches to Native communications generally stem from one of two broad philosophies of media. The first champions mass communicating as a macro-praxis and approaches Native media as a usually less than successful attempt to mimic the mainstream⁸⁵; the other acknowledges

85

In this category, I have collapsed into one, the two dominant tropes Faye Ginsburg (1993:560-1) has identified as “the Faustian contract” and “global village” models. The first describes the approach of those who view technology as polluting “pure cultures,” or as disauthenticating traditional values. The second represents McLuhan’s vision of a universalizing democracy occasioned by electronic inter-connections. As the former represents merely the “negative” aspects of the latter, which is a uniquely First World vision, I

the possibility of multiple non-derivative medias each with its own communications ideology and its own criterion for measuring value. Among the proponents of the first school of thought, there is a proclivity to view the media as operating everywhere extrinsically to society. On a global scale, therefore, "the" media represents simply the neutral means by which news and entertainment are transmitted. The second proposition, by contrast, demands that one approach the micro-discourses that diverse medias constitute as integral elements to community life -- as discourses that are often *productive* of sociality. Gerald Wilkinson⁸⁶ suggests, for instance, that creating alternative Native medias may serve to undermine the hegemony of mainstream media forms. He writes:

With the white man's perfection of the media comes the perfection of colonialism. His desire for control of our institutions in order to acquire our natural resources, and his desire to control our souls simply because we are different and pose a threat to him, will still be present. However, through efforts of our own, we can turn this around and make the media work for us. Technology is at the same time the handmaiden of colonialism and the promise of liberation (1974:30).

Rather than as competent to achieve emancipation through a variety of means, however, globalization theorists have tended to perceive non-first-world peoples who work in the medium of television, for example, as the undiscerning recipients of a technological package in which the form of the received technology somehow determines the processes and products that are producible given that technology. By way of example, Jean Baudrillard (1981) and Marshal McLuhan (1974) assert that televisual technologies, by virtue of their form and operation, are inherently dominating because they induce a particular set of social relations. Similarly inclined, Harold Innis (1951) insists that the imposition of Western technologies, including television, on to hunter gatherer societies alone was sufficient to cause the destruction of "traditional" ways of life. Both theories support the idea that the form of the technology itself is the operative agent of change.

Prior to being dismissed as a teleology of technological determinism, Marshall McLuhan's myth of

prefer to consider them as variations on the same theme.

86

In the 1970's, along with Anna Martin and Simon Ortiz, Gerald Wilkinson edited the Albuquerque New Mexico newspaper, *ABC (Americans Before Columbus)* which began publication in 1963.

the “global village” achieved a significant amount of critical acclaim. Theorists who subscribed to McLuhan’s prediction of a world psychically connected through a common communications network paid little attention to local or ethnographic evidence to the contrary. Globalization theorists tend to conflate the idea of the global diffusion of communications *technology* with a global diffusion of communications *ideology* (Appadurai 1996, Williams 1977). Though it is predominantly the *forms* of this technology, namely the TV cameras, televisions, radio receivers, satellites, and so forth, which flow from numerous cores, to numerous other cores and peripheries, scholars such as Innis (1950), McLuhan (1974), Ong (1982) and Meyrowitz (1985) assumed that set patterns in the social relations of both media production and consumption inadvertently accompanied these forms. Subsequent communications studies produced the confusing array of arguments which seemed to suggest the occurrence of a global homogenization of media apparatuses, owing to the diffusion of the tools associated with the technology of communications (Grosswiler 1998).

For a variety of reasons, there has been a general reluctance to address Indigenous communications technologies as one would other Aboriginal discursive formations.⁸⁷ One reason is that while they view hunting and gathering as “traditional” Aboriginal practices; there is a strong tradition among First World peoples to assume a proprietary relationship to such technological feats as television production -- particularly when the process is seen as indivisible from the product. Like syllabics, non-Natives view electronic technology as a “gift” to Aboriginal peoples. There is little consideration of the fact that Aboriginal social relations condition unique methods for deploying the media, thereby constituting a re-invention of the radio, television, and film form. The trail of artifacts is indeed easily traceable, flowing from center to margins. The specific modes or process by which Aboriginal media production occurs, however, are not so easily understood from afar. On this point, Ulf Hannerz’s observations are instructive. He contends that the First World has probably been a part of the consciousness of Third World peoples

87

Some noteworthy exceptions are: Ginsburg (1993, 1991), Kulchyski (1988), Meadows (1995), Michaels (1984, 1986, 1987), Ruby (1990), Turner (1991a, 1991b, 1992), Worth & Adair (1972a, 1972b).

much longer than the reverse:

If indeed there is often an idea that peripheral cultures come defenceless, unprepared to the encounter with metropolitan culture, that they are insufficiently organized and are taken by surprise, then this notion would frequently entail a measure of ignorance of the continuous historical development of center-periphery contacts (1997:109).

Following in the steps of James C. Scott (1985), Darnell points out that as a matter of necessity, members of minority groups are always much more motivated to understand their oppressors than the reverse (1993:12). This point is born out in the following example. In the 19th century, Ojibwe Methodist minister Peter Jones recounted a story of the first contact between the Anishinabek and Europeans (in Kohl 1860). According to Jones, upon hearing of the arrival of strangers to their territories, Ojibwe leaders held a council at which they decided to seek out the newcomers. After discovering the French traders who were encamped down the river, the Ojibwes initiated commercial relations, trading with them for metal axes and knives, guns, and other items which they quickly mastered and incorporated into their daily practices in ways which furthered their own goals (MacLeod 1992:11-13). Given this account of the active appropriation of European tools by Aboriginal peoples, the idea of a *recent*, or passive engagement of the periphery by the centre, therefore, might well be a consequence of the recentness of the First World's awakening to global realities, as Hannerz has suggested.

In spite of Aboriginal accounts to the contrary, there is a tendency in academic accounts concerning Native media to locate the impetus for Native media development in outside forces, for instance, in government actions which prompted Aboriginal media reactions⁸⁸ or in technological inventions which were simply accommodated by non-critical Aboriginal recipients (Granzberg 1982; Granzberg, Steinbring and Hamer 1977). These writings generally begin with reactions to the White Paper in 1969 or to some introduced technology and play up the recentness of Native peoples' engagement with electronic technologies, paying less attention to their historical involvement in wider projects of self-representation. It

88

The following accounts locate the impulse for Native media development in the allegedly unsolicited provisions made by the Canadian government to supply funds for Native political associations and communications societies (Raudsepp 1984, Rupert 1983, Smith and Brigham 1992).

does seem to be the case, however, that Native media development occurred as a result of an event-driven process. Such factors as: church policies regarding Native clergy, the rise of Aboriginal agricultural production, the signing of treaties, the institutionalization of residential schooling, and the rise of Native political organizations have all borne significantly on the emergence of Aboriginal mass communications. In the previous sections I have presented evidence which suggests that organized efforts to amplify Native voices through the newspaper medium, and thus to stage modernity, however, were initiated by Native peoples themselves, and began long before the 1960s.

Notwithstanding my own findings, notions of a non-differentiated worldwide trajectory of “progress” -- a discursive residue of colonial times -- continue to inflect current modernist⁸⁹ constructions of Native identity. The concept of a customary Native technological deficiency, for instance, enjoys a cogent contemporary existential reality. Portrayed as having arrived at the table relatively late in the process of technological progress, and as having failed to transcend their histories and localities, Indian mass mediators are often made to appear less than modern, or as insufficiently reflective or objective.⁹⁰ Conversely, highlighting the “modernity” of the Aboriginal mass media is also employed as a means of

89

I would distinguish my use of the term “modernist,” from that of “modernity.” The former designates a trans-disciplinary school of thought which is theoretically orientated to the fixing of categories and structures for analytic purposes. The latter refers to the practice of relating to contemporary inter-cultural realities — a process which is inherently complex and contradictory. The latter is therefore more likely to generate obstacles to, rather than to facilitate, the drawing of neat symbolic and practical boundaries around entities such as cultures, locales and nations.

90

Upon examining so-called “professional” journalistic practices for which the electronic technologies serve as a principle vehicle of dissemination, however it is plain to see that storytelling genres are deeply embedded in the socio-cosmological beliefs and politico-historical habits of the mainstream. “Traditional journalism,” for example, uses particular formal conventions for storytelling which tend to situate urban areas at the center and remote communities at the periphery, which champion the majority often at the expense of minorities, which privilege the immediate over the long-term, the abnormal over than the commonplace, and the individual over the community. It is a storytelling genre, moreover, which communicates a tremendous disdain for contextual and historical information, which betrays an interest in the spacial versus the cultural or temporal and which encourages almost an obsessive compulsion to seek out short, simple and palatable explanations which permit more distance to be covered albeit at less depth (Buddle-Crowe 1998).

disauthenticating the distinctness of Native media products and practices. Images of “traditional” Indian cultures as bounded coherent wholes, as fields of shared meaning, as timeless signs of traditional periphery, and as the present incarnations of some unalterable transhistorical essence, appeal to modernist sensibilities which are by definition more comfortable with putative order. Contemporary Aboriginality, however, is defiantly heteroglossic and complex.

The consequences of modernist codifications, however, are that “authentic Indians” are assumed to be naturally disinclined to live in cities, to speak English, to be filmed or recorded and are either disinterested or simply inept at filming and/or recording both themselves and cultural Others. By way of response, other scholars have asserted that Aboriginal English, for example, far from being the less than competent rendition of the language and the mark of culture loss it is often assumed to be, generally requires significant cultural translation before it is understandable by the general public. Darnell, for instance, writes:

Lack of comprehension of the distinctiveness, both linguistic in the narrow sense, and sociolinguistic in the broader one, of English spoken by First Nations peoples is at the root of much of the mutual solitudes of Native and white in Canada (1992:91).

The same might be said of Aboriginal presses, and Native radio and television. There is nothing intrinsically Euro-Canadian to these media, nor is there necessarily a transparency to the products produced through them. “Television,” according to Lyons, “...will bend to fit the cultural circumstances in which it is received, even while it is creating those circumstances” (1990:425). Media practices, therefore, as well as newspapers, films, videos and radio must be viewed as cultural products.

Despite the above interventions, when Native people employ forms of so-called “modern technology” like the English language or communications media, they continue to be charged with having indefensibly defiled their once pristine stasis, with promiscuously integrating Euro-Canadian cultural traits and producing inauthentic amalgams⁹¹. They are accused of being opportunistic traitors to their own

91

In the Delgamuukw land claims case, for example, Justice Allan McEachern ruled in 1991 that the Gitksan and Wet’suwet’en had extinguished Aboriginal title to their lands. McEachern claimed that eating

peoples and Canadians alike, especially where their technological borrowings render them competitive with Euro-Canadian commercial interests.⁹² Urban Indian peoples, who today make up the majority of the Aboriginal population in Canada, are especially vulnerable to such characterizations. They are often viewed as having voluntarily shed the trappings of their traditional antecedents in favour of the modern conveniences associated with the "white world," and are subsequently chastised when they insist on being treated differently from Canadians.⁹³

Prior to recent revisions of our modernist concepts of culture, moreover, it was fairly easy to discount the important historical roles played by such agents of cultural translation or such mediative figures as Native priests, farmers and journalists. These individuals, however, continue to be charged by non-Native as well as some Aboriginal people, with having uncritically adopted mainstream practices and sensibilities, and with having dispensed with any capacity for "real Indianness." The common propensity to essentialize cultural differences leads outsiders to apperceive Native cultures as relics of primitivism, lacking by nature the very capacities for complexity demanded of modernity. The tendency to essentialize media ideology, moreover, leads to the mis-recognition of a "global village," which as Ien Ang rejoins, is simply the story of the re-making of the non-Western other, and nothing other than the idea of "the universal

pizza and wearing blue jeans constituted enough of a break with the "aboriginal" past to render modern Native peoples non-distinct from the rest of Canadians.

92

Commercial fishing boats belonging to Burnt Church reserve residents in Nova Scotia, and Cape Croker Residents in Ontario have been vandalized by irate non-Native fishermen, who insist that Aboriginal fishers are unfairly advantaged.

93

The academic literature related to Indian urbanization in Canadian cities details the downward spiral to despair that is alleged to mark most efforts to leave the more "traditional" reserve context (Davis 1965, Denton 1972, Dosman 1972, Kerri 1978, Krotz 1980). A newspaper article entitled, "What other group of squatters would be so well-treated?" charges that urban Native peoples ought not to be the recipients of any "special treatment" (*Toronto Sun*, 6 January 1995). And, in response to a Native protest which held up a major Toronto thoroughfare, an article entitled "Let's Treat Natives Like Any Other Canadians," asserts that the solution to Native unemployment in cities is to "shut down Indian affairs, make native peoples full and equal citizens with all the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Start a process that should have begun a century ago" (*Toronto Sun*, 20 June 1999).

culmination of capitalist modernity" (1994:195).

In the realm of communications, essentialization -- the notion that Native communities are relatively undifferentiated fields -- often entails that Aboriginal media practices and products, for example, are assumed to involve community-wide participation, and to reflect abstract social processes or societal values. Failing to interrogate the specific circumstances of Native media production, moreover, often results with analytical attention being directed toward the artifacts or *tools*, rather than to the *strategies* of Native communication. It is crucial to appreciate that while they are created in particular social and historical, or cultural contexts Aboriginal mass mediations are also informed by the attempts of positioned active *individuals* to make sense of the real-life situations in which they find themselves. Indeed, the absence of a singular Aboriginal televisual genre, or one conventionalized system of organization for Native production crews suggests that Native communicators are capable of creating defiantly hybrid and idiosyncratic production processes and media products, often fusing selected features of local "tradition" with outside elements in unexpected ways.

Despite the multitude of forms these Aboriginal performances of modernity take however, mainstream media development continues to be held up as the yardstick against which Aboriginal communicative "progress" is measured, and accounts of Native media development attend generally to the introduction of European technologies of inscription -- to alphabetic and electronic literacy. The presence or absence of a European approved language and form of writing, of mechanized print instruments, and later of electronic signal transmitters, have been the main criteria employed in the external assessment of Native communications capacities.

These evaluations of Aboriginal technological evolution are generally made without considering the type of evidence I presented earlier, which suggests that throughout the nineteenth century, individual Aboriginal mass mediators were actively at work orchestrating images of Indianness through agricultural exhibits and fairs, selectively engaging mainstream presses and museums in projects of their own making, creating Native presses, authoring books, and later self-representing via Native political organizations,

friendship centres, and communications societies.

The reluctance to accept the complexity of Aboriginal identities, moreover, prompts proponents of such theories to locate the solution to the “homogenization problem” in protection, isolation and other strategies associated with the rejection of “modern” technologies and technological cleansing.⁹⁴ For technological determinists, television, much like the motorized vehicle, the English language (and by extension store bought clothing and foods), levels or homogenizes everything and everyone it comes into contact with⁹⁵. And, as Barbara Abou-El-Haj submits:

The predicted scenarios, for a homogenized or corrupt global culture, look like contemporary and deceptively milder versions of their colonial predecessor, the quasi-scientific theory of vanishing races incapable of competing with European civilization, doomed to extinction, which justified efforts to assimilate or remove and finally to annihilate indigenous peoples (1997:139).

Homogenization theories paint communications technology as a virtually inescapable force that propels hapless victims forward into an undifferentiated modernity. This inevitably results in massive subordination, the production of standardized goods for a global market — conditions which are inherently destructive of local traditions. From this perspective, therefore, participation in mass mediation entrains a whole scale annihilation of “otherness.”

From the vantage point of the centre — the site of the development of the hypothesis of homogenization — with a seemingly one-way flow of “technology” from core to periphery, Third and Fourth world cultures represent mere receptacles or “dumping sites” for First world programming products and practices (Hannerz 1997:107-8). Despite the fact that Aboriginal television often involves such strategies as recasting the English language and re-directing “traditional” information corridors homogenization theorists presuppose that such communications technologies operate simply as assimilative

94

Some environmentalists have sought to discredit the seal and whale hunts pointing to the use of “modern” technologies such as traps, skidoos and motor boats which they argue invalidate the Aboriginal hunters’ claims that these are “traditional” activities (see Wenzel 1991, Erikson 1999).

95

See Jerry Mander’s *In the Absence of the Sacred* (1991) for an example of this thinking.

social formations, the effects of which Aboriginal peoples are powerless to resist. Rosemary Kuptana, former President of the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation and the Inuit Tapirisat, carefully distinguishes between television form and content. When southern television was first beamed into Inuit communities without their prior consent, Kuptana, speaking at a CRTC hearing in 1982, charged that:

We might liken the onslaught of southern television and the absence of native television to the neutron bomb. This is the bomb that kills the people but leaves the buildings standing. Neutron bomb television is the kind of television that destroys the soul of a people but leaves the shell of a people walking around. This is television in which the traditions, the skill, the culture, the language count for nothing (cited in Brisebois 1983:107).

Gary Farmer once insisted that because mainstream content presents a warped sense of reality, television represents “the modern assimilator, replacing the old methods of residential schools, churches, and governments, which were once the primary agents of socialization among indigenous people” (1994:63).

Kuptana and Farmer, however, are strong advocates of Aboriginally controlled television. Kuptana was involved in the development of Television Northern Canada (TVNC), the Inuvialuit Communication Society, and in general broadcasting policy in Canada. She recently offered an intervention at the CRTC broadcast licence application hearing for the national Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) by TVNC. Aboriginal television, she proposes, has become a crucial form of Inuit cultural production:

Our Aboriginal communications societies are still young compared to this country and considering our history with Canada, but they proved to our elders that their ideas work. The technology may be new but the message is still very old, spoken down to us from our elders. We have produced programs that strengthen and revitalize our cultures, our languages, our history. They tell us who we are and to be proud of where we are going as a people. But it has not always been a happy journey. The generational breakdown between young and old was made worse by the arrival of television and radio. I find it ironic that those same technologies are pulling us back together (13 November 1998).

Cayuga media activist and actor Gary Farmer contends that creating alternative Native medias may serve to undermine the hegemony of mainstream media forms. He submits:

Whether we produce film, or whether we produce radio, or whether we produce stories that are being read in our daily newspapers, whether we do shows like this for public access television; it's all part of the same notion of taking control of our songs, of our images. And we determine what the audience will see and what they won't see. And we've never had that kind of control before. And to me, I don't understand how we can self-govern ourselves until we take control of our electronic media, until we take control of the images that reflect our reality (20 December 1996).

According to Kuptana and Farmer therefore, what is at issue is Aboriginal *control* over the management of mass communicated information. Rather than with the qualities that are alleged to inhere in the technology itself; these Aboriginal media activists are concerned with who controls the content and distribution of information and thus with the ways the technology can be employed to liberate and empower, or to oppress, Indian peoples. Depending on who manages the airwaves in Aboriginal communities, then, the media may represent the handmaiden of assimilation or the harbinger of differentiation and redemption.

Several anthropological studies suggest as a counterpoint to the globalization argument that there is nothing inherently transformative in the technology. Feit (1973), Tanner (1979), Ridington (1982), Rushforth (1994) and Wenzel (1991), for example, have drawn attention to the idea of technology as embedded in such factors as hunting techniques and socio-cosmological articulations, that is, the “artifice,” rather than the “artifacts,” of Northern Cree and Dene hunting strategies, such that we can no longer equate Cree and Dene hunting practices with those of non-Native sports hunters, for instance, for the simple fact that they employ the shotgun towards a similar end. Why, one might ask, should shooting a camera pose any less of a theoretical problem than the gun? Art historian John Tagg suggests that the social processes associated with photography are not given in the technology, but constitute a “discursive formation” which has to be negotiated in and across other discursive fields. He writes:

A technology has no inherent value outside its mobilizations in specific discourses, practices, institutions and relations of power. Import and status have to be produced and effectively institutionalized and such institutionalizations do not describe a unified field or the working out of some essential causality. Even as they interlink in more or less extended chains, they are negotiated locally and discontinuously and are productive of value and meaning (1997:158-159).

