

TOGETHER WE SURVIVE: EAST CREE MATERIAL CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

The main goals of this thesis are to recontextualize, to rehistoricize and to facilitate the symbolic repatriation of East Cree material culture. As a consequence of the British presence in the Hudson Bay Territory, from the seventeenth century onward a substantial number of inadequately documented material objects were collected from the Cree of the James Bay region and ultimately accessioned into European and North American museum collections. By using these objects as primary documents, we are able to gain knowledge of the native world view and to reconstruct the social history of both the artifacts and their makers.

Foremost is the need to establish a definitive ethnic identification of this material. This identification, derived from both external and internal evidence, allows further analysis of particular items which contribute towards a general understanding of East Cree history and world view. Evidence for embedded symbolism expressed in the decorative elements of beaded hoods reveals the dynamic and negotiated realities of native and European relations. While reworking and incorporating European aesthetics and ideals into their material culture, the Cree retained components paramount to native world view. As well, a socio-semiotic analysis of cloth leggings reveals their communicative role in visually projecting encoded messages to be decoded not only by members of linguistically similar groups but also by others, both human and animal, from outside these groups. On a more abstract level, metaphors of protection and provision as tangibly rendered in the ubiquity of lines and knots demonstrate the interdependence and connectedness of Cree culture.

The connecting link throughout is the prevalent theme that "together we survive." This refers not only to the actions and world view of the Cree, but also to the objects that have survived and which are now source material for reconstructing the past. Now that these initial steps have been taken, the Cree can recover this aspect of their history.

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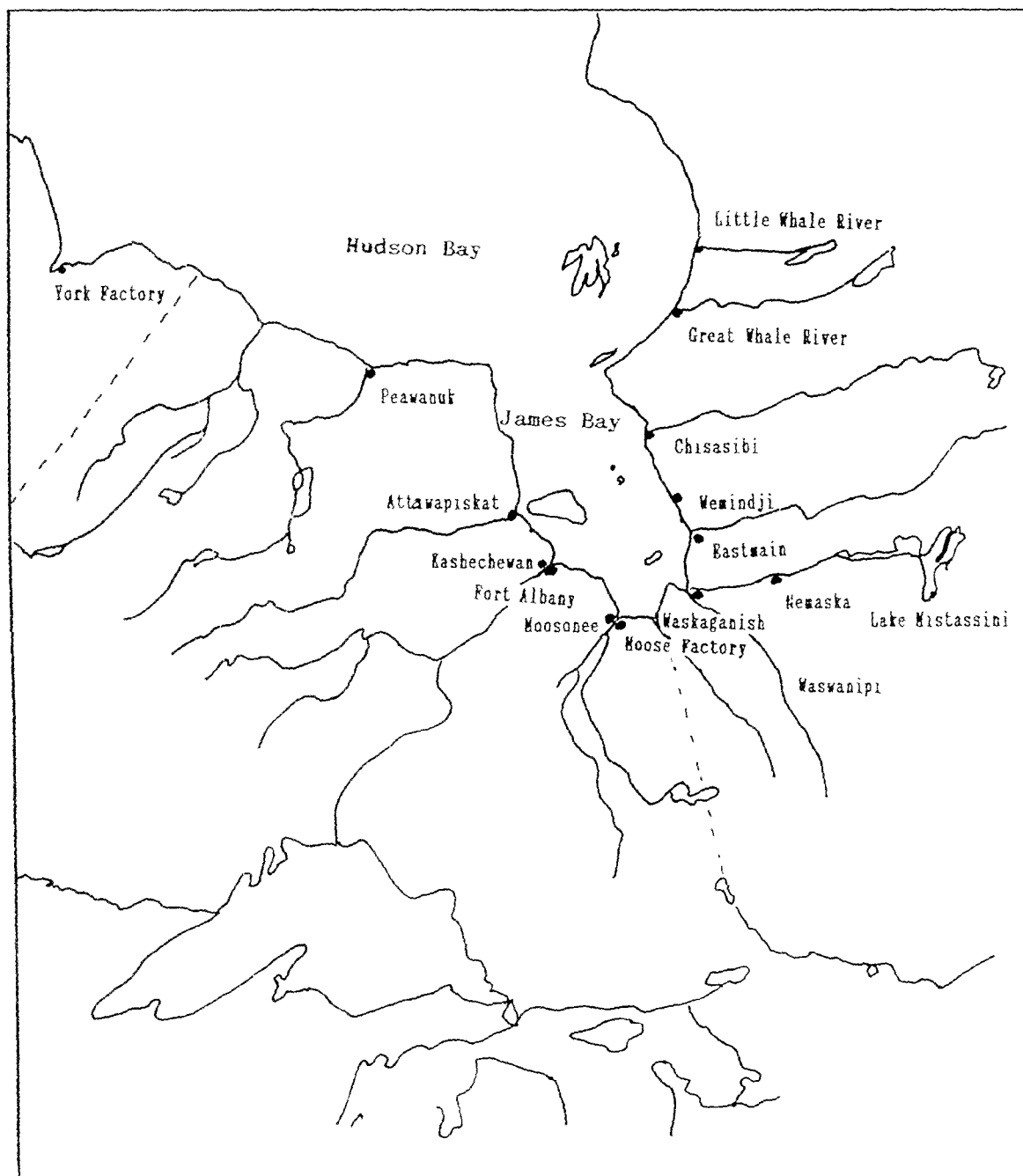
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MAP: Cree Communities (map compiled from various sources)

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CREDITS: Unless cited otherwise, photographs are by Ron or Cath Oberholtzer. All line drawings and map were prepared by the author.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

Museum:

AMNH	American Museum of Natural History
CMC	Canadian Museum of Civilization
DAM	Denver Art Museum
FMNH	Field Museum of Natural History
LFG	Lower Fort Garry
MAI/HF	Museum of the American Indian/Heye Foundation
MM	Museum of Mankind, British Museum
NMS	National Museums of Scotland
PMA	Provincial Museum of Alberta
PR	Pitt Rivers
ROM	Royal Ontario Museum
SW	Saffron Walden
UM	University Museum
HBC	Hudson's Bay Company

NOTE: For many museums I have used only the name of the city to alleviate the confusion of similar names. For complete references see Appendix A.

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INTRODUCTION

A Cravat, a Shass or girdle, and a smale payre of garters, of curious worke by the Inhabitants of the North west (whether passage or no passage,) of America in the West Indies, made of Porcupin quills very arteficiously.

(Bargrave 1676b:70,71)

The porcupine quillwork ornaments described above are presumed to be the earliest extant objects known to have been collected from the James Bay Cree of Rupert's House or Moose Factory on one of the English voyages to Hudson Bay sometime between 1662 and 1676.¹ In the collection of Tymothy Conley, a London merchant, these items with "diverse other things" were presented to Canon John Bargrave in appreciation of his aid in securing Conley's freedom from the Sultan of Algiers in 1662 (Bargrave 1676a). By fortuitously recording Conley's gift in a catalogue of his collections dated "Canterbury April 29. 1676," Bargrave has provided a substantiated bracketed date, a probable location, and the presence of an indigenous group later identified as Cree.

As the English presence became firmly established in the Hudson Bay Territory (encompassing James Bay), the collecting of material objects increased, although not always with the same amount of documentation. In fact, early exploration for a sea passage through the northwest, subsequent fur trade, military and missionary activities,

adventure, and more recent ethnographic work in the area resulted in the removal of a substantial amount of material culture. While the general circumstances of such transactions and their significance - at least from the English and Eurocanadian point of view - can be extracted from written history, the native side of the equation remains encapsulated in these material forms. To gain some knowledge of the native viewpoint - not just the physical and historical terms of the circumstances, but also the cognitive and symbolic experiences of the people - we can use this extant material culture as our data source.

The decontextualization of Cree artifacts by Europeans who collected objects without recording the context of their conception, manufacture and use effectively removed, both physically and symbolically, concrete documentation of Cree history. For non-native researchers, it is incumbent to recontextualize the material so that the native voice of the objects can be heard. Drawing upon the broadened theoretical base generated by the recent resurgence of interest in material culture studies as well as the approaches of anthropological history, the main goals of this thesis are to recontextualize, to rehistoricize and to facilitate the symbolic repatriation² of Cree material culture. Once these initial steps have been undertaken, the Cree will be able to recover this aspect of their history themselves (cf Cohn 1981;

Dening 1988; Wolf 1982). Further to this goal, additional in depth analysis of particular items of material culture will contribute towards a general understanding of East Cree history and world view.

The Natural Context

For the purposes of this thesis, the Algonquian-speaking East Cree are considered to be those indigenous peoples inhabiting the eastern coast of James Bay in the western portion of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula. This land extends from Richmond Gulf in the north to the southern headwaters of the rivers constituting the James Bay drainage basin, and inland from the coast to the river sources including the area surrounding Lake Mistassini (Map 1). Historically these people have been identified by a variety of terms from Swampy Cree to Naskapi-Montagnais that will be discussed later. According to ethnologists Richard Preston (1981:196) and Sarah Preston (1987:290), the East Cree are divided into three groups: "coasters" who remained in the coastal areas to acquire their living; "inlanders" or "hunters" who lived far inland but who traded at the coastal trading posts once a year; and finally, the "Home or Home Guard Indians" who, historically, were those natives in the steady employ of the Hudson's Bay Company.³ All three groups were considered to be basically similar in culture, language,

and history with differences attributed to subsistence adaptations and related ramifications.

To fully appreciate the people, the East Cree environment, their cultural values, and their history, we must draw upon all available sources that place them in the broader picture encompassing the contiguous geographical areas and their populations. One reason for drawing from this broader context is revealed in the overlapping distribution of such items of early native material culture as the beaded hoods discussed in Chapter Four (Photographs 2, 3, 4, 5). Furthermore, for the early time periods, ethnohistoric and ethnographic documentation must be extracted from rather sparse travel accounts and missionaries' reports. These sources often cover several areas and lack specific details about locations and identities of native groups. It is only towards the end of the nineteenth century that ethnographic data begin to be documented, adding more precise information about the indigenous people (for example, Lucien Turner's work on the Ungava District was published in 1894). Such scattered and fragmented sources separated in time are problematic when attempting to reconstruct East Cree social history and world view. Drawing from these diverse sources over a wide geographic area in an expanded time frame is, however, partially vindicated by Richard Preston's review of George Nelson's account of the Cree people of northern Saskatchewan

(Brown and Brightman 1988). He comments, "(Nelson's) information, his convictions and doubts, and his confusions are all remarkably familiar to me, though my sojourns with Cree people, over a two decade period, came a century and a half later and a thousand miles to the east, on the coast of James Bay" (Preston 1988a:1). Certainly this expanded base is supported by both a widespread language affiliation and a culture area remarkably homogeneous given its geographic and environmental diversity. Furthermore, justification for this broader base exists in the common thread of shared religious beliefs followed throughout this region prior to European intervention.

Texts written down, texts spoken, texts caught in the forms of material things: the history of the James Bay region

Predicated on anthropologist Greg Denning's view that "History is all the ways we encode the past in symbol form to make a present" (1988:1), the cultural selection and encoding processes of experiences create a "texted" past. The experiences thus recorded appear as "texts written down, texts spoken, texts caught in the forms of material things" (Denning 1988:3). The history of the James Bay region encompasses these three aspects of recording, albeit in the different voices of native and non-native perspectives, and will be discussed in the order given. Imbalances in the information preserved, which tend to favour non-native written documentation, are

rectified to a degree by the synthesis of these three forms of texted history. Nevertheless, while we can theorize that the texted past is always preserved in some manner, present knowledge is still rife with lacunae. As new texts are uncovered, more of the past is revealed and with it a greater understanding of the ways the past was encoded in symbol form to make the present. Hence, with "re-textualization" value and meaning are continuously added to the historical picture.

In the non-native voice of texts written down, the history of the James Bay region, and of the Cree people, begins in the seventeenth century with the arrival of British and French explorers, fur traders and missionaries. Initial and somewhat sporadic contact by sea probably began in 1611 with the arrival of English navigator and explorer, Henry Hudson. According to records kept by crew member, Abucuk Pricket, the manner in which casual trade was transacted with a native at the mouth of the Rupert River suggests that the natives had had some prior exposure to the economics of the fur trade (Asher 1860:114; Francis and Morantz 1983:17). However, twenty years later in 1631 when Thomas James, sailing out of Bristol, England, wintered over on Charlton Island in southern James Bay, there was no contact with natives for trade or otherwise (Christy 1894:594-603). Nearly four decades passed before the 1668 arrival of the English vessel *Nonsuch* carrying the French adventurer Médard Chouart des

Groseilliers. Here, at the mouth of the Rupert River where Hudson had wintered nearly sixty years earlier, the first trading post, Charles Fort, was constructed. The ensuing native response validated the visionary potential of a northern sea route to exploit furs espoused by de Groseilliers and his partner, Pierre-Esprit Radisson. This success was further recognized the following year with the incorporation of the Hudson's Bay Company in the spring of 1670. By 1672 the post at Charles Fort was manned year round (Morantz 1983:16).

During this time, the French traders had been moving up from the southeast, possibly in an effort to provide support to the Cree against Iroquois incursions in the James Bay area. Travelling by land and canoe, they made their first appearance in the Bay region in 1663. Further countering English success, the French established an inland post at Lake Mistassini in 1679. In 1682 the formation of the Compagnie du Nord and its 1685 royal charter permitting trade into Hudson Bay, brought the English-French competition for furs into the open manifested by a number of minor skirmishes. The French effort to drive the English from James Bay began with the 1686 attacks on Moose Fort, Charles Fort and Albany Fort by Captain Pierre de Troyes and his men (Kenyon 1986a; 1986b:6). From then until the early 1700s continuing conflict passed control of certain forts from one force to the other. At one point the English were left with control of only one post, Albany Fort,

on the west coast (Morantz 1983:16). However, the importance of the East Main coast as a source for furs prompted traders to work a trading sloop out of Albany and eventually to establish a permanent post at Eastmain early in the eighteenth century. While the French acknowledged English supremacy on the shores of the Bay, they remained a competitive factor inland.

This European contact changed the dynamics of the area dramatically. Not only was a new economic strategy developed by the Cree in response to the European desire for furs (for details see Francis and Morantz 1983), the periodic influxes of Inlanders bringing their fur harvest into the posts created stresses on local indigenous resources. Extensive extant records kept by Hudson's Bay Company employees clearly weight the evidence for the British side. Bridging, to some extent, the one-sided aspect of this written documentation, anthropologist Toby Morantz has skilfully reconstructed some of the native (inter)action in the fur trade between 1700 and 1850. By meticulously sifting through the archival evidence kept by Company personnel as well as other primary data, Morantz has established an ethnographic history of the East Cree (Preston 1985:75). As more primary records have become available, a number of other ethnohistorians and anthropologists have been fleshing out this native side of the history from the written

texts (see, for example, Brown and Brightman 1988; Brown 1980; Dickason 1992; Hallowell and Brown 1992; Van Kirk 1980).

It is, of course, the "texts spoken" that provide the native voice of regional history. Significantly, preserved oral texts underscore particular experiences accorded importance by the speakers. In fact, comparisons between archival accounts and oral versions indicate that the oral versions are equally rich in historic detail and often enhanced with additional information (Morantz 1984:181). By merging the contents of oral tradition and written evidence, a more accurate and honest history of the Cree emerges. Consequently, the validity of oral history as an authentic form (which has only recently received recognition by non-natives) is reinforced⁴ (Day 1972; Helm and Gillespie 1981; Long 1985, 1986; Morantz 1984; Schuurman *et al.* 1992; Thompson 1978). Examples of insightful historic information gained through this synthesis are demonstrated by the reconstruction of the circumstances of the armed raids of the Iroquois during the mid-seventeenth century (Cooper 1946:275; Francis and Morantz 1983:21; Morantz 1983:15; 1984) and by Preston's presentation of the Cree version of the Hannah Bay Massacre of 1832 (Preston 1990:322-323).

Following this line of discourse, further insight into the social history of the Cree is gained through the recording of life histories. Noteworthy are the life histories recorded

by anthropologists Sarah Preston (1986), Rula Logotheti (1991) and Regina Flannery (1990a) and autobiographical ones by native authors Jane Willis (1973) and Madeline Katt Theriault⁵ (1992). A cautionary approach must be taken with both these expressions of oral texts in that they have become written documents subject to interpretation by both natives and non-natives. Provided the native voice is retained, the importance of these spoken texts will continue to furnish the native perspective.

The third component of history is comprised of the "texts caught in the forms of material things" (Denning 1988:3). Material things are a culture's intangible aspects rendered in tangible form. These objects are the embodiment of the past; many of the experiences and symbolic meanings of the culture have been encoded and encapsulated for present generations. It is these material items with their encoded message that are the focus of this thesis, particularly their potential of 'repatriating' Cree history and providing a glimpse into Cree world view. As many of the symbolic referents have been lost over the years, the validity of using material culture to unravel the past will be discussed in the following chapter.

Despite the potential of material objects as ethnohistoric documents of the past, analyses and interpretations are constrained by the number, type, condition and

accessibility of extant items. This is particularly evident with archaeological artifacts which are characterized by being of non-perishable materials which occur in relatively thin cultural deposits. Recovery of this data is often dependent upon fortuitous finds and sufficient funding. This is particularly true in the James Bay region where analyses do not yield much information about prehistoric indigenous groups beyond establishing relative dates of occupation, likely size and density of the population, and subsistence patterns (Martijn and Rogers 1969; Laliberté 1978; Wright 1979). Sparse evidence of social structure and symbolic meaning must be supported by ethnographic analogy.⁶

Early examples of ethnographic material culture are likewise constrained and we can utilize only what remains in museums and private collections. The quantity, quality and form of this extant material is a direct reflection of a number of factors which include the collectors, the collecting process, preservation of materials, museum cataloguing, and the social history of the objects themselves. Further constraints are encountered by the uneven accessibility of collections for researchers. However, in spite of these drawbacks, it is the early ethnographic items, produced by the Cree primarily for their own use, that have the most potential to unlock the emic expression of this material history.⁷

Assembling the Data from the Artificial Context

According to the history of the James Bay area, a substantial amount of material culture was 'decontextualized' by being taken or sent to Britain and continental Europe over several centuries. Therefore, the methodology adopted for this study involved gathering evidence from the collections housed in museums and private collections in those locations. Initially, letters of inquiry were sent to eighty-one European and British museums requesting information about Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi (Algonquian) holdings. Forty museums responded positively, some with the caveat that the attributions were tentative. Twenty responded with no information; however, at least one negative reply was actually false and the museum does in fact have Cree material. Of the twenty-one that did not reply, fifteen are known to have Algonquian material. Several of these museums (or their departments of American Indian ethnology) with material were, however, temporarily or permanently closed for a number of reasons. Others held small, unimportant collections. During a four-month period in the spring of 1990, a total of forty-one European collections were recorded (see Appendix A), and when circumstances permitted, most items were measured and photodocumented.

The obstacle which had the most impact on this study is documentation, or rather, the paucity of adequate

documentation. The lack of ethnic identification is particularly glaring; seldom are the objects identified as Cree, especially East Cree. Cultural and/or tribal identification covers a wide range of possibilities from "North America" or "Canada" to "Indian" or "Algonquin", "Hudson Bay Territory" and "Algonquian Family." In many instances the designation is completely erroneous identifying, for example, a Cree beaded hood as Micmac (Museum für Völkerkunde, Frankfurt NS 52413) or Cree leggings as Maori (Birmingham Museum 275ab) and a Zulu piece as a sacred item from North America (Hunterian Museum E571).

Inadequate and/or erroneous museum documentation is the consequence of a number of factors both historical and administrative. As mentioned above, many museums have not had (or do not now have) North American specialists. Consequently, many collections remain unstudied. This, however, is not the main cause. Difficulties arise within the museum community concerning internal and external approaches to culture areas. For example, the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin at one time designated all the culture areas of Canada east of the Rocky Mountains as "The Arctic" (Bolz 1990). This example, coupled with a general lack of knowledge of geographical locations for specific groups by donors and/or museum staff, which was further confused by historical changes of tribal names or locations, has resulted in a number of diverse designations.

The situation has not been helped by a number of European and North American scholars who used the term "Algonquin" as the linguistic and hence, cultural, designation for these indigenous peoples.⁸ Even Alanson Skinner (1909; 1911) refers to the East Cree as "Algonquins", as does Nelson Graburn as late as 1978 (Graburn 1978:57).⁹ This has led some present-day scholars to assume that these early museum and ethnographic designations refer to the Algonquin as a particular group rather than as an alternative form of the now-current usage of "Algonquian" to indicate the language family. Present, too, is a sense that 'the others', as an exotic culture, are viewed as being 'all the same', for as the 'other' they are both culturally homogeneous and devoid of history (cf Wolf 1982).

Thus hampered by inadequate documentation there is a primary need to determine the ethnic identification of the artifacts through other means.

One approach to this problem was to take photographic enlargements of selected museum pieces to James Bay communities to elicit comments from the Cree. During July of 1990, my husband and I visited Moosonee, Moose Factory, Kashechewan, and Fort Albany on the west coast of James Bay. July of 1991 I spent visiting Waskaganish and Eastmain on the east coast of James Bay. Noteworthy differences in knowledge about the material culture exist between the two sides of the bay and these differing observations will be incorporated

throughout the thesis. While this fieldwork was all too brief, the photographs did, in fact, prove to be a marvellous means of stimulating memories and eliciting information. It was also a welcome opportunity to experience Cree community life.

A second approach to the problem of ethnic identification encompasses consideration of the internal evidence of the objects themselves, for the forms, materials, technology and content provide invaluable information. Comparison with documented analogous objects from contiguous geographic regions supported by oral tradition and ethnographic and ethnohistoric references, is also invaluable in determining a relative chronology and ethnic identity.

The two disciplines that have historically afforded the best research potential for this study are the anthropology of art and material culture studies. The validity of their use will be discussed below.

The Validity of Art and Material Culture Studies:

All material culture is expressive in that its tangible forms embody, and hence express, fundamental information about the environmental, technological, social and cognitive aspects of the culture that produced it. While in many instances these forms are of a basically utilitarian nature, certain added features¹⁰ transform the ordinary into the extraordinary, the insignificant into the meaningful, a metonym into a metaphor. Although this 'added expressive-ness'

or 'additional quality' can at times be recognized by physical embellishment, it is often both esoteric and ineffable, evoking an intuitive gestaltian response. This can be explicated to some degree by an example drawn analogously from Warren d'Azevedo's discussion (1958:705-706) of a gift of four papayas selected by virtue of their size, shape, colour, flawlessness and beauty, and presented to him with eloquent ceremony by the chief's wife in Western Liberia. This presentation advances the position that it is both the formal aspects and the qualitative features that establish the value of an object whether natural or man-made. In essence this can also be assessed as an emic sense of aesthetics for that particular culture.

It has been advanced by some scholars that it is these added qualities that define an object as a work of art. For example, Johanna Feest notes in her discussion of the pottery tradition of Manitoulin Island, that in the transforming of clay into finished pot, "The [object] communicates a lot more than functionality. By transcending its function, it becomes a work of art with an inherent message" (Feest 1989:23). Significantly, this approach allows us to accept - in addition to the observable formal qualities brought about through the transformation of raw materials into a culturally-determined finished product - such ineffable qualities as 'sentiment', 'heirloom', 'good luck', 'dream revelations', 'experiential

references', 'the sacred', and others (see also Thomas 1991:30-33 for a discussion of added value of material objects). This in turn permits insight into the social parameters which establish works of art as a **means** rather than an **end**, as a means of social solidarity or survival rather than an activity to please an elite few. Furthermore, the simplicity of this approach readily accommodates historical changes within the culture (and within academic theory¹¹) as well as those changes brought about through the incorporation of new materials, techniques and ideas. It should be noted, however, that while this explanation serves my needs for the description and analysis of Cree objects, it does not necessarily reflect the Cree perception.

From an academic standpoint the acceptance of these added qualities as denoting works of art acknowledges but sidesteps, to some degree, a number of controversial issues surrounding especially, (1) what actually constitutes art, (2) the cross-cultural assessment and evaluation of aesthetics, and (3) the use of the now-pejorative term 'primitive art', a category which perpetuates an implicit evolutionism and associated notions of Western superiority that is no longer acceptable.

Much of the earlier anthropology of art literature, predicated as it is on Western-focused art historical approach, does not explicitly define art or when it does, the

definition is skewed to each discussant's theoretical stance or purpose (Boas 1955; d'Azevedo 1958; Firth 1951). It is these differences in definitions, explicit or implicit, which create the disagreements as to what constitutes art (cf Jones 1973:257; Mills 1957:7). For example, Anthony Forge (1973:xviii) suggests that primitive art objects "are rarely representations of anything, rather they seem to be about relationships" (emphasis in original). Adrienne Kaeppler (1978:261) defines art as the "cultural forms that result from creative processes which manipulate movement, sound, words, or materials..." while George Mills' definition (1957:4) states: "One might define art as a portion of experience small enough to be organized as man would have his whole experience organized." Jacques Maquet (1986:13) takes a phenomenological position in his presentation of the insiders' point of view that "the word art does not primarily point to a notion, but to a category of material objects." While the value of these definitions and others can be argued constructively, establishing the precise relevance here would require a lengthy and unresolved domain of enquiry that I will leave for others to pursue.

Similarly, the use of 'aesthetics', 'aesthetic appreciation', 'aesthetic quality', or 'aesthetic systems' presents a contentious issue on a number of grounds. Again,

there are as many definitions, interpretations and applications as there are discussants (for example, Boas 1955; Cassirer 1944; d'Azevedo 1958; Firth 1951:155-162; Jopling (editor) 1971; Kaeppler 1978:261; Layton 1981; Maquet 1986; Stout 1960; Wolff 1983). Field work by a number of anthropologists has ameliorated some of the difficulties in cross-cultural application of aesthetics and given voice to non-Western artists and audiences alike.¹² Although appreciation of the beautiful (or 'good') is considered virtually a universal, "there is such variation in aesthetic views among preliterate peoples that very few general statements can be made" (Jopling 1971:xvii). This perspective has been taken further by Wolfgang Haberland (1986:107-131) in his recent discussion pertaining to aesthetics in Native American art. While accepting the general existence of an innate human ability to develop aesthetic feeling, he feels that consideration of aesthetics is of little consequence beyond that of philosophical speculation. Agreeing with this, we must also embrace Janet Wolff's (1983) argument that conceptions and criteria of aesthetic value are socially constructed and inevitably ideological.

Historically most non-Western peoples - and their art - have been considered intellectually and socially inferior to the West. In attempts to circumvent the connotations of static, unchanging and ahistorical that were implied by the

term 'primitive', researchers have proposed a number of alternative terms. These 'neo-terms' were intended to eliminate the patronizing undertones of defining art either in terms of the simplicity of the culture under discussion or in terms of relationship between the culture of production and Western artistic traditions (cf Price 1989:1-6). This approach was first attempted by Herta Haselberger (1961) who imperiously dismissed the current terms and presented her rationale for introducing the term, "ethnological" art as a way of avoiding pejorative terms. Nearly two decades later, Harry R. Silver (1979), in a review article, pursued the various features that distinguish 'tribal art', 'ethnic art', 'ethnological art', 'primitive art', 'non-Western art', or 'folk art' from each other. First chronicling each term according to the principles intimated or professed by the users, Silver established the inherent problems and concerns that each of these terms carries and then proposed "ethnoart" as an alternative comprehensive term. It is apparent, some fifteen years later, that the issue remains unresolved and "primitive art" with its countless definitions, extended disclaimers and connotations continues to be used (Price 1989:1). For discussion purposes I prefer to consider the material under study as simply 'art,' or in some cases, 'artifact.'

The greatest advantage of viewing material objects with 'added expressive-ness' or 'additional quality' as works of art is that we can draw from the broader theoretical base of both material culture studies and art. So, too, can the historical method of art history, with its emphasis on the art object, the individual artist, and associated written documents, be integrated with anthropological methods of observation and enquiry that attempt to contextualize 'art' within a particular culture. The major drawback here is the pre-eminent art historical emphasis on the written document which tends both to deny the validity of 'pre-literate' art and to obscure the fact that the artifact or work of art is itself an essential document. This has been partially addressed by the new art history movement in North America¹³, especially by scholars studying Native American art. The new art history "has adopted a cross-cultural perspective in which art is explored from the point of view of the particular social group, time period, or culture itself and no longer strictly from a twentieth-century Western perspective" (Vastokas 1987:13; see also Phillips 1990a:37). Concomitant with the centrality of the object has come a shift towards consideration of the economic and social conditions that surround artistic production, a shift welcomed by contemporary native artists (Young Man 1988). As well, the new art history's emphasis on interdisciplinary work "recognizes the way the two

disciplines most concerned, anthropology and art history, have been moving closer to each other" (Phillips 1990a:38; Vastokas 1992).

Fundamental to this development of an object-centred art history and its rapprochement with anthropology is an emphasis on the significance of art as communication. Studies of indigenous art conducted over the past thirty years are providing increasing evidence for the use of nonverbal systems of expression to communicate basic concepts about the natural and social order (Fagg 1961:365; Forge 1973; Hatcher 1985:135-166; Layton 1978; Munn 1962, 1966, 1973). This approach has sparked an interest in semiotics by both art historians and material culturalists. Concerned with establishing and interpreting the message(s) communicated by art, particularly abstract art (cf Llamazares 1989) and art without written documentation, scholars have gravitated away from earlier linguistic analyses to the more encompassing potential of semiotic analysis.¹⁴ For, as Joan Vastokas (1978:244) cogently argues,

Although language has provided the focus for cognitive studies so far and although several attempts at the direct application of linguistic methodological models to studies of material culture and art have previously been made (cf Munn 1966, and Kaufman, 1969), it is clear that linguistic methods or models as such should be avoided.

It is her contention that "visual systems are not completely isomorphic with linguistic systems" and rather than being shaped by language are a "cognitive sub-system parallel to...The cognitive sub-system of language" (Vastokas 1978:244).¹⁵ Coming from a material cultural background, Henry Glassie has also recognized this point (1991). Acknowledging his own earlier reliance upon linguistic analogy in material culture study, he now asserts (1991:255): "The artifact is as direct an expression, as true to the mind, as dear to the soul, as language, and, what is more, it bodies forth feelings, thoughts, and experiences elusive to language." It is for these reasons that Vastokas and others (for example, Bogatyrev 1971¹⁶; Llamazares 1989; Munn 1962, 1966, 1973; Pearce 1986, 1987; Tilley 1991) have moved towards semiotics, going beyond linguistic analogy.¹⁷ For, as Susan Pearce suggests (1986:131):

It is now time to turn to a different approach which aims to understand the imaginative quality of artefacts by exploring their social use as signs and symbols: that is their ability to represent in tangible form distinctions and emotions which it is difficult to put into words.

Foremost for these scholars is the acceptance that objects are not passive but active agents in a sociocultural sense, in that they are produced, used, and interpreted within the complexities of their sociocultural and environmental contexts (as first suggested by Victor Turner 1967, 1969a, 1969b). What

is communicated and what is understood is contingent upon the circumstances in which the communication takes place, cultural knowledge and previous experience.¹⁸ Hence, a semiotic perspective, in its application of the study of signs and symbol systems, derived - as it is proposed here - from the artifacts themselves, when combined with the study of the artifacts' social context promises a depth of understanding otherwise unobtainable. Archaeologist Ian Hodder, for one, has taken this position in his work, *Symbols in Action* (1982). Regarding artifacts as interactive agents in social and economic relations, he views them as playing a vital role in cultural process. For archaeologists, the limitations are, of course, the same faced by researchers working in museums: analyses can only be derived from what survives in the ground or in public and private collections. The potential for interpretation of meaning offered by a socially enhanced semiotic approach - or any other approach - must rely upon the context and/or recontextualization of the material. Only then can the formal qualities, cognitive aspects, and actual performance (use and function) of an object in its social context be realized. The problem becomes even more complex when earlier contexts must be recreated from present ethnographic data and analogy. An appreciation of the social history of objects (cf Appadurai 1986) from their inception to

finished product, from their function in the original context to their decontextualization, adds immeasurably to this present study. For this perspective we turn to material culture studies.

A resurgence in interest in material culture in the past twenty years has stimulated, and been stimulated by, interdisciplinary enquiry. Research in material culture in the early years of anthropology was directed to the cultural questions that artifacts could address. "Objects were a means to an end, and that end was culture, be it historical or contemporary culture" (Pocius 1991:xiv)". When anthropology moved out of the museum milieu and into academe, objects were considered no longer adequate to answer these questions nor were the same questions being asked. This situation changed once again when other disciplines (for example, history, new art history, literary criticism and cultural geography as well as anthropology) rediscovered the artifact (for a concise discussion of material culture studies and social history, see Schlereth 1983).

Historically, material culture studies have had two foci, one concentrating on objects in their social context; the other, a museological description and ordering. The first approach regards objects merely as catalysts in social relations whereas the typologies derived by the latter approach serve as markers for diffusion and innovation or as 'types' of

technical processes. While both approaches have merit, the current expanded focus on the object "as a social form endowed with culturally specific meanings, and [on]... an interpretation of that cultural form which includes indigenous understandings" (MacKenzie 1991:25) offers much more. Out of this premise objects have become the subjects of numerous studies as evidenced in such important works as *Entangled Objects* by Nicholas Thomas (1991) and *Androgynous Objects* by Maureen MacKenzie (1991), as well as several edited volumes (for example, Pearce 1989, Pocius 1991, Quimby 1987, Reynolds and Stott 1987, Schlereth 1982, Stocking 1985, Tilley 1990).

Borrowing the concept of 'the social life of things' from the title of Arjun Appadurai's edited volume, *The Social Life of Things* (1986), we can establish a social history for objects. The social history of material objects begins with an idea, develops into a mental template, and continues with the acquisition and preparation of raw materials. Once finished, an object can experience a multitude of social situations as it functions within the natural context of the culture of those who made and used it. Subsequent change(s) in ownership through either voluntary or coercive acts serves to decontextualize the object from its original context. In this new or artificial context(s) the object adds further experiences to its biographical history. However, at any

stage of the process the object can be intentionally or inadvertently destroyed. Those objects that survive fall prey to the ravages of time and the environment. This social history of objects has a direct effect upon the items that remain, are accessible to the researcher, and thus on recontextualization, rehistoricization and ultimately, interpretation of meaning.

Objects as Historical Documents

For many years archaeologists have successfully used objects as historical data to reconstruct cultures without written records (see Binford and Binford 1968; Willey and Sabloff 1980:133-146,181-210). This premise that items of material culture are the concrete manifestations of human actions and cultural processes and as such "are historical documents as well" (Fontana 1987:78; Goldwater 1973:10), permits a ready transition into studies of ethnographic materials.¹⁹ The association of ethnographic materials as sources of unwritten history was recognized by Lewis Henry Morgan and eloquently expressed in the following quotation from his 1851 publication *League of the Ho-de-no-sau-nee, or Iroquois* (Morgan 1962:351):

The fabrics of a people unlock their social history. They speak a language which is silent, but yet more eloquent than the written page. As memorials of former times, they commune directly with the beholder, opening the unwritten

history of the period they represent, and clothing it with perpetual freshness.