Scholars subscribing to this view would insist that such variables as social relations, historical and political circumstances and government policies condition the way in which media as well as such technologies as the English language (Darnell 1993) will be used by Indigenous peoples and others. From this theoretical position, therefore, it is possible to imagine cultural diversity as *intensifying*, rather than diminishing, as a result of the globalization of communications. Appadurai (1996) underscores this idea when he characterizes mediascapes as arenas where different narratives intersect. We might therefore think of an

Aboriginal mediascape as providing the context for Aboriginal versions of modern Indigenes, to dialogically interact with official and global versions of both Aboriginality and modernity. Aboriginal media thus powerfully refutes the postmodernist assumption that a system of social control and power is inherent in mass media (Meadows 1995:206-7), and that socio-cosmological conformity naturally accompanies English language diffusion.

It is crucial to understand that the configurations of Indigenes are created, rather than simply traded, by Indian peoples through Native media. On this score, Appadurai's work is useful. He suggests that while electronic media may be a globalized feature of modernity, rather than becoming increasingly similar people are imagining and articulating increasingly differentiated lives, by employing media to "annex the global into their own practices of the modern" (1996:4). That a global diffusion or circulation of symbolic products exists cannot be denied. Thompson asserts, however, that the appropriation of media products is always a local phenomenon in that it involves individuals situated in particular socio-historical contexts, who make sense of them using the resources at their disposal. He submits that the localized character of appropriation has not been eliminated by the globalization of communication, but remains instead inherently contextual and hermeneutic (1995:174). That Aboriginal people who are involved in local and national Native medias are selectively fashioning modern media technologies not simply to represent, but to reinterpret and revindicate "traditional" Aboriginality, would support Castillo and Nigh's (1998:44) thesis, moreover, that the processes of globalization can result in the parallel processes of "localization."

In Aboriginal communities in Canada, media technologies have been used much in the same ways as have tribal cultural centres/museums (Erikson 1999), as part of a generally subversive strategy which helps to articulate rather than to destroy multiple (changing, situationally and historically contingent) versions of Aboriginality. In some instances, radio has been used in conjunction with museum projects. Kevin Lewis of the National Museum of the American Indian is conducting a radio project in partnership with Canadian Native radio broadcasters on the subject of Aboriginal versions of time, for which he

interviews Native people throughout Canada and the US then edits and simultaneously broadcasts and webcasts the results. Copies of the interviews will also be filed in the museum's archives. Native communicators in regions throughout the country are asserting through Native media that contemporary Aboriginality is very much a question of creatively negotiating and balancing persistence with innovation in the midst of dramatic social change, and local with national configurations of community amidst increasingly differentiated cultural places and incrementally mobile Aboriginal populations.

Native newspapers, radio and television have been employed as means and modes of political self-determination, self-styled modernity and cultural competence. The particular ways Native radio networks, for instance, have been managed are not necessarily derivative of mainstream models, but reflect local and regional Aboriginal concerns. Meadows (1995:208) submits that it is the "process of production which ensures indigenous media programs emerge from -- and are thus part of -- the social structure of the community." Aboriginal presses, radio, film and television are critical cultural resources which do not represent simply a difference in the *use* of neutral technologies -- they constitute identifiably different *technological inventions*. What is significant for anthropological consideration here, therefore, is not that Indian peoples are culturally mediating Aboriginality electronically, but rather that they are selectively configuring the means of cultural mediation to serve the interests of Aboriginal modernities. The unique configurations, or discursive formations that come about as a result of negotiating their own needs with media technologies, broadcast policies and Indian legislation is what renders Native newspapers, video, film and radio distinctly Indigenous.

Anthropologists in particular have insisted for some time that Indigenous peoples do not passively receive Western cultural products nor technologies but rather actively seek, select and interpret introduced technologies, practices and messages. Throughout the 19th century, many Aboriginal peoples successfully resisted assimilation by critically assessing missionary, settler and government discourses. Aboriginal peoples played the various denominational discourses against each other, pointed out the lack of consensus among government departments and the lack of consistency in settler discourse -- they deconstructed and

redeployed the very weapons that were designed to destroy what was distinctive in Aboriginal cultures. These proved to be potent political techniques for asserting the national and international solidarity of Indigenous peoples in some situations, and local or cultural differentiation in others. Today, Native peoples are employing media technologies to extend contemporary relevance to these culturally constituted political, spiritual and historical debates.

Several attempts have been made to approach Native media anthropologically. In the late 1960's, anthropologists Sol Worth and John Adair were interested in whether the Whorf hypothesis could be applied to Navaho filmic narratives. Although they were more concerned with the film text than in the social relations or political circumstances of its production; they sought to establish that culture groups express the fundamentally different ways they perceive the world in their art and performances (Worth & Adair 1972b). Their findings indicate that when supplied with cameras, Navaho people composed different shots and scenes, and therefore spoke a different filmic language than did untrained non-Navaho filmmakers. According to Bredin, their study locates a distinctive Navajo filmic language in such elements as:

...a narrative style similar to traditional storytelling modes, a unique syntactic and sequential organization, a reliance on cultural and perceptual taboos (such as those against direct eye contact), and an apparent relation between verbal and visual language structures (1993:309).

In combination with other filmic focuses, such aesthetic preferences for rendering a story on film contribute to the production of media products which often bear little resemblance to mainstream cinematic models. Mainstream movies are generally held up as the models for the way films ought *to look*. Despite the connections they drew between Navajo visual and verbal languages however, Worth and Adair's study offered little by way of analysis regarding how we assume films ought *to be made* -- for instance, concerning relationships between the members of film crews. Six Nations born Mohawk filmmaker Michael Doxtater⁹⁶ offers his thoughts on a contemporary variation on this theme. He claims that

96

Doxtater spoke at the Doshowe 5th Annual Native American Film & Video Festival, held at Erie Community College Buffalo, New York from November 21-26, 1996.

Aboriginal films approach storytelling in ways that reflect commonly held socio-cosmological beliefs. He locates the principle difference between Aboriginal and mainstream films in the introductory footage. In Native films, he says, the beginning of the film represents a meditative and reflective place and functions as does the Thanksgiving Address at Iroquoian ceremonies, to "bring minds together as one." He calls this highly symbolic initial imagery "Indian Foreplay:"

Whereas the classical non-Indian story structure is three parts...ours is four parts. Why? Because things happen to us in fours. You know...the four directions; the four celestial beings - the Moon, the Sun, the Thunderers, and the Guardians; the four ages - before the Peacemaker, the Peacemakers era, this modern era and then a new era that's coming. We move in fours. So, so do our stories. We've got this Indian Foreplay at the start, that makes our storytelling (23 November 1996).

While Doxtater's comments would support the thesis that a connection may indeed exist between *Iroquoian* filmic languages, ceremonial narratives and perceptual practices; his theory is perhaps best understood as a *reading* of several Native films from a Mohawk perspective, rather than as an intertribally shared or pan-Indian practice of filmmaking.⁹⁷

Eric Michael's work among Australian Aborigines suggests that the existence of meta-media practices and products among Indigenous peoples is highly unlikely. He contends, rather, that media practices are localized and indigenized by neophyte Walpiri videographers. He posits that the narratives they inscribe on tape represent an extension of Walpiri oral traditions into electronic media and respect patrilineal rights to stories and restrictions on speaking about the dead (1986:62-63). Looking at the unique ways Walpiri videos were distributed -- the information trajectory -- as well as their content, Michaels asserts that social controls regarding information ownership and exchange among the Walpiri Aborigine

97

Doxtater's thesis is consistent with my findings regarding the Native radio show *Smoke Signals*, which is broadcast over the University of Western Ontario radio station each week and hosted by Dan and Mary Lou Smoke (see Buddle 1993). The structure of Dan (Seneca) and Mary Lou's (Ojibwe) show clearly reflects the Iroquoian ceremonial framework. Each week, the Smokes begin their show with greetings in several local Native languages, a teaching along the lines of a Thanksgiving Address, which is recited in English by a local elder. The opening music, prayer, and greetings and teaching function as transitional devices to "bring minds together as one." Michael Foster points out, this "joining of minds" enables and ensures the safe passage of messages (1988:30).

population contribute to fundamentally different communications practices and products. He writes:

The Aboriginal societies I encounter in Australia provide no models for progressive global villages. To the contrary, a future modelled on their information management systems would more closely resemble a vast gerontocratic bureaucracy than a hippie commune writ large (1986:510).

Michales' work supports the thesis that social relations condition media uses rather than the reverse.

When television was first introduced in Indigenous communities, for the Inuit according to Kulchynski (1989), and the northern Saulteaux and Cree of Manitoba according to Granzberg, Steinbring and Hamer (1977), it was the Western fictional genre which did not translate well cross-culturally, rather than video or film technologies per se. Granzberg, who spent several years studying the effects of television in northern Manitoba Native communities, insists that Saulteaux and Cree communities in the Norway house region of northern Manitoba responded to the introduction of television in the early 1970s much as they had to other elements of Euro-Canadian culture, by selectively appropriating and indigenizing media technologies in ways which built upon existing socio-cosmological beliefs, narrative genres and information gathering and sharing practices. Northern Crees related the transportational capacities of television, for example, to dreaming and to storytelling. They initially referred to the television as "koosobachigan," the Cree term by which the shaking tent, was known (1977:155). Despite their ability to integrate the mechanics of televisual technology, however, he submits, "there are no sheer entertainment, fantasy stories as opposed to practical, educational stories; stories always do both things at once. Thus again there is no precedent and no preparation for the concept of sheer entertainment, fantasy, and fiction" (Granzberg 1982:50).

Kulchinsky notes a similar tendency among Inuit viewers who initially preferred to employ film equipment to foster a realistic experience, rather than a fictionalized narrative of a hunt. The first films produced by the Inuit documented such events as the seal hunt in real time, employing natural eye-sight like shots, with no zooming or camera movement and little or no editing (1989).⁹⁸

98

The first anthropologists to make ethnographic films (or visual anthropologists) employed similar film making techniques. Ruby submits:

That the messages are always more significant than the form in which they are delivered or the practices by which they are gathered in Native communities, however, is not quite always so clear cut.

Granzberg, Steinbring and Hamer note for instance, that:

It would seem that the vociferous negative comments about TV are made by the most traditional Cree...They refuse to allow their children to watch TV in part because they believe that, since communication across great distances and the bringing of news is the business of the shaman which is able to defend himself against the spirits and evil conjurers, children are not equally safe from the evil consequences of TV (1977:155-156).

Apparently, the medium of television itself was viewed by some as a threat, for the reason that it appropriated the role of information disseminator -- a social role to which the shaman alone was entitled. It would appear, however, that more is at issue here than what meets the eye, for elsewhere, Granzberg notes that it was the "older," as opposed to the "traditional" people who spoke negatively "even bitterly about television complaining how it corrupts the young" (1980). It is reasonable to assume that elders in the community would lose some of their power to younger community members, who were more comfortable with the English language, and who were more likely to turn to their contemporaries for authoritative readings of the televised texts.

As the repositories and transmitters of traditional cultural knowledge, however, there was little in the mainstream broadcasts to challenge elders' authority. Television did not interrupt those community conventions for what was speakable and unspeakable to whom and in which contexts concerning traditional knowledge. In a gerontocratic society where the elders retain control over the management of traditional and spiritual information, Michaels suggests:

Hollywood and other imported videos [may well be] less culturally damaging than more culturally proximate programming...Thus the paradox. Hollywood's very level of generality and

Some anthropologists believe that only footage shot at eye level with a minimum of camera movement and with real-time coverage of the event are scientifically usable. Strategies appropriate to fiction were believed to create barriers between anthropologists and film professionals. These naive assumptions about the differences between the art of film and the science of anthropology are slowly being replaced by a conception of film as a culturally bound communication usable in a variety of discourses (1996:1347).

The repertoire of Inuit video and film making techniques has enlarged considerably over time.

decontextualisation is less threatening to locality-based, traditional communities who speak their own language than is the national broadcasting of Aboriginal information (in O'Regan 1990:74).

The content therefore, does not always necessarily overshadow the conditions of its creation and dissemination. This is certainly the case in Duke Redbird's⁹⁹ interpretation of the televisual form, and why he personally, has little difficulty with the media. For him, the form of television is consistent with an Aboriginal view of time. He submits that whereas the Western European understanding of time is film like in the way it consists of a linear series of still pictures which gives the impression of movement;

...There is no movement in film. With television on the other hand, we have movement that is happening all the time. If you look closely at a television screen you'll see the light is happening and moving all the time, but it gives the appearance of stillness...So you have the Western European film perspective...which gives the appearance of movement...you have the North American Indian experience which is movement all the time which gives the appearance of stillness...When the Western Europeans first came to North America and they looked at the Native world, they said, "Well, there's no progress here. There's nothing happening. We don't see a series of still pictures called historical events that we can run through a linear way and see some progress." What they were experiencing was a very high definition, linear view of time that they brought from Western Europe (on *Urbanative*¹⁰⁰ 12 March 2001).

Aboriginal peoples on the other hand, he suggests, approached time in a televisual way and "progressively" approached their own unique notions of a tradition infused modernity.

Among the northern Cree, who may speak about what matters is as important as what might be uttered. The notion of a "free press," or an independent flow of information, does not always necessarily rest easily in Native communities. Morrisseau notes that Native politicians are sometimes inclined to see the press as challenging their authority (5 May 1998). By controlling the allocation of advertising dollars, he contends, they can control which newspapers survive and which do not (ibid). Even within some communities, residents may resent articles written on matters they feel are best left unaddressed. When Gib

99

Redbird, renown poet, journalist, artist and club owner is currently employed as a videographer for City TV's television news in Toronto.

100

Urbanative is a Native radio show broadcast from the University of Toronto radio station, CIUT, 89.5 FM, and webcast internationally by way of satellite. Contributing producer and co-host, Andre Morrisseau along with guest, Keevin Lewis conducted the interview with Duke Redbird for the National Museum of the American Indian radio project.

Oskaboosche began writing articles for *The Native Perspective* newspaper about his horrific experiences at the residential school in Garden River, Ontario he received a barrage of letters from outraged Christians in his community, who insisted such matters were best left un-disclosed. According to Linda Powless, editor of one of the two Six Nations newspapers *Turtle Island News*, moreover, one Native journalist had her house burnt down, while another was ostracized from her community for articles they published (20 November 2000 on *Aboriginal Voices*, APTN).

This is not to say however, that many Aboriginal people are not willing to experiment with the form in which their messages are broadcast or that community members are not receptive to their innovations. *Buffalo Tracks* is a variety talk show originally shot at the Brantford Cultural Centre on the Six Nations Reserve and broadcast nationally via the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network. As Turner has noted for the Kayapo of Brazil, the makers of *Buffalo Tracks* self-consciously represent Aboriginal camera persons filming the show. The idea Turner says, is not merely to record the show, but to “to be seen and recorded in the act of doing so...” (1991b:70). Tape of Aboriginal camerapersons shooting serves as a record of the process of “defining, constructing and objectifying a conscious representation of this culture” (1991b:71). It highlights the fundamental point that the social practices of Aboriginal media production have a significant bearing on the meaning of the final product.

Co-hosts of the show Evan Adams and Santee Smith discuss the fine line between the public and private domains of Aboriginal knowledge. When you bridge the traditional with the contemporary, according to Santee:

...You always run the risk of maybe offending somebody...as a performer or performing artist, you have to be careful of what you take to the stage. And that's always the issue when you're creating something. You have to think there's a fine line between showing too much because so much of our culture is sacred and is for ourselves (11 November 2000).

Santee explains that it is possible to take such forms of Aboriginal knowledge and information as dances, songs and stories which may be considered private or sacred -- for families, clans or nations alone -- and present them to the public:

If you want to talk about something or show something, you have to de-contextualize it and bring it

to the stage, and then, it becomes a ceremony for yourself. For a lot of performers...the stage is sacred (*Buffalo Tracks* 11 November 2000).

Despite the medium through which they are expressed, therefore, there is a continuity to Aboriginal cultural sensibilities regarding sacredness. Aboriginality is performed in this way to new collectivities, in the form of an individual interpretation of tradition. In addition to broadcasting the show, *Buffalo Tracks* is performed in front of a small live audience. This allows for what Scollon and Scollon refer to as nonfocussed (face to face) as well as focussed (distanced, in this case televised) communication (1984:182). The audience's interaction with the hosts and guests throughout the production of the show underlines the primacy of the value in Aboriginal storytelling performances, of preserving one's individual right to make sense of, or negotiate meaning (ibid). Because the televised versions are often watched in groups and negotiated in discussions with others, however, the broadcast version does not necessarily unilaterally enforce one way of making sense, as Scollon and Scollon have suggested (1984: 183). By elaborating on conventional storytelling genres and innovating traditions in this context, performers on *Buffalo Tracks* are connecting the past with the present and the future by simultaneously remembering and creating Aboriginal versions of Native reality.

For Lisa Meeches, producer and co-host of the television show *Sharing Circle*, honouring traditional knowledge and its carriers is the operative principle at work behind the show:

We're spiritually guided. We have four elders who work on the show. One is Cree, Ojibwe, Blood, and Dakota. So the four larger tribes in this area [southern Manitoba] and in Alberta. So we are spiritually guided. We get advice from our elders. When we're feeling bad, or when we need to talk about, whether it's gangs, or violence -- issues which are very touchy to the people, and people are scared to talk about, we bring the elders in to talk about it for us. They're on our payroll, and work whenever we need them (9 December 1997).

Such neo-traditional elders as Dave Courchene, who is one of the advisors to the show, and a former president of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, have made mass mediating spiritual messages a modern tradition.

Inuit television also powerfully refutes the assumption that the medium is inherently hegemonic. According to Madden, the Inuit news and information television show, *Qagik*, for example, promotes the

Inuit value of “personal autonomy through sharing information in cooperative, non-combative, consensus-building ways” (1992:143). Madden explains that the nature and number of questions reporters ask, the minimalized depiction of reporters on camera, and the lack of interruptions when interviewees are expressing their viewpoints effectively grant the interviewee as much authority over the story as the reporter. This style also permits viewers more leeway in terms of interpreting the story for themselves (1992:141). To assert Inuit authority over the medium, therefore, is to place authority under erasure -- to relinquish control by refusing to exercise authority over others.

Globalization theorists who support a thesis of cultural imperialism through the media have a conception of cultural phenomena which is fundamentally flawed. As I have suggested in earlier sections, Aboriginal communities do not reflect the pure, pre-contact, social forms that the hermetically sealed notion of “an Aboriginal culture” supports. The First Nations, like all other modern culture groups, represent to varying degrees, hybrid cultural forms. Just as hunters and gathers quickly adapted and incorporated such technologies as guns into their hunting practices, farming into their subsistence practices and syllabic and alphabetic literacies into their communicative practices they have also selectively adapted and incorporated the video or film camera in equally appropriate manners. Thanks to Joe Mercredi and John Nichols, who invented software which permits the use of syllabic characters on regular computers and printers, moreover, the syllabically literate are now able to employ computers to build on such earlier incorporated communicative forms as syllabics (Murdoch 1985:11).