Adhering to this view of Morgan's, by documenting and objectifying cultural choices on a number of levels, the potential of material objects as primary data far exceeds that of written documents. To utilize their potential as fully as possible in reconstructing the social history and meaning of a particular culture, direct observation of extant objects must be supplemented at times with various secondary sources of description. For early materials in the latter case, this approach relies upon written and visual ethnohistoric materials in the form of diaries, journals, biographies, sketches and paintings of early explorers, traders, missionaries and travellers. Photographic records became an additional important visual source after the mid-nineteenth century as have more recent ethnographic data. All these secondary sources also provide records of artifacts that have not survived. As ethnohistorians have cautioned, the use of these sources as evidence must, however, be subject to critical evaluation concerning their objectivity, reliability, and bias (see, for example, Blackman 1973, 1984; Brettell 1986; Trigger 1982, 1986; Ray 1976).

What, then, can we glean from these primary documents? The directly observable formal aspects of form, size, materials, technology, decorative elements, and probable use

are readily apparent. Further examination of each aspect expands and correlates the processes, cultural choices and social relationships expressed in the artifact's production. Our ultimate goal, interpretation of meaning, presents the greatest challenge, and is best extracted from the total cultural context. "Reality", of course, is based on what we can reconstruct of the context from the objects that survive. At this point, a brief examination of the use of certain materials is in order to illustrate some of these processes, cultural choices and social relationships that are documented by the objects, and which serve as the basis for interpretation.

The materials selected for use in a specific object reflect a number of cultural choices. In most instances the well-deliberated choices reflect the practical values of natural sources in the local environment. For the Cree case, such pragmatic considerations as the toughness and resilience of tamarack wood favoured in the making of snowshoes and sleds (Knight 1968:7), or the preservative qualities of birch bark containers informed most selections. In addition, symbolic references of materials played a role expressing ineffable qualities of cosmological significance. On a cultural level, inclusion of non-local materials attests to perceived needs as well as trade relationships with other indigenous groups. The introduction and incorporation of European trade goods evokes

a multitude of questions centring on the selections made by the natives from the choices offered. What changes and/or adaptations in technology were necessitated by these choices?

One relevant example is the introduction of glass beads. Clearly, the European introduction of beads was accepted with enthusiasm by most, if not all, native North American groups. It has been assumed by many Europeans that the resultant florescence of decorative expression was facilitated by the ready accessibility of beads and their ease of application.²⁰ There are, however, a number of pragmatic and symbolic factors that come into play here. Foremost in addressing the latter aspect is anthropologist George Hamell whose interpretations of material substances voice strong supportive evidence of symbolic connotations (see especially Hamell 1983; 1987). He has argued convincingly that glass beads, as substitutes for sacred quartz crystals, served metaphorically as reflective symbols of life and light in the perception of native peoples in northeastern North America. So too, can Hamell's (1987) findings concerning the cognitive role of colour in native manifestations of mythical realities be considered as a factor in bead selection. Work like Hamell's is important in furthering our understanding that the material substances used by native peoples have more than utilitarian significance.

In a similar fashion, objects document "style in technology". As integrated systems that manifest cultural choices and values "technologies," according to Heather Lechtman (1977:4), "are particular sorts of cultural phenomena that reflect cultural preoccupations and that express them in the very style of the technology itself." By style she refers to "the formal, extrinsic manifestation of intrinsic pattern" (Lechtman 1977:4). Whereas each aspect of the technological processes involved in creating a material object reflects cultural choices, it is the synergistic whole that is considered the style of technology. As such, technologies can be considered symbolic systems that concretize, and thus communicate, cultural choices that cannot be or are not normally communicated verbally. Maintaining particular technological styles is an effective way of enculturating values through non-verbal behaviour.

By way of illustration, an exquisitely decorated caribou skin coat attributed to the Cree demonstrates these ideological aspects of technology. While consideration of each aspect in the production of the coat is beyond my scope here, a concise overview suffices to reveal the coat's documentation of the technological, social and ideological processes involved in its production. The steps involved also document the inherent circularity of these processes. The hunter, beautifully attired to please the caribou, succeeds in the

hunt. The caribou skin is prepared for clothing using the appropriate traditional methods for tanning and smoking as well as the correct tools made from specific materials. Cut and sewn into a culturally accepted form using sinew similarly prepared according to the 'rules' of the group, the final product is decorated²¹ with recognized motifs rendered in pigments obtained from sources with symbolic numinosity. The finished coat, resplendent in form and decoration, now manifests (in conjunction with his songs) the hunter-shaman's appropriately respectful attitude towards the caribou. The caribou reciprocate(s) by making themselves (itself) known to the hunter, who in turn knows where to look for, and follow the traces that the caribou have left for him. The hunter's success then initiates another cycle. In addition to technical aspects and ritual observances, this technological behaviour is also characterized by a specific organization of labour. The various tasks involved in the production of such a coat are performed differentially by men and women; it is the combination of their complementary roles that guarantees success. In this way, we can observe that style in technology as the integration of certain behavioural events is the manifestation of cultural patterning documented in material culture.

This discussion, although cursory, illustrates the salience of objects as historical documents recording cultural

choices and the potential of objects for recontextualization and a subsequent interpretation of meaning. My example also serves as an introduction to the following section on art and material culture as it relates to Cree life.

The Cree Perspective on Art

Two key factors necessary for understanding the Cree perspective on art arise from internal and external components. One factor is that the Cree world view acknowledges one "great community of persons" which encompasses both human-persons and other-than-humans persons (Preston 1975; 1994). Hence, material objects with added qualities are not necessarily designed to affect or please only human persons but rather to please the people, the animals and the *powatakanak* 'dream-visitors'. The second factor embraces the concept that art is integral to and embedded in native culture, and as such functions as an intrinsic and vital component for survival. As native writer, Anna Lee Walters (1989:17) cogently articulates:

In traditional Indian thinking, there is no separation between art and life or between what is beautiful and what is functional. Art, beauty and spirituality are so firmly intertwined in the routine of living that no words are needed, or allowed, to separate them.

The implications of this integration strongly refute such statements as Raymond Firth's earlier contention that

"economic activity is a necessity, but that art is a luxury" (Firth 1951:155) and John Honigmann's specification that the expressive aspects of culture (including material culture) "reveal meaning or emotion without necessarily being adaptive or contributing to survival" (Honigmann 1981:718). Furthermore, the integration erases any arbitrary divisions between art and material culture that are imposed by our culture. Indeed art, as I have defined it here, functions as a significant integrated aspect of Cree life, critical for survival and not as a luxury.

What we might interpret as aesthetic expression, is considered by the Cree to be a necessary and essential component of survival tactics. Cree women were quick to inform me that it was a woman's obligation to ensure that hunting apparel and shot bags were beautifully decorated to please the animals. Satisfied animals would then be more willing to give themselves to the aesthetically pleasing hunter. In 1991 Minnie Gilpin of Eastmain, Quebec told me that "when a woman made anything for her husband or son, she does the very best she can. If she were to stitch any which way, the animals would see that and not come near." This is corroborated by Daisy Cheezo, also from Eastmain, who recalled her mother saying "because men were hunters like warriors the men had to look great. When the woman helped the man, she must look good, too. The woman was compelled to make the man look good."

This rationale reiterates Flannery's (Flannery and Chambers 1985:7) findings sixty years earlier:

Traditionally, the donning of appropriate decorated clothing marked the hunt as a ritual occasion in which the hunter presented himself to the game in his cleanest and finest regalia, to make himself attractive to the animals and to please his *powatakan*.

Flannery also records that "The young hunter had known since early childhood that to be dressed for the hunt in his cleanest and best clothing would be pleasing to the bear and *Memekwesiw* [the Caretaker who presides over all the "clawed" animals on earth]" (Flannery and Chambers 1985:5). For the young hunter, as for each individual in the group, the definitive phrase "looking very fine" expressed an aesthetic satisfaction with his appearance.²² The hunter's success with certain animals was not only contingent upon his own appearance and those who assisted him but also extended to the decoration of the inedible parts of the first of each species killed as well as the skulls of bears obtained in ways that made them distinctive (Preston 1994). When the decorated remains were put on display, the respective animals were "very proud and would come again" (Flannery and Chambers 1985:10; Preston 1964; cf Tanner 1979:170-172).

An inferred sense of pride can be discerned in the production of any well-made item of Cree material culture. The

competence exhibited in the finished product reflects the ultimate criterion of Cree standards, the social and mental competence of the individual (cf Preston 1975). However, the importance of this criterion is often difficult for an outsider to appreciate. This is apparent in the results of Nelson Graburn's (1978) experiment in cross-cultural art appreciation. The resultant paper "examines the responses of North American audiences to two commercial forms of 'primitive' art/crafts: the wooden Cree Craft of the Naskapi-Cree Indians of the Canadian Sub-Arctic and the soapstone carvings of the Eskimos of the Canadian Arctic" (Graburn 1978:51). Examples of each art form were displayed in an art gallery setting and randomly selected viewers were questioned on their aesthetic responses to the exhibits. While the negative responses to the Cree material can be seen as a reflection of Western aesthetics, on the positive side admiration was expressed for the workmanship and "obvious familiarity the Indians had with their medium" (Graburn 1978:56). Had Graburn consulted Cree viewers, he might have been told that it was the workmanship, in this case, that was of prime importance. Indeed, the Cree Craft - as Graburn himself notes (1978:54n3) - was a commercial venture to market Cree 'crafts'. As such, the "creativity" of the items had been influenced by both government pressures and commoditization of utilitarian items by a non-native market and did not

necessarily reflect Cree choices of form and content. Nevertheless, the pride in workmanship as an extension of individual competence reflected in the Cree Craft objects is indeed an expression of Cree aesthetics.²³

In his discussion of aesthetic expression in Cree narration, Preston (1975:18,19) points to another aesthetic value that is directly applicable here: the Cree value of individual freedom; that is, "a value which allows for creativity in the expression of individual style." This individual style is, however, mediated by cultural parameters with variance in style balanced by an invariance of "events" (Preston 1975:18,19). Thus, in terms of material objects, while we can observe that each example of a particular item (for example, the beaded hoods discussed below) establishes tangible evidence of individual expression, taken together as a genre and category of objects exhibits a culturally defined consistency in form and content.

The major source of variance for individual expression appears in the incorporation of design motifs. The origins of these design motifs are pivotal to Cree art.

Design Origins

Dreams and visions are widely acknowledged as integral and sacrosanct aspects of native North American cosmology. With survival and success dependent upon the guardianship and beneficence of animal-persons and other spiritual beings,

dreams and visions become the avenues for contact and interaction with these "Other-Than-Human Beings." Dream revelations, whether experienced as naturalistic or metaphorical images, imply a transfer, or bestowing, of power from the guardian spirit to the dreamer (Flannery and Chambers 1985; Ridington 1988; see also Black 1977 for the Ojibwa; Smith 1973 for the Chipewyan). As part of the dreamer's obligations to this benefactor, the dream images must be depicted graphically and symbolically to validate the dream experience and to preserve the power that has been conferred. This validation is expressed eloquently in the native voice by Anna Lee Walters (1989:25) who tells us, "The images created by my hands are echoes of the dream-voice within me. They are also evidence of my dream-power...The images are powerful by virtue of the forces they represent or by what material means they came into being." Failure to comply with the "orders of the dreamed" would offend the guardian spirit to the extent that favours would be withdrawn and one's success would be tenuous or uncertain (Brown and Brightman 1988:143,145).

Translation of an individual's dream-inspired images into concrete form was both defined and constrained by the intrinsic and underlying cultural traditions of the dreamer's community. Moreover, it was common practice for the dreamer to relate his vision to his wife (or to another female relative) who would then give familiar form to these experiences,

according to the regional art style. "Thus," as Ted Brasser (1974:96) states in his article on the art of James Bay, "the elements of the design conformed to widespread symbolic interpretations, while at the same time having specific and secret connotations known only to the dreamer and artist" (see also Phillips 1989:61; Speck 1935:198-199; Tanner 1979:142). It also follows that despite the marked similarities of culturally-patterned styles and motifs, no two renderings of dream revelations will be exactly alike, giving rise to individual variation in the decorative elements of the material forms.

Cree Art and Material Culture: The Written Documentation:

Early ethnological research on the material culture of the eastern Subarctic focused on the distribution and diffusion of traits, and this approach often led to speculation concerning origins (Quimby 1943; Speck 1914; 1937). While this, and later research, was primarily concerned with material culture (Cooper 1938; McGee 1961; Turner 1979 [fp1894]; Skinner 1911) few detailed studies exist for particular groups. The rare exceptions include the work of Adney and Chapelle (1964) on canoes; John M. Cooper (1938) on snares, deadfalls and traps of the Northern Algonquians and Northern Athapaskans; Daniel S. Davidson (1928) on the decorative art of the Têtes de Boules; David Gidmark (1985; 1988) on Algonquin canoes; Camil Guy (1970) on the birch bark

canoe; Irving A. Hallowell (1938) on Saulteaux material culture in general; Carole Lévesque (1976) on Quebec snowshoes, moccasins and toboggans; Julius Lips (1936) on Ojibway traps; Edward S. Rogers (1967) on Mistassini Cree material culture in general; Speck (1930) on Mistassini Cree material culture in general; and Garth Taylor (1980) on Cree canoes).

The available literature discussing the eastern Subarctic material as art, in general as well as specific art forms, is also meagre. By way of illustration, only one volume, *Native North American Art History*, edited by Zena Pearlstone Mathews and Aldona Jonaitis (1982), considers ethnographic art as art history. Of the selected readings, organized according to culture area, there are only three for the Algonkian area. These include the oft-cited classic work of Speck's, "The Double-Curve Motive in Northeastern Algonkian Art" originally published in 1914, W.J. Hoffman's "Pictography and Shamanistic Rites of the Ojibwa" first published in 1888, and a more current article by Lee Ann Wilson (1982) entitled, "Bird and Feline Motifs on Great Lakes Pouches". Intensive research designed to provide an in-depth contextual analysis and interpretation of the meaning of a particular sacred site resulted in Joan and Romas Vastokas' *Sacred Art of the Algonkians: A Study of the Peterborough Petroglyphs* (1973).

Their study, although lacking supportive oral tradition, is a major contribution to anthropology, art history and the contextualization of Algonquian art forms. A more recent specific computer-generated search of fifteen data bases for publications on James Bay or Swampy Cree art yielded only Ted Brasser's 1974 article, "Good Luck in Hunting: James Bay Indian Art."

For the most part, discussion of northeastern art has centred around the polemical origins and sources of influence in art styles and motif derivation. Controversial issues were first raised by Speck in his classic study of northeastern motifs (1914) from which he posits, based on widespread primary and secondary distribution, that the double curve motif is an aboriginal Algonquian form. Marius Barbeau, on the other hand, states unequivocally that the floral art and the double curve motif of the natives cannot "be traced back to prehistory" (Barbeau 1928:512). In his view, both are directly attributable to French contact (Barbeau 1928:512). While generally accepting the premise that native art was European-influenced, ethnologist Ernest Dodge attempts to reconcile these polar opinions of Speck and Barbeau (Dodge 1951). He concludes that while both linear and dot decoration are aboriginal, only the simplest form of the double curve is free from European influence (Dodge 1951:5). Any elaboration of

that specific motif attests to European influences as does rectilinear and floral art (Dodge 1951:5).

Basing an alternative opinion on both decorative techniques and an assessment of Algonquian designs, Jacques Rousseau suggests that, "élément fondamental de l'art décoratif algonkin, non pas la "double-courbe," mais le motif à "symétrie bilatérale" (1956:219). Certainly, there is merit in considering Rousseau's suggestion that the double curve motif is more an expression of the fundamental organizing element of bilateral symmetry rather than a fundamental motif as others recommended. By accepting Rousseau's thesis, we can acknowledge the potential for aboriginal origins of the double-curve motif. Indeed, the antiquity of double-curve designs was demonstrated many years prior to Rousseau's article by George Quimby (1943) who compared the symmetrical curvilinear designs of the northern Algonquians and those of the prehistoric Hopewell peoples.

Continuing to focus on this debatable issue of indigenous origins for northeastern art styles as opposed to European-influence, James Richardson (1977) attempts to establish an historical overview of Iroquoian and Algonquian material. Materials examined encompassed non-perishable archaeological items, some twenty ethnographic examples from AD1600-1800 and numerous examples from AD1800-1900. From these three time periods Richardson concluded that "In the period

from A.D. 1600-1800 there is a continuity with the pre-contact geometric designs which are replaced towards the end of this period by European designs, forms and techniques of decoration" (1977:117). He further concluded that "the evolution of post-contact Iroquois and Algonkian art styles mirrored changes in the other subsystems of the society and their art styles reflect the increasing dependence on and adjustment to European cultural patterns" (Richardson 1977:117). These conclusions, although geographically and hence historically and politically removed from the subarctic, are relevant to the present study.

Leaving the argument of European influence aside, Speck's article "The Historical Approaches to Art in Archaeology in the Northern Woodlands" (1942) does not discuss what the title promises. Rather, the article supports another researcher's attempts to establish historical connections between the eastern Algonquian groups and Plains Algonquians based on moccasin construction and design as well as an aesthetic preference for black. Inherent in this approach is the emic consideration of the formal and subjective qualities as they pertain to a particular group, an approach seldom taken by authors of culture area overviews.

More recent publications focus on the decorative art of the Algonquian and Iroquoian natives of Quebec providing brief historical and technical overviews of particular forms

(Noël 1979; Simard and Noël 1977). In his slim volume entitled *Thunderbird and Lightning: Indian Life in Northeastern North America 1600-1900*, Jonathon C.H. King (1982) profusely illustrates the text with artifacts and historical photographs and paintings. King was also instrumental in mounting a truly remarkable exhibit, "Living Arctic: Hunters of the Canadian North" at the British Museum's ethnographic Museum of Mankind in London, England (1987-1990). This encompassed both the arctic and subarctic regions with an historical overview up to the contemporary period. Current issues concerning museums and native populations and the approaches²⁴ taken to work together successfully are documented in the accompanying report and catalogue (King 1989). The most recent full-length publication, *To Please the Caribou*, by Dorothy Burnham (1992) is a very focused study of painted caribou coats from the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula with scant ethnographic data and no attempt at interpretation. Organized in a chronological sequence from circa AD1700 to 1930, this work catalogues 60 of the best examples of the approximately 150 known extant coats.²⁵ The colour illustrations attest to the excellence of artistic production and the inherent significance these coats held for the native people. Certainly, Burnham's skills as a draftsman provide meticulous details of construction and motifs invaluable as the basis for comparative analyses,

particularly those concerned with the distribution of styles and motifs through time and space.

Together we survive:

A common theme unifying this Cree material culture is the sense that all actions are carried out together with the express purpose of survival. **Survival** in this sense is more than "hanging onto life by a thin thread of meat and shelter; **it is the technical, social and spiritual survival in the sense of people being individuals in a sustained personal community"** (Preston 1993).²⁶ Earlier, Speck (1935:245) was told, "we are only knots in a string." The "string" begins with the raw materials being put 'together,' with the human persons applying the technical aspect to produce artifacts that are used to survive. In this way, the raw materials are exploited, then transformed into cultural products, and now, those that have survived through the years become our source material for reconstructing the past. The following chapters will discuss various aspects of this theme while moving back and forth between the present and the past in our effort to recontextualize the objects (cf Denning 1988).

Chapter Two looks at the extant objects that survive in public and private collections by discussing the collection process. Working with what is available, Chapter Three attempts to establish the identity of the artifacts as East Cree based on an assessment of their internal evidence (see

below), especially selected motifs. Chapter Four discusses how the hoods (Photographs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) in their cultural context function as a material vehicle for survival that incorporates the animal world and the human world of the Cree. Discussion of these hoods also documents the increasing complexity of Cree and European relationships. Chapter Five, focusing on leggings as an identifying marker, illustrates the strong identification that exists between the Cree and the caribou (Photographs 6, 7, 8, 9, 10). Chapter Six metaphorically ties the loose ends together; together men and women, adults and children, human persons and non-human persons, by combining their technical abilities and the raw materials available to them demonstrate the cooperative effort required for technical, social and spiritual survival.

The particular objects selected for this study were chosen for a number of practical and personal reasons. For the most part these objects functioned within their natural context and thus were not produced as commercially important tourist items. Granted, while many of them were sold or given to non-natives, these items were not tourist art in the sense of being the deliberate collective exploitation of a market (cf Graburn 1976:4-8). The beaded hoods appealed to my Western aesthetic sense and to my feminine respect for the technical expertise and innumerable hours that went into their creation. The cultural significance of the leggings was underscored by

their continued use long after other items of clothing were replaced by European ones. And finally, the seemingly mundane netted baby charm (Photograph 11) reveals so much about the cognitive essence of Cree culture that it, too, must be included.

In my attempt to recontextualize these items, I have drawn upon ethnohistoric and ethnographic evidence to augment and support the internal evidence of the objects themselves. By internal evidence I refer here to the approach used by the new art history that acknowledges all the characteristics that are inherent in a work of art itself; that is, its *formal qualities* of composition, structure, line, colour, texture; its *subject matter*; the *materials* of which the object is made [including decorative elements]; and the *techniques* with which the work was produced (Vastokas 1987:24). Singly or combined, each of these characteristics - form, content, materials and techniques - can yield invaluable information about the way in which the social world is structured, experienced and reproduced. This internal evidence and the concept of objects as documents recording their life histories can provide a valid approach to develop a base for the rehistorization of Cree material culture. In an effort to provide an interpretation of meaning for these objects, I turn to semiotic and symbolic interpretations that consider sign,

metonym, metaphor, and symbolic referents to grasp an understanding of the cognitive aspects of East Cree culture.

Consequently, when the new art history is coupled with the recent resurgence of interest in material culture studies, this broader theoretical and methodological base works particularly well with Native American art and material culture encouraging dialogue across intellectual disciplines and yielding insights that might otherwise be overlooked. Within this framework, and given the fact that the material evidence relies upon what has survived in the museum context, I have chosen an eclectic approach that extracts relevant aspects from a number of perspectives rather than being constrained by one particular theoretical position. Above all, it is the objects themselves as tangible evidence of Cree world view that are now the subject of this research.

CHAPTER TWO

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST: THE EXTANT OBJECTS

The nineteenth century concept advanced by social scientist, Herbert Spencer, of 'survival of the fittest' in terms of evolutionary progress held that the most worthy would endure while others would perish. This concept is far from applicable here. For extant objects in public and private collections, while indeed 'worthy', are made so by the very fact that they have survived and not necessarily as the result of any intrinsically superior qualities. Working backwards from the extant collections to the cultural context, three major factors profoundly affect the selective survival of objects. These are the collectors, the collecting process, and the collection history, philosophies and practices of the museums themselves. A fourth critical factor centres around certain qualities of the materials used. In essence, these factors are relevant aspects in the social history of specific objects ultimately affecting research and analyses. The limitations of collections are best understood by working backwards from their artificial context through the process of decontextualization to their natural context. Following a very brief consideration of the establishment and development of nascent museums and their policies and mandates, discussion of

specific collectors and the collecting process allows some appreciation for the limitations of this extant material. Of particular importance here is the native side of the negotiations. Tangentially, in the Cree area most, if not all, objects were sold or given to the collectors, which offsets any concerns about whether the material was obtained improperly.

By appropriating the term 'internal evidence' from the study of art works and applying it to the collections used in the present research, the content of the collections can be used to elicit information. For example, the composition of any particular collection can be broken down into categorical types of artifacts represented by a finite number of examples. When possible, correlation of type with areal distribution is an added benefit. As well, the physical characteristics of individual items - form, size, material(s), colour, and condition - can be obtained with relative ease. For the early pieces, the most elusive feature is the adequacy of accompanying documentation. However, at the level of the collection, much of this information remains theoretical as the majority of older pieces are poorly documented, unprovenanced, uncatalogued, misidentified, unidentified or inaccessible to researchers. In other words, it is necessary to work with what has survived and what is accessible.

Nascent Museums:

Tymothy Conley's seventeenth century presentation of exotic artifacts to Canon Bargrave was in keeping with the passion of the times; that is, assembling a "Cabinet of Curiosity" (Ames 1986:3). For, as horizons broadened with European entry into the Age of Exploration during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the collecting of "natural and artificial" objects of great diversity or curiosity escalated among wealthy *savants* and amateurs (Zehnacker et Petit 1989). Whether items were collected personally or received as gifts, the collections, unsystematic and idiosyncratic in composition, were designed to "stimulate admiration and wonder (and) which would reflect upon the daring exploits, special knowledge, or privileged status of the collector" (Ames 1986:38). Quality was often forfeited in favour of exoticism¹ with no apparent differential preference between artificial (that, is fabricated) and natural curiosities; freaks of nature and ethnographic items of distant tribal peoples received equal admiration (King 1985:232-236; Zehnacker et Petit 1989:7).² Criteria for selection were simple: exotic, portable with limitations on size in many instances, and use of indigenous materials. For present-day researchers, the greatest asset of this attitude toward collecting is the probability that most early items were not produced to please European consumer tastes.

In a number of instances it was these Cabinets of Curiosity that became the first public museums administered by librarians, antiquarians and natural historians (see, for example, Ames 1986; Alexander 1979; King 1987; MacGregor 1983; Zehnacker et Petit 1989). Over the years, eclectic collections gave way to "systematic collecting and analytical classifications" (Ames 1986:39; Jacknis 1985:89) and ultimately, ethnographic museums³ (Halpin 1983). A timely example is that of the British Museum in London, England. The founding collections of this museum were from the bequest of physician Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753). Sloane's vast private collection (including approximately 2000 ethnographical items) differed from other Cabinets of Curiosity in terms of its meticulous recording and numbering and its use as a source of scientific data by Sloane and his colleagues (King 1987:61). Setting it apart from other early collections was that "for the first time a substantial proportion of pedestrian descriptions are replaced with information copied directly from field informants" (King 1985:236). In terms of present day concerns, its value as a general educational collection was negated, however, by being an eclectic assembly of disparate objects from scattered geographical sources (King 1985:236).

With the growth and development of these ethnographic museums emerging mandates (including accession policies) did

not ensure that documentation, particularly provenance, was accurate, if included at all (Oberholtzer 1989b). Exceptions to this general malaise, such as those exemplified by the Bargrave and Sloane collections, provide limited examples with known dates and/or provenance as fixed or 'key' markers for use as definitive comparative material.

Although hampered by minimal and inadequate documentation, the strength of collections such as these in the reconstruction of Cree social history and world view rests upon their early acquisition dates and internal evidence. Documentation, when available, also holds sufficient clues to entice researchers to follow these leads. All available knowledge of the collectors, their purposes, travel routes, and social connections adds relevant pieces to the puzzle.

The Collectors:

As noted above, the European collection of early ethnographic material was undertaken to fulfil personal interests or to provide gifts and presentations, and to fulfil requests, most often for members of the European nobility and elite. Following similar trends in other geographic areas, North American items were acquired by explorers, traders, missionaries, military administrators and travellers. In many instances, particularly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these men and women left journals or logs recording their travels in which, on rare occasions, they noted the

acquisition of actual objects. Supplemental sources are found in the records of shipping companies, the military, individual merchants and trading companies. Nonetheless, detailed provenances still remain elusive for most objects.

By way of illustration, the items collected by Tymothy Conley were most probably collected from the James Bay Cree of Rupert's House or Moose Factory between 1662 and 1676. Conley's documented release from Algiers in 1662, his acknowledged gratitude to Canon Bargrave and his profession as a London merchant establish both a *rationale* and an opportunity to express his gratitude to Bargrave. Then, by coupling that information with Bargrave's 1676 catalogue recording the Cree items and English naval exploratory efforts into James Bay during that bracketed time period, the resulting inference provides an element of certainty to this attribution (Bargrave 1676a, 1676b; Glenbow 1987a:40; Oakley 1990).

On the other hand, a nest of thirty Cree birch bark baskets (Museum of Mankind Sl 2065)⁴, was "collected between 1721 and 1746 *perhaps* by Christopher Middleton" (King 1982:26; emphasis added). By Middleton's own account he made "three and twenty voyages" (including wintering over at least twice) to Hudson and James Bays by the year 1742 (Middleton 1742 as cited in Barr 1990:34; Isham 1949:325-334; Middleton 1743). These, and possibly other voyages to York Factory, Albany

Fort, Moose River, and Churchill River (Isham 1949; Barr 1990), provided ample opportunity to collect from the Cree. These particular baskets, as part of Hans Sloane's eclectic collection, are as well-documented as we can hope to find for this period.

The early eclecticism of collections was rectified somewhat in later museum collections by the acquisition of geographically delimited collections personally acquired by traders, missionaries, medical practitioners and military officers stationed for a period in a particular region (for examples, see Table 1 below).

In turn, a secondary method of acquisition practised by several private collectors who, with discrimination and deliberation, purchased fine examples of early North American artifacts through intermediaries, has richly augmented many public collections. Particularly noteworthy was the German collector, Arthur Speyer, who is renowned for his preference for eighteenth and early nineteenth century pieces "which still possessed at least fragments of documentation" (Brasser 1976:11; emphasis added). Another collection of comparable quality, but lacking equivalent documentation, is that collected by a primary school teacher, Herr Hotz, of Zurich, Switzerland. Assembled from material obtained in Europe, the collection now constitutes the Indianer Museum der Stadt, housed fittingly in a primary school in Zurich.

Collector	Date	Area
Earl of Warwick	18thc	"Swampy Cree" Material
Grand Duke of Baden	1770	"Naskapi" Material
Caldwell, Sir John	1780	Northern Ontario
Gladman, George	1805	Eastmain
Shirley, Col.		Eastern Woodlands
Nixon, Lieutenant	1827	Quebec-Labrador Peninsula
Halifax, Miss	c1840	Hudson's Bay
Lefroy, Henry	1843	Northern Ontario and West
Lord Elgin	1847-54	Elgin Collection
Stuart, Rev. Henry A.	c1890	La Tuque, Quebec
Turner, Lucien	1892	Ungava
Skinner, Alanson	1908	East Coast of James Bay
Skinner, Alanson	1909	West Coast of James Bay
Renouf, Ernest	1915	Great Whale River
Waller, Sam	1920s	Moose Factory
Pickering, G.D.T.	1928	Tete de Boule

Table 1: Sample of Collectors in Hudson and James Bay areas.

Only at the close of the nineteenth century and into the early decades of the twentieth, did the beginnings of well-documented eastern Subarctic collections become well-established. For example, Lucien M. Turner, working in the Ungava area of the present Quebec-Labrador peninsula, accumulated a sizable number of ethnological items now housed in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.. Another important collection is that acquired by ethnologist Alanson Skinner from the East Cree⁵ of James Bay during the summer of 1908 and from the West Cree during the summer of 1909 for the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Further collections, more geographically delimited, made by Ernest Renouf of material from Great Whale River (1915) and in the 1920s by Sam Waller from Moose Factory and the east coast of

James Bay, reveal personal aspirations of the collectors. While Renouf appears to have seized the opportunity to make a profit buying artifacts and reselling them to museums (letters to Sapir 1913-1916 [CMC file 1-A-236]; Renouf 1921), Waller amassed artifacts for his own pleasure (Oberholtzer 1992). As Renouf was posted by the Hudson's Bay Company as a clerk in a number of locations on the east coast while Waller served as a lay missionary teacher in Moose Factory, the collections also provide tangible evidence of the nexus of external influences, internal changes and native life. Furthermore, the documentation provided by the collectors in the form of notes, correspondence, and in the case of Waller, diaries, divulges salient aspects of the collecting process that are so infrequently revealed.

The contents of these documented collections provide significant markers for comparison with the rather haphazard array of earlier material that has survived. Through the composition of these collections and their documentation we can also gain a sense of the collecting process from the native point of view.

Collecting Process:

Analysis of the factors inherent in the collecting process provides further understanding about the composition of museum collections. Significantly, we can discern on a general level the types of material objects that the native

vendors and donors were willing to relinquish. By drawing from a number of disparate sources covering many decades and augmented with ethnographic analogies, we can establish certain characteristics of the collecting process that have determined the form, quantity and distribution of objects in museum collections.

As can be ascertained from the previous discussion, early examples of native objects were selected on the basis of their exotic qualities; that is, as prime examples of 'the other' suitable for inclusion in Cabinets of Curiosity or Trophy Rooms⁶. Size, portability and durability of materials must have been important considerations in this early selection process, as they were to become two centuries later. As Barbara Hail establishes in her discussion of "Emma Shaw Colcleugh: Victorian Collector" (Hail and Duncan 1989:62):

It has often been said that objects, to be collectible, must be "suitcase-sized." They must also be durable, and not given to organic disintegration or destruction through packing and storing, since most nineteenth-century travellers were on extended tours of many months, and carried their purchases with them in steamer trunks, valises and boxes.

Even anthropological collecting in the Subarctic up to mid-twentieth century reflected an interest in portable and easily-collected items, with collectors eschewing such hard-to-transport items as bulky and vulnerable fur clothing, hide lodges and full-size canoes. In addition to the portability factor, selection also points to at least two differential

preferences of the collectors: a tendency to travel in the North during the summer months and a desire for "highly refined embroidered skin clothing with a reduced animalistic appearance over tailored and woven clothing" (King 1991:140). Additionally, types of objects can be correlated with gender differences; not only in preferences exhibited according to gender but also as a result of biased access to certain items based on gender. Colcleugh, for example, collected decorated personal gear and household utensils while the collection obtained by The Fifth Earl of Lonsdale during the same time period reflects his more rugged outdoor interests and his association with male guides and hunters (Hail 1991; King 1991; Kretch 1991).

The opportunities for collecting items were also dependent upon the rate and purpose of travel, for as John Lefroy notes in letters to his sister while he was conducting a magnetic survey of the Canadian northwest in 1842-44 (Stanley 1955:113; and 160 below):

Curiosities are not so easily procured by one who travels hastily, as you would suppose - if made at all it is usually by the daughters of the traders, from whom we cannot buy them, and one does not like to ask them; and in my case almost every moment that I passed at the different forts was occupied, so that I have very little time or opportunity to get them by indirect means. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis gave me several things. But if I return to the North I shall know better how to go to work, and expect to make a great collection.

This contrasts with Colcleugh's experiences. Not only did she make many trips by various forms of transportation, often marked by enforced stops of up to several days, she was also able to make several trips into some areas over the course of a number of years.

Furthermore, Lefroy's collection demonstrates the need to ascertain the social networks of the collectors themselves to gain further details about the objects collected. A specific example, a pair of Cree woman's leggings catalogued as having been collected by Lefroy at Eastmain in 1845 (Mannheim V Am 3106ab), demonstrate this need. Documentation covering this period, including the itinerary for his magnetic survey of the northwest (Lefroy 1883), negates Lefroy's presence at Eastmain at that time. Neither is there any biographical evidence to indicate any further expeditions (Stanley 1955; Whitfield and Jarrell 1982). This does not preclude a later collection date nor a different location for the source. An alternative hypothesis is that the leggings were obtained by Lefroy from an intermediary or another collector. Professionally and socially he was associated with a number of people who were involved with northern affairs or had connections with the north, any of whom could have been aware of his interest in acquiring "a great collection."⁷ In fact, it was Sir Edward Sabine, a collector of native materials himself, who was instrumental in selecting Lefroy to

conduct the magnetic observations in Canada (Levere 1982; Stanley 1955). Situations such as this one underscore the need to obtain biographical profiles of the collectors as part of the effort to trace the social history of objects.