At a CRTC hearing held in the winter of 2000, which resulted in the licensing of the first Aboriginal radio station for the Toronto area (JUMP FM), Chief Gary Williams of the Ontario Curve Lake reserve remarked that because Indian peoples have been able to incorporate electronic tele-communications media into their lives in uniquely Aboriginal ways, they have little difficulty in thinking of the airwaves as an Aboriginally manageable resource, just as the lumber, fish, animals, minerals and land are managed. He submits:

I can remember the first telephone, the first TV, and our first car. So, when you look at the experiences that I have had or that First Nations people have had and have had to progress at such

a rapid pace, I think, you know, it shows our flexibility and our resourcefulness...Also, the point I'm stressing is that we are now just starting to have the opportunities to have our histories told as it was in days gone by. We are an oral culture, we are an oral people. We have always passed our stories of history, culture and spirituality down through the spoken word. Talking, showing, but more importantly listening was the way we learned. We have always been a people willing to share, for this is what we were told by our Elders, through those oral teachings. Now more than ever there is a need for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to understand exactly who are the First People of this country and what are we really about (8 February 2000).

Williams reasoned that radio was the ideal medium with which to educate Native and non-Native peoples alike as to Aboriginal matters. At the same hearing Alanis Obomsawin asserted the centrality of broadcasting in Native community life. She insists that Aboriginal radio service is not simply a means for transmitting news and entertainment, but is essential to urban Aboriginal cultural and political expression and community interaction. She asserts:

I think if we look at our experience with the radio stations in the Indian communities and reservations and Metis communities, the fact that they did acquire a radio station has changed their lives, not just in communicating with the people but for information, for the language that is being spoken at the local station, for the social meetings for people. You go into a reserve, you go into a community, and all the houses have that radio station on....So a radio station here, for me, is not a luxury. It is going to be very good for our people, but also the teaching that it will do for the rest of the country I think is very important (31 January 00).

To understand the contemporary significance of radio as a cultural product in Native communities, it is instructive to consider how Aboriginal peoples have altered the form of radio over the years.

Aboriginal Radio Activity

Viewed solely as a tool, radio is nothing more than electronic equipment comprising switches, wires, and a tower. The essence of radio, however, is people. It is people who own the license to broadcast, and who mold the useful purpose of a native radio station. It is people who work the equipment and who give native radio personality (Cook and Orozco 1994:62).

Although invented in 1906, radio was not commonly available in Canada until the mid to late 1930s. British Columbia, for instance, began to receive radio service in 1936 when the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation established the first public radio station in Vancouver, and subsequent stations in Victoria, Prince George and Prince Rupert (Seberich 1996:3-5). With the sale of post World War II surplus goods, radios became available to communities all along the coast. Many of the Native World War

Veterans had acquired skills in radio technologies, most notably the “Code Talkers” who had served in the radio corps. That coastal peoples did not reject electronic media as a threat to traditions, nor dismiss it as mere modern “luxury,” is evinced by the overwhelming response to *The Native Voice*’s initial advertisements for radio telephones and radios as early as 1947. Aboriginal fishermen quickly calculated the practical benefits of creating reliable boat to boat and boat to shore communication channels. According to Seberich, by the 1960’s, wireless and two-way radio were routinely adapted for use on Native fishing boats; and virtually every boat used sideband channels to communicate with other fishers as well as to maintain contact with home ports (1996:3).

In some coastal and many northern communities, where it was not possible to subscribe to a daily newspaper, apart from personal communications, radio became the main means of inter-community communications, and the only regular source of news from the outside world. It was virtually impossible, moreover, for Indian agents or priests to monitor all radio conversations. Aboriginal communities, therefore, immediately innovated novel uses for the medium. According to Seberich, radios were quite useful for both gathering and sharing information regarding secret intertribal potlatches. Often, the information acquired from radio conversations would be shared within communities when they gathered for Christian masses. Radio use thus figured prominently in communicative strategies designed to contravene the Potlach Act (1996:3). In the far north, many hunters consider radio basic equipment -- taking it with them on the land has become tradition (Hudson 1977:137).

Despite designing novel uses for high frequency radios, however, Native people found little work as broadcast radio producers, journalists or disc jockeys in the 1940’s and 50’s. They were invited to read, but not to write radio texts. To its credit, the CBC was the first network to incorporate First Nations’ topics into its broadcasts. In 1944 the CBC broadcasted the five-part documentary “The Thunderbird Speaks,” and twenty years later, followed up with a national weekly show “Indian Magazine”¹⁰¹ which became “Our

101

The February 1970 issue of *The Calumet* features a picture of the Indian Magazine’s host. The caption reads: “The voice of Ojibway Johnny Yesno is heard Saturdays on CBC radio the program Indian Magazine

Native Land” after 1970.

After Diefenbaker extended federal voting privileges to Indian peoples in 1960, politicians began to lend greater attention to areas in northern Ontario and Manitoba where an active Aboriginal electorate could prove decisive in elections. The government, through such Crown corporations as The Company of Young Canadians, began to sponsor Native and non-Native volunteers in Armstrong and Kenora, Ontario to become involved in community radio and other cooperation building projects. Harold (Buddy) Sault, official founder of *The Lightbulb*¹⁰² and later organizer of the Union of Northwestern Ontario Native Organizations undertook to provide Native radio news service in English and Ojibwe by way of a mobile broadcasting van that would travel between Native communities in Ontario’s Northwest. Priscilla Simard writes that the primary goal of the new radio service was similar to that of the Friendship centre movement, namely “to dispel areas of ignorance that exist between Indian & white communities.” The broadcasting volunteers also intended to “use radio as a means of community development... [and] to provide a news service to all Indians in Northwestern Ontario” (*Kenomadiwin News* 15 October 1968). The mixed English and Ojibwe language service was to operate partly through donations and partly on a listeners’ subscription basis.

In 1967 Eugene Steinhauer, great grandson of Henry Bird Steinhauer, on his own initiative, made the first concerted attempt to centralize control over the authorship both of Aboriginal electronic and print texts in a provincial Aboriginal organization. That year Eugene Steinhauer¹⁰³, who would later become

- a national forum for the opinions of Indians, Metis and Eskimos. It’s also a means of letting non-Indians hear the Indian viewpoint.”

102

The Lightbulb began as a newsletter and grew into the newspaper *Kenomadiwin News*. Named for its capacity to “shed light on the conditions currently existing in NWO,” *The Lightbulb*’s intended purpose was to facilitate the mobilization of a unified approach to community development in the Northwestern Ontario region (*The Lightbulb* December 1967)..

103

Mr. Steinhauer and his wife, Jessie Joyful, had 10 children. His great-grandson, Ralph G. Steinhauer served as Lt. Governor for the province of Alberta from 1974-79, and on December 9, 1977, he officially opened Steinhauer Community School. Mike Steinhauer, Eugene’s brother is the Executive Director of

President of the Indian Association of Alberta, founded the Alberta Native Communications Society (ANCS), the first organization of its kind in Canada. Donna Rae Paquette, who worked at the fledgling organization recalls how revolutionary Steinhauer's vision of developing a professional class of Native communicators was at the time:

It had never been done before, to have Indian radio broadcasts...never mind reporters and broadcasters of native descent. It just wasn't done. We could be ditch diggers and waitresses and chamber maids, we could fight forest fires and clean other people's houses, pick rocks, hoe sugar beets and do the many tedious back-breaking servile types of labour expected of us. But we always knew there was no such thing as a professional native person, a white collar Indian. Until Eugene came and forced his dream into fruition and formed the nucleus of a news outlet that would feature the positive side of Indian country, and yes, there is one (in *The Edmonton Journal* 15 September 1995).

News of ANCS's successes had a ripple effect beyond Alberta's borders. In 1969, RAVEN, Sardis British Columbia's Radio and Visual Education Network came into being with the immediate aim of setting up a network of radio set operators along the BC coast (*Vancouver Sun* 29 May 1970). In 1970, the Indian News Media Society (INMS) took shape in Southern Alberta's Blackfoot country. Native peoples established the communications societies Wawatay, in Ontario and Native Communications Inc. (NCI), in Manitoba over the next two years.

The first issue of Port Arthur's *Kenomadiwin News* includes an interview with Eugene Steinhauer on the subject of ANCS's Cree radio programming. The paper reports that at first, Native listeners in Alberta were unsure what to make of an Aboriginally operated media service: "Mr. Steinhauer admitted that it had been slow going to start with, because the Indians themselves did not realize that the program was theirs entirely to comment on with no strings attached" (April 1968). Steinhauer explained that the radio program was aired weekly on mainstream stations in Camrose and Edmonton and reached an additional

Blue Quills, the first Native Controlled Residential school in Canada. In 1967, Alice Steinhauer (Eugene's wife) with Christine Daniels and Rose Yellow Feet founded the Voice of Alberta Native Women Society, an annual conference (*The Native People* 9 March 1973). The following year, Alice Steinhauer presented the findings of the Alberta Native Women's Conference to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women hearing in Edmonton. The brief concerned: health care, education and housing, and clearly articulated Native women's desire for control over their own affairs (Freeman 1995:98).

50,000 Native people in northern Alberta. He added that plans to extend the coverage to newspapers and newsletters were well underway, and that both the provincial and federal governments had expressed an interest in supplying funding support for the year 1968. Members of the Native community, he noted, were matching government grants with volunteer contributions for a cost-sharing arrangement (*ibid*).

Steinhauer's ANCS provided the model on which to base radio service delivery to Native communities throughout Canada.

According to Stenbaek (1988:336), the impetus for Inuit community radio was a study conducted by Josepi Padlayat and Paul Lumsden for the Tagramiut Nipingat (TNI) in 1972. The first Inuit community radio station emerged from Kuujuaq on the Ungava Bay in northern Québec. A local man bought several of the transmitters used to direct radio airplanes, borrowed turntables, tape recorders and microphones from community members and set up an AM broadcast centre. Surrounding Inuit communities soon copied the idea. These stations did not last, however, as the frequency interfered with airline communications. TNI eventually implemented a network of community radios in northern Québec. The stations were so popular the idea spread to other Inuit communities and to Native reserves further south (*ibid*).

By the late 1960s, several Chiefs in the Treaty Nine area of northern Ontario had also become convinced that adopting such "modern communications technologies" as high frequency radios would not lead to inevitable culture loss, nor did they narrowly construe media use to be limited to the mere exchange of information. Instead, as Minore and Hill inform:

[They] were convinced that these "trail" radios would overcome the already observed reluctance of some people to leave their villages to go fishing or out on the trap lines...With a system of voluntarily monitored but professionally maintained HF radios people would be able to leave, but never had to be out of touch with their communities (1990:107).

Insisting that radio technologies would enhance traditional practices, the chiefs began to press the government for funds to support a community controlled communications system. In a presentation to the task force on Canadian Broadcasting, Wawatay Communications Society -- the independent community group the chiefs founded in 1974 to administer the HF radio system -- insisted that "communications systems should facilitate the social and economic development of our people" (cited in Minore and Hill

1990:108). Upon incorporating in 1974, Wawatay undertook to help nearby communities establish AM stations and became a stimulus to further telecommunications developments in the area.

Broadcasting in Cree, Oji-Cree, Ojibwe and English, the Ayamowin Communications Society in Big Trout Lake became the first Native community owned radio station in Ontario. By 1977, Wawatay's newspaper *Wawatay News* was also in circulation. By 1990, 28 of the 39 Native communities in the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation owned and operated their own community radio stations. The community leaders who comprised Wawatay had successfully established a continuously operating network of Native radio stations (Minore and Hill 1990:109).

Former Ontario Regional Consultant for NNADAP (National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program), Dave Ducharme hosted a live phone-in talk show from Wawatay's Moose Factory office.

Ducharme offered the following with regard to the importance of Native community radio:

It gives them a voice. It gives them an opportunity to speak to it in a public forum. Cause most of the callers were young people, and they would come on, and everybody would know from the community who it was that was speaking, 'cause they recognize their voice. And they would share stuff, some very personal stuff, about what was going on with their own lives or friends that were having problems and things. So it got the issue out of the closet sort of thing, in the public forum, which is, I think, important in the scheme of things. Addictions, for many many years in Indian Country, was a real closet issue. Nobody talked about it. Nobody really knew what to do with it and just kind of kept it quiet...there wasn't that word, "healing," there wasn't really a language with which to talk about abuse and recovery. People may have known there was something wrong, that they were in pain, but they didn't know how to talk about it (1 October 1996).

According to Ducharme, in addition to providing the language with which to confront issues of community dysfunction, the radio station provided the tools with which to carry out a successful project of community building. He offers:

The other thing that they do that's different is the really community based kind of programming that they do. They'll cover births and deaths and things in the community. They'll cover the bake sales, and you know, it's very much a community radio station. And then, because they broadcast to such a large area, that news between communities creates a communication that never ever existed before, which is finally happening in Indian Country. It's happened all over the world. Everywhere else, technology has provided that ability to communicate, but it's only been fairly recently in Indian Country, that Indian people are starting to communicate through the radio (1 October 1996).

When Gary Farmer helped to form the Six Nations based Grand River Communication Society (later, the

Southern Onkwehon:we Nishinabe Indigenous Communications Society (S.O.N.I.C.S.), his intention was to mobilize or “socialize” his fellow community members to engage in the process of re-learning Iroquoian languages and to rejuvenate the community movement to re-shape Aboriginality along contemporary Onkwehon:we and Nishinabe, or neo-traditional, lines. His description of the process reflects the strategic selection and combination of practical traditional and mainstream elements, according to internal community imperatives, that has historically characterized the Native media movement to date:

Well, of course, the objective is to radioize every Native community in North America... 'Course Six Nations was my own home, so that was the first step, was to get my own people some radio... And we... formulated a constitution based on the old understanding, our old Iroquois Confederacy, took the best of what we could from that and of course made it available for the people... we had to resort to an electorate as opposed to a Clan Mother system... And what I find is that ...It's like planting seed, right. Because the first time you plant a seed you have to water it, and take care of it. And then the hardest thing, of course, is breaking through the earth. And then you kind of weed it and stuff. So that's been the process. It takes a while for a station, once you start it, to come fully of use or service to the community (21 January 1997).¹⁰⁴

Gary Farmer and Amos Key are also responsible for helping Cecil Isaac and other Walpole Island community members to set up a radio station on their reserve in southwestern Ontario. Isaac, who spoke at the Aboriginal Voices media conference, explained that the Ojibwe radio station was the first community project to be carried out without the band council's explicit involvement. It continues to operate outside of band council control. From its inception, Isaac and the others involved in the creation of the station insisted that reserve airwaves were “sovereign” and that the CRTC did not have the authority to interfere in reserve radio matters. In this sense he says, the station represents the genuine “voice of the community.” (17 June 1999). The station, which went on air in 1994, was first located in a bedroom in Isaac's house. It is now centrally located in the Walpole Island mall. It continues to amplify Aboriginal affairs without CRTC sanction.

104

Under the aegis of the Aboriginal Voices banner, Farmer and a group of committed volunteers have been steadfastly applying for what are, in many cases, the last radio broadcast frequencies available in Canadian urban markets. With licenses in Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver and one pending in Ottawa, and with a license to operate a national service, Aboriginal Voices is well on the way toward achieving a country wide Aboriginal radio service.

Aboriginal mediators have innovated and annexed radio practices to their already existing modes of communication in ways that reflect and reinforce Aboriginal values, and which offer practical communicatory advantages in particular localities. Native radio shows no signs of having merely succumbed to some hegemonic commercial model. Instead, the culturally specific radio activities in which communicators are engaging function to create and enhance bonds in, and between, communities; to enrich traditional practices and languages; to return authority to “the people;” and to strengthen the cultural fabric of Aboriginal life. First Nations radio is an integral element in the healing movement -- a grass roots effort to restore Native communities to physical, mental, spiritual and emotional health and to foster constructive relationships between individuals, families, communities and nations. In providing both the context for community discussions, and a language with which to address their circumstances, Aboriginal radio encodes novel forms and flows of vital information.

Aboriginal radio also figures prominently in wider political struggles to subvert Aboriginal subjugation, to assert Aboriginal authorial authority and to promote linkages between First Nations polities. Instead of merely reproducing mainstream models, therefore, Aboriginal radio practices and products represent culturally appropriate paradigms for *publicizing* progress, through community controlled communications corridors.

Canadian Aboriginal Broadcast Policy

When the federal Communications Department launched the Ironstar satellite project in 1975, partly to counter the threat posed to Canadian identity and culture by US satellites, the ANCS staff quickly saw the value in participating in satellite experiments, and applied pressure for increased communications services for Native communities in more remote areas of Alberta. ANCS was eventually permitted to mount the Hermes satellite and used this opportunity as a social laboratory for training new recruits. Native media educator, Jane Woodward explains:

Throughout the duration of the project...we used students. This was their training ground. Students became the crew...We had four different sites in Northern Alberta and we transmitted

television broadcasts to them...they could receive our signal, and they responded back by audio...It was almost like a town hall meeting (23 October 1997).¹⁰⁵

Satellites represented the polar anthesis to the historical Pass laws. The technology enabled a transportation of information through electronic linkages, and connected rather than isolated people from remote communities which promoted the formation of new regional associations of interest and decision making structures.

Funding for such undertakings, however, was never a clear cut affair. As a consequence of the demise of the White Paper, for instance, in 1970 the Department of the Secretary of State inherited responsibility for the funding of certain Native organizations including Steinhauer's ANCS, which began to receive some financial support from the government immediately. Funding for Native communications, which was initially issued on an experimental basis, was concentrated at first in the West. Alberta, for instance, received 93% and BC 7% of the total funds for Native communications organizations at this time (Demay 1991b:97).

The government did not consider intertribal communications, Native broadcasting, or self-management of community air waves to be highly contentious issues, in comparison with contests over land claims, the controversy surrounding natural resource extraction, and treaty rights disputes in the early 1970s. In fact, according to Minore and Hill:

The topic of telecommunications gave the federal government an opening it very much needed. By endorsing at least these Native claims the authorities could appear willing to listen to Aboriginal peoples. Moreover, acknowledging this linguistic and cultural need fit nicely into the broader commitment to multiculturalism which the government had made in the early 1970's. As well, telecommunications was one of Canada's "high-tech" specialties; it seems reasonable to suggest

105

It was at Inuit peoples' request, that in 1974, that the Federal government undertook research into the development of a trail, or two-way radio system to link eight communities in Northern Québec (Meagher 1974). In 1977, Taqraqmiut Nipingat Inc. (TNI) in northern Québec began their project, "Naalakuik 1" which linked the Hermes to the Anik A Satellite (Valaskakis 1992:72). Then, in 1978 Ontario's Trout and Baker Lake stations had their turn at participating in interactive satellite carried radio (Minore and Hill 1990). It was as a result of these experiments, which occurred exclusively in the north, and owing to Aboriginal peoples' own requests that such research be undertaken, that the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation -- the first Native language television network in North America -- was able to develop in 1981.

that, by bridging the broadcasting void in their own backyard, the industry would have a showcase for its capabilities (1990:103).

Nineteen seventy-three proved to be a watershed year for Native communications. The ANIK Satellite experiments, the CBC's Accelerated Coverage Plan and the governmentally sponsored Native Communications Program (NCP) were each launched that year. Accelerated coverage meant that the hardware for radio and television service would now be provided to every community of five hundred or more residents (Rupert 1983:55). Funds for programming, however, were not part of the CBC's scenario, which meant that the bulk of what was broadcasted generally issued from the larger and more affluent, white centres of the country. In general, the government has tended to view communications as promoting technological and economic development, rather than as a means of producing and expressing cultural principles. Molnar suggests that the government is eager to provide technology because hardware represents a more tangible reminder of government support than does communications education and training (1995:178). Arthur Louttit for instance, told me that government supplied broadcast quality radio and video recording equipment sat unused for years in his home community of Moose factory, because no one knew how to operate it (pc December 1998).