Drawing analogies from collections not specifically identified as Cree, we can note several presentations of gifts in recognition of native respect for certain non-native persons. For example, of the many well-documented items in the Swiss Cottage Museum, several quilled birch bark lidded baskets from the Rice Lake (Ontario) area were presented to the Prince of Wales in 1860 during his official (and hence, much recorded) visit. On one piece is written in pencil, "For the Prince of Wales from Betsy Simon, Rice Lake." Another has "Presented to the Prince of Wales" worked in quill on the front and in similar fashion, "By Hannah McCue of Rice Lake" on the back. Similar presentations are recorded by Edward Blackmore who received a number of pieces given by "his Indian friends," which are now part of the collections of the Hastings Museum in England. This museum also holds Sitting Bull's belt presented personally to Mr. Moretan Frewer in 1883 at the site of the famous Indian victory over Custer (Taylor 1984:25). Of lesser significance, except for the persons directly concerned, was the gift of (probably) Cree baby mocassins to a Welshman. Now in the American Museum at Bath (87.157a,b), the documentation for these reads, "Given to

donor's father by an Indian squaw c1926-30 when he went to work on the railroad, hoping to make a fortune. This never happened, and as he was about to return to Wales, the Indian took the moccasins off her baby and gave them to him as a keepsake." These and other examples are indicative of native intent to demonstrate friendship and respect for European associates.

Similar constraints and opportunities surrounding the collecting process remained in effect into the early years of the twentieth century, particularly in the northern locations of James Bay. Collecting during the second decade of the twentieth century, Renouf made several comments to this effect. According to his letters, "during the fall, (that) there was very little material worth collecting at Whale River itself..." (21 September 1915); the Indians at Whale River have given up their old "primitive" weapons and utensils for articles of European make (Renouf 1915); and at Attawapiskat on the west coast "the natives here appear to be far from primitive and I have come across nothing of interest as yet; - the Indians hunting in the interior appear more promising..." (27 February 1916). These notations suggest that the Coasters or Home Guard Indians had given up much of their traditional technology by the early twentieth century. The situation again raises questions about the effects of seasonality on collecting practices, even for those who remained in the area

throughout the year. If there was very little material at Great Whale River in the fall, can we surmise that items were required for fall and winter hunting and trapping in the bush? If so, would these items perhaps be considered 'surplus' or 'extraneous' in the spring or summer and thus available for sale? Or, when this seasonal paucity is coupled with the apparent acculturation of the Coasters, was it only the natives of the interior, or Inlanders, who came to the post in the summer months who continued to produce and use traditional items? Did the women have more leisure in the spring or summer to embroider and do beadwork? Or, stepping back in history, Rev. Woodall's (1911: Mf 81-4, reel I) report from Rupert House notes that:

...the first detachment of Coasters arrived June 1st. From that date onward throughout the season Indians dribbled in and dribbled out continually. The old order changeth but one longs for the old days when the Indians arrived well together under the command of their chief remained six weeks or so at the Post and then departed. This coming and going of men and lads only and the leaving of the women & children at Namiska [sic] ...

Can we presume that similar changes were happening in the more northerly posts?⁸ Can we infer also that it was the women who controlled the sale of their handiwork in the Cree area as they did further west (Hail 1991)? This leaves us with a number of unanswered - and perhaps, unanswerable - questions and inferences that directly affect the collecting process, and ultimately, the composition of museum collections.

Certainly Waller's opportunities for collecting benefitted from his extended stay in the Cree area. His associations were numerous and people knew that he was particularly interested in obtaining native artifacts, birds, and other natural items. An important and often unknown dimension to our understanding of the collecting process is provided by his diary notations which refer to a number of transactions between himself and natives, many of whom are identified by name. On one occasion Waller notes that he traded a watch and chain for a model kiyak [sic] and was then given "a fine birch bark canoe - a model of the kind used here in Moose many years ago" (2-25⁹). In a later entry he writes that he had paid the McLeods, a Cree family, for some souvenirs, although no amounts or trade items are divulged.

Several acquisitions appear to have been presented as gifts to Waller. For instance, Waller's journal entry for January 27, 1925 (2-57) reads: "Went up to George McLeods [sic] this a.m. & was given what I have often longed for viz. [namely] two amulets from an old Indian. They are made from the skin of the bears [sic] chin. These were formerly regarded with great superstition" (Photographs 12, 13). Putting aside the ethnographic significance for the moment, we can consider the relevance of the statement "...what I have often longed for...." This alleged space of time between Waller's initial expression of desire or actual request(s) and his eventual

acquisition of the amulets intimates that for certain items, the sphere of exchange transactions was highly restricted by the Cree. A partial understanding can be reached through consideration of the intrinsic or attributed values of the objects, in this case a bear's chin.

The acquisition and decoration of the bear chin and lytta (a small fibrous structure of cartilage, muscle and connective tissue in the tongue) are bound up with the total bear complex of ceremonialism practised by the East Cree (Hallowell 1926; Skinner 1914). Not only was the removal of these parts associated with the respect given to the bear's spirit, the symbolically decorated chin continues to imbue the hunter throughout his life with the bear's power and efficacy in hunting and healing. The possession of one or more bear chins by a Cree man attests to his power and competency as a man, as a hunter, and as a potential curer (Oberholtzer 1989a). To give up an object so culturally and personally significant is revealing. Either the object has lost its efficacy or the person to whom the gift is made is held in high esteem by the donor. For the "old Indian" to give up this valued possession after much deliberation pays tribute to Waller while alluding to the hunter's acceptance of his waning competence as a hunter.

In an earlier assessment of the Montagnais-Naskapi collection of the Royal Ontario Museum (Oberholtzer 1989b),

several pertinent observations about the native perspective became apparent. Items in this collection (accessioned mid-twentieth century) document both comments made by native vendors and the condition of the objects at the time of purchase, permitting a glimpse into native criteria for sale. Catalogue documentation includes such notations as "thumb torn on both mitts", "sleeves and front patched", "soles patched" and "hole in upper part of net." Other items no longer used at the time of the transaction were outgrown baby moccasins, tools of a deceased husband and a children's toboggan described as being in "fair" condition. While most of the vendors are identified by name, there are no recorded vendors for the ceremonial items of bear skin, bear chin, drum and drum beater. The fact that all these objects had been used attests to their role in native life and to the fact that originally they were not made for sale.

The question arising from the Royal Ontario Museum materials is whether or not we can extrapolate backwards from the situation of the mid-twentieth century to address native aspirations of the three preceding centuries. Extreme caution must be exercised here. A brief overview of the composition of museum collections can provide another source for determining what objects the native peoples were willing to give up.

Composition of Collections

The composition of the early collections in European museums provides only a tentative overview of the Cree items collected. Minimal documentation and limited accessibility obscure the extent of the collections themselves and the uneven and random survival of objects tends to skew the results. However, of the total number of objects assessed, roughly 600 purported to be Cree or at least Algonquian, can be categorized as follows in Table 2 below. Because of the uncertainty regarding exact dates, these categories have not been broken down according to age. However, by isolating the more recent Renouf collection of the Museum of Mankind in London and the Waller collection at the Ipswich Museum, both noteworthy for their documentation¹⁰, the remaining material is illustrative. Discussion of these two later collections prior to that of the early material will afford some insight into the types of objects the natives were willing to give up at different time periods.

The collections established by Renouf and Waller share a number of common elements¹¹. It should be noted that while both collectors obtained Inuit and Indian material, only the Cree material will be considered here. As well, for analytical purposes I am considering that each collector's total acquisitions from the East Coast of James Bay and environs comprise one collection each. Both collections are dominated

Item	Number
moccasins	162
bags	149
coats & jackets	59
garters & bands	50
birch bark containers (+ 2 "nests")	27
leggings	19
hoods & hats	19
knife sheaths	19
belts	18
pipes	15
hair/ear ornaments (pairs)	12
gloves & mitts	11
amulets	6
cradle boards	5
wooden spoons	4
rattles	3
snowshoes	3
net baby charms	3
wooden platters	2
canoes	2
masks	2
needle cases	2
rifle cases	2
watch pockets	2
moose legs (wall hanging) pair	2
bear chin (Ipswich 2 missing)	1
crooked knife	1
moss bag	1
club	1
painted robe	1
feather for hair	1
numerous models including 10 dolls	40+

Table 2: Composition of European Collections

by small-scale objects and miniatures. Both include moccasins, beaded garters, loom-woven bead belts, stone pipes, bear chins, birch bark containers, wooden spoons and ladles, and numerous examples of model snowshoes, toboggans, birch bark canoes and snow shovels. Significantly, there are no coats, hoods or leggings. In Waller's collection the ten pairs of model snowshoes, technically

and aesthetically exquisite, represent a variety of styles which Waller tantalizingly describes in the inventory list as "differing according to Locality" but neglects to provide the names of those localities. On the other hand, Renouf's model pair of snowshoes (MM 1921.10.4.211ab), strikingly similar in form to Waller's pair catalogued as Ipswich 1966.1.1071, is attributed to the Cree Indians of Rupert River. Reference to the trading relationships between the Cree and Hudson's Bay Company are reflected in the sets of Hudson's Bay Company trade tokens included with explanatory notes by each collector.

The differences in the collections rest mainly in the acquisition of different types of objects. Waller's collection also contains a number of utility items such as fish nets, fish hooks, a strike-a-light, snowshoe needles, and model goose decoys. Significantly, there are a number of model human figures in the Waller collection but none in the Renouf collection. Present in Waller's collection are net cradle charms (Photograph 11) to be hung on cradles or affixed to moss bags, a model of a baby's hammock and a shopping list written in Cree syllabics. A Moose Factory "watch pocket,"¹² "...part of the Indian dress formerly when hunting" but "now sold as curios" (Ipswich 1966.1.984) has a floral motif beaded on to a birch bark form which appears to have been covered with silk fabric at one time. This small pouch is similar in size, form and decorative composition, but differs in

beading technique, to a floral beaded bag collected by Renouf at Great Whale River (Museum of Mankind 1921.10.4.180).

Particularly characteristic of Renouf's collection is the greater number of beadwork items relative to Waller's collection. This difference is further compounded by the variety of forms and technique employed. Some of this difference can be explained by Waller's comment (confirmed by fieldwork in 1991 and 1992) that silkwork rather than beadwork was more common in the Moose Factory area.¹³ Certainly, comparison of the moccasins in the two collections attests to this predominance of silkwork at Moose Factory. While virtually identical in style and attributes, moccasins in the two collections differ in decorative techniques on the aprons with the Renouf pair beaded and Waller's pair from Moose Factory having silk embroidery. However, closer examination of the object types - loom-woven belts, garters, pipe decorations, beaded shot bags and straps, "fringes" and "ear ornaments" - suggests that this north-south dichotomy may be indicative of changes through acculturation as well as localized preferences. Indeed, the north-south dichotomy appears with other artifact forms and will be discussed further in Chapter Six.

The belts Renouf collected at Great Whale River are loom-woven beadwork articles approximately 22 inches (56cm) long. While similar in form to the straps attached to beaded shot pouches, differentiation between the two forms can be made on the basis of pattern configuration. The geometric designs of the straps, pipe

decorations and garters are bilaterally symmetrical allowing the pattern to be viewed in more than one orientation (Figures 1, 2).

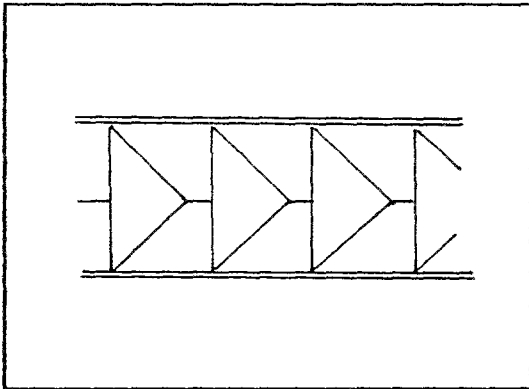


Figure 1: Pouch strap, woven beads (MM 1921.10.4.193)

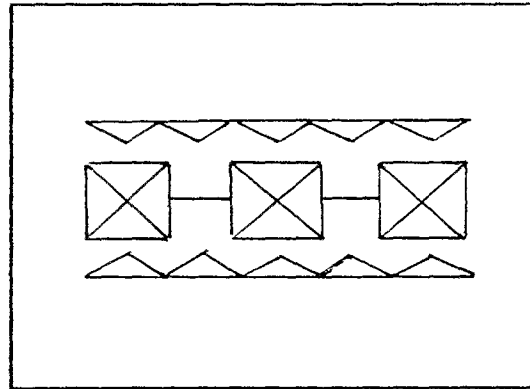


Figure 2: Garter, woven porcupine quill (Hastings 20)

Conversely, the geometric designs on the belts and headbands are vertically asymmetrical requiring a defined orientation to be "read" correctly (Figures 3, 4; Photograph 14). Two, in fact, have a "ground" line establishing the bottom of these objects. Furthermore the belts from Great Whale River all have white bead backgrounds with the designs rendered in red and blue while some headbands use additional colours.

Waller did collect one pair of beaded garters at Moose Factory, a single garter from Ruperts House, and one belt from Fort George. Interestingly, the pattern of the single garter (Ipswich 1966.1.649) is comprised of detached and alternating crosses and diamonds on a white background very reminiscent of

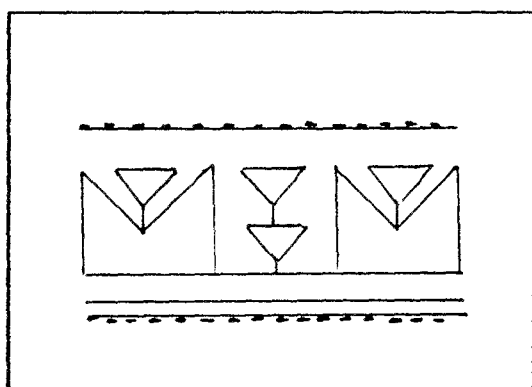


Figure 3: Belt, woven beads
(MM 1921.10.4.174)

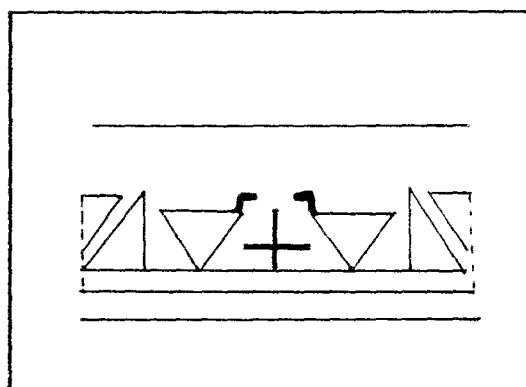


Figure 4: Headband, woven
beads (Liverpool 4.12.14.4)

a pair collected by Renouf (MM 1921.10.4.172ab) but which has an additional square motif reading "cross, square, cross, diamond, cross, square...". The deep blue zigzag design on the white belt (Ipswich 1966.1.650) has red chevrons repeating the "zig" while dark blue chevrons repeat the "zag" of the alternate side. Waller's note states that "Each bride was adorned with a beaded belt (now in disuse)". During my fieldwork, a Waskaganish (Ruperts House) resident responding to the photograph of a belt collected by Renouf (MM1921.10.4.174) remarked that "her mother (from the Moose Factory area) used to make belts like this, and when requested, would make them for other people" (Fieldnotes 1991). Another respondent at Waskaganish and two at Eastmain knew about beaded belts suggesting that at one time the belts had a wider distribution. The more numerous examples from the

northern communities indicate a longer retention of traditional items in that area.

Unique to Renouf's collection are the loom-woven bead "ear ornaments worn by young maidens" (Photograph 15). Generally rectangular in shape, all have (or have had) a tie on each corner and a row of beaded and looped fringe. According to Alika Webber, the knots of hair worn by Naskapi¹⁴ women over each ear are "often covered by a square beaded decoration" (Webber 1980:42). Ethnologist Frank G. Speck correlates this woman's hair style or "bobs" to the neck and shoulder meat of the black bear which, when cooked and ready to eat, is called "hair bobs of the bear" (Speck 1935:104). Lucien M. Turner (1894:182) also documents this particular hair style for the "Indians dwelling to the southwest of the Ungava district." While catalogue information for the Renouf ornaments identifies them as "Naskapi", comparison of motifs suggests that they may be Cree. However, archival photographs of Montagnais women (see, for example, those published by Harper 1964: Plates 12 and 20) illustrate a wider Algonquian trait.

After separating the Renouf and Waller collections from the remaining - and, for the most part, earlier - artifacts, the composition of the collections reflects the non-native criteria for collectibles: they must be portable, non-perishable, and exotic. The high proportion (50% or

greater) of bags (all shapes, sizes and functions) and the ubiquity of moccasins imply that from the native perspective these were "disposable" items. While a significant number of bags exhibit signs of wear that can be attributed to usage, most moccasins (despite accumulated dirt) evidence no wear. This latter situation strongly suggests that the natives were producing these items with a view to the demands of travellers, either in response to individual requests or in anticipation of potential purchasers.

The next largest group of items is comprised of clothing in the form of coats, hoods, leggings, mitts, and decorative accoutrements such as garters, belts and bands. Lack of detailed documentation both in museum catalogues and in ethnohistoric accounts provides scant information regarding the acquisition of these items from their natural contexts. Speculative inferences based on scant and/or tenuous information have prejudiced the reasons why particular objects were sold. By way of illustration, Alika Podolinsky Webber (1988:116) has suggested that painted coats were discarded after a year. If this is indeed the case, then other factors must have come into play in this hunting and gathering society where the fabrication and use of painted coats would have presented some difficulties (cf Burnham 1992:28,303n6; Tanner 1992:ix). In another case, the relinquishing of the meticulously crafted beaded hoods to non-natives may possibly

be a result of the increasing pressures exerted by missionary activities in the area. Answers require a great deal more research before any conclusive statements can be proffered.

The minimal number of 'sacred' and/or ceremonial items such as drums, rattles, pipes, bear chins, amulets and so on in these early collections is singularly revealing. This paucity suggests that there was a native reticence to part with these items. It also underscores the synchronous sacred and practical functions of clothing and other articles of material culture by emphasizing the sanctity of decorative designs and the incorporation of materials with symbolic references within this particular society.

Materials:

The critical factor affecting the composition of extant collections involves the materials of the objects. This takes into account the native preference for particular indigenous and trade good materials to be incorporated into specific items utilizing selected technologies. Objects deemed collectible by non-natives again reflected their cultural preferences in their concern for acquiring non-perishable exotica noted earlier. All these choices have been further reduced by the ravages of time on certain materials, often under less-than-ideal storage conditions. The materials remaining in extant collections are listed in Table 3 below.

While it is not my intention to provide a detailed technical analysis for each of these material sources, a few pertinent points will suffice to provide an awareness of both advantageous properties and vicissitudes.

Absent from the objects assessed are examples of shells incorporated into the finished product. Whether this was due to cultural preference or through deterioration¹⁵ is not clear.

Indigenous Materials

caribou and moose hide
seal and bird skins
bird and porcupine quills
natural pigments and dyes
sinew
birch bark
stone (pipes)
wood
antler and bone

Non-native Materials

woven woollen cloth
silk and cotton fabrics
beads
aniline dyes
commercial thread
woollen yarn
metal
silk embroidery floss

Table 3: List of Indigenous and Non-native Materials.

As well, only one feather item was recorded (Bristol E5977), its identity designated as simply "North American", but included in the Algonquian portion of the collection. While the identity of this piece is ambiguous, its collection date of 1925 and its poor condition gives reason to believe that other feathers or feathered items collected may not have survived. However, the few bags that incorporate bird skins - specifically, both common (*Gavia immer*) and red-throated (*Gavia stellata*) loons - appear to be in good condition

despite their age of 160 years or so (for example, bag with throats of common loon collected in 1827 by Lieutenant Nixon, Pitt Rivers Museum I.22). Although I have not been able to determine whether or not loon skins have inherent protective properties, traditionally bags made from whole loonskins were used as containers to keep sinew moist and pliable, according to Cree informant Minnie Gilpin.

Sinew, when protected from insects in the museum context, appears to last a considerable length of time given the evidence of all early garments. On many of the beaded items, such as the hoods and leggings, the beads were strung on sinew and then in most instances couch stitched to the cloth with commercial thread. While the the commercial thread has deteriorated, the sinew appears to be in good condition.

The properties and condition of hide objects depend on both the source and processing of the raw material (animal skin). Various parts of the animals and birds were selected for specific purposes and were processed accordingly. Hide that has been processed by native tanning - that is, by working oils, vegetable tannins or animal brains into the fibres - is less susceptible to stiffening or shrinking in an inhospitable environment (Howatt-Krahn 1987:44). Smoking provides additional waterproofing and resistance to insects (Howatt-Krahn 1987:44).

Bark from the paper birch (*Betula papyifera*) has a number of innate properties which provide self-protection while serving to protect other substances. The cells of the bark are composed of 85% suberin, a fatty acid which makes the bark flexible, waterproof, and resistant to mild acid and oils as well as water and alcohol (Jewett 1982:214). Birch bark's resistance to micro-organic attack is due to the presence of betulinol, a type of alcohol with antiseptic properties (Jewett 1982:214). Deterioration manifested by brittleness is mainly the result of exposure to sunlight or hot and dry storage areas. As the core strengthening material in the Bargrave ornaments, the protective qualities of birch bark in addition to adequate storage conditions have aided in the survival of these ancient artifacts.

Porcupine quills, comprised of keratin, a complex protein which is the major constituent of horn, nails, hair and feathers, are durable and resistant to fungi and bacteria. Negatively, the manipulation of the quills in the production of the decorative work and subsequent usage can cause breakage and loss. As well, the fading of colours can be attributed to light, while structural damage is the result of reactions between light, dyes, atmospheric pollutants and the processing methods (Howatt-Krahn 1987:50). Further to this, certain red dyes used to colour the porcupine quills appear to be

repellent to insects (details of specific dyes not provided by Howatt-Krahn 1987:45).¹⁶

European materials seem less resistant to insect damage and other environmental vicissitudes leading to subsequent deterioration. Certainly, from the evidence I noted in the museum contexts, commercial thread was subject to greater breakage than was sinew. As a result, many items beaded with commercial thread, for example, suffered significant loss of beads. As well, beads often manifested deterioration over time through breakage and disintegration (cf Howatt-Krahn 1986).

Certainly the effects of environmental conditions in this artificial context are decisive in the survival of many objects. In consideration of environmental concerns, the devastation of the Second World War also contributed to the destruction and loss of many museum pieces (for example, the National Museum on Merseyside, Liverpool, was destroyed by a bomb, and collections in other museums were removed at that time and subsequently lost). When the personalities of the collectors, the vagaries of the collecting process, and the changing philosophies of museums are taken into account, we can better understand the composition of the museum collections.

Summary

In an attempt to reconstruct the Cree world view from extant objects in public and private collections, it is necessary to consider the factors that have affected their selective survival. While the physical properties of the materials used in the production of these objects comprise a critical factor in their preservation, the initial selection of items available to the collector and the 'social history' of these items through the years are also significant. What remains for us to work with is essentially metonymic in that it represents only a selected portion of the entire cultural expression. Extrapolating backwards from known contexts and by piecing together minuscule bits of information from collection documentation further augmented by the internal evidence of the objects themselves, we can tentatively establish earlier contexts. Once the material objects became decontextualized their survival became a matter of chance. The survival of the Cree world view over at least two or three centuries, however, suggests a strong case for the Spencerian concept of "survival of the fittest."

CHAPTER THREE

TOWARDS AN ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION: MATERIAL EVIDENCE

This chapter will consider the concerns that arise when setting out to establish the ethnic identification of material objects. While certain features, or group of features, often situate items in the James Bay and/or Quebec-Labrador peninsula area, more precise East Cree identification is desirable. Identification, as proposed here, has been derived from both external and internal evidence; that is, from such documented evidence as museum catalogue data, ethnographic and ethnohistoric sources, and from the primary data of the objects themselves. Where applicable, these sources are bridged by information offered by Cree collaborators during field work.

As with most researchers using museum collections of native North American material as primary data, I encountered innumerable difficulties, particularly in the area of documentation. As addressed in the introduction, this is most pronounced with the older material held by European museums. Certainly my search for early materials originating from the east side of James Bay and environs was often thwarted by museum entries which seldom, if ever, ascribed these items specifically as East Cree but rather attributed them more

generally to the "Algonquin Family", "Algonkian" or "Hudson Bay Territory". This situation has not improved greatly even in the more recent historic and ethnologic periods as objects from this area often were arbitrarily assigned to the Naskapi or Naskapi-Montagnais regardless of their origin (Dyke 1970; Mailhot 1986; Speck 1935; Webber 1983, 1988).¹

The inadequacy of this documentation raises questions concerning authenticity, cultural identification, geographical origins and relative age. Certainly interpretation of such intangibles as symbolism and/or meaning cannot be considered valid without first determining the cultural origins of particular objects. Therefore, despite tantalizing but sparse fragments of information that strongly suggest specific local origins, the external evidence, fraught as it is with difficulties, must be approached with caution and a greater reliance placed on the internal evidence of the objects. The presence and distribution of various forms, materials, techniques, and motifs, particularly when a number of these elements occur together as a constellation of traits, can be informative. Even so, given the inadequacies in collection documentation, dating sequences, and historical variations in nomenclature, my conclusions are tentative and open to revision. Nevertheless, while recognizing this caveat, the criteria that are presented below are offered with a certain measure of confidence.

Current Knowledge:

Both Skinner (1911) and Rogers (1967) have provided general works on the material culture of the East Cree. This has been supplemented by Carole Levesque's publication (1976) on native snowshoes, moccasins and toboggans of Quebec, including those of the East Cree. Added to this is Speck's work on the Mistassini Cree and "Naskapi" (1930, 1935). To a limited degree these authors have documented certain forms and motifs that are spatially and temporally delineated. Projecting this information backwards to the older material and forwards to the experiential knowledge of contemporary Cree, we can establish certain continuities and discontinuities expressed in material form.

Moccasins provide an excellent example for study as they continue to be made and worn by the Cree, and as Skinner and Rogers have illustrated several ethnographic variations of form. The major drawback is the unmanageable quantity of moccasins in museum collections. Moccasin qualities of 'portability' (size, weight, and durability) and "Indian-ness" (materials, form and decoration) escalated their desirability from the early collector's point of view. Recognized at a very early stage in the history of European presence in the region, this potential for marketing opportunities was seized by the natives and such corporate bodies as the Hudson's Bay Company. Consequently, many of the forms and decorative elements were

altered to fulfil the perceived needs and aesthetics of the non-native market.

Leaving the museum examples aside for the moment and concentrating on those illustrated by Skinner (1911:20; see Figures 5, 6 below) and Rogers (1967:54; see Figures 7, 8 below), the basic form has a pointed toe, a central seam over the foot, and usually an upper extension that is tied around the ankle (Figure 5; extension not illustrated by Skinner; see also male doll's moccasin Photograph 20). The most conspicuous variations are related to the central seam extending from toe to vamp; that is, no seam (Figure 8); rabbit's nose (Figure 6); and caribou tooth (Figure 7 and Photograph 21). Comparison of these features with museum holdings identified as specifically Cree, or at least regionally, reinforces this use of form. However, there are several other forms that may or may not be East Cree.

During field work, photographs of these anomalous types elicited no responses of recognition while those with the "classic" features drew comments from nearly all the elders. Most elders confirmed that the pointed toe was the style they used to make before they started making the rounded toes. Some considered the moccasins with the central seam as the correct pattern; others declared that there should be no seam. It appears that community affiliation does not inform or influence their comments, but rather, differences may have

been a factor of fading or otherwise vague memories, and/or a preference of maker or wearer. Above all, form was more critical than the presence or absence of a seam. In response to Skinner's illustrations of moccasin types (1911:20), John Blackned of Waskaganish commented to Richard Preston that the rabbit's nose type was an earlier form, especially among the Mistassini Cree (Preston 1988b).

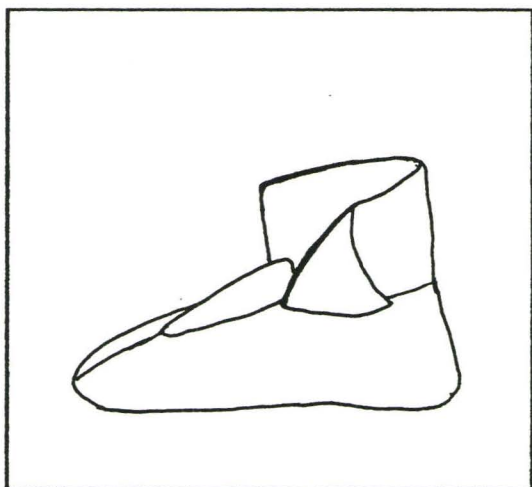


Figure 5: 'Classic' moccasin with pointed toe and central seam (after Skinner 1911:20; Fig.c and Rogers 1967:54; Fig.20)

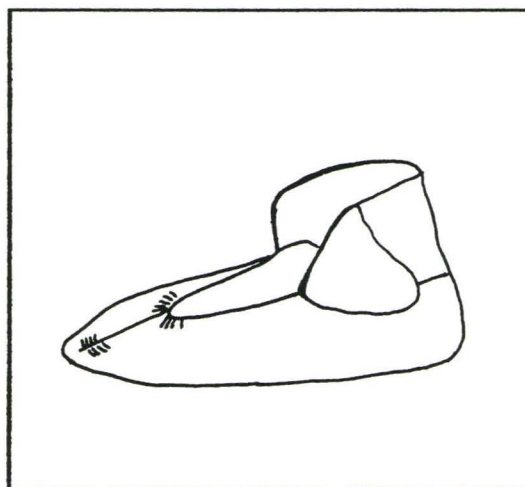


Figure 6: Rabbit's nose moccasin (after Skinner 1911:20; Fig.a; extension added)

While these photographs drew comments that stressed the continuity of form, they also elicited comments documenting both a particular change in form and men's preferences for one style over another. According to a number of women at Eastmain, the pattern for a round-toed style (Photograph 23) was introduced by a local Inuit woman some fifty years or so earlier. Prior to that time, the women had

made pointed-toed ones with ankle flaps. Apparently, according to their accounts, when they saw the sealskin moccasins and kamiks of the Inuit, the Cree copied the style in moose hide (1991 fieldnotes). Round toes are now the accepted form for most moccasins.

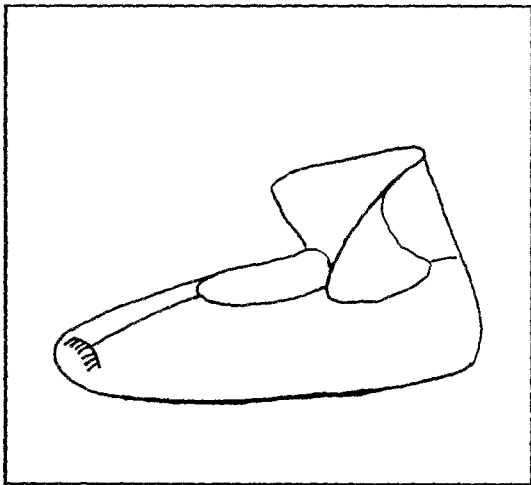


Figure 7: Caribou tooth moccasin (after Rogers 1967:54; Fig.19)

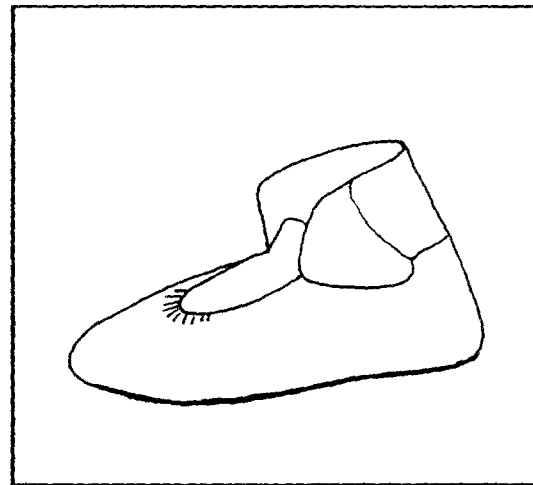


Figure 8: Moccasin without seam over foot (fieldnotes 1990, 1991)

In addition to these two moccasin forms, the Cree indicated that the preference for the "caribou tooth" form (Figure 7) was a matter of personal and/or practical choice. Although one woman prefers making caribou tooth moccasins, her husband considers the round toe more comfortable when wearing snowshoes. In contrast, another hunter found that the caribou tooth style offered better protection from abrasion by the toe straps of snowshoes. Yet another woman continues to make this

style for her husband but produces round-toed ones for sale in the south.

From a technical aspect, the caribou tooth style was used when the "hide was too thick" to make the pointed toe style (1991 fieldnotes), an observation also noted by Skinner (1911:21). Technological innovation such as this to accommodate differences in materials may also be the underlying reason for the adoption and adaptation of the Inuit round toe form for use with the thicker and less pliable moose hide. Certainly, caribou hide was the preferred choice for durability and ease of manufacture (1990, 1991 fieldnotes; Lévesque 1976:42; Rogers 1967:53). Further research may confirm that this change is correlated with the decrease in the caribou population and the increase of moose in the area.

The adoption of this round toe style at Eastmain may also reflect a community "fashion" but if so, it fails to explain the passing of the pointed toe form in other communities. Above all it reflects the fluidity and flexibility of the Cree culture to absorb new forms. At the same time, oral tradition maintains the "classic" form identified as Cree by the Cree themselves. Within this realm falls a consideration for differential use as separate pairs of undecorated moccasins were used for everyday wear inside and outside. In most instances, decorated moccasins were preserved for ritual occasions such as hunting. Hence, a

number of forms can co-exist within one community and one time period.² Certainly the function - both practical and ideological - is retained in each of the forms. This flexibility and innovativeness noted here permits further understanding at various levels during the course of contextual reconstruction through material culture. Conversely it raises a number of questions regarding the reasons instigating the changes.

The potential for identification at the community level remains tantalizingly close but frustratingly elusive. This situation is epitomized by Sam Waller's accompanying notation for seven pairs of model snowshoes of different forms which states, "Snowshoes differ according to Locality,"³ but withholds further explication. This problem was only partially alleviated during fieldwork. Cree elders projected a strong sense of what was "not ours" but little concrete evidence of what was actually "ours."⁴ Comments on both sides of the Bay with particular relevance for establishing community or group identification were expressed implicitly by a woman who had moved to Kashechewan. Although having been raised at Attawapiskat, she included herself as a practitioner of local artistic expression in her comment "our way of doing things here" (1990 fieldnotes; emphasis added). Similarly, an Eastmain woman of mixed Inuit and Cree heritage spoke of the way "we do it here." This primacy of local identity also seems

implicit in the following statements: "that is the way they make them at Nemaska - even the embroidery" (1991 fieldnotes referring to moccasin #18⁵); "made here" (1991 fieldnotes referring to moccasin #17); and an east coast consensus that silk thread rather than beads were used; and that floral motifs rendered in profile on mittens, moccasins and bags were "inlander" from "Mistassini" or "Waswanipi" whereas their own flowers were always "open" (that is, in full bloom). And yet, as no one identified or even commented on two pairs of moccasins with pointed toes, silk embroidery and "open" flowers collected by Sam Waller at Moose Factory between 1923 and 1930 (for example, Photograph 22), we are left with a perplexing situation.