At first, Indigenous peoples in the far north actively resisted what they considered to be a cultural invasion from the south. In the arctic region short-wave radio networks had been established in the 1930s, but were consistently controlled by trading and police posts and missionaries, and served largely as receptors for government directives issued from the south. According to Valaskakis, Arctic high frequency radio functioned to solidify the interests of southern institutions, and broadcast radio had little relevance for Inuit peoples. In 1960 CBC would broadcast the first Inuktitut program. By 1970, however, still only 17% of the northern programming was in the Inuit language, and few Inuit spoke English (1992:68-69). The Inuit Tapirisat began lobbying for Inuktitut-language television as early as 1975 (Devine 1995:42).

To address the issue of Aboriginal content, Wally Firth an Inuit MP, and former radio announcer for the Inuvik service, called a meeting with NIB President, George Manuel; Métis leader, Tony Belcourt; the Inuit Tapirisat's Tagak Curley and the Director of CBC's northern services. *The Native People* reported

that Firth reminded the CBC of its responsibilities as a publically owned cultural institution:

I want to help CBC live up the Broadcast Act, he says, referring to that part which reads that a station shall "serve geographic regions to develop the culture of that region and contribute to Canadian unity." ...Policies respecting programming and hiring must change, he says, and one of the best ways to localize content is by moving the policy making headquarters to one or more Northern centres. Northern policies can best be made in the North, not Ottawa (5 January 1973).

Firth also called for two studies to be conducted -- the first, on the impact of television among Northern Indigenous peoples; the second, on the structure of the CBC Northern services department itself.

Apparently Inuit peoples were not prepared to passively accept government broadcast policies, nor mainstream media models without prior consultation and ongoing negotiation. What Inuit and other Aboriginal communities were proposing therefore, was that they were interested in inventing television for themselves.

In 1975, after a two year experimentation period, during which time southern content was delivered by satellite signals to northern Native and Inuit communities, the ANIK A satellite was officially launched (Rupert 1983:59). As a result of Inuit protests, however, the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) conducted a series of hearings from 1978 to 1982 on northern broadcasting. In conjunction with the hearings, the CRTC issued the Report of the Therrien Commission on the *Extension of Service to Remote and Underserved Communities* (CRTC 1980). The report, which asserts governmental responsibility to assure broadcasting that supports Aboriginal languages and cultures, formed the basis for the federal government's first Northern Communication Policy, the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program (NNBAP) which was issued in 1983, the International Year of Communications.

According to Minore and Hill:

Announced as a four year program, the NNBAP committed 40.3 million dollars for the production of regional Native language radio and television programs. In 1987, the end of the four year trial, the Secretary of State announced that the program would continue on a permanent basis (with a budget that year of 13.2 million dollars). To date 13 Native communications societies have received funding (1990:106).¹⁰⁶

106

Brisbois (1983) outlines the 5 principles governing the NNBAP as follows:

1. Northern residents should be offered access to an increasing range of programing choices

The principles outlined in the report set out to ensure Aboriginal participation in the management of northern airwaves as a resource. These principles would find concrete expression in the formation of the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) and later in Taqramuit Nipingat Inc. (TNI), another Inuit Communications Society. IBC would receive a license to distribute mostly Inuit cultural programming via the satellite channel of the CBC, and would also distribute programs produced by TNI (Rupert 1983:60).

In 1980, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the international organization representing Inuit peoples globally, established a Communications Commission to recognize the importance of trans-Arctic communications. Since its inception, the Commission has actively promoted the exchange of television programs between the IBC and television corporations in Alaska and Greenland. Stenbaek writes that as a result of these programing exchanges, the Inuit in each area have come to learn each others dialects, which has contributed much by way of establishing a common lingual ground (1988:334).

According to Brisbois (1983:112), owing to the lack of television training programs in the north and the lack of trained Inuit producers, IBC developed a curriculum for in-house training which became a model for other Native communications societies, as well as independent Native communications education programs. The IBC founders attained funding for the training program from the Ministry of Canadian Immigration and Employment. The training curriculum combines technical instruction, basic journalism, language and cultural workshops, and practical hands-on experience in production. Inuit media activists

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- through the exploration of technological opportunities.
 2. Northern Native people should have the opportunity of active participation in the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission's determination of the character, quantity, and priority of programing to be broadcast in predominantly Native communities.
 3. In order to maintain and develop their cultures and languages, northern Native people should have fair access to broadcasting distribution systems in the North.
 4. Wherever Native people form a significant proportion of the population of a service area, programing which is both relevant to Native concerns and includes content orientated by Native people should be produced for distribution by northern broadcasting services.
 5. Government agencies engaged in establishing broadcasting policies which affect Native culture should consult regularly with northern Native representatives.

throughout the north, therefore, successfully resisted the control of southern bureaucracies by insisting on participating in the formation of broadcast legislation and by resolving to innovate broadcast radio and television technologies which were responsive to unique regional community needs.

Particularly in remote northern Aboriginal communities, Indigenous radio and television have come to be considered basic, rather than luxury services. Regarding the Povungnituk Inuit community on Hudson's Bay, for example, Rupert writes:

Communication, transportation, and medical needs are all met through community radio...residents keep the sound on their television turned down low while watching...this allows them to keep an ear on the radio. To do otherwise would be too risky, because as everyone knows, the next message might be for you (1983:57).

It is difficult to be a functional member of the community of without participating in the community radio programs. He explains:

It's "phone-in" time on CKPV-FM, local all-Inuktitut radio station, and the 800 residents of Povungnituk are incessantly phoning. They are playing a traditional game where one person phones in an animal imitation, and the first caller to identify the imitation wins. This game is followed by another where people wait to see who will be the first to call in and sing a chosen traditional song—in Inuktitut, of course. The callers are young and old, men and women. While playing such games, older people relax and children learn the subtleties of Inuktitut humor and culture...(ibid).

He insists that such electronic connections link people in northern settlements in an extension of the same intimate, "face-to-face" manner as when they lived in nomadic family groups out on the land; re-enforce traditional patterns of communication; preserve Native languages; and encourage a sense of community. The IBC asserts that the principle use to which Inuit communicators in Nunavut put such media to is to reduce the vast distances between otherwise isolated Inuit settlements via permanent electronic connections (IBC website).

Around the time the people of NWT were preparing to vote on dividing the territory and creating Nunavut, IBC developed a series of documentaries on the central issues and televised the political debates. According to Marina Devine, "When Inuit turned out in massive numbers and overwhelmingly voted "yes" to Nunavut, IBC was given a lot of the credit" (1995:42).

Communication between Inuit communities is possible today owing to an Inuit conviction to re-

establish the channels of communication that had been severed by forced settlement, rather than to a simple availability of government funds. In addition to television, the Inuit of the eastern Arctic are innovating other technologies to promote language retention. Murdoch writes that “a renaissance of syllabic writing and printing has begun, in the wake of increasing control which Canada’s aboriginal people have more recently gained over their children’s education” (1985:11). The Inuit, he informs, continue to lead the way in the development of printing and computing technology for syllabics.

Although great advances were made in broadcasting across Canada, there was a concomitant decline in Native newspaper production. By 1972, there were 37 Native publications in existence throughout Canada. The number was reduced to 27, however, by 1984. In Ontario, Native newspapers diminished from 11 to only 3. By 1990, half of all Native publications in Canada had been discontinued. While government funding was certainly not the impetus for their creation, the withdrawal of such funding facilitated their untimely demise.

Throughout the 1970s, the majority of Native newspapers were affiliated with political organizations, such as the Dene Nation (*The Native Press*) the Union of Ontario Indians (*The Calumet*), the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians (*Saskatchewan Indian*), and the Native Council of Canada (*The Forgotten People*). According to Rupert, one reason for the demise of Native publications was that Native and Canadian political leaders were increasingly disinclined to fund or encourage critical coverage of their own affairs (1983:58). Certainly other factors were at play, however, it is quite clear that Native publications were discontinued due to changes in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal governmental policy rather than owing to lack of Aboriginal publishing interest, or to a loss of readers.

Prior to the funding cuts, amendments to the broadcast legislation seriously affected the ways Native communications branches conducted their business. In 1975, for instance, the Federal Treasury Board approved an extension of the Native communications program which involved making grants available to Native media groups across the country. This effectively decentralized the NCP and added yet another layer of bureaucracy to the funding structure. According to Joel Demay, former Head of the Indian

Communication Arts (INCA) program at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College in Regina, by 1977 to renew funding through NCP, the Aboriginal communications society had to push its funding requests through 19 administrative stages (1991b:97). Although they were somewhat impeded developmentally by red tape, by 1978, ten southern Aboriginal Communications Societies were able to secure funding from the NCP.

After 1983, at which time the NNBAP was introduced, newspaper outlets were required to cut ties with Aboriginal governing structures to receive federal and provincial government funding. That year, the government allocated public funds for thirteen northern Native communications societies. The communications societies were incorporated in accordance with the broadcast policy as non-profit groups, independent of Aboriginal political societies and were governed by Native boards (Smith and Bringham 1992).

The Native Communications Program (NCP) was initially created, at the behest of Aboriginal media activists, to sponsor Native newspapers and radio projects among Native organizations south of the Hamelin Line -- the 55th parallel which defines the Canadian North for purposes of broadcast policy. Although the Inuit could be reasonably well-served by a single network, southern Native groups formed at least ten linguistic groups which were comprised by thirty or more languages or dialects. According to Minore and Hill, the idea behind the NCP was that each province was expected to fund one Native communications society. Each communication society could then aim their program productions toward an area where one language or dialect was commonly understood (1990:105). The program was designed to provide financial support for basic operational costs and core support for special projects, training, community radio maintenance, media workshops, and a capital assets fund to Native media organizations.¹⁰⁷

The NCP, was somewhat different than what had earlier been provided by the Secretary of State by

107

A year after it was introduced, the government granted the NCP a five year mandate which was supposed to have marked the end of the "experimental" phase in government Native communications funding. Native mediators were understandably shocked when in 1990, the government announced that all NCP funding would be eliminated.

way of Core and Communications funding to political organizations. The latter had enabled Native political organizations to form, and to direct the activities of, communications branches. Under the NCP however, the communications branches were expected to sever ties entirely with Aboriginal political bodies. This policy revision compounded the problems of Saskatchewan Native mediators, where in 1982, a newly elected provincial government cut all funding to the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. This had the effect to virtually eliminate all Aboriginal print and media development there (Demay 1991a:419). That same year, the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College at the University of Regina established a two year certificate program in Indian Communication Arts (INCA) -- the country's second Native communications educational program.

According to Shannon Avison, present Coordinator of INCA, when the Canadian government deemed independence from political organizations to be a requirement for funding under the Native Communications Program, it was trying to force the work strategy of "watchdog journalism" onto communications societies' media production practices (5 December 1997). Journalists were expected to assume an openly confrontational attitude to interviewing, for instance, so as to unearth the truth at all costs and thereby to "guard" the public good. This was interpreted by some Native journalists as potentially disrespectful toward community leaders, elders and other Aboriginal authority figures. Demay (1991b:106) notes that Aboriginal publications have not been endowed with centuries of adversary with Aboriginal governments, enjoying instead a mutually respectful and supportive relationship. Indeed, it should be remembered that when the first Canadian newspapers were created, the ideology of partisanship was perfectly harmonious with the agendas of the papers' owners and editors, who often aspired either to become politicians themselves, or to benefit financially from their party loyalty. Other factors, however, have contributed to a poisoning of the relationship between Native leaders and Native presses. One of the most contentious issues has been control over funding. After Federal government financial support waned for Native newspapers, for instance, some Native leaders turned their backs on non-complementary

media.¹⁰⁸

To promote a clear division between Native communicators and Native politicians an initial report, prepared by the Secretary of State for a National Native communications workshop, recommended that regional committees be created and include among their delegates permanent representatives from: the Secretary of State, Citizen Branch; Status, non-Status Indian and Inuit communications associations; and the provincial or territorial governments. In addition, depending on which projects and programs the Communications Societies pursued, additional representatives from the following federal government agencies were to be involved: Department of Communications, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Department of Manpower and Immigration, and the Department of Regional Economic Expansion (*The Native People* 9 February 1973). Clearly, the Canadian government sought to vest ultimate discretionary power in its own agents, at the expense of Native politicians *and* Native journalists. Thus, while the agencies of the non-Native government worked both as a buffer and a barrier between Native communications societies and Aboriginal political organizations; they were seldom the neutral forces they purported to be.¹⁰⁹ When the NCP was eventually finalized some of the communications branches of Native

108

Miles Morrisseau describes the problems his Kettle Point based independent paper faced before its demise in 1993, and contrasts the economic context in which he produced his paper with that of the two Six Nations publications -- *Tekawennake* and *Turtle Island News*:

Not only do you have a situation where the Union of Ontario Indians controls the largest newspaper [*Anishinabek News*]...if you imagine how difficult it would be to try to survive as an independent that was questioning... positions taken by the Union, I'm sorry, but you're just not going to get any support. And it's very difficult to then get commercial dollars supported from mainstream Canada because they don't see the Native community as a viable market to advertize in. There's that whole perception that "Well, they're just wards of the state, on welfare." They don't see those as viable communities that actually buy the millions of dollars in groceries and clothing and automobiles that they do. So a situation like Six Nations when they have...many small independent commercial ventures...they have numerous businesses for that massive on-reserve population. And so that's what has allowed them the freedom. I know that they do get advertising from the local band office and that sort of thing...but they can't control those papers because there is so much commercial development that's able to support those two publications (5 May 1998).

109

In the 1980s, BC's Communications Society, RAVEN met its demise owing to government meddling. The federal government insisted on changes in the organization by threatening to cut off funding. The society disintegrated soon after.

political organizations became “independent”¹¹⁰ Communications Societies.¹¹¹ Unencumbered by the mainstream media’s recently developed illusion of objectivity, however, practitioners of Native media did not necessarily consider refraining from involvement in wider movements of social action, a functional work strategy. Nevertheless, as a concession to the funding providers, Native journalists attempted to maintain the appearance of non-partisanship, even though the Boards of the communications societies and political organizations were sometimes identical.

Few of the issues covered and hence inscribed by the Native presses -- from Native high-school student graduations, interviews with Elders, to Native legends -- however, could be considered “non-political.” Because collective processes concerning the construction and transformation of Aboriginality are at work throughout Native media production processes moreover; Native media practices must be viewed as “on a continuum with social action for Aboriginal rights” (Ginsburg 1993:575). Native media are inscribed in a process of mediating social change. And, owning or at least self-managing the means of promoting strategic change represents an *inherently* political undertaking.

In addition to politically non-allied papers, the federal government has tended to focus funding attention on northerly areas, perhaps perceiving northern lifestyles as more “authentic,” and northern

110

From its inception, and without government prodding, ANCS for one, claimed to operate independently from the Indian and Métis political associations, though staff members were often quite active in these organizations. This is not to say, however, that *Native People* did not report on the activities of the political associations, nor publish comments from readers, including political organization members and their critics, on occasion. Nor did the Native political organizations roll over and refrain entirely from involvement with the communications societies, as they had been ordered to do. Eventually, however, both Steinhauer and Joe Blyan (ANCS’s Assistant Director) left ANCS to take on more openly active political roles in the provincial Native organizations.

111

By the end of the 1970s, BC was the only province in Canada that did not have a province wide Native communications organization. The Native Communications Society of BC eventually formed in 1985. Members founded a Native journalism school in Vancouver, published the newspaper *Kahtou* and attempted to create a First Nations radio station.

languages as more worthy of preserving.¹¹² Because southern Aboriginal lifestyles tend to be viewed as more "westernized" and as becoming increasingly compromised with time and exposure to mainstream ways, government officials seem to be of the opinion that the process of integration ought to be hastened if it cannot be stemmed. The government's preference for providing support in the north is also a matter of economy. The bulk of northern Native radio service is of the regional variety; whereas congested airwaves in the south require that each community have its own station. With regional radio, therefore, approximately the same amount of funding that would go to one southern community, gets spread out over several northern reserves.

The NNBAP, although subjected to several cuts since its introduction, continues to be the major funding source for Aboriginal broadcasting to this date. In 1985 however, the government approved a new two year southern Native communications program which included funding for the first national communications society -- the Lac La Biche based NNATCOM (later renamed NACS, the National Aboriginal Communications Society). Although it represented only a fraction of the NNBAP budget, funding for southern institutions (NCP) grew to 4.6 million that year. The merger of NNBAP and the NCP, both of which were to expire in 1987, however, was never realized. Once removed from the scrutiny of the international community at the close of the Year of Communications festivities, the Canadian government began to slash all Native media production spending. According to Valaskakis, in 1990 funding for the NNBAP was cut from \$40.3 to \$11.1 million and NCP funding for southern groups was eliminated altogether (1992:74).

By the year 1990, Native communications societies were well-positioned to usher in a new era of First Nations communications throughout the country. They had amongst themselves highly trained Native

112

It is ironic that the north has received the bulk of the broadcast funding when one considers that languages in the south are in greater need of protection and promotion. According to Gary Farmer of Six Nations, a recent Sweetgrass Language Institute study indicates that of the seventeen thousand people living at Six Nations, only eight people under the age of 40 speak one of the six Iroquoian languages (31 January 2000).

communicators. They were equipped with a satellite system, community based radio, newspaper and TV projects. They were producing broadcast programming in English as well as several Aboriginal languages, and literature in alphabets and syllabics. Perhaps most importantly, many Aboriginal mediators shared a vision -- they were committed to bringing about a radical change in the social status of their people. The funding cuts were a severe setback for all Native media. Many Native communication societies interpreted this withdrawal of support as an attempt to silence an increasingly effective and vociferous group of Native activists. Chippewa journalist Shelly Bressette writes that as a result of the sudden cuts, "within months, about half of all native newspapers in Canada went bust" (*Nativebeat*, March 1993:13).

In 1991, a new *Broadcasting Act* recognized the "special place of aboriginal peoples within Canadian society." The NNBAP, moreover, was reformulated as a national policy and the government approved \$10 million to establish Television Northern Canada, or TVNC¹¹³. Valaskakis notes that, ironically, the viability of the framework envisioned through the Native Broadcasting Policy has been strengthened in the area of program distribution through TVNC, and weakened in the area of broadcasting (and newspaper) production through cutbacks to the NNBAP and the demise of the Native Communications Program (Valaskakis 1998). Despite the cuts to newspaper production, several new Native newspapers and radio shows were born, spurred by such events as the Oka Crisis -- in 1990, *Nativebeat* newspaper, *Smoke Signals* and *Tribes in Motion* radio shows; and the Columbus celebrations in 1992 -- *MicMac News*, *Anishnabec News*, and *The Eastern Door* newspapers.

Media production units in the south and urban areas, moreover, have never accepted their exclusion from Native broadcast policies. The national *Native Broadcast Policy* was formulated with the assumption that Native peoples live in small, rural, fairly homogeneous communities and for the most part

113

TVNC is a satellite channel which provides television distribution to 94 Native communities served by Native Communications Societies. According to Roth, TVNC does not produce television programming, but distributes or broadcasts Aboriginal language and cultural programs in 15 different Aboriginal languages (1994:330). The Minister of Communications initially expressed support for the network as early as 1988. The network was licensed in 1991 and went to air in 1992.

in remote areas. According to southern peoples, this reflects a flawed conception of contemporary Aboriginal experience. At the CRTC hearing for the recently licensed Toronto based radio station, Aboriginal Voices Radio (now JUMP Radio), Gary Farmer explains why Native radio is just as important in the south, and deserving of inclusion in the funding and other programs set aside for northern Native stations. He submits:

I have spent 25 years of my life trying to bring recognition to the fact that southern nations...are not disappearing; we are not going away...we are the fastest-growing population (31 January 2000).