Materials:

The presence and distribution of indigenous materials used in traditional manufacture can define both the origins and the relative age of certain items. This is best demonstrated by the production and use of hide clothing in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula. Until the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, prepared caribou skin was the preferred choice for most hide items. After this period declining caribou populations in the lower James Bay region gave way to moose, and moose hide supplanted caribou in the manufacture of some items (Craik 1975:234; Low 1896; Morantz 1987; Tanner 1979). Moosehide clothing and accessories prior to this period

can be presumed to have originated elsewhere. This is not to deny preferences exhibited by coasters and inlanders between hide clothing and European fabrics and clothing.

Less informative are the decorative materials once used throughout the area as their use is more generally widespread. For instance, trade and other forms of exchange involving both raw materials and finished ornamental pieces have been suggested on a number of accounts, particularly for porcupine quills and quillwork (Mikkelsen 1969; Orchard 1971:2,5; ROM 1977). Attempts to determine specific origins for quill-decorated pieces during fieldwork met with failure. It quickly became apparent that the decorative use of quills - both porcupine and bird - while once an integral aspect of Cree art now belongs to the past in the James Bay area (such as the Bargrave items discussed in Chapter I). On the west coast of the Bay, the older women claimed never to have seen a porcupine, a legacy perhaps of a community lifestyle. A more revealing response came from two men who burst into laughter at every photograph of items decorated with quillwork. To these elders it was incomprehensible that anyone would use quills in this manner. For, when they were in the bush, they either singed the entire animal over the fire to remove the quills or retained only the flesh after skinning the animal (1990 fieldnotes). Despite less dramatic responses given by

elders on the east coast, no one offered either memories or oral traditions about quill usage (1991 fieldnotes)⁶.

The introduction and purchasing of glass trade beads is well-documented in Hudson Bay Company journals; their use by Cree women is noted in numerous ethnohistoric and archaeological reports (for example, Adams 1982; Hind 1863; Isham 1949; Lamb 1970; Rogers *et al.* 1972), and beads are still used to decorate personal gear and tourist items. However, photographs of early museum pieces continue to evoke questions among contemporary Cree women, the foremost regarding the source of these early beads. This was asked most often in Waskaganish and Eastmain where much of the "traditional" decorative work was remembered as being silk embroidery. However, one Eastmain elder recounted that "when they were in the bush on foot they used to come to a spot where there had been an old michuap and she used to love to pick up all the little beads that they [she and her sister] found on the old "floor"." The two girls used to compete to see who could find the most beads, picking them up with a fine needle. Once she found a pile of beads as though a beaded article had been dropped or discarded and decayed there until only the beads were left. Their mother reused these beads that were "all colours." This anecdotal format not only affords insights into the use, reuse, and decorative value of the beads but also suggests that strict usage of beads as

historical indicators must be tempered by other considerations.

Decorative Techniques:

There is insufficient evidence to draw any correlations between varying technical styles or techniques with specific locales. Most techniques used for decoration were widespread throughout the Eastern Woodlands and Subarctic regions with any differences seemingly a factor of adaptive techniques developed with the introduction of non-indigenous materials. Early painted decoration was accomplished by applying indigenous pigments and prepared fish roe with tools carved from antler and bone. Techniques for porcupine quillwork included "netting" in which different coloured quills are wrapped around alternate pairs of threads, resulting in a compact net (Feest 1980:116), wrapping, loom-weaving, plaiting, stitching and knotting (Bebbington 1982; Mikkelsen 1969; Odle 1971; Orchard 1926, 1971 [1916]). These authors also present verifiable evidence of a strong - but not definitive - correlation of certain techniques used on specific object forms. Fewer techniques are employed for decorative beading. These techniques are essentially confined to spot stitching (couching or applique stitching) in which lanes of sinew-threaded beads were attached to a garment by anchoring a perpendicular stitch over the sinew at every second or third bead (see Figure 9), and loom-weaving done on

a small bow loom. In turn, these two methods contrast with the Plains technique of "lazy" or "squaw" stitching in which several sinew-threaded beads are attached after every fifth bead (or more), or, only at the ends (see Figure 10)[†]. The infrequent examples of silk ribbon applique display techniques common to the Great Lakes area. There appear to be no verifiable examples of moose hair embroidery.

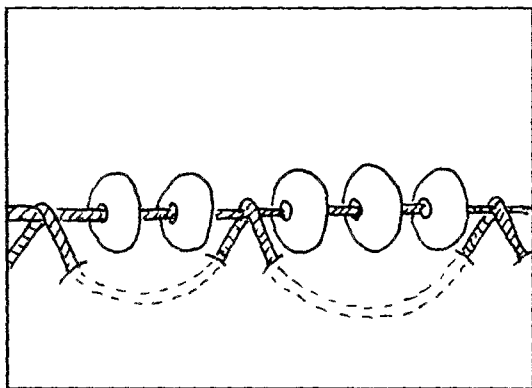


Figure 9: Couched or spot stitching

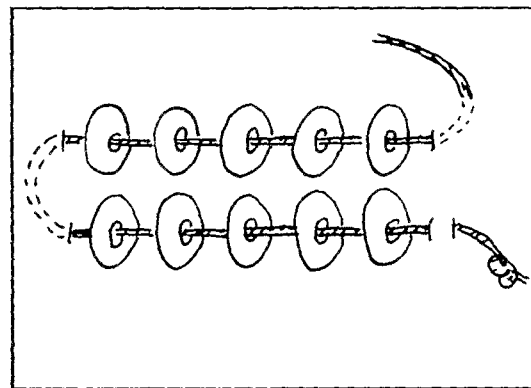


Figure 10: Lazy or squaw stitching

Motifs:

The limited success of defining ethnic identification of objects based on internal evidence derived through form and materials, turns our attention to the iconographic details. The goal is to isolate a motif that has a well-delineated geographic distribution and time span to authenticate and validate a specific ethnic identification.

As a starting point towards this objective, I found Kate Duncan's definitive criteria distinguishing Algonquian

motifs from Athapaskan ones, as expressed in porcupine quillwork, very useful. According to her findings, Algonquian motifs are "complex in colour and parts and stand isolated or barely tangent at triangle points..." As well, Algonquian "patterns almost always alternate two motifs in an ABAB fashion" (Duncan 1989:40). Furthermore, in contrast with most Athapaskan motifs which are comprised of a single element, the Algonquian motif usually has more elements, most often a combination of right triangles juxtaposed in various ways with each motif being symmetrical.⁸ It became evident during my own efforts that this particular composite bilaterally symmetrical motif (see Figure 11) comprised of three triangular forms - two right-angled ones with lateral points touching to form the

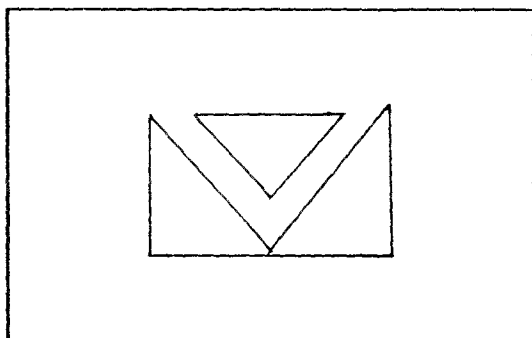


Figure 11: 'Classic' wedge-triangle motif

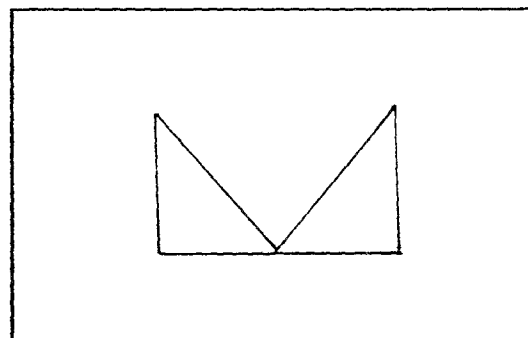


Figure 12: Motif variation: negative space

base with an inverted isosceles triangle centred in the space thus created - could be identified on a number of Algonquian items (see Appendices B, C, D). Two variations of this 'classic' motif occur with similar regularity and

distribution. The central inverted triangle of one variation (Figure 12) is recognized as a negative space between the abutting wedges while the second variation (Figure 13) places an inverted and stemmed triangle in this position. This motif (and the two variations) occurs as a design element on loom-woven porcupine quillwork belts, pouches, panels and epaulettes; on painted hide coats, belts, headbands and sewing kits; and on loom-woven beaded belts, headbands, and hair wraps. Examples date from as early as AD1770, and probably earlier, and continue well into the twentieth century. A

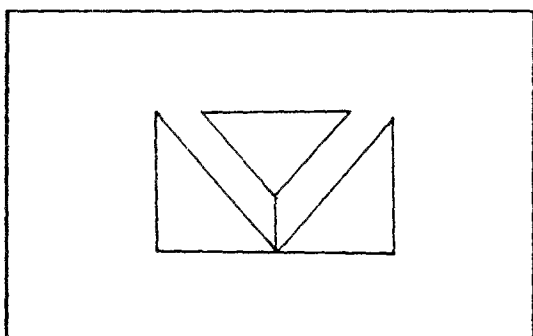


Figure 13: Motif variation:
stemmed triangle

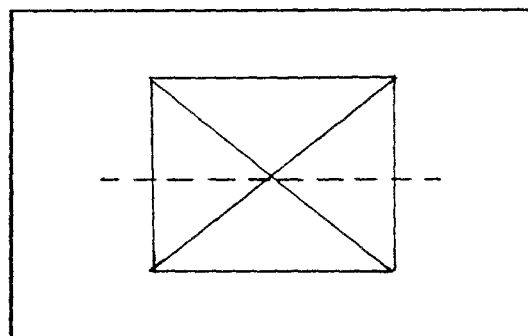


Figure 14: Mirror image
(dashed line added)

limited number of variations, elaborations and incorporations of the motif expand the number of examples considerably (see Figures 14-17; Photographs 14-18). The presence of this motif in various materials over such a lengthy chronological sequence alleviates some of the concerns prevalent with the tracing of designs in beadwork alone (cf Speck 1942:173).

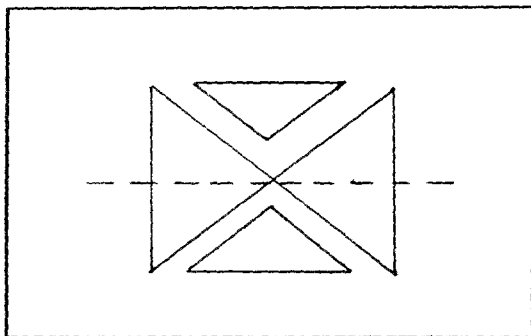


Figure 15: Mirror image
(dashed line added)

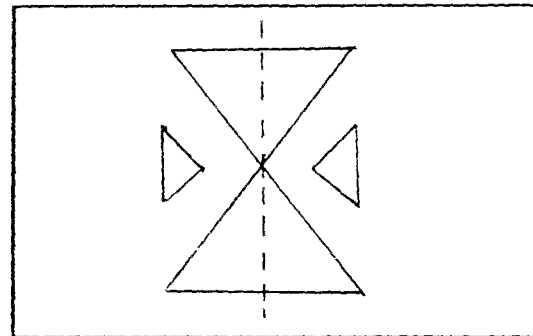


Figure 16: Mirror image
(dashed line added)

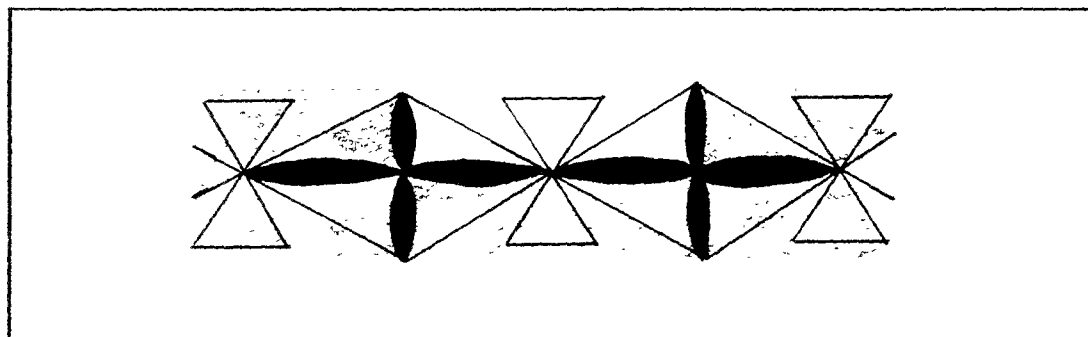


Figure 17: Elaboration with shading added to isolate motif

Attempts to isolate the motif as a basis of cultural identity through personal observation of museum materials augmented by published illustrations in numerous sources, including auction catalogues, yielded promising results. With few exceptions, this particular motif appears to be limited to the northern Algonquian groups⁹. One noteworthy exception is the use of the wedge shaped element without the central inverted triangle, in a great number of heavily beaded items made by the Sioux, particularly in their eastern divisions.¹⁰ Historically situated between two groups of Algonquian

speakers (the Arapaho and the Cheyenne) and with noted ties to the Great Lakes area, the Sioux use of this element suggests an avenue of research to be pursued at another time.

Returning to the motif in question, by working backwards from the securely documented twentieth century examples, a regional continuity is revealed. Our starting point is the loom-woven bead work collected by several ethnologists working in the northern reaches of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula early in the twentieth century (see Photograph 14 for an example). During 1929 and 1930, Richard White collected much of the Naskapi material from the interior of Quebec-Labrador peninsula in the vicinity of Davis Inlet for ethnologist Frank Speck. Just prior to this time, Duncan Strong, an anthropologist on staff with the Field Museum in Chicago, had collected material from the Barren Ground and Davis Inlet bands of the Naskapi during the period of 1927-28. Further west Ernest Renouf, a Hudson's Bay Company employee, made a major collection of East Cree material around 1915. Although Renouf had worked at several posts on the east coast of James Bay for a total of 11 years from the period 1913-1926, most of his collection is believed to have originated in the Great Whale River area.

Of the two most prevalent forms of this woven beadwork, the first to be considered here is a long narrow form variously labelled as a belt or headband. Only when

measurements are included, can distinctions be made between the two with the longer form arbitrarily considered to be a belt. Both these items were collected in considerable numbers in an area extending from the eastern coast of the peninsula westward to Great Whale Post. As can be discerned from Photograph 14, the motif, expressed here with a stemmed inverted triangle, is the predominant decorative element on these belts and headbands. Minimal ethnographic information documents that "girls and newly married wives often make [head]bands of beads...for their lovers and husbands" (Turner [1894] 1979:122), and that, at least on the east coast of James Bay, beaded belts were worn by brides (Waller 1929: item 91). Several older Cree women on the east coast of James Bay recognized these belts from photographs. One Waskaganish resident recalled that her mother would make these belts for other people upon request "in the old days" (1991 fieldnotes).

A second loom-woven beaded form incorporating this particular motif is a pair of hair wrappers or hair ornaments characterized by a single motif and loop-ended fringe (see Photograph 15). Duncan Strong's 1927 photograph of a young woman wearing similar hair wrappers provides contextual documentation (VanStone 1985:116, Figure 86). This is further supported by Renouf's artifact description which records these beaded hair wrappers as being worn only by "maidens" on the "bobs" of hair tied over the ears (Museum of Mankind

1921.10.4.109). While Strong collected hair wrappers from the Barren Ground bands situated south and east of Ungava Bay, ethnologist Lucien Turner ([1894] 1979:18) records these wrappers and hairstyle as being particular to the "Indians dwelling to the southwest of the Ungava district" (presumably around the Great Whale River area) several decades earlier.¹¹

In addition to these woven bead items, there are a number of painted items attributed to this time period and general location that also incorporate the wedge-shaped motif under discussion¹². While many examples abound on caribou hide coats, headbands, women's roll-up bags for sewing, and men's knife sheaths, this particular genre is characterized overall by a simplified, and somewhat crude, rendering of a limited number of motifs. This leads me to speculate that while continued use of the motif attests to its importance, a number of social and/or economic changes may have been taking place which adversely affected the overall composition and quality of the decoration.

Thus, from these relatively well-documented artifacts which establish the presence and geographical distribution of the motif during a specific time period, we can establish a tentative cultural identity. Tentative in that many scholars continue to identify all of the people of this region as Naskapi, despite documented evidence to the contrary. Nevertheless, it remains that this motif was being used, at

least as recently as the 1930s, by both the northern groups of the East Cree and the inland Naskapi.

Examination of the painted hide coats exemplifies the importance of the motif, for, in spite of the inherent fluidity of the pigments and paints which should essentially remove any perceived technical constraints imposed by the loom-weaving technique, the formal geometric qualities of the motif continue to persist. There is, however, especially in the more recent examples, elaboration of the motif. While most of these elaborations comprise vertical and/or horizontal reflections aptly reiterating Rousseau's proposal (1956) for a fundamental bilateral symmetry¹³ (see Figures 14-17, there is also a hint of floral expression as can be discerned in Figures 18 and 19 below.

Chronologically - again working from the most recent examples backward in time - the latest coats exhibiting the wedge-shaped motif and dating from the late 1920s and 1930s come from the Ungava Bay and Davis Inlet area (for marvellous illustrations of caribou coats see Burnham 1992). A decade or so prior to this, Robert Flaherty (film-maker of "Nanook of the North" fame) collected five coats while in the Great Whale River area from 1910-1912. Of these five, one in particular has innumerable depictions and elaborations of this motif (Royal Ontario Museum HC.2250). Some thirty years earlier, of the seven coats collected by Lucien Turner in 1882-1884, three

have elaborations of the motif. Beyond this point the documentation becomes less exact, relying on accession dates and educated guesses of curators and ethnologists for cultural and geographic attributions as well as approximate time sequences.¹⁴ Significantly, the expression of the motif on these early coats, is once again a simple unelaborated geometric design. The uncertainty of documentation makes it imperative to consider additional associated features.

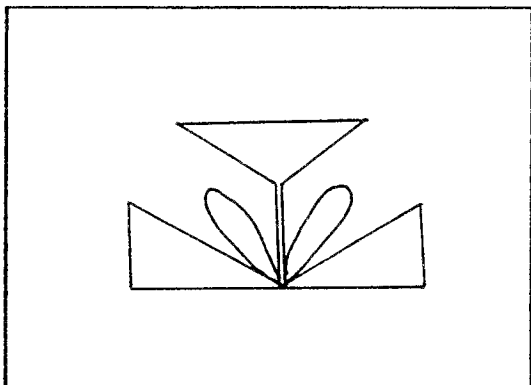


Figure 18: 'Floral' motif on coat (ROM HC.2250)

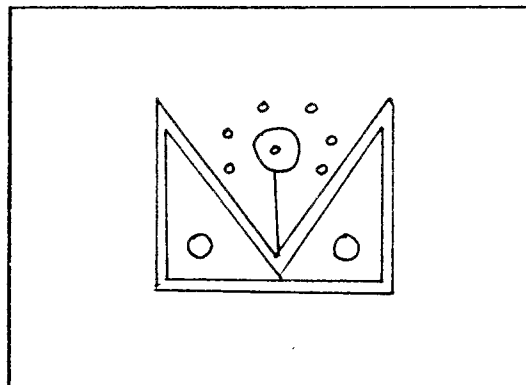


Figure 19: 'Floral' motif on coat (Edinburgh UC 277)

For example, the painted coats that have been attributed to the Swampy Cree (that is, the Cree surrounding James Bay) and northwestern Ontario are often identified by the addition of loom-woven porcupine quillwork bands and epaulettes (Photograph 16), as well as separate pouches (Photograph 18) and belts (see, for example, Brassier 1976: Figure 76). Noteworthy is the inclusion of this motif worked into these quillwork accessories. In addition, other painted

motifs such as circles and elongated wedges appear on several examples. Further analysis of these latter two motifs may provide more precise temporal and spatial markers. However, for the present, these features, coupled with the cut of the coats, serve to differentiate them from the Naskapi and Montagnais painted coats of the same time frame that Dorothy Burnham (1992) has researched so meticulously¹⁵.

Consideration must also be given to the location of the motif on a particular garment or accessory. For instance, on painted coats, the motif is strategically placed in conspicuous positions that suggest an intent for immediate recognition by others. One of the earliest examples, with a probable date of AD 1770 (see Ewing 1982: Plate 5) shows the motif on the front of the coat. Many coats, however, have the motif incorporated into designs on the centre back (Photograph 17) while numerous other examples prominently display the motif in a border which encircles the bottom of the coat. When the motif occurs as an element in the porcupine quillwork, the finished strips are attached to shoulders and as epaulettes on coats, on the front of pouches, or worn as belts.¹⁶ In all instances, the motif was intended to be seen and recognized.

In summation, I submit that the incidence of this motif may indicate that diffusion took place among other proto-Algonquian speakers. Alternatively, the distribution of this motif may substantiate a movement of the Cree as they

spread out from their presumed homeland somewhere in the vicinity of the southern region of James Bay. The retention of the triangular motif in the more northerly reaches of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula well into the twentieth century reflects, in part, the relative isolation of the area from external pressures and influences of missionization and government interference. I would further submit that while we, as scholars, may recognize this motif as a cultural marker for this particular group, the Cree themselves must also have considered this to be a mark of identification. As noted in the earlier discussion of design origins (see Introduction), while certain motifs and designs were culturally determined, limited variations of those motifs could be introduced through individual expression. The prominence and regulated position of this particular motif on the front, back, and bottom decorative panels of garments and accessories, as well as its importance acknowledged by the continued usage over two and a half centuries, suggests that it was considered a sign; that is, as a non-verbal means to readily and visually communicate ethnic identity and/or status.¹⁷

A second motif with a more limited distribution and time-depth is a U-shaped figure (scallop) which occurs singly or in repetition. The upper point of each "arm" of the U is surmounted with either a stylized tri-lobate "flower"¹⁸

or a rosebud (Figures 20, 21; Photograph 19). A configuration of repeated U-motifs, topped most often with the tri-lobed "finials" and quite often occurring in association with rosebuds, appears on cloth leggings, hide mittens, an early drawstring cloth pouch circa 1830 (Denver Art Museum 1966.219), a later drawstring pouch circa 1885 (McCord ME 987.120.6), and an unidentified painted hide coat (Glenbow AR 215). As a single unit with rosebuds or other petal-like elements decorating the extended arms, this pattern is rendered on a large number of hunters' shot bags.

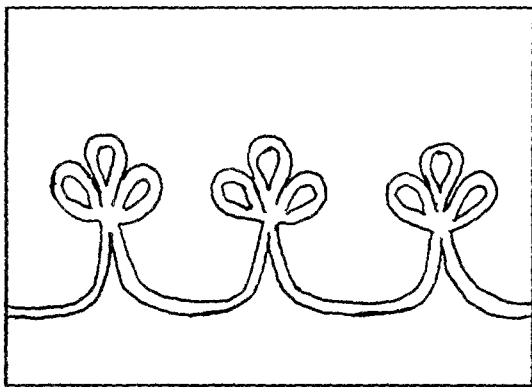


Figure 20: U-motif with tri-lobate 'finial'

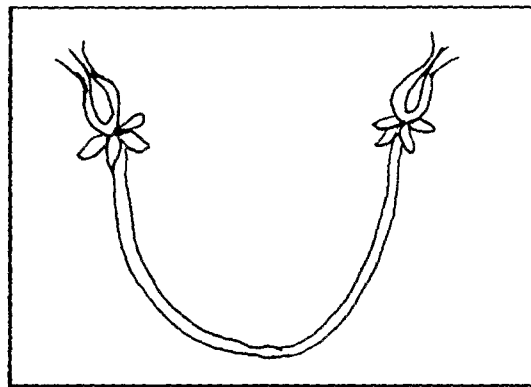


Figure 21: U-motif with rosebud 'finial'

One of the earliest examples of multiple renderings of this U-motif occurs on the beaded cloth leggings (Mannheim 3106) possibly collected in the Eastmain area circa 1840. On this pair the arms of the motif are surmounted with what can be interpreted as a tri-lobed form positioned between two 'leaves'. A second pair of beaded cloth leggings, belonging to

the Mactavish Collection (Christie's 1989:50), are dated as pre-1870 with no definite location given. On this example, the U-motif is topped by a simple tri-lobate figure. In 1908 at the Eastmain River, Skinner collected an "old pair" of beaded cloth leggings (MAI/HF 50-7056) with a similar configuration, but separated by a beaded line from a lower design comprised of serpentine line, rose leaves and rosebuds. Yet another pair (CMC III-D-584a,b) with this dominant scallop design possesses additional decorative elements as well as a greater elaboration of the requisite tri-lobate motif. Neither date nor location are known. All leggings have the definitive rounded form of women's leggings of the James Bay Cree (see Photographs 7, 9; and Chapter 5).

This scallop motif with tri-lobate finials appears on three beaded hoods, one (CMC III-D-606) having been collected by either George Gladman at Eastmain or Charles Stuart at Moose Factory at some time between 1805 and 1865 according to catalogue information. The second example, Frankfurt NS 52 413, bears no documentation and, is in fact miscatalogued as "Micmac." A third example held in a private collection, is known only through a photograph. As well, an enigmatic item in the McCord Museum (ME987.120.3) labelled as a "headdress" was Cree-made about 1885 or 1890. The ends of this cloth item are beaded using the U-motif elaborated with rosebuds and rose leaves, the arm of the U being topped by a single rose leaf.

Rendered as a single motif defining an elaborated configuration, this U-motif occurs on shot pouches. Two such pouches can be tentatively associated with the east coast: one collected by Renouf (CMC III-D-29) before 1914 is catalogued as originating at Great Whale River; a second one (CMC III-B-6) was collected by Edward Sapir at Pointe-Bleue, Quebec in 1911. Sapir "acquired it from Louis Claire, who received it from a Naskapi woman" (catalogue documentation). However, given the uncertainties of ethnic identity for this region, the pouch may very well have been made closer to James Bay. An archival photograph (PAO Acc6440) from a St. Thomas Anglican Church, Moose Factory collection dating from 1860-1870, identified as a "little boy holding powder horn and shot bag" illustrates the familiar U-motif on the bag. Attributed to the Hudson Bay region, the exact location of its source is ambiguous.

The painted coat mentioned above presents an interesting constellation of design motifs. In addition to the scalloped effect topped by rosebuds, the design on the bottom border also includes the wedge-triangle motif discussed previously as well as profiled florals similar to those provisionally ascribed to the Mistassini-Waswanipi area. Originally this late nineteenth century coat had been identified as Naskapi but this identification was subsequently changed to "Metis" (Carter 1989). However, the constellation

of motifs plus several rows of painted dots suggest a Cree origin. The cut of the coat further supports this ethnic identification.

Early examples of this motif beaded onto cloth items and its presence on a painted coat indicate a similar overlapping of techniques and decorative materials as the wedge-triangle. However, to establish this pattern as an intermediate temporal stage between the painted or quillwork double curve motifs found on earlier hide items and the strictly floral renderings on later ones, or alternatively, as a geographically bounded feature, requires more examples and further research.

Conclusion:

Working solely with available museum documentation to establish ethnic identification of objects is fraught with minimal and often inaccurate information. More satisfactory results arise through the consideration of the internal evidence of the objects themselves bolstered by the inclusion of native opinion. In this particular study the inadequacy of forms, materials and decorative techniques of the internal aspects to supply definitive identification supports the heavier reliance on the presence of specific motifs. Two relevant motifs in the form of a wedge-triangle and a U establish, respectively, a well-defined spatial and temporal

usage among the northern Algonquian groups, and a more limited use among the eastern Cree.

Based on these results, it is tempting to draw inferences similar to those proffered by Sister Bernard Coleman (1947) following her extensive analysis of Ojibwa decorative designs. As she declares (1947:123-124):

Finally, there is some evidence for concluding that designs contributed in a degree to the solidarity of the group. While a great deal of leeway was left...to individual choice and creative ability, nevertheless there is a fundamental unity running through the designs throughout the northern Minnesota Ojibwa area. The Ojibwa themselves, at least the older ones, commonly believe that they can distinguish quite clearly between their own designs and designs derived from the whites and the neighbouring Cree and Sioux. They have a sense of pride in "our ownness." Thus, the designs probably contributed in minor measure at least to the solidarity of the group which for the rest had little political unity.

I detect a similar sense of group solidarity from the material evidence and hints of this stated pride in "our ownness." For, despite the environmental, historical and political interruptions that have taken place in the East Cree area, the recognition of these forms, materials, decorative techniques and motifs, and especially this sense of identity, attests to the depth of cultural affiliation expressed in these objects.

CHAPTER FOUR

BEADED HOODS AS EXAMPLES OF EMBEDDED SYMBOLISM

The traditional arts of Native peoples, like stories handed down from generation to generation, carry culture over time. Although they change as the artists [change], still the sense of ancient identity remains the same...the outward appearance [of objects] can hide a culture's sense of what constitutes tradition (Dixon 1990:2).

With these introductory remarks, Susan R. Dixon's recent essay, "The Essential Spirit", raises the complex issues of tradition, continuity, change, renewal and embedded symbolism.

While the outward appearance of objects may have changed over time, contemporary artists working in a number of media speak of their work "as carrying culture, as linking them both to their own past and to their present as a people" (Dixon 1990:10). This inherent "essential spirit", maintained in the memory of the people and passed on to future generations, becomes evident as we reconstruct the social history of the rectangular beaded hoods of the James Bay region. The iconography of these hoods also provides tangible evidence for determining relative chronology, regional development, local variations, possible avenues of influence, and innovative processes.

Consideration of these hoods as primary ethnohistorical documents initiates a discourse enveloping a number of issues regarding tradition and innovation. As will become apparent throughout this chapter, while the indigenous form of the hoods is retained, materials and decorative elements become replaced and elaborated in response to European influence. However, rather than being viewed as an invented tradition (cf Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Linnekin 1983), the observable changes in this material item reveal a deliberate native attempt to 'negotiate' outside influence. In other words, they retained culturally significant features while concomitantly demonstrating an outward acceptance of non-native materials, symbolic referents, values and expectations. This syncretism, tangibly expressed in the beaded hoods created by women artists, reflects the interplay between men and women, native and non-native, indigenous society and colonial hegemony, and between aboriginal religion and missionization. Further, the hoods demonstrate the processes of change, levels of innovation, and expressions of resistance inherent within these social constructs.

Material Evidence:

During the course of this research, eleven extant full-size hoods and three miniature hoods were personally examined (see Tables 4, 5 below). The data thus collected were supplemented by information garnered from photographs, museum

documentation, personal communication with a number of researchers and museum personnel, archival photographs, period paintings, ethnographic and literary sources, and firsthand inquiry in James Bay communities.

<u>Museum Number</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Collector</u>	<u>Source</u>
*Berlin 12827	c1860	ex Speyer	Swampy Cree
*Birmingham 242'60		Bill Reid	James Bay
*Birmingham 63'61		Bill Reid	James Bay
Birmingham			
*Bristol Ea 11042			
*CMC III-C-512	c1850	Rev. Stuart	La Tuque, Que.
*CMC III-D-572	1805-65	Gladman	Moose Factory
*CMC III-D-605			
*CMC III-D-606	1805-65	Gladman	Moose Factory
*Frankfurt NS 52 413			
Gatchell	pre1886	Rogers	
*Haffenreffer			
Horniman PC72			
Lr. Ft. Garry HBC 57-28	c1860		York Factory?
Lr. Ft. Garry HBC 60-59	c1860	Armit	Moose Factory?
MAI/HF			Fort Albany
McCord M7059	c1880		
*MM Ethno 1984.Am.7.1			
ROM 912.23.2	early 1800s	Gladman	James Bay, Que.
ROM 916.22.2	c1800		
PMA H64.64.34	1850		Ernest Brown
Private Collection in Ontario			
Private Collection in Montana			
Private Collection			
Private Collection			

Table 4: Known examples of full-size hoods in collections. Asterisks indicate personal observation.

In total there are probably less than thirty full-size hoods remaining in museum and private collections in Europe and North America. Evidence indicates that they were made by the Cree peoples from Fort George (Chisasibi) on the east coast to Fort Albany on the west. The Cree term for these

hoods or caps is, according to Ellen Smallboy (Moose Factory), 'miksa studen' or, according to Harriet Matthews (Fort George), 'e mitsuits utstuden' (Flannery 1933 and 1936 fieldnotes).

Descriptions of the extant beaded cloth hoods require adjectives of a superlative nature and even these cannot do justice to the actual hoods. Both aesthetically pleasing and technically superb in terms of contemporary Western perceptions, these exquisite geometric and floral masterpieces (see Photographs 1-5) produced during the early to mid-nineteenth century exemplify a meticulous and assured craftsmanship that argues for a long-standing artistic tradition. These hoods share certain commonalities in such basic characteristics as form and iconography. All are rectangular in shape with only negligible variations in the length of 50 to 54 centimetres (excluding fringe) and a finished width of approximately 25 centimetres (folded). They are most often made of wool broadcloth although stroud, and more rarely, velvet fabric were also used. Colour choice was predominantly black or navy blue, and occasionally red (Berlin) or olive grey (private collection). A square or, less-often, a long rectangular strip of fabric is folded and stitched along the top and/or back with the resulting seam covered by braid or ribbon and invariably outlined with beads. The point thus formed is surmounted by a tassel of either

stroud fabric cut into strips or silk cord. The lining is silk or cotton in a number of colours and patterns. Along the bottom edge hangs a fringe of slightly larger beads strung on very fine strips of tanned caribou hide with the colours arranged to create horizontal stripes. The ends of the fringe are finished with either wool tassels, or more commonly, beaded loops. Most, if not all, of the decorative beadwork is done in what has become accepted as the traditional native technique (described in the previous chapter) in which tiny seed beads strung on sinew and spot stitched with either sinew or commercial thread.¹

A typology based on iconographic differences establishes three types: (1) those ornamented with intricately executed floral motifs and which comprise the majority of examples (see Photograph 3); (2) those featuring geometric motifs (see Photograph 1); and (3) a few that suggest an intermediate position with geometrical motifs that are more fluid in nature (see Photograph 2). The patterns of these three types are organized within a triptych configuration with the central panel wider than the two flanking it. Each panel is defined in some manner. Those of both the floral and intermediate types are defined by either a narrow band of ribbon which is outlined on each side with a single row of white seed beads or, alternatively, rows of beads. The panels of the geometric ribbonwork types are separated with plain

strips of fabric or ribbon. Significantly, all three types display strikingly similar expressions of serpentine and/or zigzag lines within these panels (compare Photographs 1, 2, 3). Without exception, every example, in my opinion, is noteworthy for the technical expertise and artistic value with which it was made and decorated. And, although each hood conforms to these common formal qualities, there appear to be no two identical examples. The high number of stylistic conventions used to represent flowers, the actual flower forms selected, and the composition of the selected elements reflect individual skills and aesthetics. A noted tendency towards clusterings of particular motifs on a number of examples suggests, however, that there may have been some localized group preferences as well. Further analysis of these motifs, especially in comparison with other Cree beadwork items, would be beneficial.