Farmer asserts that Native peoples scattered over a broad area yet still retaining the semblance of a community is the reality in southern Indian Country. The JUMP Radio team, therefore, applied to be considered under the northern policy even though they were technically ineligible, hoping as Gary insists, "to possibly set a brand new trend in terms of the southern situation...or other urban regions in Canada" (ibid). Sherman Manness, then acting Treasurer for Aboriginal Voices or JUMP Radio explains that although they were eligible to apply under the "Community Radio Act," the JUMP Board preferred to remain under the auspices of the *Native Broadcast Policy*:

Perhaps you can look at it as a semantic issue or you can look at it from quite a variety of points of view, but we prefer to be recognized as Aboriginal people in control of our Aboriginal institutions. Although we could fit under the whole notion of a community radio station, controlled and answerable to a board of directors made up of community members, that to us is not precise to us. For us, we almost insist on being recognized as Aboriginal people. Hence, our choice was to pursue a license under the Native policy, which is Native control of a Native radio station (31 January 2000).

JUMP was in fact awarded the broadcast license, and plans to take to air sometime in the year 2001. The signal will be broadcast to the Toronto area, making it the first independent urban Aboriginal station licensed in Canada.

After the disastrous handling of the Kahnasatake or Oka Crisis, the federal government created the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples with the intent of designing a new blueprint for the relationship between Canadians and Indigenous peoples. The report states, "There is an urgent need for aboriginal media to assume the role that a storyteller used to fulfil, fostering the discovery and rediscovery of aboriginal identity and community" (RCAP 1996:624 and 621). Furthermore, the committee called for "...

the creation of a third national broadcasting network, an autonomous aboriginal language service similar to the CBC" (RCAP 1996:635). Both recommendations would be realized with the creation of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) which aired nationally for the first time in September 1999. The national Native network, which broadcasts approximately 72 hours a week in English, 18 in French and 30 in various Aboriginal languages, was the result of the combined efforts of Aboriginal peoples in the north -- the TVNC Board of Directors -- and a coterie of Native media activists from the south.¹¹⁴ Government funding occupies a substantial portion of the annual APTN budget. It is the mandate of the network, however, to be entirely financially independent from the government by the fifth year of operation.

Nowadays, the funding contexts of Native media production can be grouped into three broad categories. Native media products are produced by Native people by the major networks wherein the mainstream organization is responsible for all costs, for example, the CBC, CTV, Global Television, the A-Channel and so on; with university provided radio facilities and public cable access resources; and finally in either financially independent or government funded Native media outlets.

In general, the degree of editorial freedom enjoyed in each of the above contexts, increases with the amount of financial control Aboriginal people have within the organization. Until the recent launch of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, employment in the mainstream media offered only real possibility of broadcasting to both Canadians and Aboriginal peoples on a national basis. Native peoples, however, have historically protested many of the images of them created by this same media. In November 1998 at the CRTC hearing for the licensing of the APTN, for instance, Maurice Switzer, then representing the Assembly of First Nations, asserted:

One of the roles of the Assembly of First Nations is to promote and enhance the relationship

114

The southern group includes: Roman Bitman, Jim Compton, Barb Cranmer, Gary Farmer, John Kim Bell, Alanis Obomsawin and Ghislain Picard. In addition to Abraham Tagalik, and J. C. Catholique, members of the northern board consist of representatives from: Northern Native Broadcasting, Yukon; Inuvialuit Communications Society; Native Communications Society of the western NWT; Inuit Broadcasting Corporation; Taqramiut Nipingat Inc.; Okalakatiget Society; Yukon College, NWT Government; and three directors at large (APTN Brief).

between Canadians and First Nations peoples in Canada. If Canadians better understood who we are and what our aspirations are, they would better understand us and it would result in a better relationship between the two solitudes. Mainstream media has failed miserably in bridging that gap. They could argue that their role is not public education, but that's an implicit civic responsibility of the mass media and it is one that's not being adequately fulfilled (13 November 1998).

Many Aboriginal communicators, moreover, view working in mainstream media, with a certain amount of trepidation. Monique Manatch, former host of the radio program *Native Stuff* at McMaster University's CFMU Radio and present coordinator of the Aboriginal Media Program at the First Nations Technical Institute at Tyendinaga, Ontario recalls that while employed at the CBC, she was prohibited from pursuing Aboriginal stories for the reason that, as a Native person, she was told she lacked "the right kind of subjectivity" to carry such stories off (11 December 1996). Because she was viewed as an interested member of a Native community, says Monique, she was considered incapable of objectivity when it came to Native theme stories (ibid). Most Native communicators are entirely capable of adapting to the work strategy of mainstream organizations. Ironically, with few exceptions, non-Native journalists, who do not specialize in Native issues, generally lack the requisite expertise to judiciously report on Aboriginal affairs (Buddle-Crowe 1998).

On the other hand, Native controlled contexts, as Shohat and Stam point out, allow for a sort of political regrouping to occur whereby, the Indigenous minority becomes the majority "...seeking to move beyond being 'tolerated' to forming active intercommunal coalitions" (1994:47). As active agents of reform, Native communicators who are employed in Aboriginally funded or operated outlets are able to use the forums they create for trans-national intertribal communication and mobilization, to unabashedly advocate for justice, and when necessary, to facilitate the revolution in thinking that is required to foster a change in Native peoples' circumstances. Roger Obomsawin explains:

There is a need for independent and objective Native media with the ability to do investigative reporting and analysis, as well as promote the strength of our culture, our arts, our businesses -- all of the many strong aspects of our Native Nations. We are, on the one hand, experiencing an explosion of talent and skills that people are starting to really express, and expressing them for a lot of years. But so many people are now coming out, and expressing themselves as Nishinabe. And the Native media is going to play a crucial role in reflecting that true expression of who we really are (on *Smoke Signals*, 17 July 1993).

Brian Wright-McLeod¹¹⁵ began hosting *Renegade Radio* (formerly *Native Expressions*) in Toronto, to publicize the circumstances of Indigenous peoples' lives the world over and to assert a sense of solidarity between oppressed peoples. He explains:

...the opportunity there was to get a voice for the issues, the political issues, and the environment issues concerning Indigenous peoples. And it was in the mobilization in 1985 towards resisting the forced re-location of 10 000 Dine people in Big Mountain, Arizona, that was one of the main efforts we were working on, and we needed more of a public voice that would reach a lot more people than just the public events that we were doing (13 December 1996).

According to Wright-McLeod, Native peoples must undertake this type of social agency themselves as the mainstream institutions are incapable of directing societal reform. On *Renegade Radio* he provides the type of information he hopes will engage people in meaningful social action. He explains:

The basic premise of the program is to build that type of an awareness. And white media will not do that, because they don't have the understanding from the inside as to how colonialism affects Indigenous peoples, when they're part of the colonialism process themselves (ibid).

Leon Anthony (Soop),¹¹⁶ who is employed both in the mainstream (for Edmonton's A-Channel television station) as well as being the producer of the Aboriginal show, (*Saturday Night at the Rising Sun Cafe* for APTN) submits:

Sure there's a lot of land claims that are coming up...finally the Native people are being educated to knowing what still belongs to them. And they're going to get it, you know. We're not these "primitive" people anymore, who don't know what writing means. We know the white world now. And it's a new generation coming up. This new generation coming up knows their powers. And that power is education. That power is knowledge. And it's going to turn into a real battle (19 November 1997).

Were it not for the existence of Native controlled media organizations and programs, media activists such as Obomsawin, Anthony, Manatch and Wright-McLeod are convinced that, as Gil Scott Herron sang with

115

Brian Wright-McLeod compiled an encyclopedia of Aboriginal music that was released in July 2001.

116

Leon was introduced to Native media by his uncle, Everett Soop -- essayist and political cartoonist for *Native People*, *KaiNai News* and other papers, as well as a Native rights activist and an advocate for the physically disabled. Sadly Mr. Soop, who had MS, passed away in August 2001 at the age of 58. His nephew, Leon completed the INCA program at SIFC and earned a Journalism degree from the University of Regina.

reference to the Black civil rights movement, "the revolution will not be televised."

Raising funding for such organizations requires endless hours of grant and letter writing and research. At FNTI, Manatch made creative use of grants she solicited from Heritage Canada, Multiculturalism Canada, the Canadian Employment and Immigration Office, National Film Board, Primates World Relief Fund, and the APTN, to put on a media conference entitled "Telling Our Story." This is a fairly common strategy for Ontario Native communicators, who until recently, were also able to apply to the now defunct NDP government sponsored initiative, Community Radio Ontario Program (CROP) for funds. The Toronto and Ontario Arts Councils, and the Canada Council for the Arts have also been known to provide grants for media festivals, conferences as well as toward media training initiatives. Telefilm Canada and the National Film Board provide grants for specific media projects. Segments of the corporate sector, such as Bell Canada, the Bank of Montreal, Air Canada and Casino Rama have also been quite supportive of Aboriginal media endeavours in the province of Ontario.

Brenda Chambers, television producer, former producer and general manager of the Yukon communication society, Northern Native Broadcasting was involved in the creation of Television Northern Canada -- the northern service which has since become the APTN. Chambers comments on the importance of creating a distinct Aboriginal media, and insists that the federal government's support of Native media has been, "more of an appeasement than a priority." At APTN's CRTC hearing, she asserts, however, that:

Unlike private broadcasters who have shareholders to reward, APTN is not about money. It is about culture, it is about identity, it is about role models, inspiration and achievement. Aboriginal people must have a guaranteed voice in the mass media. Television is a crucial tool in our efforts to maintain a strong and distinct cultural identity. Ready access to TV across Canada will allow us to reflect our lives to one another and to all our neighbours. No other broadcaster has or will commit to making that happen. So we must do it ourselves (13 November 1998).

Between the mainstream and Native controlled institutions are the Native radio shows broadcast from university or community stations, and television shows aired on cable access channels. *Aboriginal Expressions*, for example is a bi-weekly television show covering events in the Edmonton and area Native community. It is produced and broadcast with no production costs to its creators using Edmonton's Shaw Cable facilities. *Smoke Signals* at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario; *Urbanative* at the

University of Toronto; and *Between the Earth and Sky* at the University of Alberta are radio shows which currently also benefit by university provided internet webcasting equipment, by means of which they are able to broadcast their shows internationally.

Brian Wright-McLeod, began hosting the show *Renegade Radio* in 1985 at CKLN, the Ryerson University radio station in Toronto. Wright-McLeod's astute political commentaries are renowned. On one program, for instance, he featured a dominatrix making baloney sandwiches on white bread, to convey the idea that Native peoples are "dominated, we're being fed baloney and that everybody is being squished together into white bread" (*Toronto Star* 3 July 1999). Today his show is simultaneously broadcast over the internet by the Aboriginally operated American Indian Radio On Satellite (AIROS) — a network which stretches from Alaska to New Mexico.

Mostly peopled by volunteers, these community access contexts provide the least expensive option to going on air for Aboriginal peoples. While they must conform to the stated rules and regulations of these organizations, Native radio and television people usually have access to free equipment, a volunteer base, in-house training programs, the relative freedom to pursue their own information agenda and a context in which to share with their communities while honing their media skills. Radiographers using public access facilities are able to experiment with both the show's format and content from week to week, which frequently entails testing the limits of their own notions of Aboriginality. Mary Gladue, host of *Tribes in Motion* at the University of Alberta station, feared Aboriginal music was becoming essentialized, thus it was her mission to expose listeners to a broader range of contemporary Native music. She introduced her show by asserting, "there is more to Aboriginal Music than drums and flutes!" Marie explains:

Any time there's any kind of stereotyping, I personally kind of rebel against it. I feel the same way about flute music. There is so much flute music out there. And that's another thing that's supposed to be Indian right?...I'm always looking for stuff that's alternative -- punk, reggae, because it means that Native people have the confidence to explore different things, and not pigeon-hole themselves. And some of them make it really unique, because they mix it. They mix it with their own traditional stuff that they have (4 July 1996).

When I asked Dan Smoke, who co-hosts *Smoke Signals* with his wife Mary Lou, what he envisioned his role to be as a Native journalist and broadcaster, he replied:

There's people I know out there who haven't begun that [healing] journey, or who are farther along that journey. And I know that whatever I'm sharing, or whoever the guests are on the show, or in the tape, what they're sharing is going to affect them some way. Even if it just makes them think positively for two hours about themselves, then that's two hours out of their day that's going to be positive, just positive...So, for that length of time I want to be able to be, I guess, a medium for them to feel good about who they are (30 March 1993).

University radio hosts are responsible for their own expenses, which can be considerable if one is doing research, gathering interviews and covering community events. As with the independent organizations, however, little by way of funding does not necessarily translate into poor quality programming. As Gary Farmer asserts, Indian people have traditionally "done a lot with a little." In recent years, that national Aboriginal broadcast legislation has called for the provision of a substantial amount of funding towards Aboriginal radio and television development is significant. These provisions ought not, however, to be regarded as gifts. They come after almost two centuries worth of Aboriginal protest activity and media activism. The development and national circulation of Aboriginal print and other media, ultimately, has been a necessary condition for the emergence of a truly country wide Native consciousness.

Partly owing to Aboriginal peoples' participation in the formation of broadcast policies, some Native legislation has improved significantly from that which was drafted to regulate the broadcasting of seed in the 19th century and the activities of Native political organizations in the early 20th century. Aboriginal people in Canada have fashioned a national Indigenous television network, for instance, within the guidelines of relatively supportive Aboriginal broadcast policies. In the north and in the south, whether there are Aboriginal media funds and amenable communications policies or not, Native communicators are making the best of whatever resources are at their disposal, using whatever means are available to mediate social change according to the internal imperatives of Aboriginal communities.

For urban Indians and those living on southern reserves, this re-traditionalizing does not imply a retreat northwards to the bush. Brian Wright-McLeod asserts that southern Native peoples must use:

...these tools that we have, whether if it's the English language, or a computer, or radio, or magazine and book publishing, and use the best of our ability to tell the truth, whether they like it or not...This is what self-determination is. And we'll use it by any means, whatever it is (13 December 1996).

Aboriginal mediators are using Native newspapers, radio, videos, television and the internet to restore those inter and intra-community connections disrupted by colonialism.

By narrowcasting, Aboriginal communicators are culturally mediating political, cultural, economic and electronic literacy or competence. They are seeking to balance a local sense of community with national sovereignty and to heal themselves and each other. Narrowcasting is carried out in Aboriginal languages as well as English and French. Because much of the historical and cultural background information necessary for understanding the content is already shared by the audience, however, with television, visual imagery is often employed in the place of spoken texts to evoke places, events and feelings in narrowcast narratives. Broadcasting, which involves inter-cultural communication, also disseminates Aboriginally authored information, but requires a different strategy. Broadcasting techniques include employing English or French and appealing to a common intertribal history, experiences shared by Indigenous populations and often Pan-Indian sensibilities. When broadcasting, no particular age, class, gender, or lifeways group is necessarily targeted, and because there are no assurances of any sort of “commonsense” readings of the texts, voice-overs which direct interpretation along certain lines, are often employed.

Native broadcasters are nurturing constructive relationships with alienated segments of their own communities as well as the rest of Canada through dialogue. In so doing, they are participating in a crucial new form of social agency. When Native peoples document their own ceremonies, council meetings, stories and encounters with such outsiders as the police, the government and other non-Native neighbors, then exchange their media products within and across cultural boundaries; the media become, as Turner suggests, “not merely a *means* of representing culture, actions or events...but themselves the *ends* of social action...” (1991a:36). That they are able to conduct these community projects today, in a mostly supportive policy environment, is attributable to the actions of media protestors and innovators, whose tradition of asserting and mediating Native rights has helped to inscribe Aboriginal sensibilities in broadcast legislation.

Inscribing Ideoscapes And Community Building

By the early 1970s, a network was beginning to emerge comprised by Native communicators from across the country, who subscribed to each other's publications, and listened to recordings of each other's radio programs. Opinions began to coalesce among these organizations regarding the function and goals of Native communications with regard to community development. *The Native People* reported, for instance, that on 4 July 1973, the first Native owned AM radio station in Canada went on the air. Northern Manitoba's Cross Lake station, CFNC was unique in that its broadcast license had been granted to Native Communications Inc. (NCI), a private non-profit Native Communications Society, whose Board of Directors consisted of Native people from various regions in Manitoba. The project was funded by the provincial Department of Northern Affairs. The article quotes Allan Keissler, NCI's General Manager, who states:

Programs will be planned in light of needs recognized by the community and in relation to their aspirations and life-style. Sources of information will be local people...local programming information will help equip listeners for personal and community decision-making and will also provide a means for pursuing and promoting the people's social and cultural interests and thus enable an expansion of their own capabilities... (*The Native People* 20 July 1973).

CFNC, which was the first of many Aboriginal radio stations planned by NCI for Manitoba, was unique among northern radio services also for the reason that it intended to broadcast 75% of its programming in Cree. Social reconstruction projects such as those geared toward asserting the authority of local leaders (as opposed to government officials), promoting Aboriginal language acquisition and retention, and privileging locally relevant forms of knowledge point to a fundamentally different approach to broadcasting.

The idea that Aboriginal radio activities constitute simply a "different use" of a neutral technology does not convey a sense of the depth of difference between mainstream radio and what is in effect an entirely unique discursive formation. Aboriginal media practices, which are negotiated in and across Native languages, socio-cosmological beliefs and practices and cultural institutions, render forth an *indigenized* technology. According to Gary Farmer, Aboriginal radio represents not merely the *means* of ensuring, but also the *end* of efforts to ensure Aboriginal cultural survival:

Electronic media is one way to get to our people with a signal that's reflective of their reality...[without it] there's no way we can survive as Indigenous nations...in this day an age, with enormous signals coming at us about living our life in the mainstream way. They're after us. They want to convert us still. They're still after us to convert us. And we have to work hard at maintaining our cultural integrity...We can't do it without electronic media in the 21st Century (21 January 1997).

Indigenous media, as Ginsburg asserts, is a discursive form for negotiating "powerful relationships to land, myth and ritual" (1991:94). Brian Wright-McLeod explains how the music he plays on *Renegade Radio* departs radically from mainstream norms and conventions for commercial radio. He uses his show, he explains, partly as a means of articulating Aboriginal history through music:

People are documenting history as it happens, in song. And this is an ongoing oral history. This is an extension into the 21st Century of recording who we are, literally recording who we are, and our experiences, and our aspirations, and our fears, and our dreams, and all those things that make us human. You know, it's no different than a round dance song, or a story song being passed down through a family line, or a clan line. And now it's being passed down from musicians. It continues on (13 December 1996).

When Marie Gladue moved to the city of Edmonton from the Big Mountain reservation in Arizona, she experienced feelings of alienation from the Native and non-Native communities. She says she undertook her radio show, *Tribes in Motion*, in an effort to retrieve "her voice." Marie insists that Aboriginal musicians sing about such incidents as Oka, as well as more routine forms of oppression, to document the events and to enable their listeners to co-experience feelings of pain and loss through the music. She envisions her role as being a chronicler of contemporary history:

You play the music and you try to inform your audience where it's coming from and what it's about. So, in a sense, you're a teacher -- sort of a historian just for the minute (4 July 1996).

Novel radio texts are but one distinguishing element in a vastly complex set of Indigenized organizational features.

When narrowcasting, for instance, on reserve radio and in community papers, the protocols regarding who may speak to whom, when, and about what, are closely monitored by community members. Cultural rules concerning the sharing of certain stories at particular times of the year, for instance, may be written into organizational ethics and policy statements, or may simply be silently "understood" by staff. Provided that cultural etiquette is upheld, journalist and editor, Minnie Two Shoes is reluctant to accept that

there is a necessity for official style guides to Native media production, which she says have a tendency to “homogenize the language” (17 June 1999). Greg Young-Ing, an editor for Theytus Books, intervenes that style guides are necessary, however, in instances where Aboriginal cultural protocol is disrespected.¹¹⁷

Young-Ing cites the following common breaches of protocol in representations of Native peoples:

Aboriginal cultural materials that are owned by particular elders, families or clans are appropriated. Aboriginal cultural materials that have specific regulations associated with them, such as they can only be told by certain people, in certain ceremonies and/or at certain times of the year have those regulations broken. Traditional stories, legends, ceremonies, dances and/or objects, such as masks that are deemed as sacred and not intended for the public domain are appropriated and represented...(17 June 1999).

Young-Ing intends that the guide he has prepared will have wider applications than merely the edification of Aboriginal mediators. They are generally already aware of the cultural proscriptions concerning representation, so much so that they generally incorporate this knowledge into their routine work strategies.

Broadcasting circumstances also bespeak a different form of communication when such factors as the organization of the workplace, hiring procedures, and methods of payment are in the hands of Native peoples -- when the work environment reflects Aboriginal cultural values (Bowne 1996:70). Here too, cultural protocols are operative. With broadcasting, however, there is no guarantee that the media texts will be decoded in the ways they were encoded. Hence, some mediators make the effort to inscribe the decoding process within their broadcast texts. The tendency among Aboriginal communicators, as Ginsburg instructs, is to accentuate the *activities* of production and reception — the social relations — as opposed to the dominant cultural model which privileges the text (1993:575).

Whereas globalization theorists contend that modern media are inherently de-traditionalizing and commercializing, Aboriginal radio hosts seem more concerned with the enormous potential of the broadcast media to retrench traditions in contemporary circumstances: to contribute to language retention and evolution; political, historical and cultural awareness; in short, towards issues of identity, sovereignty and

117

Minnie Two Shoes and Greg Young-Ing facilitated a session entitled “Aboriginal Editorial Practice,” at the Aboriginal Voices Festival media conference, which ran from 16-18 June 1999, in Toronto.

communality. Until relatively recently, however, Native communities have been invited to *read*, but not to *write* mass distributed electronic texts. As such, Native radio and televisual discourses are only beginning to arise as Native producers attempt both to develop their own forms of electronic literacy, and to *write* radio and television texts that are appropriate for local or national, Native or non-Native, audiences. The following discussion of locally and nationally cast Native media is intended to provide examples of an emergent urban Aboriginal media discourse on community development.

Unlike northern Ontario's Wawatay, the Alberta Native Communications Society was born of print rather than radio beginnings. Its first manifestation was as a column in the *Edmonton Journal* and later as a Cree radio program aired on CKUA -- a non-Native radio station. These were soon followed by a newsletter and the monthly newspaper *The Native people* (1968), which by 1972 had become the first weekly Native paper in Canada. As *The Native People's* staff was comprised mainly by Cree and English speaking Native people, each issue of the mostly English newspaper, contained several articles in Cree syllabics. Blackfoot speakers in southern Alberta were served by INMS's Blackfoot Radio and *Kainai News*. While other papers which began as organs of the emergent Native political organizations may have been constrained to some extent to accord with a particular political orientation, friendship centre papers, and those put out by Native communications societies, enjoyed greater liberty to pursue a wider range of issues of concern to the Native communities they were accountable to. According to Terry Lusty, who served for a time as the Calgary correspondent for *The Native People*, two Alberta newspapers preceded *The Native People*. Around 1964 in Blood Country, Reggie Black Plume created *The Sundance Echo*, which eventually became *Kainai News*. Lusty explains that while these papers served Native communities in southern Alberta; *The Native People* represented the first truly intertribal provincial paper in Alberta (6 July 1997).

Doug Cuthand, who edited *Native People* from 1969 to 1971, transformed the paper from its newsletter to its newspaper format, and established the paper as a regular monthly (pc 10 September 2000). The ANCS quickly developed radio and video production departments and produced weekly cable

television programs, films by contract, educational materials such as “Kis Ke Yem So” (Cree for “Know Yourself”), a 25 part radio series for grades four to six written by Maria Campbell (*The Native People* 27 July 1973) as well as a weekly program for CBC radio stations in Alberta (2 March 1973). ANCS promoted various forms of literacy. In addition to alphabetic and syllabic texts, for instance, the newspaper asserted the historical relevance of such Indigenous literacies as smoke signaling, sign language and picture writing (11 May 1973). “Blanket talk” is also featured as an important form of Native communication.

According to Lawson Carnochan, for instance, who was a regular contributor to the paper:

When scouts were sent out by a tribe they were usually expected to report as soon as they discovered anything. Blanket talk was a fairly common method with the blanket being held and waved in certain ways to convey the message...It is believed that this system was every bit as complex as the morse code and able to convey as much information although in an abbreviated form (in *Native People* 5 January 1973).

The paper featured Isaac Beaver’s weather forecasting combined meteorological and ecological readings which also tied in medical advice, and formed the subject of an ANCS video and television broadcast. *Native People* was also one of the first Native newspapers to explicitly promote media or electronic literacy by including several educational supplements regarding the mass media. It explained the purposes behind, and goals of, various ANCS radio and television broadcasts. It promoted communications workshops and media assemblies. The paper also profiled Native media personalities, intending that they serve as role-models for the next generation of mediators. The Indian Affairs Department sponsored an ANCS film series project on local government called “Many Voices,” which was designed as an aid for training band councils. Articles supporting the efforts of those involved with the Smallboy Camp proffered general bush competency. For life skills training and to secure the aid of Native advisors in dealings with the court system, readers were directed to the Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA), which later developed its own media department and controlled distribution network.

Owing to the absence of formal culturally appropriate Aboriginal media training establishments in the 1960’s, Alberta Native Communications employees innovated an informal, experimental process for transmitting communications expertise. In addition to the overwhelming amount of work that went into

newspaper, radio and video production, Native journalists at the ANCS also undertook to instruct new employees as they entered the organization. Jane Woodward, former Chair of the Native Communications program at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton, served as the first woman reporter for the newspaper. She recalls that the lack of training programs for Native journalists at the time impelled Native media neophytes to seek out knowledge on their own:

...It was kind of like the blind leading the blind almost, because we didn't have expertise within the Aboriginal community to teach us about [journalism]. So anything that you did, you kind of did on your own...So it was all like a time of growing and learning, and kind of, having to find your own teachers. And so it was a very, very exciting time, of course, at that time. And Aboriginal people were just kind of getting their own voice, and discovering each other, I guess, in these large cities. And it was a time, as well, of accelerated migration into the cities (23 October 1997).

Donna Rae Paquette was initiated into the world of newspaper writing by Jane Woodward, who trained her to write for *The Native People's* women's page. Donna remarks on what a liberating experience newspaper writing was for her:

...It was a license to speak. It was -- we have a voice, we're going to say what we have to say. And of course, when a person...or say a collective body of people, keep things bottled up for a long long time and they don't have anybody to talk to...because nobody's really listening, then when they do get the chance to speak to an audience, to a...vast audience, the first thing that comes out is a spewing forth of all the anger, the hate, the insults. Now it's our turn, and we're going to give it out, like you've been givin' it to us...But it was a wonderful spewing out, it was...We loved what we were doing. We believed in what we were doing. We were fired up and on fire. This was our way of being in the revolution. This was *our* way. And we were all young, and full of piss and vinegar...Oh man, it was an exciting time to be in the Indian movement (11 August 1998).

Working in the Native newspaper environment required that one develop the type of administrative and academic skill set that was required to do battle with mainstream political apparatus and the multitudinous legions of the civil service. In familiarizing individuals with the political discourse and bureaucratic procedures of the mainstream, Native media environments provided a perfect training ground for Native rights leaders and politicians as well as other activists such as artists, entertainers, and educators. Jane Woodward recalls, however, that members of the ANCS were convinced, that without a Native specific educational communications program, they would not be able to reproduce their staff, who were being lured away with attractive job offers, particularly from the Native political organizations.

By 1973, the federal government had begun to formally implement some of the changes to Native

education that had been expressed in the National Indian Brotherhood's policy paper, *Native Control of Native Education* (1972). In the document, the Brotherhood insisted that, "Only Indian peoples can develop a suitable philosophy of education based on Indian values adapted to modern living...." Consequently, in July of 1973, *The Native people* reported that the Alberta provincial government had returned to Native communities some control over their children's education, and transferred to several Native groups the funds to run their own schools and to select their own curriculum.

The staff of ANCS was convinced that media training specifically geared toward Native people was crucial to the educational strategy in development by Alberta's Aboriginal planners. According to Woodward, in 1972, ANCS contracted Edmonton's Grant MacEwan College to deliver the first, and what was to become the longest running, Native communications training program in Canada.¹¹⁸

Around this time, some Native communicators were also actively producing multi-media educational materials for schools and community groups. Under their Challenge for Change Program, for instance, the National Film Board of Canada sponsored Alanis Obomsawin to facilitate storytelling workshops through pictures, slides, film and sound among members of the Manowin reserve in Québec. Alanis Obomsawin, who since went on to become a nationally celebrated and internationally renowned film maker, was initially drawn to communications media for its educational potential:

At first that was my main interest, to try and develop material for teachers, so that the children would learn about themselves and about their ancestors...it's a very important thing, because every community, every town, wants to know about it's own people and about it's own image. They want to be able to recognize themselves... We have something to give. We have something to say that children, people, can live by in their lifetime, or understand what injustice is, understand how we live, why we live this way, understand how laws are made, and not be afraid to fight for their rights, the rights for people of all nations, all those things, and make a better life for the people

118

At the time of this interview (1997), Jane Woodward was the Coordinator for the Native Communications program. In 1999 Grant MacEwan announced it would no longer offer such training and the program was canceled. Several Native communications programs have been established throughout the country: the now defunct Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en School of Journalism in Hazelton BC and the Native Journalism program at the University of Western Ontario in London, the Aboriginal Broadcast Training Initiative program at the Manitoba Indian Cultural Education Centre, Saskatchewan Indian Federated College's INCA program in Regina, the Native Media Program at Capilano College in North Vancouver, and the Native Communication Program at the First Nations Technical Institute at Tyendinega, Ontario.

coming in the next generation (19 September 1996).

Establishing the Grant MacEwan Native Communications Program, and introducing Native authored narratives into mainstream educational contexts, represented critical steps in the process of seizing control over the production and interpretation of images and discourses in common currency concerning Indian peoples. The communications program provided a context for students to innovate various means of negotiating and mediating their relationships to their communities, the Canadian majority and the transnational Indigenous polity through Native media production. The NCP, moreover, afforded students with an opportunity to experiment not merely with the established conventions of mass communications technologies, but to construct and transform Aboriginality itself through the creation of unique production processes and media products by fusing selected features of local "tradition" with outside elements in innovative ways.

Indeed, by examining and critiquing mainstream media practices, Native Communications Program students were able to develop strategies for deconstructing such discursive formations as Eurocentric tropes of civility, the Canadian narrative of progress and modernity, and the normative middle-class whiteness operative in the mainstream news apparatus. For Lisa Meeches who lectured students in the Broadcast Program at the Manitoba Indian Cultural Centre, Native journalism is different in several important respects:

Well, for one thing, it's story structure. When we're interviewing our elders we give them the time they need. We don't say OK this is only a minute and a half story. And it's a lot more tough because you're trying to tell the entire story, especially if you're working in the newsroom. It's really hard. But I guess educating our staff makes it easier, because you know the editor is going to tell the story visually as well. And if you can tell the story visually, as well as verbally, you can tell a greater story. But learning the cultural aspects of an Indian story -- knowing what to shoot, what not to shoot, so being familiar with tradition also helps. And, it has a lot to do with self-esteem. You have to be strong spiritually to be a good reporter, otherwise you're just the whiteman's perfect Indian, telling their stories for them. You're not a Native journalist. So there is a big difference (9 Dec 1997).

According to Leon Anthony, a former instructor in Native communications at Grant MacEwan, the Native students learn to master the dominant journalistic praxis the better to subvert it:

Society is on a real fast pace...and the media is a good reflection of that. They see that people

don't have time -- so let's give them a ninety second fix on what's happening in the world...A lot of times media follows the pattern that society is following, when it should be the other way around. We have to *create* the patterns people want to follow (19 November 1997).

Students in the program assessed what Creeness, for example, meant to them in relation to "Indianess," Canadianess and Indigenouness. They also experimented with various means of electronically inscribing their collective expressions. Students did not, therefore, simply appropriate modern communications technologies. They experimented with ways of negotiating radio, print and televisual practices, in and across Native languages, socio-cosmological beliefs and practices and cultural institutions. The students also inquired into such discursive fields as Canadian broadcasting standards and legislation and global technologies of communication.

Buffy Ste. Marie successfully infiltrated the mainstream mediascape in the 60s through songwriting, musical performances and her appearances on *Sesame Street*. In 1996, she founded "The Cradleboard Teaching Project," a program that promotes cross-cultural awareness via interactive CD ROMs and internet sites. The program seeks to connect and engage Native and non-Native students from Canadian and American elementary school classrooms in discussions concerning Aboriginal cultures and histories. According to Ste. Marie, Cradleboard is geared toward proffering critical social as opposed to merely technological skills, "Cradleboard is not about the technology. Cradleboard is about helping children through cross-cultural communication to get to know one another" (20 March 1999).

Miles Morrisseau, former CBC correspondent, Native newspaper founder, and present Executive Producer for Aboriginal television, attended the now defunct Native Communications Program which was offered at the University of Western Ontario in London until 1990. He too asserts that the program provided a context for the forging of interpersonal relations with the other Native students which facilitated the collective imagining of possible futures. This laboratory for the testing of forms of inter- and extra-tribal mediation, rather than simply the training in the mechanics of camera operation, was what he valued in the program:

The program itself was adequate. I wouldn't say it was great or anything like that. But what was amazing about it, and I think that's what's sorely missed about the fact that the program is no

longer in existence, is the fact that it brought a dozen people from all across the country, who came with their own experiences and their own histories and their own stories to tell, and put them in an environment where they talked about Journalism, and the news and media with other Native people from other territories. And you heard stories that you didn't hear. And you would hear perspectives of stories that should be told that were basically being ignored, or being twisted in a way that made them not valid. So that basically started me off on that career as a Journalist. And it was really sharing with those other people, as we sort of developed dreams and challenges of what we would like to see if we ever had the power, which we never did [laughs]. We had visions of it at certain times. It's something that is an ongoing struggle (5 May 1998).

Buffy Ste. Marie insists that media production (and one might add, media production training) is a rich environment for the ongoing process of neo-traditionalizing and re-inventing or re-constructing

Aboriginality. She insists:

We're trying to not only *preserve* our traditions, but encourage the *development* of our traditions...We're not dealing with preserving corpses here. Our traditions are still alive. They're not recognized except in ourselves...Native traditions are traditional and still alive...the whole reason I went on *Sesame Street* even, was to prove that we're not all dead and stuffed in museums somewhere, with the dinosaurs. We have living traditions (27 March 1993, *Smoke Signals*).

Producing Native media products for both broad and narrowcasting purposes has become an increasingly important form of social agency. According to Thompson, employing mass media fosters a "re-mooring" of tradition. He submits, "...new communications media ...provide the means of separating the transmission of tradition from the sharing of a common locale, thus creating the conditions for the renewal of tradition on a scale that greatly exceeds anything that existed in the past." In other words, mediated communication, he says, facilitates an embedding of traditions in new contexts and a linking of traditions to new territorial units that exceed the limits of shared locales and face to face communication (1995:187-188).

One of the advantages of narrowcasting, on the other hand, is that Aboriginal media texts do not require an explicit outline as to how they should be read. Video production at Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA), for example, is currently geared toward collectively engaging Native communities and mobilizing support for, and participation in, local community development. NCSA videos are not produced simply to entertain. Their visual language moreover does not easily correspond to any mainstream model. Kulchyski (1989) for instance, notes that what distinguishes Inuit film and video as a discursive formation from mainstream Canadian cinema (in addition to such factors of filmic language as pacing, shot

composition, and storyline) is the absence in Inuit films and videos of performers, and thus of a barrier between the audience and the performer. This is also the case for NCSA films, where accountability to, and credibility within, one's community requires that the media producers know (have some *personal* experience of) the video's subject. One of the most popular NCSA projects to date, for instance, has been the four part series, *Rage* which dramatizes the childhood reminiscences and adult lives of Aboriginal violent offenders. The story was scripted, acted, shot and co-directed by a group of re-formed offenders, themselves.

NCSA¹¹⁹ is an excellent example, moreover, of how Native media producers, in diminishing the "massness" of the medium, are able to innovate novel flows of cultural knowledge, while at the same time respecting the rules governing information access, thus "protecting communication pathways and the value of information they carry" (Michaels 1986:153). Judi Jeffrey, a graduate of the Grant MacEwan College Native Communications program, is the Head of the NCSA media department. She explains that NCSA has nine offices to which the media department's videos are distributed. Satellite offices throughout Alberta borrow the videos from the regional offices. Field staff from these offices also request that specific videos be made to address such local community concerns as HIV and AIDS awareness, legal or financial matters and so on. NCSA also aids in the crafting of community policy on such issues (1 December 1997). NCSA's central mandate is to provide practical information and thus to promote cultural competency among Indian peoples, and to mediate between mainstream institutions and Indian peoples of Alberta (NCSA 1994). To these ends NCSA has produced videos on such topics as: crime prevention, parenting, money management, Native legends, substance abuse, hunting and fishing rights, the Young Offenders Act and AIDS (NCSA 1994).

119

NCSA was founded and initially financed independently by Chester Cunningham, who originally delivered these services through the Edmonton Friendship Centre. To fund the expanded project he was required to secure a personal bank loan, as banks would not fund Native organizations at that time. In February of 1997, at which time Mr. Cunningham won an Aboriginal Achievement Award, NCSA was celebrating its 25th year in operation. Graduate of the NCP at Grant MacEwan, and movie actor, Jimmy Herman was one of the first people hired to work in NCSA's media department. This information was taken from an interview conducted by Cathy Sewell with Chester Cunningham for the Edmonton Cable Access television show, "Aboriginal Expressions" (aired March 1997).

These productions are authored by mostly Native production crews and are generally shown to target Native audiences. This information trajectory reflects a cultural politics of dissemination that might be labelled “narrowcasting,” insofar as it comprises an information system wherein both the pathways, and the information content, are protected in order to ensure that the right people are seeing the right text under appropriately managed conditions. Under such conditions, there is a greater likelihood that Aboriginal conventions regarding such matters as interview protocol (who many speak to whom about what topics) and rules governing the ownership and sharing of certain types of information (ceremonial and intellectual property) will be appreciated. Where Aboriginal social relations of production and consumption prevail, video texts are more likely to be decoded in the way they were encoded -- viewers are more likely to retrieve or negotiate the intended messages from the video -- than if the crews or audiences were predominantly non-local Native peoples or non-Natives. The sharing of an implicit background knowledge, which is inculcated slowly over a lifetime, makes this common capacity for sense-making possible.