Those hoods resplendent with beaded floral patterns have flowers that cascade from a central motif at the top of the head down either side of the face and flow bisymmetrically across the back towards another motif centred there (Photographs 3, 4, 5). Undulating lines dominate the composition of the patterns. Tiny distinctive leaves opposed along these lines serve to create a delicate foliage. The colours selected are dominated by pinks, pale blues, green, crystal and white while stronger reds and golds are used

occasionally as accents but appear most often as elements in the fringe. Many of the flowers, particularly in the central panel, are outlined with white. The overall impression is of an exuberant vitality acknowledged by non-native researchers and Cree women (fieldnotes 1990 and 1991).

A single example, held in the Museum of Mankind (London, England), has geometric figures executed in silk ribbonwork. The red, navy and yellow silk, cut and appliqued (sewn) onto strips to create the geometric pattern is an example of "Developmental" style of ribbonwork typical of the northeastern North American groups. The earliest to appear, this style dates to perhaps the eighteenth century (Abbass 1991). A bilateral symmetry extends outward from the central zigzag motif with the red elements outlined with white silk thread in a finely-wrought chain stitch. The same decorative technique and style is used on two cotton and/or woollen ribbonwork examples, the motifs outlined with white beads.

The intermediate types appear to bridge, at least visually, the two types. For example, the Berlin hood has curlicues (or 'open' fiddleheads) and tiny flowers that soften the angularity of the central zigzag motif. Both the Royal Ontario Museum hoods and the unfinished specimen in Frankfurt have both geometric and floral motifs. Although not as readily apparent in the geometric and intermediate types,

there is also a vitality and strength in their colour and composition.

Another source of material evidence is to be found in a number of miniature hoods present on dolls or by themselves (Table 5). The examples discussed here are particularly appropriate in their careful replication of Cree apparel whether or not made to depict 'how things were done in the past' or simply to capture the present. In particular are two dolls from the Horniman Museum in London, England (Horniman 1976.459 and 1976.460). This pair were recently on loan for a Subarctic exhibit at the Museum of Mankind in London, England and have been illustrated in the publication accompanying the Spirit Sings exhibition (Glenbow 1987b:77). Although the dolls themselves are of English origin and have been dated to the period 1770-1790, each of the pair demonstrates a different,

Museum source	Date	Identification	Feature
CMC III-D-573	1840-65	East Cree	rosebud motif
Horniman 1976.460	1770-1790	Cree	beads/ geometric
MM 1923.6.194d	c1880	Cree	silk floss/stitched
MM 1923.6.194c	c1880	Cree	capote hood ("man")
Smithsonian D.C.90,036	1882	Naskapi	"Cree" style
Smithsonian D.C.90,035	1882	Naskapi	tuque
Private collection		Cree	beads/ geometric

Table 5: Examples of miniature hoods.

but presumably 'traditional' *ensemble* of East Cree women, possibly from that time period. Of importance is the hood worn by one doll (Horniman 1976.460). Made of woollen fabric, and the geometrical patterns outlined with beads, this tiny

rectangular example with its tasselled peak is very similar to those full sized ones described in the early accounts of Hudson's Bay Company officers. A very similar doll dated to circa 1800, offered for auction in 1989, wears a more elaborately beaded dark green stroud hood (Christie's 1989:53). In a recent publication, the painted illustration of a Cree woman depicts the clothing of the Horniman doll with the hood 'replaced' by that of the 'auction' doll (Johnson 1990: Plate D).

Another pair of dolls, of Eastern Cree heritage and presently housed in the Museum of Mankind in London, are dated to about 1880 (Museum of Mankind 1923.6.194c and d). While their clothing documents certain changes over the intervening century, it is of interest to note that the female doll (Museum of Mankind 1923.6.194d) wears a 'traditional' rectangular wool cloth hood with the familiar tassel at the peak. The body of the hood is trimmed with braid and embroidered with silk floss, the only bead work being the monochromatic red fringe with its typical looped finish. The figure's male companion wears a round "pill box" hat beneath the pointed hood of his capote². Similarly, The female doll (D.C.90,36) of the pair of Nenenot [Naskapi] dolls collected by Lucien Turner in 1884, and now housed in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution (D.C.90,035 and D.C.90,36) also wears the familiar rectangular cloth hood. Despite the general

acceptance of Turner's tribal designation for these dolls according to his 1894 ethnology of the Ungava District (Quebec-Labrador Peninsula), I suspect that a closer examination of his records may reveal that the dolls actually originated closer to James or Hudson Bays. Alternately, the dolls may have been carried in either direction with groups or individuals visiting relatives in other areas.

A small hood (c.10 cm. long and 5 cm. wide) held by the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa (CMC-III-D-573) was probably collected by Hudson's Bay Company Factor, Charles Stuart sometime between 1840-1865 in the Moose Factory-Timiskaming area. Although exhibiting only one panel of ornamentation, the iconography of the rosebud motif that interrupts the undulating line (which is itself enhanced with tiny leaves and thorns) is of extreme importance and its significance will be discussed below.

Evocative Issues Raised by the Evidence:

It is evident from these descriptions that the materials utilized - other than the sinew and caribou strips for stringing the beads - are of European origin. This evidence in turn evokes a number of questions regarding other aspects of these hoods. Are the form and motifs also of European origin? If not, how can we establish and document those features that may be indigenous and pre-date European influence, but which were considered vital in the transmission

of Cree culture? Can we also isolate particular elements and influences that may have been introduced? Importantly, can we trace the development of the hoods from an earlier style to those collected during the mid-nineteenth century?

Historic Evidence

The earliest known recorded mention of hoods in the James Bay region is the notation made by the Englishman, Thomas Gorst in the journal he kept during the voyage to the New World on *The Rupert* (Gorst 1670: entry for September 29, page 135a). Having arrived at Rupert's River in the southeast corner of James Bay on the 29th of September 1670, Gorst observed that, "The women differ not from them [the men] in habit, only that the caps of their coats hang down behind somewhat like a Monkshood whereas the men wear theirs close to their necks." By inferring that the monks' hood that Gorst refers to was that worn by members of monastic orders in England at that time, the form would have resembled a peaked hood very similar to those still being made in the James Bay area some two centuries later (see, for example, Milliken 1967:13,64; Nigg 1959:139).

Further written descriptions of such hoods do not appear until nearly a century later when in 1743 Hudson's Bay Company officer, James Isham³ describes the cap worn by a Cree woman as a "peice (sic) of Cloth which they sew behind and Reaches over their Shoulder's, all these garments are worked.

full of Beads, porqu'pine Quil's, and other ornaments..." (Rich 1968:110). Later, Isham's successor, Andrew Graham, elaborates further in his description of the men's hoods: "If you take a pillowcase or bag with one end and side open, and place a tassel in the closed angle, you will have an exact representation of the cap. It is usually made of cloth ornamented with beads, in the shape of deer, birds, straight and curved lines, etc." (Williams 1969:145). He adds that the woman's cap was the same "only more ornamented" (Williams 1969:149; see also Lamb 1970:133 and Thompson 1962:81 for other descriptions).

Continued use of these beaded hoods was observed by several other European authors associated with the early economic and religious concerns of the area. For instance, in his journal entry for August nineteenth 1852 (CMS A-97), the Rev. E. A. Watkins notes that for the church service at Moose Factory,

The men were clothed in much the same way as the poorer classes in England, except that their coats were provided with hoods for use in winter. The women were dressed partly in English style, but many of them had a blanket which they threw over their heads, but others wore the peculiar head-dress of the country ornamented with a propition (sic) of beads.

That same year, Anglican Bishop David Anderson (1873:123) also noted that the women at Moose Factory "...invariably wear the long cap or hood, falling over their shoulders, and richly

ornamented with beads, while the men have, generally, a good capote and embroidered leggings."

During this time period, this "peculiar head-dress of the country" was still being worn by both sexes of the Indians living in the interior (Inlanders). While visiting at Rupert's House in the course of his periodic religious rounds, the Rev. John Horden recorded the arrival of three Indian families (Journal. April 24, 1853. CMS A-88). He describes the men (two of whom were conjurers) as "being in full dress" which included

On their heads were blue cloth caps, somewhat similar to those worn by the women, but with three or four large white feathers on the top, and the sides worked with beads in the form of a deer, this cap always being worn while deer hunting.

Further evidence for the wearing of pointed hoods can be gleaned from artistic depictions rendered in the early years of the nineteenth century. For example, watercolour drawings by Cree artist William Richards and Swiss-born Peter Rindisbacher provide several appropriate illustrations. In Richards' pre-1811 winter scene somewhere in the vicinity of Moose Factory, a married woman is shown with a fairly elaborate version of a beaded hood (see *The Beaver* 1983, Outfit 314(2):69). On the western side of James Bay, Rindisbacher portrays a number of men and children (both Cree and Saulteaux) wearing variations of these peaked caps, often

surmounted with feathers rather than tassels (see *The Beaver* 1983:33 for an illustration of Rindisbacher's work). Four decades later (1852) English missionary, John Horden sketched a Moose Factory woman wearing a floral beaded hood (Photograph 5). Archival photographs of Cree women wearing hoods at Fort Albany (Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives and Public Archives of Canada), Moose Factory and Rupert's House (Waskaganish) (Public Archives of Ontario) in the 1860s appear to be the last contextual evidence for the James Bay area⁴. Shortly thereafter the hoods appear to have been completely replaced with shawls for, "the girls like the women, always wear(ing) a shawl over the head and shoulders, even to church..." (Anderson 1873:123).

Ethnographic Evidence:

Through the generosity of Dr. Regina Flannery, pertinent portions of her fieldnotes recorded during 1933-1938 provide vital ethnographic information about these beaded hoods on the east coast of James Bay. The following details were provided by five of Dr. Flannery's informants. I have taken the liberty to repeat this information nearly verbatim with the incorporation of approximate dates and comments extracted from a later letter from Dr. Flannery.

According to Ellen Smallboy who was born at Lake Kesagami circa 1853 and who later lived in Moose Factory, the woman's beaded cap was, "made from a single strip of cloth

folded so that the fold would be at the crown of the head, then stitched up the back. The cap had beadwork all around the edge and a fringe of beads, 'liwehutcigan', hanging from the bottom." Apparently, Mrs. Smallboy had not witnessed them being worn at feasts and did not mention whether or not she had ever had one herself. Her sister-in-law, Christiana, made a paper model of a cap.

A collaborator at Rupert's House, Edward Nemegus, was born there circa 1867. As his mother died when he was quite young, he was raised by his grandfather. He remembered "his grandmother wearing her cap when watching beaver nets and at feasts, when his grandfather sang and drummed." Furthermore, "only married women could wear beaded caps."

Alice Earless, who was born circa 1875 and raised just south of Fort George, said that after one of the men had located tracks of the caribou and returned to camp to tell about it, that night the old man would sing and drum. The women would wear their beaded caps and dance up and down holding onto a tent pole, and, as she remarked, "Everyone was happy." If the caribou were located in an area where others were needed to drive them to the hunters, all would be dressed in their cleanest and finest clothing, and a woman who had a beaded cap would wear it. At the feast following a successful hunt, the women, with their beaded caps, danced in place holding onto the tent pole, their backs to the fire in the

middle of the migwam (sic). Mrs. Stevens, Margaret Blackned's sister's daughter, who was born and raised inland from Eastmain, noted, "Sometimes (as many as) three women dance, and they laugh [as encouragement] at the old man and he sings more."

Margaret Blackned, born near Fort George circa 1875, and living at Rupert's House at the time of the interview, when speaking of women's beaded caps, mentioned that, "The ones who have them are the ones who are better off. All the women who could bead would make one if possible." It is probable that Margaret Blackned had one herself.

Antecedents, Analogues and Speculation

The widespread distribution, extended use, and retention of the rectangular form despite the introduction of 'foreign' materials and changing lifestyles attests to an indigenous form. Nevertheless, in an attempt to determine possible aboriginal antecedents for these hoods, we must extrapolate from other sources beginning with archaeological evidence recovered from the Port au Choix site on the northwestern arm of Newfoundland. Here, in a burial from Locus I, lay an articulated supine female skeleton with numerous shell beads extending in a double line from below each shoulder and running across the skull forming an open-sided triangle suggestive of the edge of a hood or hooded garment (Tuck 1988: Plate 1). Carbon-14 dated to at least 3000 years

ago (Tuck 1988:162), this presents the earliest evidence presently available. Noteworthy, too, is the similarity of lifestyle of these early caribou hunters and the ethnographically contemporary eastern Cree (cf Tuck 1988:80-97).

From this archaeological material we turn to the prehistoric visual recordings of Algonquian speakers to the south. The pictographic records of Painted Rock Island in the Lake of the Woods district include a depiction of a figure wearing a pointed hood (Dewdney and Kidd 1962:46). To the southeast, the Peterborough Petroglyphs reveal shaman figures wearing pointed hats, one attached and one separate (Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:66,136). As well, innumerable birch bark scrolls have figures with pointed 'heads' that may be, in fact, pointed hoods. A more recent (1920s) wooden meat tray attributed to the Naskapi (Haffenreffer 85-773) is decorated with a man depicted beating a drum and wearing a pointed birch bark hat. Without confirmation these examples remain merely suggestive.

Ethnographic material from other sources alludes to an ancient practice of hunting disguises whereby the skin of an animal including the head - with the ears still attached - was pulled over the hunter's head and shoulders. Documented evidence for this practice in the eastern Subarctic rests solely on Regina Flannery's findings that the Attawapiskat

Cree of the Cape Henrietta barrens did indeed utilize this method (1990b). Alanson Skinner describes the hooded coats of tanned caribou skin with the hair left on worn by East Cree boys and men as being "...symbolically painted inside by outlining on the skin, the eyes and mouth, of the animal, signifying that the garment possessed the powers of speed, endurance, or cunning of the living animal, and was able to convey them to the wearer (1911:15-17). In Skinner's accompanying line drawing, the animal's ears have been supplanted with tassels. He further notes, "this symbolism is confined to the garments of men, and the designs occur on the hood or head coverings only" (Skinner 1911:15-17). There is some dispute as to the veracity of Skinner's concept that the powers of the animal contained within the skin would be transferred to the wearer. However, ethnographer, Adrian Tanner, has recorded that among the Mistassini Cree (1979:141) special hooded coats or parkas made of the head skin of caribou or young moose were once worn to give the wearer the animal's power. Although these parkas are no longer used for hunting but are made only for children now, it is accepted that the wearing of one will increase the child's later hunting ability (Tanner 1979:141). Further afield, Frank Speck describes the Penobscot hunting costume as including a hood that served as some sort of disguise as it is "squared across the top with two ear-like flaps, and comes down narrowly along

the sides of the face and hangs well over the neck and shoulders" (1940:46).

While this second set of data does establish an extended use of hoods, these particular hoods demonstrate a divergent rounded and/or eared form used specifically in hunting which require another line of investigation at some future time. However, a rather cursory comparison of the two sets of data suggests a somewhat differential use between men and women, but with a somewhat similar ritual function of propitiating the spirit of the caribou (and beaver) for hunting success.

Another possible candidate as antecedent (or possible analogue) is the ceremonial hide or robe such as the one attributed to Eastern James Bay and held in the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC-III-B-588; dated circa 1740). Analogous characteristics and symbolism suggest that this may be a possible antecedent to the peaked hood. Foremost is the robe's function as a covering for the head, albeit under specific circumstances. Analogies also include the square shape which replicates the hood before sewing, the painted decoration that is divided visually into three panels, defined borders, fringes along the edges and the corner tassels. Ethnologist Ted Brasser's suggestion that "the cross-design was painted (in the centre of the robe) in honor of both one's own soul-spirit and those of the animals" (1974:96) when

compared with the Cree use of the tassel centred on a hat to represent the spirit or soul (Flannery 1988), identifies a further correlation.⁵

Ethnographic information collected by both Adrian Tanner for the East Cree (1984) and Alika Podolinsky Webber (1983) for the Naskapi corroborates Brasser's interpretations. Based on the evidence garnered from his informants, Tanner has noted regional variations in decorative techniques and composition. Whereas the East Cree in the Fort George (Chisasibi) area most often referred to a painted style of decoration with fringes cut into the edges of the hide, the more southerly Mistassini East Cree tended to use a beaded and ribbon style similar to Montagnais techniques. Further differences can be noted between the Naskapi and East Cree in that the Naskapi shamans wear the caribou hides with the decorated side facing inward and the animal fur facing out (Tanner 1984:101). In contrast, the hides of the James Bay area have all the hair removed and the decorated side is always displayed outward. According to Webber's opinion, the wide distribution of these robes in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula as well as the continued - and secretive - use attests to the intrinsic importance of the robes (1983:64).

Whether or not these painted robes are indeed antecedents to the hoods or merely part of the same iconological and symbolic tradition is difficult to assess

with our limited information at this point. However, it is interesting to note that a number of painted hide coats from this region possess an attached collar (often fringed) that appears to be a vestigial form of a hood. One such coat (Smithsonian Institution, Department of Anthropology 90241) has a collar that served as a hood which "allowed the shaman to envelope his face in darkness, a state in which he would sit for hours waiting for a vision, helping him guide his people to caribou" (Armitage 1991:61). Also visually striking is the triangular-shaped porcupine quillwork attached at the neck on the upper back of a Central Cree painted coat from the early nineteenth century in the National Museum of Ireland (see *The Spirit Sings* 1987b:76; Figure 66 for illustration).

No discussion or search for origins, analogues and avenues of influence, can disregard the peaked, or conical, cloth caps worn at one time by members of the Algonquian Wabenaki cluster which includes the Micmac, Malecite, Abenaki and Penobscot. Overtly different in form from the hoods of James Bay, these conical caps are, however, decorated with similar techniques of beadwork and ribbonwork. A number of further distinctions can be discerned in the formal qualities of the two hood types. As noted above, the James Bay Cree type is recognized by its rectangular form made from a single strip or square of cloth, tasselled peak, beaded fringe along the bottom edge, a three-panelled (triptych) composition and

predominately floral motifs (to be discussed below). By way of contrast, the maritime type is conical in form made from two pieces of cloth, is occasionally shaped to reveal the face, seldom has tassels, lacks the beaded fringe, and the decorative patterns - rather than being contained within a triptych composition - feature a broader border next to the face and a narrower band at centre back. The beaded hoods of this type indicate a preference for the use of double curve motifs.

Origins and development of these peaked caps have also been difficult to determine despite the number of researchers (most notably Gaby Pelletier 1977, 1979 and Ruth Holmes Whitehead 1980) who have focused on this aspect. Much of their work has taken into account the relations of the Jesuits who were of the opinion that prior to the adoption of European hats and caps, these natives had gone bareheaded. Other researchers have accepted Le Jeune's conclusions regarding Montagnais clothing to be indicative of European origins for caps in general. In his relation of 1634, Le Jeune notes that these people go bareheaded "which makes me think that very few of them used hats before their intercourse with our Europeans; nor do they know how to make them, buying them already made, or at least cut, from our French people." However, he also says, "Give them a hood, and a man will wear it as well as a woman;..." and "One has a red hood, another a green one, and

another a grey, - all made, not in the fashion of the Court, but in the way best suited to their convenience". Rather than being contradictory, Le Jeune may actually be indicating two different forms of headgear. If this is so, it allows for European styles to be adopted in one aspect of clothing and traditional forms to be retained in another.

A number of very early references (1609 and 1611) attest to the existence of "lace-like patterns", and women "improving cloth with trim". However, as the earliest descriptive reference to Micmac women wearing these peaked caps dates to 1791, we have no way of knowing when this form was actually adopted. While ribbonwork hoods appear fairly early chronologically, the development of beaded hoods was concurrent with or slightly later than those of the James Bay region. In fact, the presence of floral patterns rather than the double curve motif did not occur until late in the nineteenth century, long after their florescence on the James Bay hoods.

This development in the east coast area does not preclude the possibility that European influence, particularly that of the French traders and missionaries, moved north and west along the early trade routes to James Bay. Rather, it merely diminishes the likelihood of direct influence and suggests that the rectangular hood form may have arisen from indigenous antecedents.

Somewhat parenthetically, the circa 1860 engraving by Emile Petitot of a Slave woman wearing a rectangular hood decorated simply with three strips of fabric or braid **may** attest to historical Cree movement and influence in this westward direction (illustrated in *The Spirit Sings* 1987b:137). Similarly, an extant Athapaskan example more recently attributed specifically to the Slave Indians (documentation Edinburgh 558.42) furthers this argument. This, too, is reinforced by the Cree hood collected from the Touchwood Cree of Saskatchewan (Lower Fort Garry) which appears to be intermediate in either a chronological or geographical sequence (or both). It exhibits a number of classic elements coincidental with the James Bay type in form and iconography but differs in that there are only two vertical panels as well as a horizontal one on the bottom similar to those of the Slave and Athapaskan examples.

Iconography, Innovation and Embedded Symbolism:

The hoods worn by both men and women recorded as early as 1670 in the James Bay area were probably made of hide, were pointed and had painted or porcupine quillwork decoration. By the early 1700s, rectangular hoods for both sexes were made of European trade cloth and decorated with porcupine quills and European beads, changes apparently closely tied to the social and economic situation arising from the fur trade.

As noted earlier, the iconographic descriptions of hoods worn by Cree males in the mid-eighteenth century state that faunal and avian imagery as well as straight and curved lines were used. Although the women's hoods were described as being more ornamented, there are no details as to the specific imagery depicted. In the early nineteenth century the production of the, by then, intricately beaded rectangular cloth hoods blossomed literally and figuratively. By 1852, as noted by Anglican Bishop David Anderson (1873:123) at Moose Factory, the women invariably wore a richly ornamented hood.

This summary suggests a classic innovative sequence in response to the introduction of trade materials that facilitated and encouraged creative expression (see Barnett 1953; Oberholtzer 1990b). Theoretically, the innovative sequence is identified as having an initial starting point, an expansive period, and a tapering off period. As exemplified by the innovative changes of the hoods from hide to cloth, from porcupine quills to beads, and from 'traditional' motifs to floral ones, native art is often expressed best in terms of a skilled reiteration of existing forms and symbolic references with the introduction and adaptation of new materials, symbols and technology.

However, the presence of well-developed floral motifs and patterns on the hoods in the early to middle 1800s also fuels the controversy about floral expression in native art.

Much of this controversy has arisen from the rather sweeping inferences that Marius Barbeau presented in his 1928 paper on "The Origins of Floral and Other Designs Among the Canadian and Neighbouring Indians." His thesis is that all the floral patterns of the northern tribes were adapted from those of the French *Renaissance*. Having been taught to the Algonquian and Iroquois girls "by the nuns in the ancient colonial missions and schools," these floral patterns "were adapted at an early date by the Indians to suit their fancies" (Barbeau 1928:512). Wide acceptance of this thesis has tended to obscure study of the development of floral expression. The present research suggests a more complex explanation deriving from an examination of native values found in the decoration⁶.

Prior to the establishment of Hudson's Bay Company (hereafter HBC or Company) posts at Rupert River in 1668, Moose River in 1673 and Albany River in 1675, the Cree were obtaining trade goods through Indian middlemen or directly from the French. These sources provided the coveted cloth and prized beads (and possibly needles and thread) (Krech 1984:31)⁷, often in exchange for the hare and marten the women trapped. The technical advantages and potential for creative expression of these trade items made them increasingly desirable. Although initial supplies of beads were limited in colour and size (Rogers, Webster, and Anderson 1972), there is evidence that the Cree were soon indicating their preferences

(the cloth colours remained constant with blue, red, and black). The yearly order from Fort Albany for 1726, for example, requested, in addition to other goods, two hundred pounds of small white and small purple beads, "the smaller the better" (Davies and Johnson 1965:105-106). In a similar vein, the "letter home" for 1731 contained the admonition that "The small crystalline beads sent this year to match the small blue, are not such as we constantly trade at this place, neither will our Indians trade any of them..." (Davies and Johnson 1965:157). And, as The Earl of Southesk (1969:124) noted for western Canada, there was a continued preference in 1859 for "...the little trashy white ones, no bigger than a pin's head." Fragments of beadwork recovered *in situ* from recent archaeological excavations at York Factory confirm that sometime after 1789 there was a definitive colour selection for particular beadwork decoration (Adams 1982:38-42).

At this juncture the social, economic, and artistic role of the native women becomes increasingly important. Most of the visual and written documentation associates women wearing these hoods with the posts⁸. Although these women were probably members of the Cree bands known as the Home Guard which remained in close proximity to the posts supplying the Company men with meat, and ultimately, marriage partners "after the custom of the country", the ethnographic data and identification of specific people wearing hoods also includes

"Coasters" (Morantz 1991). The acquisition of the materials, the preparation of sinew for thread, the sorting and stringing of beads, laying out the pattern, beading and completing of the work of art required untold woman-hours⁹. On the one hand, this could suggest a traditional polygynous marriage with the burden of domestic tasks shared by more than one wife. On the other hand, the wife of a trader¹⁰ might have enjoyed a life in which "domestic duties were relatively lighter than they had been (and) women could lead a comparatively easy and free life" (Coleman 1947:118). Conversely, Jennifer Brown cautions that traders' wives were often burdened with large families, a factor that could adversely affect both their time and energy (1976)¹¹. The establishment of a genealogical profile and an in-depth assessment of time management would be invaluable. However, for the present discussion both marital situations imply a certain wealth and/or status as well as access to coveted goods (compare with native comments recorded by Flannery above). In either situation, the industriousness, artistry and expertise demonstrated by the maker would have gained her much prestige. Indeed, within her own culture, a young native woman's artistic expertise increased her desirability as a wife (Van Kirk 1977:38). As a trader's wife, this same expertise, viewed by the British culture as "an appropriate feminine occupation...for the cultured woman" served to

increase the stature of the trader (Duncan 1981:6). The production of increasingly elaborate, and hence more time-consuming, floral designs suggests the need for increased social and economic support that both cultures would have had to provide.

In her discussion of floral design in the central Subarctic, Kate Duncan (1989:56) concludes that floral design was introduced to the native peoples of northern North America by means of the European embroidery tradition. She writes:

In central Canada, as in Quebec, Roman Catholic nuns were almost the first European women to settle in the area. Although Englishwomen teaching at a series of short-lived academies at Red River as early as the 1820s (Van Kirk 1980) may have influenced the production of embroidery by native women, it was the nuns, arriving at mid century, who actively stimulated the art of European-style embroidery in central Canada.

Duncan also suggests that "British whitework embroidery with "leaf stems" is likely the European prototype for this style which may have developed in the Red River area under the influence of British women, particularly those associated with the Anglican missions there" (Hail and Duncan 1989:69). While in this last statement Duncan refers to the James Bay hoods, the historical development of education and religious instruction of fur trade society in the James Bay and Red River areas, however, suggests that a source other than mission wives and nuns must have been influential.

To appreciate the relevance of the introduction, development and incorporation of floral beadwork in the James Bay area as a means for maintaining and transmitting native identity and values, it is necessary to provide a rather lengthy overview of the history of European influence in this regard. With the exception of one unsuccessful introduction, there were no white women in the Bay area until 1840 (and about fifteen years earlier in the Red River District). According to historical information compiled by Sylvia Van Kirk (1980) and John Long (1985, 1986), this situation, despite the initial disapproval of the fur-trading companies, encouraged unions between Company men and native women resulting in families of mixed heritages. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the Company finally acknowledged these burgeoning communities of 'fur-trade families' in the Bay. With this recognition came an attempt by the Hudson's Bay Company headquarters in London to provide native born sons of Company officers with enough formal education to prepare them for service with the Company. Beginning in 1794 with the arrival of school books sent from England, this limited schooling was later formalized with the arrival, in 1808, of four male teachers at the Hudson Bay posts of York, Albany, Moose and Eastmain Factories. However, the schools they established soon failed and education once again became the responsibility of the Company men.

Inland to the west, William Cockran was the first Protestant missionary to bring a wife to the settlement at Red River. Until the arrival of Ann Cockran in 1825 little progress had been made towards Protestant female education. In the summer of 1827, Mrs. Cockran set up a girls' boarding school to provide the daughters of Company officers with the education deemed essential for them to be "acculturated to the ways of civilized women" (Van Kirk 1980:146). Shortly thereafter, Catholic education for girls began under the guidance of two educated mixed-blood women from Sault Ste Marie¹². The Company officers were discontented with the domestic training that this education emphasized, desiring rather that their daughters be equipped to "retain their social positions in Rupert's Land" (Van Kirk 1980:148). This led to the establishment of the Red River Academy and the hiring of an English governess able to "teach the ornamental as well as useful branches of Education;" (Van Kirk 1980:148).

Christian instruction at the factories had been, from the beginning, the responsibility of the Company Factors. Although French Jesuits had made a brief appearance in the Bay in the late seventeenth century, they were not instrumental in establishing Christian communities. Much later when the Company's charter was renewed in 1837 by the British parliament, it included a proviso that the native condition be improved by providing religious instruction. This opened the

way for Christian missionaries provided that they did not interfere with the trade. The first missionary to arrive in the Bay was the Methodist, George Barnley, who arrived at Moose Factory with his wife in 1840. When the Barnleys left in 1847, the Wesleyan Mission Society did not replace him (Long 1986:68). In that same year a member of the Roman Catholic order of the Oblates of Mary the Immaculate, J.-N. Laverlochère, arrived. As the company refused permission for the Oblates to establish a permanent mission there, they made little impression at Moose Factory. They were able, however, to secure a foothold at Albany further up the west coast of the Bay and at Abitibi to the south (Grant 1984:105). Missionization of the James Bay natives began in earnest in 1851 with the arrival at Moose Factory of the Christian Missionary Society's John Horden.

The relevance of these two avenues of assimilation - education and religion - vis-à-vis the hoods is twofold. First, there is acknowledgement among the Company men that the educational needs of their daughters differed from those of their sons. As well, the minimal presence of white females as instructors of the native and mixed-heritage girls is demonstrated. Second, it establishes a chronology for historical development. Comparison of this chronology with that for the development of the hoods is revealing.

According to the available written and pictorial evidence, the women were wearing beaded cloth hoods (albeit with decorations of straight and curved lines, and deer, and birds) at least by the mid-eighteenth century. No later than 1811 a watercolour image by native artist, William Richards, illustrates a heavily beaded hood with complex motifs that appear to be floral¹³. In 1852 Anderson noted that all the women were wearing beaded hoods with floral motifs and Horden sketched a Moose Factory woman wearing one. This comparison of chronologies, including possible influences derived from the Red River settlement, makes it difficult to justify European influence brought about through the instruction of mission wives and nuns.

In her meticulous work on the women of the fur trade, *Many Tender Ties*, Sylvia Van Kirk discusses the concerns that Company officers had regarding the education of their daughters. The class-conscious fathers wanted their daughters' education not only to encompass reading and writing but also to inculcate those characteristics that would replicate the British male ideal that ladies were "the delicate flowers of civilization" (Van Kirk 1980:192). Van Kirk writes (1980:99,101):

...as the eighteenth century progressed, it is clear that more and more officers were determined to prevent their daughters from living as Indians and began to play an active role in their upbringing...A fascinating glimpse of the efforts of some fathers to

"civilize" their daughters is provided by the Book of Servants' Private Commissions which lists imports from England on private account for the years 1790-1810. The officers at Albany seem to have been particularly anxious to have the females in their families adopt English fashions. Large quantities of cloth (mainly calico and chintz), ribbons and lace were ordered, along with the items essential to dressmaking. Among Robert Goodwin's requests were issues of "Ladys Magazines", specifically with pictures of fashionable dresses, and "a Lady's red Morocco Book for Silk thread with Scissors...a really stylish lady might complete her costume with an imported shawl and a beaver hat...By the nineteenth century, the mixed-blood wives and daughters of the officer class attempted to keep up with English fashions.

While the fathers thus provided the European "civilizing" influence, I feel that in the early stages it was their native mothers who would have provided the instruction necessary to interpret and implement these fashions. The profusion of floral patterns on lace, chintz and calico coupled with the illustrations in the women's fashion magazines may indeed have been the inspiration for the introduction of floral beadwork on the hoods. Concomitantly, a certain amount of traditional native techniques, composition, and aesthetics would have been incorporated into the finished products.

The realistic representations of flowers on the later hoods blends the two cultures. Realism is enhanced by the colour selection of the beads. The pinks, blues, violets, greens, and white repeat the natural colours of the flora of the James Bay lowlands. By mid-July the green canvas of the

clearings have become splashed with vibrant pinks, blues, and violets accentuated with clear yellows and sharpened with white (personal observation). As prominent on the hoods as in their natural environment, the presence of wild roses (Photographs 24, 25) and other indigenous species suggests an intent to replicate the local species and to encapsulate the short, but fecund, growing season. At the same time, the floral motifs present an 'acceptable' iconography by European standards. For instance, the abundance of roses - in full bloom, in bud (Photograph 24), or as the tiny paired leaves (Photograph 25) on the winding stems - brings to mind the metaphor of the "English rose" and with it the ideals of British womanhood, of true love, and as a symbol of Christianity with the reference to Christ¹⁴. The iconographical evidence thus attests to an overt subsuming or embedding of traditional native motifs within those depicted in European fashion and ideals, these same floral motifs so expertly rendered on the hoods acknowledged a degree of acculturation, of being "civilized". As such they become metaphors for the very essence of European femininity: charm, devoutness and dependence - those lady-like characteristics that the British-born fathers had been endeavouring to instil in their country-born daughters. But we must look beyond the overt manifestation of this floral expression to gain the native point of view. Hints of another meaning embedded

within these floral patterns have been addressed by a few authors (Van Kirk 1980:7). And as Richard Preston (1975:9) has noted for the East Cree, there is a "tendency of Cree individuals to emphasize meaning more than form." Thus, by adopting the rose, and indeed, other floral images, indigenous meaning was able to continue masked as it were with 'acceptable' European iconography.

Based on museum specimens and extensive literary research, several scholars including art historian, Ruth B. Phillips and ethnologist, Frank G. Speck, have concluded that the stylized floral motifs on early contact art from the Eastern Subarctic are of native origin (Phillips 1987:61; Speck 1924:124-127). As with other traditional symbols, often inspired through dreams, graphic depictions of plants were believed to be efficacious to their wearer as protective spiritual power (see Flannery and Chambers 1985; Oberholtzer 1990a; Phillips 1984b for discussions of depicted dream motifs). However, the key to understanding the imagery of these hoods rests with two examples in the Museum für Volkerkunde in Berlin and the Museum of Mankind (British Museum) in London. The abstract expression of this imagery, rendered in beads and in ribbonwork, reveals features otherwise obscured by flowers on the other hoods. Still retaining the formal three-panelled form, the dominant motif of the central panel in each is an elongated zigzag. The

outside panels contain undulating lines, those of the beadwork example forming interlaced wavy lines while those of the ribbonwork hood have a single scalloped line that appears in mirror image framing the central panel. It is these same two motifs, zigzag and undulating or wavy lines, that Phillips has

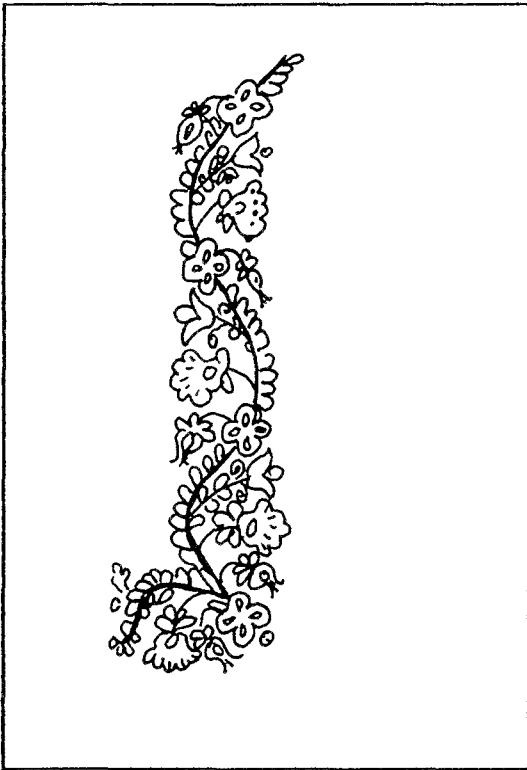


Figure 22: Flower overburden

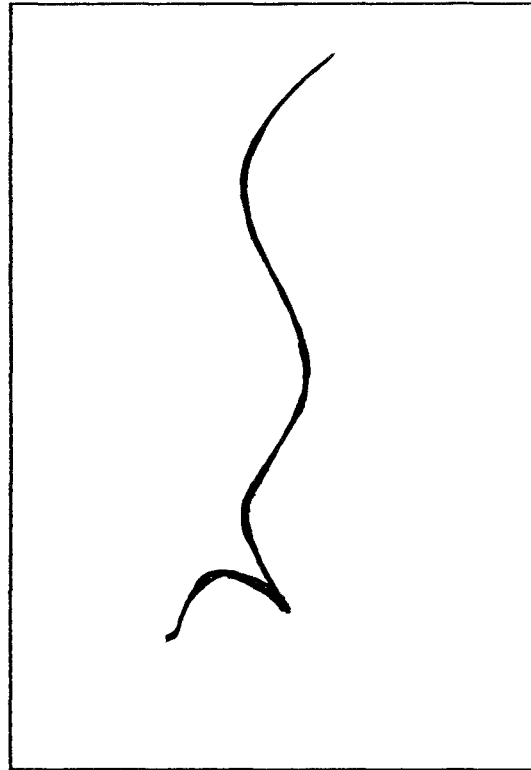


Figure 23: Overburden removed to reveal line

identified as representing the powers, respectively, of the cosmic zones of the sky and the underwater world (Phillips 1984b:415). These two motifs are often found united on object made of material from the 'earth' zone. By figuratively stripping away the overburden of flowers on the later hoods,an the underlying zigzag or undulating

forms are revealed (see Figures 22, 23 above). With the transition from the indigenous 'earth' material of animal hide to that of trade cloth, the flowers assume an important role in their representation as the vital mediating earth zone. The three panel format refers obliquely to these three zones of native cosmology. All the extant hoods suggest this rendering of cosmic reality, a conceptual symbolism that fits into the tripartite Cree schema identified by Flannery (Flannery and Chambers 1985:3).

The success with which the traditional symbolic reference was embedded in the floral imagery is reflected in the length of time that the hoods continued to be worn after the adoption of Western clothing by native women (as were other floral decorated items worn by men). We know that from at least the early 1800s (and possibly earlier) Company men had been encouraging their wives and daughters to affect at least an outward sign of acculturation by putting aside their traditional clothing. While some of the officers' native wives did in fact dress in the English style of the period, the native wives and mixed-blood women generally adopted a more practical costume with high-waisted dress, long skirt, a shawl and moccasins as illustrated by Rindisbacher in the 1820s (Van Kirk 1980:101). This costume was still popular some thirty years later when, in 1852, John Horden sketched a Moose Factory woman, Hannah Che-ah-pun, wearing a beaded hood.

(Horden appears to have exercised artistic licence in sketching only two panels of floral decoration.) This continued use of the hoods implies, on one level, a European acceptance predicated on the metaphorical allusions to British standards of ideal femininity at that time. On another level, the continuance implies that the women valued the hoods because they possessed a sacred and symbolic significance that provided efficacious protection to the wearer. Overt realism, such as that expressed on the later hoods, often obscures the symbolism and hidden meaning and may be indicative of a religious system that is being forced to go underground (Phillips 1984b:418).

Flannery's unpublished ethnographic information presented above provides vital insight into the depth of meaning that these hoods held within the native culture. As noted earlier, Flannery's informants recalled their grandmothers and other "better-off" married women wearing hoods in ritual situations, particularly in rituals surrounding the caribou hunt. This connection with the caribou hunt is reminiscent of Horden's 1853 journal notation. There he mentions that the Indian men coming into Rupert's House wore blue cloth caps, "...always being worn while deer [caribou] hunting."

Why, if this imagery was so successful, and the function so essential, did these floral beaded hoods

disappear? A possible hypothesis for the seemingly abrupt demise may rest with the christianizing movement of the Christian Mission Society's representative, John Horden. At the time of John Horden's arrival at Moose Factory in 1851, all the native women worshipping in the Anglican church wore one of these hoods (Anderson 1873:123). After this period, these hoods were being collected, most often by Company factors. A biographical sketch of Horden's career demonstrates his evangelizing mission in the James Bay region. One year after he arrived, Horden began visiting posts throughout the region encouraging the natives to "abandon their traditional beliefs and practices, not ascribing to them any spiritual or cultural values" (Long 1989:447). By the end of his career in 1893, he had converted or reconverted virtually all the Cree of eastern James Bay, Moose Factory, Fort Churchill and York Factory. (Long 1989:446). Beginning in 1860, Horden's protege, Thomas Vincent undertook to counteract the influence of the Roman Catholic priests at Fort Albany. The rather late (1865) use of hoods at Albany and the religious competition of the two European factions, suggests that Horden's influence may have caused the women to give up the hoods along with "overt traditional usages such as singing, drumming and seeking personal spirit-helpers while at the same time adapting some of their beliefs compatible with

Anglicanism into a syncretic form of Christianity" (Flannery 1990a:24).

As the beaded hoods worn by the women were first gradually, and then rapidly, replaced by the ubiquitous shawl for general wear, the traditional form of pointed hood was retained on the men's clothing¹⁵. The capote, mentioned by Anderson in 1853 and Newnham in 1895, was a dark blanket-cloth coat with an attached, pointed hood complete with tassel. The combined warmth of the heavy wool blanket with the loosely tailored quality of a coat proved to be an acceptable alternative to native male clothing. It remained popular well into the twentieth century (fieldnotes 1990), and its modern counterpart is recognized in the parka.

Despite the acculturative efforts of the European society, beadwork continued to provide a means for maintaining and passing on shared identity and values. In particular, similar floral motifs appeared on such forms as bags and pouches of various shapes, sizes and functions, babies' moss bags and cradle board covers, moccasins and mittens. Although the number of forms and the intricacy of the patterns has decreased over the years, beadwork continues still as an active and viable art form. Limited essentially to moccasins and mittens, the distinctive Cree floral motifs derived from those on the earlier hoods have local recognition as 'James Bay Cree style' (fieldnotes 1990).

Summary and Discussion:

In summation, the wearing of hoods by both men and women was recorded as early as 1670 in the James Bay area. Although the actual material, shape and ornamentation are unknown, some assumptions can be made. It can, for instance, be assumed with some assurance that hide was the material used. Similarly, the widespread distribution of pointed hoods throughout the subarctic and the northeast suggests that this was a universally accepted shape probably in use at the time of European contact. Decoration, if present, would have been a continuance of the painted hide and porcupine quillwork traditions that were the pre-contact methods of ornamentation. By the early 1700s, rectangular hoods for both sexes were made of European trade cloth and decorated with porcupine quills and European beads. This suggests that an existing traditional form became reiterated with the introduction and adaptation of new materials. As the technical advantages and potential for creative expression became apparent, the desirability of these trade goods increased rapidly with a concomitant burgeoning creativity recorded in a concrete manner on the hoods. However, it would appear that the introduction of European materials did not disrupt or replace the use and function of the hoods within the Cree culture.

Based upon the historic evidence alone it would appear that the wearers of the beaded hoods were married women

associated with the posts as the "better-off" wives of either Home Guard Indians or European traders¹⁶. However, the ethnographic material broadens this continued wearing of hoods to include both men and women of the interior groups. The ethnographic data also establishes the functional importance of the hoods in hunting success. Although catalogue documentation for the floral-patterned hoods held in the Canadian Museum of Civilization describes them as men's hoods, I would speculate that the floral motifs were more likely represented on the women's hoods while the men's were decorated with geometrical and faunal motifs. As always, more evidence is needed to draw conclusive statements: a more exact chronology derived from a number of sources including the introduction and incorporation of specific trade items in particular areas would add greatly to a discussion of the origins and developments of the hoods. Certainly a more detailed iconological analysis would provide essential primary information.

Increased usage of floral designs can be viewed as a native means to maintain and transmit their own cultural identity and values embedded within overtly European patterns¹⁷. Barbeau's statement that all floral patterns were adapted directly from those of the French Renaissance can be disproved by drawing upon the ethnographic and ethnohistoric evidence. While this same evidence strongly suggests a

European introduction of floral design, I would refrain from declaring unequivocally this as the only source of inspiration. Rather, I would prefer to accept the probability, as do Speck (1914) and Phillips (1987), that floral motifs have aboriginal origins. Certainly, at least some prior application as efficacious graphic depictions would facilitate this seemingly rapid acceptance, development and incorporation of European floral patterns.

It has been thought that as the proselytizing Anglican missionaries increased their efforts to discourage any traditional native expression, particularly on the west coast, the hoods seem to have rapidly disappeared. This seems rather simplistic in consideration of the complex nature of social and material systems. But, for whatever reason(s), contextual use of the beaded hoods has been discontinued and only the pointed form has been retained in contemporary parkas. Fortunately, these last remaining examples of exquisite beadwork have been preserved in the artificial context of museums and private collections.

CHAPTER FIVE

CREE LEGGINGS AS A FORM OF COMMUNICATION

Communication may be seen as a transference or bridging of feelings from man to animals or from animals to man. The mechanism of communication may be known only as a deep, strong effort to communicate (Preston 1975:212).

This mechanism of communication between persons - both Human Persons and Animal Persons - can take many forms and be comprised of many layers. While such intangible forms as speech and action play a major role in communication, it is the tangible messages encoded and encapsulated in material culture that will be explored here.

As a term of reference "Material Culture" functions as a bounded category isolating and decontextualizing material objects from their indivisible social, spiritual, economic, and geographical matrices. Therefore, interpretation of these objects necessitates that they be contextualized as much as possible within a holistic framework relevant on a number of levels. In this chapter the contextual use of decorated leggings documents, visually and metaphorically, economic changes brought about by the fur trade and by the decline in the caribou population. Stylistic changes in the material and forms of the leggings further attest to Cree adaptive

responses to the paramount effort for survival. Moreover, leggings serve as signs communicating cultural information about the identity, gender and status of a particular individual not only within the group and between groups but also between Human Persons and Animal Persons (cf Driscoll 1980, 1983, 1987:176; Saladin d'Anglure 1984:404; Swinton 1980:24).

Critical to an appreciation of this latter feature is the acceptance that clothing, as expressive material culture, serves as a form of communication. Echoing Joan Vastokas' emphasis (1978: 244) on the use of socio-semiotic analysis to interpret the messages communicated by material culture, Grant McCracken persuasively argues that this communication cannot be likened to that offered by linguistic models "which establishes signs and the rules for their combination into messages" (McCracken 1987:118). But rather, this form of communication should be likened to works of art in which "cultural categories and principles are encoded and made manifest" (McCracken 1987:107). Contrary to the linear reading of syntagmatically linked linguistic signs, the information encoded in various aspects of clothing is "read" simultaneously. Only when that encoded message does not conform to fixed cultural categories is its ambiguity examined. Inferring from this that clothing constitutes a conservative code with a fixed set of messages that cannot be

entrusted to language, we can discern that the message conveyed is meant to be made public but not transformed (cf McCracken 1987:120). Consequently, as active agent(s) in a sociocultural sense, clothing in general and individual items in particular, provide(s) an invaluable means of communication for both secular and ritual situations. This becomes singularly relevant when the message projected is intended to be evaluated and decoded not only by linguistically similar groups but also by others, both human and animal, as will be addressed below.

Two quite different styles of leggings attributed to this area and now in museum collections generate a need for comparison of their form, material and decorative elements. As well, the continued wearing of decorated leggings, at least by the women, after the introduction and adoption of European clothing suggests a significance beyond overt functional need. While much of the ensuing analysis is based upon economic and environmental pressures, ethnographic, ethnohistoric, and visual evidence supports my contention that documentation of economic change in a specific geographic area can be discerned through examination of the material culture. Equally significant is the relevance of using a semiotic approach to recognize the use of clothing as a sign of group membership, gender, and status, and as an aspect of economic strategy for survival.

Ethnographic and Ethnohistorical Evidence:

Sparse ethnographic and ethnohistorical evidence acknowledges leggings, or "leggings", as an ubiquitous item of clothing in the eastern Subarctic area worn during the winter by the men, and in all seasons by the women. After his 1852 visit to Moose Factory, David Anderson wrote that the men wore "a good capote and embroidered leggings" to the Anglican church service (Anderson 1873:123). In his 1861 description of a Montagnais woman living in Quebec, Henry Youle Hind noted that "neat moccasins and mistassins [leggings] peeped from beneath her [European] dress" (1863:22). Three decades later in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula the retention of painted hide leggings is recorded in Lucien Turner's description and accompanying sketch of a pair attributed to the Ungava Indians. According to Turner (1979:119,120), this pair (presumably those of a man) extended from the "upper portion of the thighs to the ankles...in the form of a narrow bag open at each end. The seam is on the outer side of the leggings and along it sewed a strip of deerskin having the edges cut into fringe." His sketch and verbal description of women's leggings provide details not apparent in other ethnographic references (Turner 1979:127):

They extend higher [than the men's] and the bottoms cover the tops of the moccasins. They are made of skin or cloth, the latter black or red. To cut out a pair of leggings requires skill. The cloth is doubled and then cut nearly in circular form. A size sufficient to fit the limb is sewed up leaving the crescent-shaped remainder a flapping ornament. The "wings" are often edged with cloth of a different color and on the outer borders rows of beads complete the decoration. The two crescents are left free, and as the wind separates them they flap fantastically. They are always worn so as to be on the outer side of the legs. The bottoms of the leggings are heavily loaded with numerous rows of fancy beads.

It is interesting to compare this description and accompanying illustration of a "Nenenot woman's leggings" (and other garments) with those worn by the doll illustrated in Plate VIII above the caption "Doll, Indian Woman, Full Dress, Nenenot" (Turner 1979: opposite page 162). As the two are stylistically very different, this inconsistency may be indicative of a regional variation not addressed by Turner.

Certainly by the first quarter of the twentieth century, the wearing of leggings had diminished considerably. In the James Bay area Alanson Skinner (1911:15) found that for winter wear men's "leggings were made of beaver, fisher, or of the skin of the legs of the caribou, worn usually with the fur inside. They extended from the thigh to the ankle." At that time a few of the older women still owned beaded cloth leggings which "are much shorter than those worn by the men and are tied on below the knee" (Skinner 1911:19). The

collections made by such men as Ernest Renouf working for the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) on the east coast of James Bay from 1910-1926 and Sam Waller who taught school at Moose Factory from 1923-1930 do not contain any examples.

During the 1930s, the East Cree told Regina Flannery about earlier forms of men's leggings made of skin or cloth which:

extended well up to the thigh, were attached by a caribou or other string to a line around the waist which also supported the breechclout...Men's leggings of stroud or duffle were described as made so that the fold of cloth was on the inner side of the leg and that the outer edges were left free to form flaps which were variously decorated with beads, ribbon, etc. [sic] Some said the lower edges were straight, others said they were narrowed and tucked into moccasins (Flannery 1991).

At Albany in 1935 Cree women were still preparing the lower leg skin of the caribou and sewing the triangular pieces together with sinew to make men's hunting bags and leggings. In a similar manner, women's leggings were constructed from four pieces with the fur side out for each leg, tied below the knee and extending to the ankle (Flannery 1991).

By the 1960s when Edward S. Rogers conducted fieldwork with the Mistassini Cree, leggings were no longer worn (1967:131). However, he did record Cree verbal descriptions of men's leggings worn in the past, descriptions which correspond with the actual pair illustrated by Frank G. Speck (1930:figure 122) and discussed below. Traditionally, "The

material for the men's leggings was cut in such a way that a point was formed at the lower edge of the seam, and the seam and point were decorated with beadwork" (Rogers 1967:52).

The sequence of this dating corresponds with the information gleaned during my field trips to James Bay (1990 and 1991). Although a number of women had heard stories of these decorated leggings from their mothers and grandmothers, only two of the older women recalled seeing them as a young child.

Although the examples cited here far from exhaust the available sources, few details of additional significance can be derived. I believe that this limited information reflects the European acceptance of the functional aspect of leggings without further thought about any deeper or symbolic meaning. Certainly on a pragmatic level, these clothing items served to provide warmth in winter and protection from underbrush and other hazards of "the wilds". However, in light of the fact that women wore them "in all seasons"; there are very few specimens in collections; and, their status as one of the three items of native apparel (the beaded hoods and moccasins were the other two) retained by many women after the adoption of other items of European clothing reinforces their ideological importance beyond the practical value.

Material Evidence:

Primary data, derived from extant museum examples augmented by published evidence and ethnohistoric sources, establishes two styles of leggings. In most locations of the James Bay-Quebec-Labrador area, the supplanting of one style with the second is indicative of historical changes reflecting a high degree of native involvement in the fur trade. In areas where interaction with the posts was minimal, the earlier style was retained much longer.

Style One: The first style of leggings to be considered are constructed of caribou skin, rectangular in form and decorated with painted designs (see Table 6 below and Photograph 6). Often attributed to the Naskapi, this style of legging can also be associated with the east coast of James Bay. While a definitive identification of individual examples requires more extensive research than has been undertaken here, there is sufficient evidence to support this style of legging as part of the generalized painted skin tradition for the James Bay-Quebec-Labrador area. As Alexander Mackenzie noted during his travels of 1789-1819 (Lamb 1970:132,133): "tight leggins...reaching near the hip" of the Knisteneaux Indians [Cree] substantiates that "the leather is neatly painted, and fancifully worked in some parts with porcupine quills, and moose-deer hair...(and) also adorned with fringes and tassels." Mackenzie indicates that women's leggins were of

similar style but shorter in length and gartered beneath the knee (Lamb 1970:132,133).

<u>Museum Number</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Identification</u>	<u>Length</u>
CMC III-B-591	pre1770	Naskapi	77cm.
Offenbach 4.20.20	c1780	Naskapi	70cm.
Paris 78-32-144	"old work"	Naskapi	58cm.
Hunterian E129	1760-1770	Naskapi or Cree	79cm.
Berlin IV B 78 AB)	pre1824		65cm.
MAI/HP 3/2901	1800-1840	Naskapi (woman's)	45cm.

Table 6: Painted caribou skin leggings

Although few in number, the extant examples exhibit relatively uniform details. Made from a single piece of soft, unsmoked, tanned caribou skin, the leggings are sewn with sinew, the folded edge to the inside of the leg and the vertical outer edges stitched together to form an open flap. In two examples (Canadian Museum of Civilization III-B-591; Deutsches Ledermuseum 4.20.20) these flaps are fringed and quill-wrapped similar to the fringes on East Cree robes and coats. The painted designs are rendered in red, yellow, gold, mahogany and black. Except for rather sparse examples of double curve motifs (for example, Museum of the American Indian/Heye Foundation 3/2901 and Deutsches Ledermuseum 4.20.20), the motifs are all geometric (stripes, diamonds, cross-hatching, triangles, serpentine/zigzag lines, ovoids, and dots). Based solely on length (44cm compared with the others which range from 58cm to 79cm), at least one of the six

pairs examined here can be considered to be those of a woman's (MAI/HF 3/2901).

The dating for most of these examples falls within the latter quarter of the eighteenth century and possibly into the early nineteenth century. For example, those in the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow are presumed to have been collected from the Hudson Bay area probably in the 1760s or 1770s (documentation HM E129) while those in the Hadlock collection (Museum fur Volkerkunde, Berlin IV B78 AB), collected no later than 1824, means that the leggings may predate, but do not postdate this year. The other examples tend to fall within this time period, with a tendency to cluster at the earlier end. However, as noted above, Turner records caribou hide leggings in the interior Labrador area as late as 1882 (Turner 1979:120) and Richard White Jr., in a letter to Speck, mentions that before World War I (pre-1914), "painted leggings were (also) common" there (White 1926-1949: 25 June 1929). No further details about this early style are readily apparent.

Style two: The second style of leggings, more narrowly attributed to the James Bay-Northern Quebec area, were fabricated from trade cloth and can be distinguished from those of other areas and earlier time periods by their characteristic shape and pattern of ornamentation. Essentially rectangular in shape, the folded cloth is stitched on the outer side of the leg to form a flap tapering from very narrow

at the upper edge to wider at the "ankle". The decorative elements, rendered in beads and silk ribbon, occur across the bottom edge with minor elements occurring vertically along the outer edge. For the most part, the major elements can be designated as floral in nature although varying in both complexity and elaboration on individual pairs. The fairly simple vertical ornamentation often comprises no more than silk ribbon binding outlined with single lanes of beading or may include a narrow zigzag row of beads. Colourwise, all but two pairs examined were made of navy or black woollen fabric, the exceptions being one red pair (Birmingham 275ab) and a dark cream-coloured pair (private collection). The dimensions of the leggings suggest two distinct groupings: leg lengths can be divided into one group ranging from 30.5 to 36.5 centimetres while those in the second range from 46.5 to 53 centimetres. The widths for both groups, measured with the legging folded, range from 19.0 to 26.1 centimetres.

There are, however, two distinct variants that occur with the lower aspect of the flap. One variant exhibits a flap cut into a rounded form just above the ankle constriction (see Figure 24 below as well as Photographs 7 and 9). On several of these examples, a tassel of silk ribbon is attached just under the rounded aspect where the narrower section begins. It is this form that occurs in association with the shorter lengths described above. A second legging form, essentially

rectangular in form, is cut so that the bottom corner of the flap creates a triangular form (McCord ME938.1(1&2); see Figure 25 below and Photographs 10 and 20). When tassels are present, they are usually attached to the tip of the point formed by the triangular projection. This form corresponds to

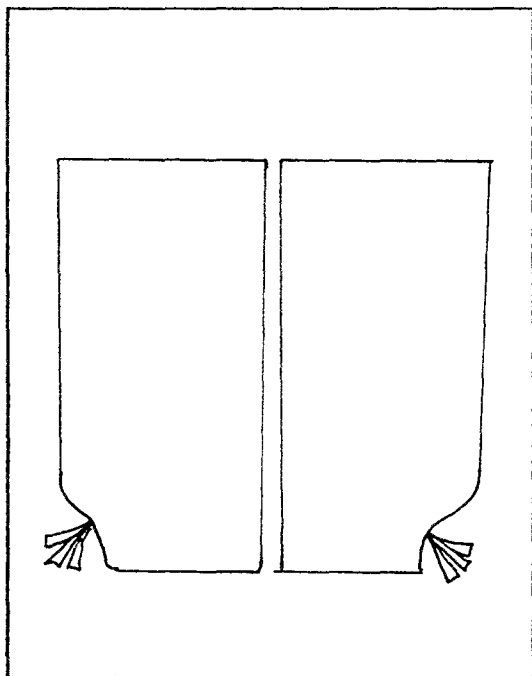


Figure 24: Woman's leggings with rounded flap

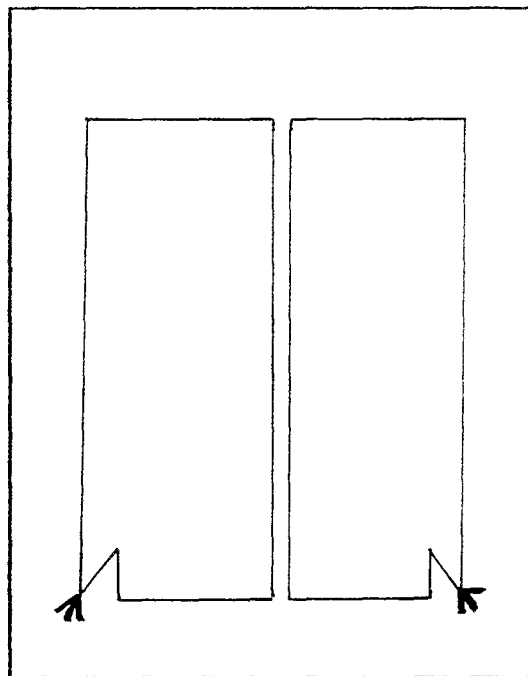


Figure 25: Man's leggings with pointed flap

the grouping of leggings with longer lengths. Acceptance of these two forms as variants of a single style implies that each is function-specific.¹ By adding length as a factor - also noted in ethnohistoric and ethnographic references - it is reasonable to suggest that these variants are indeed gender-specific with the rounded form and shorter length being designed for women while the pointed form and longer length

comprise a male version. Indeed, these particular forms were confirmed as being traditional for at least the Eastmain area.² While nearly all the people I talked to at Eastmain had only heard about these leggings from their mothers and grandmothers, they all verified that these were indeed the "proper" shapes. In fact, on occasion, both forms were described to me at great length prior to being shown photographs of either of them.

Further confirmation of gender differentiation is provided by museum documentation as several pairs with the rounded form are catalogued specifically as "woman's leggings" (Edinburgh 1968.7.29 and 1968.7.31; Skinner 1911:19,56; American Museum of Natural History 50-7056; CMC III-D-584a,b). Supplemental documentation offered by archival photographs of women wearing decorated leggings is generally disappointing as the actual shape of the flap is often impossible to discern (for example, Province of Ontario Archives Acc2210 S1994).

Museum documentation for the male legging form with the pointed flap includes a pair (reduced scale) made in the early 1960s by Ellen Cheezo to specifically illustrate the form once worn at Eastmain (CMC III-D-216a,b).³ Decades earlier, a full-size example from the Mistassini Cree was documented by Speck as being a "Man's black cloth legging" (see Speck 1930:452, figure 122 for illustration; MAI/HF 16/9770). This in turn compares with several other museum

examples which date from as late as the 1920s (CMC-III-D-84a,b) and as early as the mid-1800s (McCord ME938.1(1&2); see Figure 25). A pair of dolls (Museum of Mankind 1923.6.194c,d), presumed to be from the eastern James Bay area, are clad in leggings with forms appropriate to the time period and their respective genders (see Photograph 20 for male doll).

The use of cloth for leggings in the Subarctic is given first recognition in James Isham's 1743 notation of Cree men's leggings in the region of York Factory as "Stockings of the same stuff [cloth]; - which Reaches 1/2 way their thigh and ties to the said string round their waste [sic]; with their Garter's tied below the knee;..." (Rich 1949:110). Isham provides no further description that would enable us to assess the form of these leggings at that time. Somewhat later another historical marker can be derived from artist Peter Rindisbacher's prolific art production. In his water colour portraying "A Hunter Family of Crees at Fort York" (York Factory) painted in 1821, each member of the Cree family wears distinctive leggings. As with the archival photographs, the shape(s) of the bottom flaps are indistinguishable. Nor does Bishop John Horden's later, and somewhat tantalizing, description provide details of the cut of the bottom. In lieu of trousers, "they make leggins of various kinds of cloth...sometimes very tastefully decorated with bead-work, especially those of the women, are provided with flaps or

wings on either side" (Batty 1893:32). In a further description of the "usual costume of the Cree Indians"... "legs are cased in the ordinary blue cloth leggings" (Batty 1893:40).

More definitive information concerning the cloth style of the East Cree, derived from museum documentation, genealogical reconstruction and ethnographic evidence, does not appear until at least the early years of the mid-1800s. According to museum catalogue information, the earliest documented pair of women's cloth leggings was collected in 1845 from Eastmain by Colonel John Henry Lefroy (Mannheim 3106).⁴ As mentioned above, several of the Cree recalled hearing about these leggings from the elders, and a few had actually seen leggings that were similar in shape although with little or no decoration. All stressed that the decorated leggings would be worn for ceremonial occasions which, for the Cree, include hunting.

Iconography of the Leggings:

The visual aspects that enhance the leggings are as critical as the form for both cultural significance and semiotic reference. The Cree repeatedly emphasized that the hunter - and through association, his wife - must have beautifully decorated clothing to please the animals. The more dream friends the hunter had, the more complex was the ornamentation, and hence, the more success he might have as a

hunter (cf Flannery and Chambers 1985; Oberholtzer 1990a:279). The onus was upon the wife or mother of the hunter to demonstrate her expertise as craftswoman and artist by producing her finest work for both the hunter and herself. Given the strength of traditional continuity manifested in other aspects of Cree culture, it is presumed that these rules were also operational in the production of the painted leggings of Style One. The predominance of geometric designs on these hide examples appears to have given way to floral designs with the adoption of cloth. A mid-nineteenth century example presumed to be transitional between the painted geometric designs and floral beadwork is a pair with geometric designs appliqued in silk ribbonwork on woollen trade cloth (CMC III-M-60a,b; illustrated in the *Spirit Sings* 1987b:92).

A definitive analysis of the decorative elements of men's cloth leggings is impeded by the scarcity of extant examples. Two pairs in the McCord Museum yield the most information. One pair (ME 938.1&2) dated as mid-nineteenth century, has a fine serpentine line on the vertical edges with trefoil floral forms placed within each curve. The depth of the curves positions the alternating flower-forms outside the vertical axis producing an overall dynamic appearance. The pattern extends from flap point to upper edge. Horizontally across the ankle area, a floral design comprised of a stronger serpentine line with thorns, rosebuds, rose leaves, and

'shell' flowers is worked in white, crystal, pink, green and blue seed beads. When the two leggings are placed side by side and bisected visually by the space, these horizontal patterns create mirror images of each other. Silk ribbon tassels are attached to the tips of the points.

On the second pair of men's leggings (McCord ME 987.120.2), dated as circa 1885-90, the vertical design presents a less-dynamic version of that on the earlier pair. While the trefoil floral forms are identical, the serpentine line assumes a secondary role by merely linking these floral motifs together creating a static arrangement along the vertical axis. As well, instead of ending at the tip of the flap, the vertical pattern turns to go across the inner edge of the flap and ends just before the ankle decoration begins. The horizontal pattern, however, features a strong serpentine line similar to the earlier pair but with full-faced five-petalled flowers centred in each curve of the line. Beads are white, gold, pink and blue, and in this instance, the silk ribbon tassel is attached in the notch between flap and ankle. Two other examples of male leggings (MAI/HF 16/9770; private collection) are finished simply with ribbon, single lanes of beads and tassels.

The greater number of extant examples of women's leggings tentatively suggests two iconographically-based divisions, one entirely floral and the other a combination of

floral and a U-shaped motifs. Tempting as it may be to classify these as regional expressions, the paucity of examples renders this notion purely speculative.

The floral type is exemplified by the two pairs of woman's leggings collected by John Clark at Little Whale River circa 1860 (Photograph 9). The full-face flowers, rose buds and leaves on prickly stems present a configuration similar to the meandering serpentine one so obvious on Cree beaded hoods. As with the man's leggings, the mirror reflection of the pattern from one folded legging to the other is noteworthy. When worn, the two leggings present a visual image of a single unit with the "joint" becoming the central axis creating a bilateral symmetry (see Photograph 9). The dissimilarity of patterns between those on the fronts and those on the backs of these particular pairs is enigmatic.

The second group are characterized by a pair collected by Skinner at Eastmain in 1908 and by the Mannheim pair (attributed to Eastmain). The composition on the Mannheim leggings is dominated by a U-shaped scallop (discussed in Chapter 3) which is repeated across the bottom of the leggings (see Photographs 7 and 8). At the point where two "arms" meet there is stylized flower with simple eight-lobed flowers placed within the U, and beneath the arms are looped figures. A similar pattern on leggings in the Mactavish collection appears as a simplified version (Christie's 1989:50). This U-

motif occurs again on the Skinner pair, this time above a band beaded with rosebuds and paired leaves attached to a meandering line. This configuration of repeated U-motif in association with rosebuds is rendered on a number of Cree items.

As this motif is depicted singly or in repetition on items associated with the hunt (leggings, mittens, shot bags, and possibly the Glenbow coat mentioned previously), and with caribou hunting in particular, I would submit that this U-shape is an iconic rendering of the frontal aspect of the caribou rack⁵. This position is strengthened by the motif being invariably beaded in white, the colour symbolizing the caribou (Speck 1935:215; Tanner 1979:143). Comparable interpretations have been proposed by Alike Podolinsky Webber who equates the double-curve motif in Naskapi culture to caribou antlers in general, and more specifically as depicting the perspective of the hunter in his transformed state looking out from inside the animal (Webber 1980:16), and later as representing man and caribou as one (Webber 1987:19). This same concept is expressed in a Cree myth in which, at the beginning of a hunt, the young man describes the encounter with the caribou from the human perspective. During the hunt, however, he assumes the caribou perspective describing the events according to how the caribou views them (Tanner 1979:136). These events presume that the caribou's antlers

present a visible marker from both viewpoints; that is, 'looking in' and 'looking out'. Consequently, with the visual concordance between the U-motif as a stylized and abstracted rendering of caribou antlers and an ethnographic interpretation of the double curve motif presented here, this meaning becomes layered. This interpretation falls in line with my stance on embedded symbolism which argues that the symbolic referents of earlier Cree motifs became subsumed within 'acceptable' (at first to the European audience and later, to the Cree) floral representations and/or floral enhancement while retaining critical and identifying attributes.

The strength of this assumption for iconic representation is also partially confirmed by the Cree belief that the inedible parts of an animal contain part of the animal's power requiring reverence and ritualized handling (Preston 1964; Tanner 1979:131). Antlers are thus accorded their rightful respect by being decorated and carefully hung (Hind 1863:202; Preston 1964; Tanner 1979:171). Given that antlers generally symbolize renewal, rebirth, and regeneration, and hence, fecundity, the repetition of this motif may refer to an anticipated (or wished for) increase in numbers of the caribou.

Clothing as communication:

The diversity in form and decoration of leggings among various indigenous groups implies that leggings as an article of clothing served as a principal means of "visually communicating information about the groups to which they belonged as well as about themselves as individuals" (Maurer 1979:119). Such information as tribal affiliation, group membership, status, gender, age, sacred power, dream symbols, and artistic expertise could be communicated, often simultaneously (cf Jopling 1976; Kuper 1973; Mauer 1979). While the variations are virtually infinite when considered at the level of individual creators and wearers, certain parameters governed the forms and motifs which were group specific. The type and amount of information conveyed (emitted and received) through clothing form and embellishment becomes dependent on the physical and/or social distance between the sender and receiver. In a parallel manner, Martin Wobst establishes (1977: 332) that: "Items that are worn on the outside of several layers of clothing show up first, and the higher an item is located on the body, the earlier it becomes visible... at long distances." According to Wobst's findings, it is headgear and coats that function best as carriers of stylistic messages "specific in terms of the largest group that an individual affiliates with" (Wobst 1977:334). The form and decorative elements bring leggings into this realm of

communication, as well. Particularly in sparsely populated hunting and foraging societies, it is these distinctive key features - particularly the form - that would provide the first level of communication. The message communicated at a distance might only establish "us" or "not us"; that is, as being a member of the group or someone from outside the group.