This network suggests a kinship, as opposed to a library of information model insofar as it passes along information according to the rules and interdictions of particular communities, and links those who, while they may not share blood, are joined both experientially and epistemologically. In other words, the network associates those who collectively value particular conventions for negotiating meaning. Because NCSA videos are not broadcast via television networks, the information trajectory is localized and operates as a community-oriented resource. The mainstream media’s preferred information handling structure, on the other hand, resembles a more impersonal, city centred, “commercially-oriented consumer vehicle,” which broadcasts indiscriminately to the widest audience possible (O’Regan 1990:78). Providing protonarratives of possible lives and imitable forms of Native competency, each NCSA video contributes in some way to the development of Aboriginal community imaginaries and individual identities. This technology or strategy of videography can be viewed as mobilizing the development of rights and identity based micro-discourses, and as rendering therefore, a localized customarily modern or neo-traditional form of Aboriginality.

Native controlled media production sites -- where information and knowledge are produced and circulated -- have also become important vehicles for producing Aboriginal competency and such modern forms of solidarity as intertribalism (sometimes called pan-Indianism), and political nationalism. Cat Cayuga, one of the founders of the Aboriginal Film and Video Alliance, explains how a video project might foster a sense of regional solidarity. Cayuga along with project mentors, Bernelda Wheeler, Alanis Obomsawin and Wil Campbell, initiated a media training project entitled "Elder Voices." Ten culturally and experientially diverse Native communities on reserves and in cities throughout Ontario participated in the project. According to Cayuga, although it involved teaching community members how to develop scripts, use video equipment to tell stories, and market the final product the principal purpose of the project was to promote the idea of a "collective process":

I think when we started the project, we had more than just tangible, practical, concrete hopes for it...in terms of the collective awareness, you know, and how we deal and work with each other through a process...It was our understanding to try to work in what we thought was...an *Aboriginal* way, and what does that mean to us, and how do we work with each other. And also to work with elders and really contemplate what is an elder...people will find a point of reference for what elder means to them...It will be each individual's point of reference within themselves, within the group, within their community, and how it relates to them within their community...And the idea of strengthening our cultural ground, you know, it's like you strengthen this ground in Moose Factory, or strengthen the ground in Toronto. At some point, all our ground is going to meet (12 December 1996).

The screening of the final product, a video comprised by ten treatments on the subject of elders, enabled an embedding of the notions of elders from a multiplicity of locales, in the territorial unit of Ontario. The video represents the sort of collectiveness that is possible with cultural and experiential diversity, and serves therefore, as a possible model for Aboriginal nationalism.

After ten years of publishing, on March 29, 1993 *Windspeaker* issued its first national edition. One of the most successful nationally distributed Native newspapers, it has been crucial to the promotion of Aboriginal nationalism by helping to establish a national speech community. Bert Crowfoot, Publisher, was one of the first graduates of the Alberta Native Communication's Society's Native Communications Program. He previously worked as a sports reporter for *Kainai News*, founded the Hobbema based newspaper *The Native Ensign* and edited *The Native People* for several months in 1980.

In 1983, a year after the *Native People* ceased publication, Crowfoot resurrected the paper renaming it AMMSA -- the acronym for the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society of Alberta, which was incorporated that year. In 1986, the newspaper was renamed *Windspeaker*. It continues to serve as the umbrella organ for several other regional papers also put out by AMMSA including: Saskatchewan *Sage*, Alberta's *Sweetgrass*, and the most recent creation, British Columbia's *Raven's Eye*. Crowfoot was also instrumental in establishing AMMSA's CFWE Radio which is based in Edmonton, but owing to the shortage of available air space there, is not available in the city. At the time of the 1990 funding cuts to southern Native media, nine of eleven publications funded by the Native Communications Program were discontinued. *Windspeaker* was the only Native newspaper west of Ontario to survive. It has become the most widely circulated Native newspaper in the country. Crowfoot continues to serve as CFWE's General Manager. CFWE is a satellite network that is received in northern Alberta by forty-three satellites and six Native communities. The signal is broadcast live, twelve hours a day, five days a week, and four hours a day on the weekend. A satellite wrap around service fills the off air period (Crowfoot 25 June 1996).

Crowfoot asserts that Aboriginal radio has strong community building potential:

I think what's happening is people are finding that they need to communicate to their people; that a lot of the problems that are happening on a reserve are a result of people not knowing what's going on, or not knowing who is doing what; and knowledge is power. If people know what's going on, then it empowers them to get control of their own situations (25 June 1996).

Finding fluent Native language speakers who are media savvy, however, is a common problem plaguing many Aboriginal communications outlets. Native languages themselves often lack the vocabulary necessary for discussing legal and technical issues relating to, for instance, environmental and modern communications issues. For this reason, AMMSA co-sponsored the development of the *Alberta Elders' Cree Dictionary*. In the section devoted to new terminology can be found Cree translations of such media related terms as, broadcast (*ka pekiskweh etowihk*), journalism (*ka acimowasinahikehk*), newsworthy (*takahki acimowin*) and radio (*kanotohtamihk*). Joel Demay (1991a:424-5) writes that the characteristics of developmental media include media practices which: incorporate traditional forms of communication, accommodate social or communal interests, rely on interpersonal communication and show a commitment

to social change. Developmental media, he says, motivate people to participate in the process of change by educating audiences and by providing technical information about problems, possibilities and innovations.

Amos Key, who with Gary Farmer and others founded of Six Nations' radio station, CKRZ -- "The Voice of the Grand"¹²⁰ in Ohsweken, Ontario compiled the document entitled "Setting Up a Community Radio Station: Helpful Hints," in which he lists the following reasons for establishing community radio:

...It promotes who you are culturally and linguistically...It can build a sense of community. Can promote change: socially, politically, physically and mentally for the betterment of the community. It can advance the "Cause." Promotes patriotism in who we are! Promotes our own writers and our performing artists. Creates a market for our musicians. Most importantly if can promote pride in our languages by promoting the usage of our languages...It can promote economic development...It can be a forum to discuss issues, ideas...It can be a tool in case of emergency¹²¹ (August 1993).

At the CRTC broadcast license hearing for JUMP FM, Maurice Switzer stressed the following characteristics of Aboriginal media for development:

So if there aren't vehicles like Aboriginal Voices Radio or APTN, *The Messenger*¹²² or *Windspeaker*, you know, all of these, these little scattered communication vehicles, important stories aren't going to be told. And not just to mainstream Canadians or wider Canada, who really have just woeful ignorance about Aboriginal people, it is just -- a day does not go by in which I'm not amazed at the lack of knowledge about some pretty basic aboriginal cultural or traditional or historic information that is exhibited in the mainstream media. It is very important that Aboriginal Native people talk amongst ourselves about what is going on and hear our own voices...It can impart hope. If you know that some people are accomplishing things -- if you grew up in an environment that is maybe not the most positive environment because of all sorts of social issues and poverty issues, to know that people are succeeding is extremely important, and Aboriginal media is very important to carry those messages, those messages of hope. They are education messages (8 February 2000).

120

The first Native radio station to go on air in Southern Ontario was Akwesasne's CKON, which began broadcasting in 1985. CKRZ, formerly CFCN, began in pirate radio form in 1990. Aboriginal radio stations now exist on most southern reserves, as well as several urban centres on university stations throughout Southern Ontario.

121

In northern areas, for example, radio takes the place of roads during bad weather bouts. People call in and listen rather than going out and visiting. In the south, on the other hand, the Mohawks of Kanawake used their community station, CKRK to keep information flowing out of the community during the 1990 "Oka Crisis."

122

The Messenger is published by the Assembly of First Nations in Ottawa.

For Dan and Mary Lou Smoke of *Smoke Signals*, Aboriginal radio provides the context for Aboriginal people simply to speak and listen to one another, which has enormous "healing" potential:

Each one of us has gifts, but we don't have to be singers to let people know about it. We have other ways of sharing that. And so... talking about it, talk about the good things, you know. At the outset we talked about the problems, the silence, the code of silence, that's been the problem. The solution is to talk about the solutions, to share them too, because I think that's how we heal (30 March 1993).

One way that CFWE promotes community building is by providing a forum for the negotiation of relations between Native politicians and the Aboriginal public. Crowfoot explains:

What we've done with our media, in some cases, especially on the radio, is we've had forums, where we've had two, or three, or four of the different leaders go on an open line show where people can ask them questions...you've got access to a talk show or to an open line where you can ask people questions about self-government, ask them questions about taxation, or ask questions about some of the other issues that are there (25 June 1996):

This dialogue between the Aboriginal leaders and public promotes not only an understanding of the political process, which tends to encourage greater participation; but serves also as a fundamental step in policy-making as leaders are publicly obliged to justify their decisions. Riggins (1983:49) notes that because the mainstream media is, for the most part, uninterested in exchanges between Indian leaders and the Aboriginal public, Native media outlets (such as CFWE and CKRZ) are the only viable forums for political dialogue on these issues.

The CFWE radio network has been adapted as a political forum; as an instrument of community mobilization; as a means of transmitting Native languages, stories, news and practical information; as an emergency hot line; as a community events bulletin board; as a promotional vehicle for Native arts; and as a town hall. It has been implicitly assumed by the dominant cultural industries that "professionalism," however, is quintessentially synonymous with the mainstream model of journalism, despite the fundamentally different demands Native communities make on Native journalists, and the unique types of responses they in turn make to those demands. The CFWE radio project, therefore, offers no signs of an inevitable surrender to some Euro-Canadian sense of media "professionalism" or modernity. Rather, CFWE's Aboriginal communicators have allied radio with a concrete political movement and are

employing the medium to address many of the same Aboriginal issues Jones' *The Indian* set out to clarify, namely: Indian sovereignty; land claim, taxation and education but also with the creation of community solidarity in urban areas — a distinctly modern concern.

Unlike *The Indian*, however, AMMSA's various media have achieved a modicum of financial success. At a Native media conference held in May 2000, in Toronto Crowfoot commented on the problems with Native media outlets that were "hooked on funding." *Windspeaker* is published without financial support from either the mainstream or Aboriginal governments. With financial independence, according to Crowfoot, comes ideological independence:

I think it's important that we have our own media. And when we say independent, we also have to be independent from the Native politicians...a lot of politicians have their own agendas, and they only want the people to know, what they want them to know. And it's important as a media, that you are able to get all of the information out to the individuals, and people on reserve...there's a lot of media that is controlled by council -- controlled by the various politicians -- and a lot of times when you're in control of communications, it's a very powerful control that you have on people (25 June 1996).

According to Christopher Spence, it is imperative that Native mediators become familiar with the dominant system. Aboriginal communicators, however, "try not to make the same mistakes that others in media have made. We have a chance to look at [mainstream media] and work away from what's in place" (19 May 2001). Madden writes of the Inuit that, "They see the CBC as a teacher of the aspects of Southern Canadian culture that they feel a need to understand -- adapting aspects of the culture they feel useful, rejecting those they feel detrimental, finding an accommodation between both cultures' needs that will allow the Inuit to survive (1992:146). Aboriginal mediators looked to their already existing systems of communication for the provision of models on which to base new syntheses of interests, associations, practices and products. They also appropriated and indigenized some elements from mainstream media models. Native and mainstream Canadian journalisms, because they constitute socio-cosmologically informed practices of cultural mediation, therefore, are destined to follow two distinct historical trajectories.

Native journalism is comprised by a myriad of styles and approaches which are directly affected by such factors as current broadcast policies, funding structures, Indian legislation, local cultural values as well

as individual aesthetics. The unique means by which Native communicators negotiate elements from this discursive repertoire constitute the alternative information casting paradigms of the Aboriginal mediascape. The one characteristic, however, that all Aboriginal broad- and narrowcasting efforts share is the emphasis on marking off Aboriginality, or distinguishing the Aboriginal from the mainstream. To advance ideological independence, moreover, or the freedom to construct one's own interpretive frames, is the intended goal of the vast majority of Native mediating endeavours. According to Tim Johnson,¹²³ within the context of Native American journalism ideological independence does not necessarily result, however, simply from de-Americanizing Native content, nor from barring politicians from practicing press work. Johnson is a former Six Nations resident who now serves as the Publisher and Executive Editor for the Oneida New York based *Indian Country Today* — America's national Native newspaper. He describes *Indian Country Today's* unique editorial policy:

The integrity of the editorial voice of the newspaper is absolutely essential in my estimation. And I think all too often we've seen examples of newspapers where...the publisher of the paper is basically voicing their opinion on various issues, sometimes even reporting a story and they issue an opinion on the story. And what we really did with *Indian Country Today* is we really want to make that a group process, bringing together folks — other Native journalists, other leadership people from any range of areas — to come in and feed us their opinions and their viewpoints and then out of that, we fashion a position for the newspaper. It's not any one person's voice. And what we've realized by doing that is that it really helps to moderate the language, it forces our editors to look at what are realistic issues — you know, what does it take to get informed about an issue before you can render an opinion that's appropriate. So, I think by putting more of an intellectual process to it, a group process, has really helped us to provide a clear, and as unbiased a position as we possibly can...within the overall editorial values that Aboriginal people would hold dear (on *Urbanative* 5 March 2001).

Although the papers pursue different production strategies, the ultimate goal of such independent organs as *Windspeaker* and *Indian Country Today* is to help to facilitate a learning process whereby Indian readers from across the country come to contemplate their common interests -- in other words, to construct a vision of "the nation" and to promote a sense of national solidarity. This, according to Johnson, is crucial if the paper is to fulfil its role of bringing influence to bear on the policies being made which affect Indian

123

Tim Johnson was interviewed by Andre Morrisseau on 5 March 2001, for *Urbanative*.

peoples. He asserts:

In today's world it's not necessarily the gun that is going to eradicate Indian rights. It's legal, highly technical issues, it's legislation that slips through without the Indian leadership fully aware of its long range implications — things of this nature that otherwise may adversely affect Indian sovereignty. So because of that, Indian Country has to educate itself more and more as time goes on. And as information is transmitted more quickly, you really have to stay on top of things (ibid).

In keeping with the tradition of adaptation, contemporary Aboriginal communicators are building on previously recast media forms, such as the Native newspaper, to reach increasingly mobile Aboriginal audiences and new markets of interested non-Aboriginal readers. *Indian Country Today*, for example, now publishes over the internet as well as in its traditional format.

Because the Aboriginal elderly are generally the repositories of older traditions, it often befalls the younger generation to embrace, and to recondition, new technologies. Aboriginal youth, in particular, are quickly becoming computer conversant, learning html (Hyper-Text Markup Language used to construct web pages), often before their “traditional” tongues. Aboriginal internet use, however, cannot be neatly categorized in terms of broadening or narrowing an information trajectory.

Native people in remote areas have been able to earn high school diplomas and university degrees while continuing to live off the land by means of the internet. Aboriginal organizations have been able to plan international gatherings as well as to gather by tele- and video-conferencing for meetings, eliminating travel time and expenses. Native communities such as the Oneida of Standing Stone in New York, the first Indian nation to put up a web page, are employing Native listserv discussion groups as a vehicle for official press releases, to archive and post their treaties, to provide a virtual tour of their territory and the cultural centre, to document the activities of the Oneida police force, and to chronicle Oneida history (Polly 1998:37-41). The internet provides each Indian individual with a computer the opportunity of becoming a mediator. The world wide web serves as a forum for Native people to articulate, and disseminate their own stories as extensively or as restrictively as particular purposes demand.

According to Ben Winton, publisher of *Native Peoples* magazine, when conflicts between the Chief and Council and Native journalists impede the flow of information to the people, the internet might

provide a solution. He submits:

I was kicking around this question of how do we maintain a free press, and I came up with an idea...the internet. It may be another avenue that we haven't explored...I don't think [tribal governments] can control the internet. It's been argued that because of the introduction of the internet that the media is truly unchecked and uncontrolled now, and maybe by putting our stories on-line, stories that we can't get into print anywhere else, it might be another avenue to explore (16 June 1999).

The First Perspective newspaper's James Wastasecoot insists that even though the majority of Native leaders are highly principled, community functionality is conditional on whether residents have a source of information that remains at an arm's length from the band council authority structure (16 June 1999). He explains that in a typical reserve setting, the communications system consists of band meetings, the bulletin board, the moccasin telegraph or rumour mill, regional radio stations and the mainstream media. None of these, he says, routinely provides reliable information on, nor to, the local community:

This is why we need a community newspaper in every community...What we try and do is to inform the community about what's going on in that community so that the people can make an informed decision an act. They should be able to act on the information that we convey to them...(ibid).

Wastasecoot has been publishing *The First Perspective* newspaper on the web for some time. He also publishes a community paper by conventional means for the Peguis reserve in Manitoba.

Native news wire services, which transmit information over the internet on a subscription basis, provide Native publishers, as well as broad and narrowcasters with an independent source of information related to continental Native happenings. Todd York of the Nebraska based Indianz.com, which debuted in August 1999, submits that conventional newspapers are ill-equipped to provide any sort of documentary background on the stories they publish. Indianz.com, on the other hand, provides stories as well as links to historical and legal documents (*Lincoln Journal Star* on-line, <http://www.journalstar.com> 21 May 2001). Lending readers the opportunity to view primary documents themselves enables individuals to construct their own authoritative readings of these texts. The chat groups which have spun off of such sites, moreover, provide subscribers with a forum in which to discuss their interpretations with others.

Organizing principles such as the hunting paradigm or the ceremonial cycle, which are still

operative on many reserves, do not necessarily transport well into large urban areas where the Aboriginal diaspora is culturally diverse. Consequently, consorting by means of the internet has become an important context for the transmission of news and tradition both within, and between, reserves and cities. The internet represents the evolution of the moccasin telegraph, says Ishgooda, webmaster of *nativenewsonline.org*, in Riverview, Michigan. "Before [communication] was mouth to mouth. Now it's keyboard to keyboard" (ibid). Listserv subscribers are forming discursively based net communities which have little to do with territoriality, nor necessarily with cultural affinities. A distinctly modern form of solidarity, these internet communities are products of the "collective imagination," and not necessarily the outgrowth "of the natural destinies of peoples, whether rooted in languages, race, soil, or religion" (Appadurai 1996:161). Mobilizing activity among groups of shared interest over the internet offers a new means for inscribing novel forms of Aboriginal identity, affinity and assembly.

Live radio, which began as a global form, became one of the most local of mass media in reserve contexts. With the advent of audio streaming or webcasting, however, radio now has the potential to pursue the obverse trajectory. In April 2001, the Banff Centre for the Arts held a symposium for Aboriginal mediators on the topic of webcasting Native radio programs. According to Marrie Mumford, Banff Centre's Artistic Director for Aboriginal Arts, "The ultimate impact is to engender a network that will, in the long run, link Aboriginal artists and communities to national and international indigenous communities" (AIROS Press Release 5 April 2001).

Native America Calling is a call-in talk show that is webcast by means of the American Indian Radio On Satellite (AIROS) network. On-line listeners are invited each show, to join the "electronic talking circle." Christopher Spence, aka "Chagoosh" is the Producer, technician, web master and host of what he calls the "interactive convergent media initiative" (19 May 2001). This involves using his web page as a point of confluence to link the radio shows *Urbanative* and *Native America Calling*, chat groups, a message board, an interactive photo album, and other features. Spence, who calls himself a "digital warrior," sees his mission as providing "a place, on the radio dial, in cyber-space, and eventually all mediums, where you

will find interactive Native North American content..."(ibid). He intends that his manner of producing "convergent" media will serve as a prototype for other Native radio shows.