A number of examples provide validation:

1. **Iroquois** cloth leggings are rectangular with the front seam left open above the instep; decorative beadwork occurs across the bottom and on either side of the opening (see, for example, Brant 1990:74,75,76; Johnson 1990a: Plate F1; Iroquois leggings are often illustrated flat with the openings at the side.). However, Iroquois warriors wore hide leggings that displayed beaded and deeply notched flaps on the outside of the legs circa 1769 and unobtrusive side fringes circa 1812 (Johnson 1990a; Plate B1 and Plate F2, respectively). Johnson also illustrates an Iroquois dancer whose side opening legging is garnished with tabs and ornate decoration (Plate F3).
2. **Ojibwa** men's leggings were side-seamed with a flap that ended in a rounded tab below the knee (King 1982:16; archival photograph). King also illustrates a pair dated to the mid-eighteenth century with elongated tabs that had belonged to a great conjuror of the Spanish River Ojibwa (King 1982:38; MM2575).
3. **Great Lakes Indians.** A catch-all designation for a number of tribes that lived in the vicinity of the Great Lakes. For the most part their leggings in the early 1800s were front-seamed with an opening over the instep but appear to be slimmer in outline than those of the Iroquois and simply decorated (Phillips 1984a:41,57,59).
4. **Plains tribes.** Ronald Koch provides a brief summary of distinctive features of the leggings of a few tribes with the caveat that "decoration of leggings was quite varied, depending on the maker, tribe and time" (Koch 1977:141, 171-176). Blackfeet: often yellow with black horizontal painted stripes; attached scalp locks. Crows: fringed bottom tabs; quill-wrapped horsehair. Western Sioux; bottom tabs short or absent. Cheyennes: women, boot moccasins; men, "forked" style. Comanches: women, boot

moccasins; men, long fringes and bottom tabs. Prairie tribes: tight below knee and cut with points projecting above front seam; bottom tab; scalp locks attached.

5. **Saulteaux.** Skinner's description of men's leggings as worn in the past (that is, worn prior to his fieldwork in 1908) is "skin-tight leggings with a fringe running along the seam down the outside of the leg. in some cases, instead of a leather fringe, dangling feathers were used for this purpose (1911:121).
6. **Micmac** men's leggings of the early nineteenth century were rectangular-shaped red wool ornamented with beads and ribbon applique. The bottom edge had a simple pattern and the vertical edge, a more complex and elaborate one. The outer edge of the vertical side exhibited a scalloped effect (Whitehead 1980:18).
7. **Tattoo.** At least among the Ottawa (King 1982:86) and the Central Algonquians (Johnson 1990a: Plate A) men's legs were tattooed with geometrical designs on their calves and thighs with horizontal demarcation indicative of the tops and bottoms of leggings.

As these descriptions are inadequate for a number of reasons - the lack of illustration, chronological sequence and spatial distribution being the most critical - they are to be considered merely as indicators of the more obvious visual differences that can communicate information.

Of importance is the implication that specific forms can be correlated with certain groups for purposes of group identification. Previous studies in other culture areas correlating the form or "cut" of certain items of clothing with specific group identity have yielded parallel results. A classic example is Clark Wissler's (1915) study of the costumes in the Plains area in which he not only identifies particular dress forms with specific groups but also indicates

their distribution on maps (Wissler 1915:87). To a lesser degree, F.H. Douglas (1951) has provided a more general areal distribution of women's clothing for the American Southwest, the Plains and the Northeast. For similar interpretations about Inuit clothing as highly visible social identifiers in a hunting and gathering life style, both Bernadette Driscoll (1980, 1987) and Jill Oakes (1987, 1991, 1992) have done extensive historical and ethnographic research.

Consideration of the distinctive legging forms which gained immediate recognition as the "East Cree form" by contemporary Cree (at least at Eastmain) and the handing down of this traditional form through oral communication, suggests a deep-rooted practice potent with cultural meaning. Whereas the form alone was a readily identifiable marker to outsiders (those at a greater social distance) that the wearer was 'Cree', it also performed as a distinctive marker at a greater physical distance for both outsiders and Cree alike. Dependent on their level of experience, outsiders or 'others' might or might not recognize the variations of this Cree form as being gender-specific. Of course, the message would be clear to those within the Cree culture. Crossing both these boundaries of social and physical distances, the legging form and decoration communicated information to the caribou. Before developing this further, the decorative element must be taken into consideration.

The messages communicated through the decorative elements are intentionally more abstract and hence more difficult for the outsider to fully interpret. That these elements are important features is indicated by a shift in position which correlates with the adoption of European style clothing. Returning again to the Rindisbacher painting mentioned above for illustration, the position and type of decoration can be discerned from a distance. While the man's leggings are decorated with geometric motifs, those of the child's are plain and the woman's has large flowers in a vertical configuration visible from the ankle to about the knee. Despite the minimal evidence available, the obvious contrast with the position of the decoration found on extant examples, suggests that as native women adopted the longer dresses of European fashions, the decorative element was moved to the bottom of the legging in order to be seen. This appears to be the case in the archival photograph of women at Moose Factory circa 1866 in which only a decorated lower portion shows below these women's dresses.

The degree of complexity displayed in a decorative design, while conveying certain cross cultural standards, would disclose less ambiguous meanings to the Cree. Within the community, the message communicated by form and ornamentation would be understood at an immediate level revealing the social situation, gender, status, visionary experiences, hunting

success and sacred power of the wearer to others within the same group. However, in a group in which action is more sacred than objects, much of this must be inferred by us through feats of *bricolage*; that is, by pulling together the bits and shreds of information derived from the available material (cf Tilley 1990:26-28).

In other cultures clothing serves a vital role imparting this cultural information. For the Cree this is one aspect which has received very minimal coverage in the literature, nor is it mentioned specifically by the Cree. There is, however, a strong possibility that leggings - at least the decorated ones - functioned in this capacity. Having already determined that gender is indicated through the flap form, leggings may also communicate social and/or biological maturity. This is based in part on the absence of extant examples or record of decorated child-size ones - other than the somewhat dubious designation of a single decorated pair as "child's" (Christie's 1989:50,51).⁶ This absence is reinforced to a certain degree by Rindisbacher's portrayal of the Cree child wearing undecorated leggings while those of the parents are ornamented.

Pertinent to this argument is the Cree ideological association between dream experience, social maturity (especially as a hunter), and the rendering of dream revelations as decorative designs on items of material culture

(particularly those items used for hunting) (Flannery and Chambers 1985; Oberholtzer 1990a; Phillips 1987:62; Skinner 1911:55; Speck 1935:227). While a Cree child is encouraged to remember his or her dreams, "such dreams, **although they have no practical use** [at that time], are held to indicate that the person potentially has spiritual power" (Tanner 1979:126; emphasis added). By the time this potential can be realized, it is assumed that a young man, having reached his late teens, will have "acquired some competence in the practical skills of hunting, trapping, and fishing" (Flannery and Chambers 1985:3). Hence, when the young hunter begins to dream in earnest, the *powatakakanak* 'dream-visitors' give him, among other gifts, "designs for the decoration of hunting clothing and equipment" (Flannery and Chambers 1985:6). The responsibility of interpreting these dream-inspired images into culturally accepted designs on hunting clothing and bags becomes that of the hunter's wife (or other female relative). Presumably this woman has reached biological maturity and demonstrated her social maturity through her expertise in making and decorating clothing. The inherent implication of social maturation thus expressed in the acquisition of hunting skills and spiritual power through dreaming on the part of the young men is complemented by the domestic skills and potential fecundity of the women.

This relationship between hunting skills and maturity holds a figurative signification when broadened to include the Cree metaphor linking human sexuality with hunting and killing (Preston 1975:215-16; Scott 1989). Acceptance of this connection implies that hunter and hunted are sexually mature. To this evidence can be added the visual and metaphorical allusions to sexual maturity of both legging forms (see Note 1). Together this presents sufficient evidence to surmise that the wearing of decorated leggings with the gender-appropriate form coincided with the recognition of social and/or biological maturity within the Cree community.

Communication in Cree terms is not limited to human persons but extends to encompass animal persons (cf Hallowell 1960; Preston 1975; Tanner 1979:136-152). As I will develop in the ensuing discussion of caribou, the form and decorative elements of the leggings also serve as signs to the caribou. For, as Colin Scott demonstrates (1989:195):

Animal behaviour, dream images, and religious symbols all fall within the Cree notion of 'sign', with the assumption that signs constitute knowledge or guidance for actors. And not only humans but animals and other non-human persons send, interpret, and respond to signs pertinent to various domains of human action : hunting success or failure, birth and death and, critically related to these, the circumstances of reciprocity between persons in the world.

Analysis of the symbolic associations establishes the inextricable link between the Cree and the caribou that is communicated by the leggings.

Communicating with the Caribou:

This bond between the Cree and the caribou, revealed by the iconological aspect of the leggings, is given voice through a model pair of leggings collected in 1962 at Eastmain (CMC III-D-115a,b). These little leggings were made by Daisy Cheezo to illustrate the style worn two generations ago. According to the maker, the "shape of the legging imitates the shape of the caribou leg" (notation on catalogue documentation for CMC III-D-115a,b). While the cut and decoration of these little leggings appears to be a blend of those used to distinguish male and female styles, the accompanying comment is worthy of investigation.

By comparing the two legging shapes with line drawings of caribou legs and hoofs, we can establish strong visual similarities (compare Figures 24 and 25 with 26 and 27). These line drawings depict the bottom of the caribou legs with the dewclaws illustrated from the front, and from the side. From both perspectives the dewclaws conform more closely to the cut of the man's legging (Figure 25). With the wearing of the seam-cum-flap on the outside of the leg, the projections at the bottom would replicate the silhouette of the caribou leg. As none of the sources consulted indicate any differences

in appearance between male and female caribou dewclaws and hoofs (see Burt 1952:50; Kelsall 1968:33; Smith 1982:140) the two legging forms suggest a Cree-derived need to

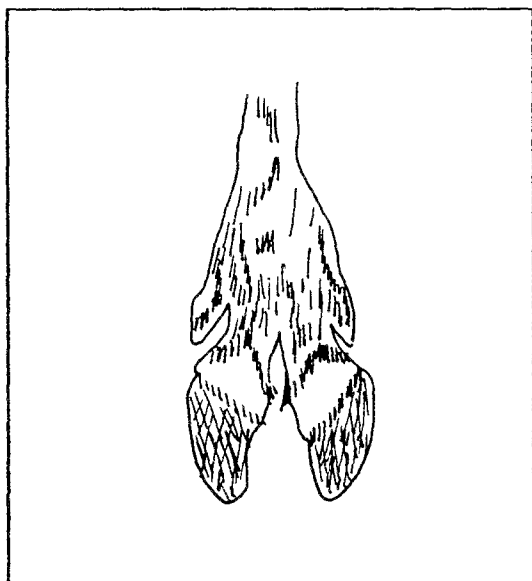


Figure 26: Caribou leg, front view (redrawn after Kelsall 1968:33)

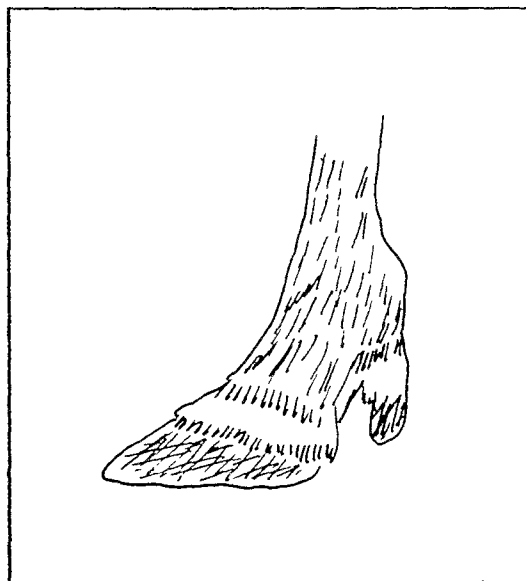


Figure 27: Caribou leg, side view (redrawn after Kelsall 1968:33)

differentiate between men and women. Analogously, the hunting of beaver establishes a similar sexual differentiation of humans but not of animal prey. In his discussion of the emotional dynamics of hunting, Preston (1975:228-230) adroitly and sensitively demonstrates the sexual "roles" of humans and beavers in the course of events. While the hunter treats a beaver with a love and sexual relationship parallel to that he shares with his wife, the hunter's wife receives the identical beaver and welcomes it with the "sexual hospitality" she would accord a visiting man. Significantly, "... the beaver does not

change its sex in this series of events, as it relates first to the man and then to the wife, in order to keep the relationships heterosexual" (Preston 1975:229).

Traditionally, the caribou was central to the economy of the East Cree as a major source of food and clothing. As such, many of the ritual aspects of Cree life were directed towards propitiating the beneficence of the caribou spirit. The relationship between a hunter and a caribou is so close that the intimacy has been likened to that of a sexual relationship between a man and a woman (Preston 1975:215-216). The depth of meaning is expressed symbolically in Cree mythology with the marriage between a young hunter and Caribou Woman (Speck 1935:82; Tanner 1979:136; Turner 1979:164-166; also see Preston 1975:225 for a different version).⁷ As myths can be considered guidelines for certain rituals, the symbolism of this social interaction between hunter and caribou/man and woman can be extrapolated into an explanation for the visible differences observed in legging form. It was critical that the caribou be able to recognize the male hunter in order to give "herself" to him.

These leggings worn on the hunter's legs, as replications of the caribou's legs, draw attention to the significance of the legs of the caribou. In life caribou legs mysteriously produce a clicking sound that no other animal can imitate. They also take the caribou on its seasonal round in

search of food just as the hunter's legs transport him in a similar search. In death, the metapodial bones provide a prized marrow fat called wiin (Tanner 1979:156). It follows that the leg bones must be treated with particular respect and are "sometimes seen hanging on a wall or tent pole, and which are often used as buzzers on a drum" (Tanner 1979:147). Turner noted that dogs were not allowed to gnaw at the leg bones of the first caribou killed "lest the guardian spirit of the deer be offended and refuse to send further supplies" (Turner 1979:37; Speck 1935:90; see Preston 1964 for discussion of the ritualized care of bones).

Significantly, the bringing back of the lower legs of caribou with the first tokens of a kill is for their coveted source of *wiin* (Tanner 1979:156). While this particular fat remains the focus of the most meaningful Naskapi feast, among the East Cree it is now "eaten as a delicacy, but no particular ritual is attached to its consumption," although it is still shared carefully (Tanner 1979:156,170). A similar ritual of fat sharing was recorded by James Clouston, during his explorations of the interior of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula 1819-1820 (Davies 1963:49). This sharing of fat appears to be similar to Turner's experience with the Naskapi "feast of furs" at which guests were given pemmican, a "compound of rancid tallow and marrow with a due admixture of pounded dry meat of the reindeer" that had to be consumed

within the ritual tent (Turner 1979:159). Georg Henriksen considers these "eat-all feasts" or mokoshan as "an act symbolizing the redistribution of meat as well as the dependence of the Naskapi on the caribou spirit" (Henriksen 1987:42).

Synergistically, the highly significant details of the enigmatic clicking sounds of the caribou legs; the admonition to restrain the dogs from gnawing on the legs of the first-killed deer for fear of offending the caribou spirit; 'power' to travel in all weather as a result of the physical capabilities of the caribou hoofs to gain purchase on snow and ice (parallel to the action of snowshoes)⁸; the source of the highly prized fat that is equitably redistributed; the use of the cannon bone as a drum buzzer; and an association between the lower legs of the caribou and the Deer Lady, attest to the symbolic nature of the caribou leg. This emphasis on the lower legs seems to suggest that a certain essence or spirit of the caribou resides or becomes concentrated in this "container." By wearing leggings that are made from caribou hide, or duplicate the shape of the caribou leg, the hunter metonymically identifies with the caribou. Not only does he take on the essence of the animal, he assumes the mythically determined role of the young hunter to "take advantage" of the willingness of the caribou to "give herself" to the hunter. A successful hunt ensures the well-being of the group.

Zoomorphic references such as this which connect hunters and game metonymically are echoed in tangible Inuit ethnographic analogies (cf Driscoll 1987:179). Exhibiting a similar ideology to that of the Cree in their relationships with animals, the Inuit exemplified this close relationship between hunter and animal in the manufacture of hunting equipment which includes clothing (Stenton 1991:8). As Bernadette Driscoll (1987:175) writes, "...animal imagery was often used in the design of hunting equipment, for it was believed that the attributes of the animal were symbolically embraced within an object designed in its image." In general, "clothing made from the skin of the animal being hunted not only camouflaged the hunter but assisted him in identifying with the animal" (Driscoll 1987:177,178). In particular, the use of skin taken from the caribou for leggings and footwear, although also exhibiting a functional basis, connotes a symbolic usage in animal-human bonding (Gubser 1965; Hatt 1969; Issenman 1985:106). With our understanding of the efficacy of the Cree hunter's well-made and decorated clothing in hunting, the initial use of caribou skin leggings (later replaced by cloth leggings) metaphorically replicates caribou legs and thus falls within these ideological and symbolic concepts. To wear leggings was to become caribou in thought and action and endurance.

Appropriate with the concept of the leggings' function as a sign, and the Cree belief of caribou-human human-caribou transformations, the legging form is also a semiotic communication to the caribou. For not only do leggings serve as a means of identification at the group and individual levels for the Cree, they also allow the caribou to identify the Cree. As the success of the hunter rests upon the acknowledgement of the human-persons--animal-persons continuum, there is an integral and reciprocal assumption that the caribou will recognize the hunter. Just as human-persons can recognize other human groups **and** differentiate between male and female in their own group **by the silhouette shape of their leggings**, the caribou also uses these same features to recognize the Cree hunter. Simultaneously, the decorative elements communicate the hunter's visionary experiences, the spirit-persons who have befriended him, his success as a hunter, and his sacred power. At the same time, the fineness and quality of the woman's needlework, which adds significantly to the overall meticulous presentation of the hunter, is indicative of their combined respect for the caribou (1991 fieldnotes; Chaussonnet 1988; Driscoll 1983, 1987; Fienup-Riordan 1988). This message, encoded as it is in tangible form, can be evaluated and decoded by the caribou.

Discussion

The presence of decorated cloth leggings shaped as caribou legs which replaced the use of painted, straight-legged and flapped leggings of the eighteenth century and which continued until falling into disuse around the beginning of the twentieth century, evokes many questions. When this transition took place, what mechanics governed it, and who was instrumental in implementing it, may be revealed with further research. Of greater concern, however, are the ideological reasons which must be questioned. Why change from a material such as the caribou hide which serves as metonym and/or metaphor for the caribou to European cloth which must be shaped to assume its role as metaphor for the caribou leg? If the transition from hide to cloth occurred prior to the introduction of the new form, what precipitated the change in form? Or, did the change in forms coincide with the change in materials? And, if the form was significant, why did it fall into disuse when it did? We may never know all the answers.

However, working under the premise that material culture can document social and economic changes within societies, the historical and ethnographic literature concerning that time period was examined for a feasible answer(s). A possible - and plausible - consideration is drawn from Toby Morantz' conclusions (1983:166):

...that the fur trade increased the James Bay peoples' harvest of woodland caribou, that it

became in the fur trade period a more reliable resource than in prehistoric times...We know from the evidence...that caribou was a highly desirable food but it may have become even more important as a means of supporting the hunters' participation in the fur trade...[the fur trade forced] the Indians to lay up stocks of dried caribou flesh in order to trap non-food animals whereas in precontact times only food animals were hunted.

This increased importance in the pursuit of caribou flesh when considered in conjunction with the spiritual and ideological reverence that the Cree traditionally displayed towards the caribou suggests a concomitant increase in propitiatory behaviour. The close relationship between the caribou and the hunter requires that the hunter's clothing and paraphernalia be well made and beautifully decorated. As part of the communicative process between man and caribou, the hunter assumed the essence of the caribou through the metonymic wearing of its hide. With the adoption of European clothing, the continued necessity for tangible expressions of metonyms, metaphors, and symbols became projected onto the leggings and expressed in the form and motifs. The pleased caribou would give themselves to the hunter.

However, increased reliance upon caribou as a food source also implies an increase in the number of caribou skins available for clothing manufacture. Therefore, the introduction and continued use of cloth may be attributed to prestige; to being exotic and therefore ritually significant; to ease the decorative process. In addition cloth may have

been considered acceptable to the Europeans as evidence of native acculturation and being "civilized". The use of cloth may also have been preferred because it provided evidence of success in the fur trade system; or for any number of unknown reasons.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century increased external pressures made their effects felt in the James Bay region. The Anglicans gained considerable influence, government surveyors were quickly followed by geologists, and railways made James Bay readily accessible from the south (Morantz 1987:213-14). With these southern intruders came wave after wave of disease reducing the population in their wake. During the latter part of this period, the animal populations began to dwindle and caribou were reported as being scarce (Low 1896:318; Morantz 1987:217). By the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries there was a notable change in Cree reliance on the HBC for more food supplies, a diminished fur trade, a decreased animal population and increased intervention by missionaries with their imposition of religious and educational endeavours. These changes were mirrored in the loss of tangible recordings of traditional values, references and symbols in material items. For some time, only the practical value was retained. Knowledge of the messages embodied in the leggings is becoming part of the traditional past.

CHAPTER SIX

TYING IT TOGETHER:

NET BABY CHARMS AS METAPHORS OF PROTECTION AND PROVISION

This chapter focuses on lines, knots and connectedness, tying together the disparate parts that are the complexity of life, of culture, and of this thesis. As a thread that stitches the pieces together or the umbilical cord that physically connects the infant to the mother, so too, do symbolic lines and knots connect men and women, young and old, human persons and animal persons, human persons and other-than-human persons, natives and non-natives, the past and the present, and ultimately, all the cosmological forces and elements. These lines and knots of connectedness are literally the thread of life.

The statement, "From great-grandparents to great-grandchildren we are only knots in a string" (Speck 1935:245) epitomizes East Cree world view. To arrive at an appreciation of this notion from our Western perspective we begin with the examination of a rather insignificant item of Cree material culture. Here, "insignificant" refers to the small size, lack of ornamentation, few extant examples, and discontinued usage by the Cree. As such, the object's mundane character contrasts with other more elaborate and to Western eyes, more aesthetically pleasing works of Cree art replete with their conscious, intentional expression of belief (see, for example,

Oberholtzer 1991). However, as Jules Prown (1991) and Maureen MacKenzie (1991) cogently argue, simple or utilitarian pieces often embody a clearer and more powerful expression of belief. By accepting such items as tangible indicators of belief and value, and hence, world view, an analysis of their embedded metaphorical structure and symbolic meaning extends their reference beyond the expressed function to provide a deeper and more comprehensive level of meaning.

Material Evidence:

The particular object for this analysis is the circular net baby (or cradle) charm. Based on limited ethnographic description (Flannery 1962:477) supplemented with the physical evidence of a few museum examples, Cree net cradle charms are small wooden hoops about six to nine centimetres in diameter filled with netting, much like a spider-web in appearance (Photograph 11). A single net charm was hung on the hoop of the *tikanagan* 'cradle board' or attached to the infant's moss bag. Its stated function was to protect the baby by catching "everything evil as a spider's web catches and holds everything that comes in contact with it" (Densmore 1979:52; see also Coleman 1947:87; Flannery 1962:477). Evil or malevolent forces included colds, illness and bad spirits.

Initial curiosity about these net cradle charms was aroused during the course of field research when it became apparent that these circular charms were known only within a clearly delineated geographical area. While most elders interviewed on the west coast of James Bay recognized the charms from photographs only after considerable prompting¹, one woman, originally from Attawapiskat, not only recognized the cradle charms but also indicated where they would have been hung on the *tikanagan* to "protect the baby from colds." This prompted two other women to recall what they called "souvenirs" (but which were NOT tourist items) that were beaded and hung on the cradle for "unknown reasons."² For most, some recognition of these charms was in the form of recollections of "stories that were told about them." Similarly, responses from elders and mature adults at Moosonee and Moose Factory at the southern end of the Bay also required some prompting.

However, at Waskaganish, on the lower east coast, recognition of these web-like charms was immediate, as most of the women had actually used them for their own babies. In sharp contrast, further up the east coast at the community of Eastmain no amount of prompting elicited any knowledge of these charms. Only one woman expressed a vague recollection of one that she had seen being used many years before by "other

Indians." This negative response was somewhat puzzling in light of the rich tradition that **was** remembered about other artifacts. Cree translator, Minnie Gilpin of Eastmain provided an insight into this seeming contradiction. Until quite recently all the women in that area had tied a miniature fishnet³ made from thread around their babies' necks to "catch" or "snare" colds, illness and bad spirits; in other words, to protect the babies.

This practice is brought to life by Cree biographer Jane Willis from Chisasibi who relates (1973:16-17):

My grandmother tied a black knotted thread around the baby's neck to ward off evil spirits, something that she [the baby] would wear for the vulnerable first few months of her life. (The thread had to be black because evil spirits emerged only at night. Unable to see the thread in the dark, they became entangled in the knots until the first rays of sunlight could kill them). Only after she had been safely protected was she allowed to join her mother.

While both the function and the netting imagery of the two practices were the same, the expression took different forms.

Literary research further supported this mutually exclusive geographical distribution. While the fishnet type appears to be restricted to the more northerly reaches of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula, the distribution of the web-like circular charms must be extended to include the Ojibwa to the south and west (Coleman 1947; Densmore 1979; Lenz 1986), as

well as the more westerly located Cree groups. Analogous forms of small netted hoops with **seemingly** different overt purposes are also used among several Plains groups (see, for example, Lowie 1922), in the American Southwest (see, for example, Cushing 1986; Dumarest 1905; Parsons 1918), by the Huichol of Mexico (see, for example, Lumholtz 1900; Toor 1947), and rendered in two-dimensional form in pre-historic Mesoamerican murals (see, for example, Burkhart 1989; Franco 1954; Klein 1990; Taube 1983). In the Great Lakes region panels of netted quillwork were suspended from the hoop of the tikanagan to trap evil in the web-like patterns of the netting (Blair 1911: 1,77). And among the Delaware "bits of corn husk or leather thongs were fastened to the little wrists and ankles to deceive the ghosts into imagining that the baby was tied to the earth" (Skinner 1915:50) This wider distribution and diversity of form, in turn, raises further questions regarding continuity and meaning. These questions can be answered, in part, by considering the symbolic and metaphorical nature of the charms.

Inherent within these different physical forms, rests a common and continuous function and meaning. This becomes apparent when we consider the net baby charms of the northern Algonquian groups as being merely one tangible form reflecting the cognitive consonance of a complex ideological tradition. As visual metaphors of both protection and provision they

protect the baby from harm, enabling the child to grow into a productive adult. These charms in turn refer to a more complex pattern of protection and provision which encompasses fishing, hunting and trapping technology and production. Furthermore, by figuratively untangling the finished net, the embedded metaphorical and symbolic referents of lines and knots are also revealed. These, and the inherent and recurring theme of connectedness, are expressed in both the visual and verbal imagery of Algonquian - and particularly East Cree - material culture and mythology. This imagery exemplifies a tangible expression of what George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) have come to consider as "metaphors we live by." That is, metaphor as a conceptual system plays a central role in defining everyday realities and is pervasive in everyday life.

The Mythological Connection:

Beginning first with a discussion of the basic element of the line, it is evident that lines, cords, strings, straps and 'bonds' are used synonymously to trap, ensnare, entangle, bind, and ultimately, to link or connect on a multiplicity of levels. Their power is intrinsic to their linear form. In some instances, this power can be reversed by releasing the captive through loosening or cutting the bonds. As religious historian Mircea Eliade has observed (1961:111), "Widespread is the custom of protecting oneself against illness and evil spirits by means of knots, strings and cords." These concepts, as

revealed in both myth and material culture, can be used to establish the underlying ideology of lines and knots.⁴ It is also evident that these lines and knots are critical to Cree life whether as practical, metaphoric or symbolic means of provision and protection.

The verbal imagery of a particular episode in the *atalohkan* 'legend, sacred story' category of Cree mythology introduces the motifs of lines, ensnaring, and subsequent release (Brightman 1989:6-7; Ellis 1989:1-2; Preston 1975; cf Hallowell 1960 for similar Ojibwa category).⁵ While innumerable variations of the same mythic episode exist - whether told on its own or as an element within a longer version - the essence is as follows: The culture hero *Tcikapis* and his sister live together after the death of their parents who have been consumed by giants in either human or animal form. One day *Tcikapis* discovers a path and wonders to himself whose path it might be. In order to discover the answer, he obtains a line (variously a head hair or pubic hair or a thread) from his sister which he makes into a snare. After setting the snare, he goes home for the night. When he rises in the morning in total darkness, he realizes that the path is that of the sun and it is the sun that he has snared.⁶ Feeling somewhat contrite, he attempts unsuccessfully to loosen the snare to release the sun. Eventually, a tiny creature

(variously a mouse, shrew, mole or beaver) manages to get close enough to the sun to successfully gnaw through the cord. While acknowledging the presence of other valid features, it is, however, the act of snaring and releasing with a line that is salient to the present analysis.

These motifs of paths and of obtaining a thread, hair or line from a woman to ensnare or entangle animals or adversaries and then release them, are consonant with the cognitive patterning of Cree life. Relevant, too, is the theme of connectedness inherent in the paths and lines linking the upperworld (the sun and moon) with humans. This connectedness is substantiated by the mythic arrival of the first people on earth who descend from the upper world on a line spun by the "Great Net-Maker" or "Spider" (Ellis 1989:5-8). The link with the earth is grounded by the tiny gnawing creatures whose intimate association with the earth is in the form of trails and interconnected tunnels, or, in the case of the beaver, leads created through the marsh from tree source to beaver lodge.⁷

In his publication on the traditional narratives of the Rock Cree Indians, Robert Brightman presents a version of the Tcikapis episode narrated by Cornelius Colomb (1989:138-139). This version includes a motif in which *Cahkapis* (Tcikapis) catches two beavers and ties them up with the

string from his bow. According to Colomb's version when Cahkapis is threatened by the giants to give them one of the beavers, he replies: "Go ahead. But only if you can untie my string." They could not do it. "Oh," he said, "Too bad you can't do it. So you get nothing" (Brightman 1989:138). This particular act of tying with the string and its unyielding power that thwarts the attempts of the giants has further significance in that the motif of the beavers, as intermediaries between land and water, earth and the underwater world, continues the cosmological symbolism discussed above. This is confirmed on a more abstract semantic level by Preston's (1975:219) introduction of the term *ehbubukdaet* in his discussion of Cree hunting songs. While translating literally into English as untying something such as a knot in a cord, the term's added quality of revealing insight or perception establishes it as a mental rather than physical process (Preston 1975:220). By mentally untying the knots, the singer is able to send a direct line of communication to the animal being hunted.

As an intermediate phase between the verbal imagery of myth given above and the visual imagery of material culture, string games (what we call cat's cradle) provide a fleeting glimpse of the intricate manipulation of strings into a number of figures, some abstract, and some recognizable as animals

that are snared in real life (Rogers 1967:120; Skinner 1911:38,140; Speck 1935:201). In the past string games were played only in the winter, a time coincident with the telling of sacred myths. While there appears to be little documentation for the rationale behind this custom, it may in fact parallel known Inuit beliefs and practices that required abstention from playing string games during periods of sunlight for fear of snaring the sun and causing darkness.⁶ Conversely, the Igulik, played string games when the sun was going south with the deliberate intent to enmesh it and thus prevent its disappearance (Jenness 1923:284). Contemporary changes and lack of earlier ethnographic information have left a vacuum in this regard.

Lines in Material Culture:

Turning to the use of lines in Cree material culture, innumerable forms are worthy of note. A particularly relevant example is the Cree man's *niimaapaan* or *nimaban* 'ceremonial carrying string' used to drag home certain species of game. This string, plaited from strips of caribou hide, is made initially by the neophyte hunter's mother. As he gains hunting prowess, increasingly longer ones are made by his wife. The *nimaban* is considered to be the hunter himself with a loop representing his head and the loose ends his legs. As well, the loose string ends represent the tails of the cord and

symbolize the "trails of game" (Speck and Heye 1921:16). As a means of preserving its power against starvation, the *nimaban* is carried in the hunter's game pouch, seldom being displayed except when used (Speck and Heye 1921:11). On a number of occasions it is resanctified by being worn for dances performed by the hunter over the body of the slain animal (Speck and Heye 1921:7). While the relevance of this item can be gleaned from its practical and symbolic functions, further significance is established by its linguistic origins.

According to the highly speculative translation provided by Frank Speck and George Heye (1921:8), "the term *nimaban* seems to signify "dance-cord," from *nimi-*, "dance, and the common Algonkian stem *-aban*, denoting "string," "something pliable" which occurs in cognitive [cognate] forms throughout eastern dialects." According to Speck, etymologically related Algonquian terms are those that gloss as 'wampum', 'snowshoe string', 'moccasin string', and 'carrying strap' (Speck and Heye 1921:8). A more likely translation for *nimaban*, given to Richard Preston by John Blackned, is 'my cord' (Preston 1994). In this version *ni-* is taken to be the first person possessive ('my') *-aban* 'cord'. In either version, this linguistic relatedness underscores the importance of strings and lines to these people.

When beaver are caught during the winter, whether trapped or caught with a circular net, they are ritually entrapped with the *nimaban* and dragged back to camp over the snow (Rogers 1973:46; Speck 1935:115; Tanner 1979:145). This manner of transporting the beaver creates a trail or path, a visual connectedness between the beaver, its home and family, and the hunter, his home and family. It replicates the trails through the bush that link one Cree hunting camp to another, one family to another. And somewhat more obliquely, it refers to the fictive kinship ties between humans and beavers created by a man's marriage to a beaver wife (Brightman 1989:210-213; Preston 1976:225; Skinner 1911:104-107). Ultimately, the release of the beaver from the trap, from the net, and from the *nimaban* ensures future provision.

Similarly, when a larger animal such as a bear is caught, the hunter rolls the animal on to its back and symbolically entraps it by placing the *nimaban* on its chest, the loop or 'head' of the carrying string toward the bear's head (Speck and Heye 1921:18). In the event that a hunter must return to camp for assistance, the power of this plaited line protects the animal from both visible and invisible predators.

From a review of Cree material culture, it becomes evident that the *nimaban* is but one concrete example of the line which reflects the wider and less-tangible concept of

lines. For the Cree the world is full of lines, material lines of hair, sinew, thread and hide strips transformed into snares, carrying strings, belts, bow strings and fringes, and the lines of trails, traplines, sight lines, kinship lines, rivers and mythology. All are, in fact, life lines of protection, provision and connectedness.