To publicize *Ubanative*, which began broadcasting in the Spring of 2001, Spence sent out e-mails to the two hundred plus Aboriginal people in his directory. The word soon spread, and he has since received over two thousand replies from new listeners. Spence augments the music stores for the show, which he funds himself, by downloading MP3 music files from the many Native web sites he steadfastly unearths. He says this enables Native musicians to receive instant air-time and eliminates high production and shipping expenses, which have had a prohibitive effect on the dissemination of new Native music (ibid).

Spence has a highly innovative approach to internet radio, one however, which builds on well-established forms of Aboriginal communication. In 1999, he conducted a highly successful media experiment which involved building a temporary radio station on site for the Aboriginal Voices film, video and music festival. He and Andre Morrisseau co-hosted a live, webcast radio program throughout the six day event. During the night, they linked up with and broadcast AIROS programming. At the time, AIROS was the first and only internet broadcaster. According to Spence, the Aboriginal Voices experiment was the first effort ever in Canada to webstream in this way.

Spence also manned the computer display which invited festival attendees to enter the "Cyber Pow Wow." This computer application was the work of Skawennati Tricia Fragnito and a consortium of Native new media artists. The Cyber Pow Wow took the form of an inter-active chat room in which one would assume an avatar and use it to wander from tipi to tipi, much as one would at a regular pow wow, viewing the works of the artists and meeting people. Spence explains, "I wanted the pow wow integrated with our radio programming...this would involve people who were listening on-line to our radio station from around the world. They can listen to the audio while chatting with people who are also listening to the same audio" (ibid). Pow wows represent a sort of sonic unisonance — people gather to listen and dance to singing and drumming and to forge inter-national connections. That the connections in this instance are electronic is incidental. It is the spirit of this communicative act which makes this a uniquely Aboriginal application of

the internet.

More Aboriginal Films, also, are beginning to be made locally and circulated internationally. Like the internet, filmmaking is one of the relatively newer communicative forms Native communicators are endeavouring to indigenize. According to the Aboriginal Filmmakers Association of Alberta, when first Dene film maker returned home to the Northwest Territories, his people had no word for his new art:

They called it dream talking. "When you make films," an elder said, "you are speaking your dreams" (Dreamspeakers pamphlet 1992).

Festivals such as Dreamspeakers,¹²⁴ the first and until recently, only Aboriginal film and arts festival in Canada, the Aboriginal Voices Festival, and conferences held by organizations such as the First Nations Technical Institute, the Native Indian and Inuit Photographers Association, the Centre for Aboriginal Media, and the American based, Native American Journalists Association, have become the loci both for networking and for strategizing Aboriginal media activism. Media conferences and festivals, moreover, have become gathering places for the world's Indigenous mediators. Together, they are innovating new methods of explicitly challenging the global media as opiate model by restoring to individuals in their communities a sense of dignity, and enabling them to negotiate community valued forms of competency as well as Aboriginality. At the same time, they are empowering individuals in their communities to achieve a sense of locality while simultaneously promoting inter-national interaction and thus, by way of media practices and products, are endeavouring to culturally mediate an Indigenous solidarity. Native communicators are mobilizing their visions, moreover, according to Michael Doxtater, to redeem not simply Indian nations, but "society, as a whole" (23 November 1996).

In providing access to the sort of information that allows Aboriginal individuals to narrow the gap between popular and Aboriginal histories, to understand Indian legislation, to deploy the dominant political

124

The first annual Dreamspeakers festival was held from 22-27 Sept 1992, in Edmonton. The festival featured hands-on workshops and professional instruction in: directing, screenwriting, producing and acting. The second part of symposium was comprised by sessions focusing on: colonialism, mother earth, spirit talk and Aboriginal humour. In 1996, Dreamspeakers began honouring selected recipients with film industry awards.

system toward their own common interests, and to strategically select and integrate elements from mainstream and Aboriginal socio-cosmological beliefs and economic systems contemporary Aboriginal mediators are asserting that the power to make one's own informed choices, to creatively self-govern as it were, might well mitigate the destructive effects of colonization. Third Worldist film represents a project of "remapping and renaming," "reclaiming and reaccentuating events" according to Shohat and Stam (1994:249). Aboriginal media shares this penchant for reinscribing the past. Where attention to neo-tradition is the operative form of modernity; interrogating and re-articulating the past effectively rewrites the present and enables a path to be charted into the future. "The communication of political power," says Donald Browne, "won't guarantee political progress...but the lack of communication will almost certainly guarantee the lack of progress" (1996:191).

CONCLUSION

Much like a mass media apparatus, the Methodist institutional structure was designed in such a way as to permit the same message to be broadly cast over a vast territory. Missionaries, however, who served as the prime agents of mediation, soon found that one set of communicative strategies would not work for each locality. Aboriginal missionary mediators adapted Methodist messages and technologies to serve Native community needs. By disseminating information which engendered alterations to the Native habitus, the Ojibwe ministers were deeply implicated in societal transformation as well as cultural arbitration. Steinhauer's camp, for instance, sought to retool the cultural register of the Cree language, as much as the Cree people themselves, in order to convey the cultural logic that the biblical word implied. The unintended result of these endeavours was the Aboriginal appropriation and dissemination of a syllabic system — a communicative form which Aboriginal people employed in pursuance of their own imperatives. Thus, while missionaries set about to reconstruct the Native habitus and to construct a Methodist nation, they found themselves enrolled in plans of Native making, cast in roles they were unable to anticipate, and often placed in the service of an Aboriginal nationalism. Once moored in new Aboriginal localities, Methodism, met the same fate as did other mass mediated products — it was syncretized and multiplied.

Aboriginal peoples' receptiveness to some carefully selected missionary influences is in keeping with their "opportunity" based approach to the changing environmental factors framing their lives. It was from the hybridization of Ojibwe forms of communication, for example, that the discourse of protest, based on comparison and contrast, could be derived. The weaving together of traditions and discourses is part of a larger and ongoing pattern of syncretic adaptation, which has served as a powerful strategy for sustaining the very notion of *Aboriginality* in the midst of rapid cultural change.

Outside the missionary complex, mediators such as Peter E. Jones, Frederick Ogilvie Loft and Andrew Paull employed newspapers to promote particular visions of modernity and of nationhood. Their

struggle to achieve justice for Native peoples was informed by their preferred readings of the Aboriginal treaty literature and Indian legislation, and was fueled by strategic writing campaigns. Their renditions of Indianness contested the images of Native peoples that were published in the non-Native presses, where Native voices but not Native imagery were deemed superfluous to the story of the development of the Canadian nation. These political activists would initiate a certain pattern of structured non-violent opposition to the Canadian state, which would influence the very specific form of protest that Indian people would employ for the next one hundred years. This mobilizing principle would serve as the prototype to the types of Indian organizations that currently exist. These organizations, furthermore, would fundamentally change the structure of Aboriginal communication, speaking for peoples with mixed cultural and lingual affiliations, and from geographic regions beyond shared locales.

Providing access to the information that is required both to produce an informed opinion and to engage in meaningful social action has been the continuous goal of Native mediators from Peter E. Jones and Henry Bird Steinhauer in the 19th century, Henry Bird's great grandson Eugene Steinhauer in the 20th, through to such contemporary communicators as Bert Crowfoot and Gary Farmer in the 21st. In mobilizing a sort of syncretic adaptive politics, each of these Aboriginal mediators has sought to pose as well as to arbitrate critically important questions regarding key cultural transformations associated with the rise of modern Aboriginal society. The process of indigenizing the presses and the airwaves has been vital to the emergence of contemporary Aboriginal identities.

When Native political organizations, friendship centres and Communications Societies initially formed, they provided a means to assert control over the type and direction of information flowing in and between Native communities, and served as vehicles for the recasting of information about Native people for non-Native consumption. Native newspapers such as *The Native People*, *The Native Voice*, and *The Calumet*, which emerged at a time when Native competence was becoming imaginable to Canadians, represented elaborations on the form of Native protest. Each contributed to the evolution of the political strategies initiated by Aboriginal activists in the treaty and civil rights movements. A full century after

Peter E. Jones' paper was laid to rest, AMMSA's CFWE and *Windspeaker*, as well as *Indian Country Today* and *The First Perspective* would continue to address many of the same issues *The Indian* set out to clarify, namely: Indian sovereignty; land claims, taxation and education, but also the creation of community solidarity in urban areas — a distinctly modern concern. The ultimate goal of these organs has been to construct a vision of "the nation" and to promote a sense of national solidarity.

In 1998, the first "all Native" feature film entitled, "Smoke Signals"¹²⁵ was released for viewing by North American audiences. The film opens with a view of a camper sitting at the crossroads where a Coeur d'Alene reservation road meets the highway. On top of the camper sits a Native man issuing reports via reservation radio as to the local weather, what types of vehicles are driving by, who is entering reservation land and other seemingly "non-newsworthy" pieces of information. Contemporary Aboriginal peoples, the scene might say, do not live in isolation unaffected by outside influences. They put so called "modern" technology, moreover, to the service of traditionally valued forms of mobility and orality.

Aboriginal films like Native writings, attest not to a mere replacement of Native orality by white filmic languages and literacy, but to a creative synthesis of selected metaphoric, allegoric and other narrative conventions of Native oration with non-Native scribal traditions, that is cast on screen or penned in English prose. Aboriginal mediative practices also combine elements of two culturally informed communications systems -- the mocassin telegraph (comprised by Native kinship and community networks) and mass production and dissemination (comprised by owners/producers and consumers). Scollon and Scollon submit that in terms of Athabaskan storytelling traditions, for example, the principles remain the same whether spoken in English or in Athabaskan. Variations in the story result, instead, when storytellers adapt the story to meet the requirements of a particular audience (1984:178). Broad and narrowcasting strategies, therefore, generally deliver distinct versions of the same story.

Narrowcasting, an elaboration on the mocassin telegraph theme, is a strategy which ensures that

125

Smoke Signals was written by Sherman Alexie, directed by Chris Eyre and stars Evan Adams, Adam Beach, Irene Bedard and Gary Farmer.

the right people are seeing or hearing the right text under appropriately managed conditions. Narrowcasting protects local communication pathways, and their information content. For this reason, audiences receiving narrowcast media products are more likely to retrieve or negotiate the intended messages from them, without the provision of explanations and motivations. Rendering radio, press and television technologies responsive to community communications conventions is highly conducive to the promotion of community building initiatives. Providing protonarratives of possible lives and imitable forms of Native competency, narrowcast media products contribute to the development of Aboriginal community imaginaries as well as individual identities. This strategy is localizing in the sense that it constitutes a fortification, as well as an extension, of already existing intra-community communications corridors. In that it is employed to urge a reflexive consideration, and often a reworking, of particular local versions of Aboriginality and of modernity, narrowcasting practices create the conditions for the renewal of tradition and evoke performances of neo-traditionality.

Broadcasting Aboriginal media products is a strategy with somewhat different implications. Broadcast audiences, for instance, are less likely to decode the texts in the ways they were encoded without implicit "reading" directions. Native broadcasters, therefore, address culturally diverse Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal audiences by resorting to wider inter-tribal or pan-Indian themes, by using English, which has become the Aboriginal *lingua franca*, and French, and by including explanations of the social processes of cultural production within the broadcast texts themselves. By unmooring traditions from their territories and re-embedding them among communities of interest rather than of shared locale, broadcasting elicits novel forms of Aboriginal solidarity. Because of their capacity for wide reception across cultural and geographic borders, broadcast Aboriginal texts are crucial instruments in the development of political nationalism. Broadcasting is often dependent on a satellite system. It thus implicitly requires cooperation with, and from, the state. Media activists in the north and south have steadfastly insisted on participating in the formation of Aboriginal broadcast legislation and have resolved to innovate broadcast radio and television technologies that are responsive to their local needs. As broadcasting also exposes non-Native

audiences to various dimensions of Aboriginal authority, this strategy of media activism engenders reconciliation between Natives and newcomers.

The internet combines elements from both of these strategies, offering the most diffuse as well as the most direct medium of text dissemination. Because film, video, books, newspapers, and radio, can all be webcast, the internet represents a site of convergence for the diverse forms of Aboriginal media. Native interlocuters are using the net to build on conventional narrative practices. The interaction of storytellers and respondents that occurs on-line facilitates shared sense making and mutual negotiation of meaning — vitally important values in Aboriginal storytelling traditions. Because of its independence from the Aboriginal band council structure and from the state, moreover, the internet has the capacity to convey unfiltered information directly to, and between, “the people.” With its capacity to connect communicants in conversation and to mobilize action on an international scale, the world wide web carries enormous emancipatory potential for Indigenous peoples.

Aboriginal adaptations of communications media practices and products are thus more likely to serve as harbingers of varied Native modeled modernities than as handmaidens of homogenization. The mass commercialization and de-traditionalization or homogenization of media producers and receivers that globalization theorists predicted would result from the global circulation of electronically mediated media practices and products has not occurred. Instead, Aboriginal peoples have used radio, for example, in unprecedented ways, to restore the connections that were virtually destroyed by such things as the reserve system, the pass laws, interferences with Native political organizations and the restrictive components of the *Indian Act* legislation. Cultural complexity and hybridity, however, were not activated by the introduction of communications media, which represent only one of the most recent in a series of Aboriginal encounters with “Otherness.”

The contradictory multiplicity of Aboriginal existence was nonetheless accentuated with the introduction of non-Native media. While they certainly challenged local symbols, the pulpit, the plough and the press were variously and ingeniously redeployed to bear a host of new meanings as Aboriginal

mediators fashioned their own visions of modernity. Over the course of contact with Europeans, Native hunters and gathers have adapted and incorporated such technologies as guns into their hunting practices, farming into their subsistence practices and syllabic and alphabetic literacies into their communicative practices. Aboriginal peoples have selectively adapted and incorporated microphones, cameras, transmitters and computers in equally appropriate manners. While the circulation of mediated goods and practices is undeniably global in scope, however, the appropriation and indigenization of media practices and products invariably occurs by individuals, with situated perspectives wrought from specific cultural and historical contexts.

Decolonization increasingly succeeds through Native peoples' engagement with, the capitalist economy, communications technology and mainstream imaginaries and institutions. It also proceeds through their selective adaptation and subversion of these dominant forms. Aboriginal peoples' production and consumption of media products is by no means predictable given the technology of these media. Native individuals have not only different ways of negotiating the symbolic content of the media products they produce and receive, but also are innovating novel media production practices. Rather than the homogeneity that globalization theorists insist invariably accompanies these technologies, Aboriginal peoples have employed print, radio and television to reinvigorate or to reinvent traditions and to investigate and experiment with their identities. They have deployed media to reacquaint with old, and foster links with new, community members. Perhaps most importantly, indigenizing the media has provided Native communicators with a means to acquire justice for their peoples by educating and engaging Native community members into distinct visions of modernity. From birchbark talk through digitized dreamspeaking, Aboriginal media production has moved from the production and consumption of information and knowledge to *express* sovereignty, to the production and consumption of information and knowledge to *produce* solidarity.

Battles fought in the realm of discourse which aim to counter the effects of structural violence and to invest symbols with new meaning seldom garner the same attention as do enacted and armed contests

over more tangible objects. Yet, as Nordstrom and Martin point out, violence in its ideational manifestation -- as when it is either symbolic or embedded in the socioeconomic structure of society -- is responsible for the destruction of far more lives, than is violence in its physical manifestation (1992:8). Native communities in Canada are no strangers to structural violence. The *Indian Act*, for instance, defines Indianness *for* Aboriginal peoples. Forced settlement interrupted intertribal trade patterns. Missionization and residential school education virtually destroyed kinship networks and Native literacies. Indian legislation prohibited Native ceremonials as well as forms of Indigenous economic exchange, political organization and media development. In addition to interfering with Native socio-cosmological and politico-economic structures and practices, each of these factors might be viewed as an affront to Aboriginal *communications systems*.

If we approach the structuring sets of relations which brought certain people together to the exclusion of others as *communicative*, rather than simply *relational*, the type of state-to-administrative subject relationship which threatened to replace inter-Aboriginal inter-connectivity during the colonial era takes on added significance. Though legislation flowed in one direction -- as television, radio and other media texts seem to do -- Native individuals did not allow the successive waves of new regulations simply wash over them. Nor have they become passive transformees through exposure to non-Native media. Native media consumers are negotiating their own spectatorial positioning in relation to Native and non-Native media texts. Aboriginal media producers, furthermore, are creating production practices as well as media products through which Native individuals are not only connecting with each other, but establishing connections to their territories, their traditions and to new trans-localities. It cannot be denied, however, that government and missionary attempts to transform Native subjectivity by altering the nature of Aboriginal individuals' interaction with their social and physical environments would present significant challenges to cultural communication or transmission. Only much later did broadcast policies affect how Indian peoples related to, and communicated with, Native and non-Native people. In impeding and in some cases destroying communicative pathways, the Indian administration, missionaries and others who assumed

authority over Indian matters, also succeeded in invalidating the value of the information carried along them. That forms of neo-traditionalism are possible today, however, suggests both that the devastation was less than total, and that Aboriginal peoples have a tremendous capacity for resiliency.

Symbolic creation is the discursive engine of identity definition and self-representation. It is therefore constructive to consider that, as Van Meijl and Van der Grijp contend, “when people are no longer forced to represent their cultures and traditions as principally static, their ability to control, create, reproduce, change or adopt social and cultural patterns for their own ends will also improve substantially” (1993:642). The power to create new forms, to flesh out and infuse old symbols with new meanings is in effect, self-determination. This would include the capacity to define and delimit the boundaries of nationhood and thus to select as a collectivity, the very substance of that sense of peoplehood. At a time when the risks associated with identities circulated via the media are enormously high, the Native media apparatus has the capacity to serve as a crucial laboratory for the generation, circulation, importation and testing of the materials for Native identities that creatively rejoin historical memories with contemporary realities, and local with transnational imaginations.

Today, Native media activists are redefining and legitimizing their own versions of Aboriginality and progress, tradition and modernity by inscribing them in print, video, film and through radio texts. Their experiments in identity negotiation are revealing that the connotations of these terms are never as discrete, stable, or distinct from one another as the labels imply. An important segment of a larger social movement, Native communicators are creating defiantly hybrid production processes and media products by fusing selected features of local “tradition” with outside elements in unexpected ways. In so doing, they are deploying media products and practices as a staging ground for action.

A close examination of Native media practice suggests the impetus to create a new social order and a close linkage with social action for Aboriginal rights. The generation of Aboriginal social policy, and the mobilization of Aboriginal audiences that go hand in hand with the articulation of Aboriginal broad and narrow casting paradigms are significant contemporary forms of social agency. Aboriginal communicators,

moreover, are deeply implicated in the politicized struggle over national culture. Innovating media practices and technologies for overtly political ends is consistent with the drive to repatriate both the responsibility and the authority to author Aboriginal stories about Native peoples. Reclaiming authorship over Aboriginal matters ensures that Aboriginal voices are included in the processes, practices and policies by means of which the narrative of Canadian progress is articulated. Contemporary Aboriginal communicators are the inheritors and the progenitors of a tradition of deploying English language fluency, the cultural mediations that occur through media production and their facility with mainstream public and political affairs — all Indigenous literacies — as weapons against domination transforming tactical weakness into strategic strength. Aboriginal media production discursively links fragmented communities and divided selves. It mediates the reparation of old imaginaries and the creation of new communicative corridors. Finally, the forms of strategic syncretization in which Native communicators are engaging enable an indigenization of global fare and an elaboration of new dimensions of the envisioned world.

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 Ducharme, Dave
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 Obomsawin, Alanis
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 Smoke, Dan
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