By tying strings or lines into knots and nets we are effectively adding another level of symbolism. Following Eliade's deductions derived from ethnographic parallels, knots and bonds possess functions "of healing, of defence against demons, or of conservation of the magic and vital forces" (1961:111). Certainly in Cree culture nets provide food, and nets protect by catching illness and bad spirits. The act of snaring and trapping with the goal of killing fish and game has a negative aspect which is counterbalanced by the release of the animal's spirit and the provision of food for the humans. Similarly, the entanglement and removal of illness and bad spirits caught in nets provides a positive function of protection, not just for the babies, but also, by extension, for the entire group. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, this physical, biological and social connectedness of the Naskapi-Cree world view is summed up and reinforced by their comment that: "From great-grandparents to great-grandchildren we are only knots on a string" (Speck 1935:245).

Ethnographic and Archaeological Analogues:

Visual and verbal imagery from other time periods and other areas extends the metaphor of protection and provision and provides us with a comparative framework. According to Ojibwa myth, in the beginning all the food caught by hunters decayed before it could be eaten and despite an abundance, people died of starvation. Finally a six-legged bug learned to weave a net of thread which trapped the decay-producing flies. His success at protecting the provisions was rewarded with the addition of a fourth pair of legs and the new name of "Net Maker" (Johnston 1981). Myths from other North American and Mesoamerican groups establish the Net Maker or "One whose thread never runs out" as Grandmother Spider or Spider Woman.

The earliest tangible - and tantalizing - form of spider webs in the Americas was recently uncovered during an archaeological excavation in Peru (Alva 1990:4). Draped across the chest of a Moche Lord buried nearly two thousand years ago lay a necklace of nine or more single gold spider webs - each complete with spiders bearing human faces on their backs - strung side by side (Alva 1990:6). Tantalizing in that we may never truly know the message encoded by the Moche, nevertheless, this object signals a symbolic protection in death as in life similar to the interpretation given the examples discussed below.

In Mayan murals and Aztec codices of preColumbian Mexico, visual imagery of the Spider Woman deity, spiders, webs, nets and snares have close associations with women, creation, water, and scrying⁹ (for a detailed analysis see Taube 1983). The positive aspect of these associations is countered by Cecelia Klein's (1990: 81-103) interpretation of these images as symbols of sin and punishment. While the focus of her argument is primarily concerned with sin, and in particular, the use of snares and nets to punish - in effect to remove undesirable sinners - suggests a purpose designed to ensure that the social order is maintained and the "good" are protected from undesirable people and situations. This interpretation appears to have developed from an earlier paper (Klein 1983) in which she demonstrated that the netted circular abdomens of insects depicted in Aztec iconography serve to catch and remove sickness, an interpretation more closely linked to the level of analysis here.

Moving into the protohistoric and historic periods in the southwestern United States, there exists a rich body of mythology augmented by visual representations resplendent with images of hair, spider webs and netted shields which associate the Spider Grandmother with war, bears, and future vision (Cushing 1896; Parsons 1918; 1939; Taube 1983:129-135; White 1932). Providing the connection between these areas of Mesoamerica and the American Southwest across several time

periods are the visually similar and analogously functional *neali'ka* 'netted shields' of the contemporary Huichol of Mexico (Lumholtz 1900; Taube 1983:115; Toor 1947:71-75). In all instances, the metaphor of protection and provision can be extrapolated from these images.

Farther afield, art historian Marija Gimbutas (1989) argues convincingly that the patterns of cross hatching on pottery items dating as far back as the early neolithic period in Europe represent netting. Based on the occurrence of netting within certain motifs, she concludes that these motifs conceptually relate fish, nets, and moisture, and ultimately, the reproductive powers of a supernatural female.

This association of a female element with netting, reminiscent of the similar findings in Mayan, Aztec and Pueblo cultures, is also apparent in Algonquian culture. The very act of transforming sinew, threads, strings or babiche into knotted and netted objects is carried out by the women. Women provide the mythological snare line, braid the *nimaban*, net snowshoes and lacrosse sticks, make fish nets and beaver nets, bead *natutshikan*, lace babies into moss bags and *tikanagans*, sew canoes, birch bark containers and clothing, make the emically important netted bags used by the women (1991 fieldnotes; Skinner 1911:51), weave rabbitskin clothing for everyone, and, of course, do the netting for the babies'

protective devices. As well, they paint the two dimensional netting patterns on caribou skin coats and toboggans as protection from evil forces and to ensure provision through successful hunting.¹⁰ All these material items¹¹ are the reification of Cree social constructs that value the complementary social relationships of men and women (Beaudet 1984; Levesque 1976). The nexus of male and female production, and of protection and provision is best exemplified by snowshoes. Making the wooden snowshoe frames is the man's responsibility while the netting, including the protective design, is completed by the woman (Burgesse 1941). This joint effort produces an object that as an efficacious means of transportation protects the wearer (man or woman) from both unseen malevolent forces and potential starvation while allowing the pursuit of subsistence activities and maintaining contact with other group members during the winter months.¹²

Discussion:

The association between nets and water is clearly evident: fish were caught in nets below the water; similarly, round nets were used at times to catch beaver (Skinner 1911:25; Turner 1979:153). Less obvious is the acknowledged association between spiders and water. While many species are found in abundance around water sources, the webs of all species catch or "ensnare" water droplets from the dew and rain. With little, or no documentary evidence, the

significance is somewhat nebulous. More conclusively, there is a concurrence between the verbal and visual imagery of the charms and water. Visually analogous to most spider webs, round net baby charms also share the same lexical term, *hiibii*, with beaver nets and fishing nets (Preston 1992). Is this explanation for the circular baby charms also applicable to the linear miniature fish nets?

A further relationship of nets, fish and water is established through the protective nature of fish nets used against unwanted spirits, particularly in what Alanson Skinner calls Cree mortuary customs. He notes (1911:80) that "Sometimes, for the first three nights [after a death] the wigwam was entirely surrounded by fish nets stretched on poles, to form a barrier to prevent the spirit returning." A further use has been recorded for the Naskapi by Alike Podolinsky Webber who provides a detailed description of the natutshikans 'necklace' used in shamanic healing rites (1977). Of the five forms made, only one can be used by all sexes and ages, its verbal depiction evocative of the fish-net baby charms. Webber (1977:118) describes it as being "plaited out of strips of skin. Fish were often blamed for disease, and this net-like charm, tied around the throat, "caught" not fish, but sickness." A Naskapi "necklace" collected by Webber and described as being a "narrow net made of caribou babiche

tied around the neck when bad cold" [sic] (museum catalogue documentation accompanying CMC III-B-556) suggests that the *natutshikans* and miniature fishnet baby charms are one and the same or at least share the same form and function.

Confirmation of the same metaphorical and symbolic meaning in these two divergent forms begs for explanation. One element considered to be relevant for at least a partial explanation is the topography of the land and its effect on behaviour. Whereas the Cree and Ojibwa think in terms of radiating out across the land to follow traplines and social networks, the Cree of the more northerly areas repeatedly told me that they view their world as being more linear, following the east-west water routes which take them inland from the posts. Hence, the geographically determined behaviour of "radiating out" across the land or the "linear movement" of river travel may each become reified in these material objects.

Contemporary Examples:

External influences over the years have contributed changes in religious practices, subsistence activities, and introduced new materials and technology to the Cree. Accepting the premise that the physical aspect of symbols may change while their function remains the same, we can see that the importance of netting as a device for protection and provision

has remained relevant in the Algonquian culture. For example, introduced materials were incorporated into some of the last baby charms by netting brightly coloured commercial yarn on to a plastic rim (CMC III-D-108; accessioned 1962). Beaded net necklaces similar to the miniature fishnets have been produced for the tourist trade for a number of years (*Sault Daily Star* 1967). Similarly, a painting by Ojibwa artist, Elaine Kanasawe, depicts a frog with cobwebs between its toes. According to the catalogue information, the frog, as Mother Earth's second born, was sent to control the insects that were overrunning the earth (ROM 976.320.4). The inclusion of cobwebs reminds us of the Ojibwa myth about the spider that removed the decay-producing flies mentioned above.

More recently, netting endeavours have taken a further commercial turn by marketing what can be considered contemporary versions of the baby charms to the general public. One form is the "Dream Catcher" which, according to the accompanying information, "When hung, ... captures the dreams as they float by. The good dreams knowing the way, slip through the centre hole, drifting gently off...to the sleeper below.. The bad dreams not knowing the way, become entangled in the webbing, only to perish with the first light of day." For a culture that accepts dreams and dream symbolism as a way of life, the making of dream catchers is a poignant reminder

of the metaphorical structure and symbolic meaning of lines, knots and nets for these people. Concomitantly, dream catchers as marketable items provide a cash return while 'marketing' native values to both natives and non-natives (Oberholtzer 1994).

Conclusion:

Thus this initial "insignificant" item of material culture - the net baby charm - has proven to be a metonym and a metaphor that elucidates a deep and comprehensive level of meaning relevant to Cree culture. Through the examination of lines, knots and their ability to establish connectedness, the disparate parts can indeed be tied together. As well, the aphorism of Speck's informant, "From great-grandparents to great-grandchildren we are only knots in a string" (Speck 1935:245) is seen to epitomize the East Cree world view metaphorically and physically in the material culture. In a similar vein, E.E. Evan-Pritchards has cogently encapsulated this aspect of material culture as follows (1940:89):

Material objects are chains along which social relationships run...people not only create their material culture and attach themselves to it, but also build up their relationships through it and see them in terms of it.

CONCLUSION

TOGETHER WE SURVIVE

The encoding of the past in the present and the motivation for survival are two critical themes recurring throughout this discussion. The first theme, premised on the view that these encoded symbols and experiences of the past are made tangible, or 'texted', in material forms (Denning 1988:3), provides merely one aspect of the process of historical reconstruction and recontextualization of the East Cree material culture. Certainly as a tangible record, we can assess the continuities, discontinuities, and possible resurgence(s) of meaningful elements in Cree history and world view. When these material sources, in turn, are combined with "texts written down" (albeit in non-native voice) and "texts spoken", a more comprehensive history is articulated. As with all aspects of textured history, however, satisfactory results can only reflect the quality of the source material. This places a strong imperative on the researcher to establish the 'historical veracity' of the material used as primary documents. Critical to this are the ethnic identification and temporal associations of particular objects. One approach for this avenue of research would be to focus on a single material item considering every aspect of its internal evidence, its function within the Cree culture, and its external evidence

carefully and finitely scrutinized. A second approach is, as this study has done, to take a broader focus undertaking the consideration of a more expanded overview of several objects. Consequently, while definitive ethnic identification of these objects from museum sources still remains somewhat tenuous, a more complete world view and historical presence does emerge. And through this broader focus that encompasses the interaction of objects, people and social constructs, we can appreciate the constant underlying theme that "together we survive."

As established in the introductory chapter, the validity of utilizing material objects as historical documents and tangible expressions of encoded symbolic information cannot be denied. By adopting the socio-semiotic approaches of the new art history movement to study native art, we can view the objects as active rather than passive agents in a sociocultural sense. As such, they are produced, used, and interpreted as aesthetically satisfying items within the complexities of their sociocultural and environmental contexts. What is communicated by these art objects and what is understood by us becomes contingent upon the circumstances in which the communication takes place, upon certain cultural knowledge, and upon previous experience. Optimization of this communicative process then depends upon the contextualization, or in this instance, the recontextualization, of the objects.

And in turn, the recontextualization of the objects is established through a synthesis of museum evidence, ethnographic information, ethnohistoric documentation, Cree knowledge, and of course, the objects themselves.

By appropriating Appadurai's concept of a social history of material objects, we can follow 'the life history' of objects from idea to finished product and from natural context to artificial context. This life history takes us through the processes of decontextualization back to the present recontextualization (at least in an abstract cognitive sense). Salient to this approach is an understanding of native motivations and actions in the giving or trading of goods, non-native collecting practices, museum acquisition and conservation policies, further tempered by the vagaries of survival of actual physical evidence. It is through these processes of historical reconstruction that the underlying and many-layered theme of survival becomes apparent.

Identifying the Material:

Beginning with the objects accessible in museum collections, we can readily observe the concrete physical expression of an original idea transferred into a mental template and the materials used to 'voice' it. Culturally selected materials reflect practical values, metaphorical significance, and conscious incorporation of non-indigenous substances. Indigenous caribou hide, rabbit skins, seal skin,

wood, birch bark, bone, antler, native pigments, porcupine and bird quills, sinew and roots are supplemented or replaced by moose hide, European cloth, metals, aniline dyes, beads, and commercial yarn, thread and twine. Encompassed within the manipulation of these materials from source to finished product are the culturally determined technologies and techniques. Thus, from the acquisition of a caribou skin through the preparation of the hide into finished article, these technical processes are indicative, for example, of the extensive cultural knowledge inherent in hunting and gathering technologies. In general terms, this knowledge includes dream revelations, animal behaviour, adherence to appropriate rituals, familiarity with environmental conditions, topography, making and using equipment, land use rights, preparation and preservation of the hide through flensing and tanning, measuring, cutting, stitching with sinew and decorating with pigments that also must be acquired and prepared. The depth and breadth of knowledge necessary to produce, for example, a garment essential for the pursuit of caribou, is profound. Furthermore, the technologies and techniques that manifest this cultural knowledge also reveal the complementary roles of a hunter and his wife for success in their efforts for individual and group survival.

While such complex technologies are generally applicable to all the groups of the eastern Subarctic area,

particularly the Quebec-Labrador peninsula and the James Bay areas, a more precise ethnic identification allows for the recontextualization necessary to develop an interpretation of meaning. Recontextualization and interpretation are contingent upon a synthesis of ethnographic and ethnohistoric information, information that in itself is often open to question. Ultimately, ethnic identification of material items rests upon a constellation of traits derived from these two non-native sources augmented and authenticated by Cree oral tradition and the objects themselves. The most salient aspects of these objects are their form and iconography. Of these, it is the forms of the hoods, leggings and mocassins as well as the motifs on coats, bags, leggings and loom-woven beadwork that furnish the distinguishing characteristics best identified with East Cree material.

For example, on a broader scale of definition, the rectangular form of the beaded hoods identified with the environs of James Bay contrasts unmistakably with the deliberate shaping of those of the Maritime Algonquians. In addition to this distinction, a pre-contact antiquity for the rectangular form can be demonstrated by the 3000 year old archaeological remains of an economically analogous population. At Port au Choix, Newfoundland the skeletal remains of a woman buried wearing a shell-decorated hood

establishes an indigenous antecedent for the rectangular form long before the arrival of non-natives.

On a narrower scale (temporally and spatially) three or four distinct moccasin forms can be correlated with local variation, differential use, and possibly, deliberate adoption to accommodate new materials such as moose hide. The earlier or 'classic' form of pointed toe with or without a centre seam appears to have been used interchangeably with the 'caribou teeth' form and possibly another 'rabbit's mouth' form. In recent years this earlier form has been supplanted - or, in some instances, merely supplemented - with the round toed moccasin familiar to non-native collectors. Nevertheless, all forms directly reflect Cree needs and conscious choices.

Turning to the iconography as a means for establishing a definitive East Cree identification for the material, the presence of a wedge-triangle motif, expressed in indigenous pigments and porcupine quills as well as introduced glass beads, and conspicuously displayed on coats, bands and bags, attests to a long and meaningful use. Confined, more or less, to the northeastern regions, this spatial distribution of this bilaterally symmetrical motif in its various expressions and elaborations suggests that its use was confined to the Algonquian speakers of this region and may have, in fact, served as a sign of ethnic identification.

From the mid-nineteenth century into the early years of the twentieth, collection data suggests that a U-shaped motif was prevalent on East Coast material, especially in the Eastmain area. Depicted primarily in beadwork with single or multiple expressions, most often surmounted by a trilobate 'floral' or a rosebud, this motif appears on hunting clothing and gear. One tentative interpretation of the meaning of this motif rendered as it is on these items suggests an association with the caribou and may have been intended, in certain instances, to represent the caribou's antler rack.

Thus, while individual features of the objects do not necessarily establish a definitive East Cree identification, a synthesis of information yields more promising results. Certainly, the presence of indigenous materials (later replaced by trade goods) and the incorporation of certain motifs on particular forms when 'fleshed out' with contemporary Cree knowledge, archival photographs, ethnographic works, collection data and ethnohistoric documentation, presents a stronger sense of identification. However, the collective strength suggested by these parameters must be tempered by the uncertainty of the intuitive nature of this analysis. As more information is accumulated, further iconographic analysis should afford more discrete parameters for the identification of these material objects.

Embedded Symbolism:

Of all the material items considered, the rectangular beaded cloth hoods are perhaps the most readily recognized James Bay Cree artifact. As noted above, early archaeological antecedents attest to the pre-contact occurrence of this form. The iconography, however, introduces a different situation. Within the context of a longstanding debate about native as opposed to non-native origin for these floral designs in the Northeast Woodlands and Eastern Subarctic culture areas, this study considers the processes of change and levels of innovation communicated by these hoods. Based on ethnohistoric and ethnographic sources, observable changes from caribou hide to trade cloth and from geometric figures and naturalistic representations of animals to the floral patterns of the nineteenth century can be documented. Subsequent consideration of both the internal and external evidence indicates that these observable changes were, in part, native responses to cope with the external influences engendered by the fur trade and the subsequent missionization. Hence, these floral hoods, while outwardly demonstrating acceptance of non-native materials, symbolism and values, actually retained certain culturally significant features of their Cree makers.

Iconographically, the floral motifs and the overall configuration of the floral designs served to embed Cree symbolism. In particular, the predominance of roses as

blossoms, buds, leaves and prickly stems suggests a deliberate expression of British symbolic references to Christianity, femininity and true love. Concomitantly, these same motifs make native reference to the local landscape and an inherent symbolic reference to the cosmological 'Earth' zone. This reference is further defined by the undulating line uniting each floral element and the tripartite organization of the floral panels on each hood, representing earth, water and sky.

The success of this embedded expression is reflected by the continued position in Cree society long after other items of clothing had given way to non-native pressures to adopt European styles. Embedded native meanings within this overtly non-native floral iconography on all items reveal, and consequently record, the negotiated realities of action between native and non-native, between indigenous society and colonial hegemony, and between aboriginal world view and missionization.

Material Culture as Communication:

While all material culture encodes and encapsulates messages in tangible form, clothing in particular serves as a major source of communication. As active agents in a sociocultural context clothing items in general, and individual items in particular, communicate secular and sacred information. This is singularly relevant in the Cree experience as the projected message is intended to be publicly

'read' and decoded not only by members of linguistically similar groups but also by others, both human and animal, from outside these groups.

Leggings, as an individual example of clothing, effectively illustrate this active communicative role. Processes of change and continued usage comparable to those observed for the hoods can be noted in the replacement of trade cloth for caribou hide and floral beadwork for painted geometric designs. However, a significant change in form occurs coincidentally with these other changes. The deliberate effort to create two distinctive shapes in the legging form is itself a communicative act and evokes questions as to why this was undertaken.

When this Cree legging form with its variant shapes and decorative elements is compared with those of various other indigenous groups, we can see that the diversity in form and decoration facilitate communication. Visible at a distance, these messages disclose such vital information as tribal affiliation, group membership, status, gender, age, sacred power, dream symbols, artistic expertise, and so forth. Through the decoding of these messages, appropriate recognition and behaviour ensues. It is evident that proper identification and behaviour can be critical to the well-being and security of sparsely populated hunting and foraging peoples.

Certainly this level of communication indicates that the distinctive Cree form carries one or more messages. While this idea is fairly apparent, it does not fully explain the reason(s) for the initial change nor the dichotomy of shapes. By taking the level of investigation a step further, we can determine that the shapes of leggings are a gender-specific differentiation that correlates the pointed ankle flap with garments designed for men and the rounded ankle flap with those of the women. It is this gender differentiation that plays a key role in the caribou hunt.

For the Cree, communication is not limited to humans but includes Animal Persons as well. Deemed critical for communication during the caribou hunt, the shape of the ankle flap (reminiscent of the shape of the caribou leg) functions as a vital sign to the caribou. One level allows the caribou to recognize the hunter as a Cree. Another level, predicated on the intimate relationship between hunter and caribou which reaches a depth of meaning not unlike that of a sexual relationship between a man and a woman, addresses the imperative need for the caribou to distinguish the male hunter from his wife. The caribou, thus informed, will give herself to the hunter.

From this one item of clothing we are able to discern the implications of clothing as communication operating within a realm common to animal persons and human persons. This

communicative function can be extrapolated to include other items of material culture.

Cultural Metaphors:

A metaphor "we live by" can be perceived as a conceptual system which plays a central role in defining everyday realities and as such, is pervasive and intrinsic in world view. One such Cree metaphor is caught in the tangible form of the circular net baby charms. The netted aspect of these charms function to capture bad spirits and in this role they serve as visual metaphors of protection. However, this metaphor can be expanded to encompass that of provision too. For a net charm, by protecting the baby from harm, enables the child to grow into a productive adult supplying provisions for the group. In turn, these charms metaphorically refer to the complex pattern of protection and provision inherent in hunting, fishing, and trapping technology.

By figuratively untangling the finished net - baby net, fishing net, beaver net, or trapping snare - the embedded metaphorical and symbolic references of lines and knots become apparent. It is evident that lines, cords, strings, straps and bonds are used synonymously to trap, ensnare, entangle, bind, and ultimately, to link or connect on a number of levels. For the Cree, the world is full of lines, material lines of hair, sinew, thread and babiche transformed into snares, hunters' carrying strings, belts, bow strings and fringes, and the

lines of trails, traplines, sight lines, kinship lines, rivers and mythology. All are, in fact, life lines of protection, provision and connectedness. Another layer of symbolism, added by the process of tying these lines into knots, reinforces the perception that these lines and knots are indeed critical to Cree life whether as practical, mythological, metaphoric or symbolic means of provision and protection.

Together We Survive:

The connecting link throughout this thesis has been the prevalent underlying theme that "together we survive." For the most part this theme refers to the actions and world view of the Cree. However, the concept also makes reference to the consideration of the actual objects that have survived numerous transitions over the course of many years from an initial raw material stage to their current status as "extant" museum holdings. Those objects that have survived now become our source material for reconstructing the past.

The recent resurgence of interest in material culture, particularly as the documentation of intangible aspects of a culture, allows insights previously overlooked. For example, the material culture of the East Cree provides tangible evidence that an anthropological focus on gender-specific roles and production presents only a limited perspective on the Cree world view. Contrary to contemporary European models which emphasize exclusivity determined through a sexual

division of labour, the traditional Cree model emphasized - and in some areas continues to emphasize - the synergistic value of the complementary and interdependent roles of men and women, especially husbands and wives, in their efforts to survive in the Subarctic environment (for further evidence, see Blythe, Brizinski and Preston 1985). Here, survival encompasses not only the overt pragmatic aspects of culture, but also its social and ideological aspects. While certain Cree tasks were superficially categorized as being gender-specific and therefore performed on an individual basis, the end result - hunting success, a material item, or social well-being - was most often derived from the combined efforts of men and women. For a culture that exists by hunting, trapping and fishing, and that espouses a belief in dreams, interaction with the supernatural, and ritual behaviour towards nature, this joint approach was critical for the propitiation of these forces. Together men and women performed the necessary maintenance of intra- and inter- societal relations that ensured their survival; that is, social relationships with other humans, as well as those between humans and animals, and between humans and the supernatural. Although such cultural practices were seldom articulated verbally - especially to anthropologists - evidence for these complementary roles can be discerned through the processes undertaken in the production and function of specific material items.

The synergism of such complementary roles is best exemplified through the process of snowshoe making. In this instance, the husband carves and shapes the wood into a well-formed frame which is then filled with netting by his wife. During this netting process, the babiche line is not only transformed into a web-like support enhanced with protective designs, it also incorporates intrinsic cultural metaphors of protection and provision which are bound up in the metaphysical and symbolic properties of lines and knots. Through these combined efforts of man and woman, the finished product thus provides both the necessary support on the snow to facilitate hunting and trapping, and protection from negative spiritual forces. As well, during the long winter months when individual hunting groups were dispersed over the land, snowshoes became a technological means for maintaining the critical supportive social alliances.

In a parallel manner, the construction of birch bark canoes remained an amalgamation of male and female tasks until factory-made canoes totally replaced this traditional type. Of the major tasks involved in the construction of bark canoes, many were performed by women. Significantly, the process of 'clothing' the canoe was the responsibility of the women who stitched the seams of the bark cover and then lashed it to the gunwales with split spruce roots. So, too, was the application of painted decoration traditionally a woman's task. These

decorative designs, based upon the husband's dream experience, were applied to the canoe in such strategic places as ribs, gunwale caps, and either side of bow and stern. However, the canoe was not just the product of the man's and woman's labours, it was also perceived as a living creature - typically a waterfowl, fish or animal - which possessed qualities highly desirable in a canoe. The finished canoe, thus empowered by the spirit of the creature revealed to the builder in a dream, was regarded as a collaborative effort of man, woman and animal spirit. Together they created a material object which fulfilled the practical, social and spiritual needs to survive.

Of greatest importance in the endeavours for survival were the preparations undertaken for hunting. While the man was expected to demonstrate his acquired skills as a successful hunter, it was his wife's skills as seamstress and artist that had the invaluable potential for enticing the animals to give themselves to the hunter. As I was told by an East Cree woman: "When a woman made anything for her husband or son, she does the very best she can. If she were to stitch any which way, the animals would see that and not come near." This concept was reinforced by an older woman whose mother had instructed her that "because men were hunters, like warriors, the men had to look great. The woman was compelled to make the man look good." And when the woman helped a man in hunting or

trapping, she, too, must look good. So important was the appearance of the hunter's clothing and paraphernalia that meticulous care must be accorded every item, from the preparation of the materials to its final decorative enhancement and its performative use in hunting.

Central to the decoration of hunting equipment were the concepts of dreams and visions alluded to above. With survival and success dependent upon the guardianship and beneficence of animal-persons and other spiritual beings, dream revelations - whether experienced as naturalistic or metaphorical images - implied a transfer or bestowing of power from the guardian spirit to the dreamer. As part of the dreamer's obligations to his benefactor, the dream images were to be depicted graphically and symbolically to validate the dream experience, and to preserve the power that has been conferred. Failure to comply with the "orders of the dreamed" would offend the spirit to the extent that favours would be withdrawn and the hunter's success would be tenuous or uncertain. This is cogently demonstrated through the Cree story narrated by John Blackned about a man named Chou-a and his relationship with his Mistabeo (guardian spirit). Chou-a's failure to comply with the Mistabeo's instructions resulted in the withdrawal of the spirit's assistance and a starvation situation for Chou-a and his family (Preston 1975:93-100).

While the translation of an individual's dream-inspired images into concrete form was both defined and constrained by the intrinsic and underlying cultural traditions of the dreamer's community, it was common practice for the dreamer to relate his vision to his wife (or to another female relative) who would then give form to these experiences, according to the regional art style. And the animals, thus pleased, would give themselves to the hunter.

However, hunting, perceived as a sacred act, entails more than attracting the animals and killing them. It also involved propitiatory or placating rituals at each stage of the hunt, the butchering and prescribed sharing of flesh and fat, and the transformation of these into food. And, ultimately, with the transformation of animal skins and furs (and later, trade cloth) into finely-wrought clothing designed to please and hence attract more animals, the cycle begins once again. At each of these stages, the complementary nature and significance of the woman's role underscores the fact that she functions in a ritual capacity as wife of the hunter. This attests to her position as an important and conjunctive hunting partner.

Certain articles - such as these exquisitely beaded hoods, floral landscapes that mediate a deep-rooted tripartite cosmology - were worn by women while actively participating in hunting rituals. Unpublished ethnographic fieldwork conducted

in the 1930s by Regina Flannery at Moose Factory, Rupert's House, and Fort George confirms this ceremonial role. At that time, her Cree informants recalled their grandmothers and other "better off" married women wearing these hoods when watching beaver nets, and at feasts. It appears, however, that the beaded hoods were particularly important in rituals surrounding the caribou hunt. According to Cree accounts, the night after tracks of the caribou had been located, the women would "wear their beaded caps and dance up and down holding onto a tent pole while the old man would sing and drum." In the event of a successful hunt, similar rituals were again performed.

These hoods also reveal a Cree tactic for survival in their early relationships with non-natives. The key rests in the iconography of the hoods. The use of floral patterns, possibly promoted first by non-native husbands and fathers, eventually became accepted by nineteenth century Europeans in general as evidence of native efforts to become "civilized". In tune with European sensibilities of the times, the symbolism inherent in this use of flowers worked in elaborate patterns, reflected their own transplanted ideals of femininity and gentility. However, embedded within this floral expression, the Cree retained their own symbolic and emotive referents, referents critical in acknowledging the gifts of dream-visitors, pleasing the animals, and maintaining cultural

values. It can be suggested that one means of ensuring the continued use of the traditional hunting clothing - gloves, moccasins, leggings and bags - was through this adoption of floral imagery. This can be considered a major achievement inasmuch as increasing pressures by Europeans to Christianize and acculturate the Cree caused other ritual items to be eliminated.

Through these specific examples of material culture, complementary and interdependent roles imperative for survival can be authenticated. The roles of men and women, of human-persons and animal-persons, or of human-persons and other-than-human-persons, were neither gender nor species specific. Rather than being exclusive, each role was equally valued and critical to the welfare of all. Only together can they survive.

Conclusion:

Above all, material culture embodies the very essence of the Cree nature; that is, an autonomous proactive character demonstrated through the connecting links of complementary relationships with human persons, animal persons, and other-than-human persons. Material culture defines the fluidity and flexibility of the Cree to act, to adapt, and hence, to survive. Moreover, material culture allows us, as outsiders, to reconstruct aspects of their social history and to discover

these essential characteristics. Material culture does indeed render the intangible tangible.

END NOTES

Chapter 1:

1. Speculation is that the voyage was that of the *Nonsuch* in 1668-69 (Glenbow-Alberta Institute 1987a).

2. The use here of 'symbolic' repatriation differentiates this form of repatriation from an actual physical return of objects to the Cree. This usage is in keeping with the philosophies presented in the *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples* (1992) co-sponsored by the Canadian Museums Association and The Assembly of First Nations.

3. Through the generations, a number of the "homeguard" and the European employees of the Hudson's Bay Company intermarried and their descendants who were employed by the company became known as "company families" (cf S. Preston 1987:290).

4. Pertinent to this argument is the success of Helm and Gillespie who began with an oral tradition to establish a creditable history (1981:8-27).

5. Although Madeline Katt Theriault is actually an Ojibwa born in a tent on Bear Island in Lake Temagami, her reminiscences encompass her early life spent in the traditional native life style and her transition into a "mixed" life style. Much of her early life is similar to that of the Cree. The people of this area are sometimes referred to as OjiCree.

6. Historical archaeology has fared somewhat better. For example, Walter Kenyon's historical reconstruction of early European presence in James Bay attests to the advantages of synthesizing material evidence recovered from archaeological excavation with archival documentation (Kenyon 1986a).

7. Ethnologist Christian Feest (1980:14) terms this form of art as "tribal art"; that is, art "produced by members of tribal societies primarily for their own or their fellow members' use...to satisfy the material or spiritual needs of the tribesmen."

8. Following Lahontan's lead, John Long (1791:xxvii) uses "Algonkin" as the "mother tongue". Nearly a century later, Henry Youle Hind speaks of the "Cree branch of the great Algonkin race" (1863:4).

9. See also frontispiece of the 24th *Annual Archaeological Report for Ontario* (1912) which identifies a James Bay beaded hood and a painted coat as "James Bay Algonquin."

10. While these added features may appear to be non-utilitarian or non-functional to our western perspective, they are usually crucial to the function of the object.

11. As an example, ethnographic art was the basis for theories about diffusion. For the most part this approach was a direct result of comparison of the material in museum collections. Such classic studies, represented by Douglas Fraser's, "The Heraldic Woman: A Study in Diffusion" (1966), were derived solely from the formal aspects of the objects without consideration of their original context.

12. See Jopling's edited volume of 1971 for germane articles, particularly those of Irvin L. Child and Leon Siroto, Daniel Crowley, as well as Paul Bohannon 1971, and Nelson H.H. Graburn (1976) on Native American art.

13. In a paper entitled, "The Impact of Anthropology on Research and Writing in Art History" presented at the Universities Art Association of Canada conference in Victoria, British Columbia in November 1992, Vastokas discusses at length the differences between British and North American 'New Art History'.

14. This recent interest in semiotics goes beyond the theory of de Saussure and his followers who ignored external objects. Art historians and material culturalists tend to accept that material objects are vehicles for communication, as are linguistic signs.

15. *Images and Understanding* edited by Horace Barlow, Colin Blakemore and Miranda Weston-Smith (1990) provides a timely discussion of research on imagery conducted by scientists and artists.

16. In the preface to the English edition, Bogatyrev admits that when he originally wrote this book, it was not intended to be concerned with semiotics. However, his use of structure and function in the analysis of ethnographic data on

material and spiritual culture was considered sufficiently relevant to be included as the fifth publication in the series, *Approaches to Semiotics*, edited by Thomas A. Sebeok.

17. No matter how meticulously we do research or how carefully constructed is the analysis, we must still revert to language to describe these findings; the "nonverbal systems of expression" communicated by art must be translated into words.

18. In identifying the need to modify the arbitrary relationships between signified and signifier found in language to those relationships in the case of material culture, Christopher Tilley (1991:95) lists these pertinent parameters: "(1) signification is grounded in tradition; (2) signification is rooted in social relations and social structures; (3) signs will differ according to their degree of polysemy and the social context in which they are used; (4) signification in material culture is generally simpler than in either spoken or written language."

19. One caveat is to avoid 'reading' these 'documents' in a linguistic analytical fashion at this point.

20. Graburn (1976:11) states that "Foreign materials are substituted for hard-to-obtain native objects, such as imported beads for porcupine quills, freeing artists from the problems of gathering and preparation and allowing them to concentrate on design and execution - and greater production." While acknowledging that beads did indeed permit a certain freedom in artistic expression, their acquisition required items to be traded. Graburn seems to ignore the fact that although the women were freed of some problems, they spent energy trapping martens and preparing their husbands' furs to exchange for beads and other goods. The desirability for the beads themselves appears to have been a driving force, rather than simple pragmatic concerns.

21. This is a simplification of the process as some parts of the coats are decorated before construction, some parts after.

22. Once again, Regina Flannery has provided significant data from her fieldwork .

23. To Pomo (California) basket makers, a "perfect" basket was not any of the colourful feathered ones so often illustrated in publications of Native American art (and thus deemed aesthetically appealing to Western tastes), but rather a plain one. One of the emically determining criteria is the

fineness of the willow used. The finer the willow, the better the weaving and ultimately, the more pleasing were the results. Requisite slenderness of the willow was achieved by the careful cutting of the bushes year after year, a process that was negatively effected by confinement on reservations (Sally McLendon 1990: personal communication).

24. A number of native consultants worked with museum staff in everything from lobbying for financial support, to interpreting the material culture and erecting full-size *michuap* (Cree tipi).

25. According to Burnham (1992:1), the evidence for these coats begins in the 17th century and continues until approximately 1930 in the area that stretches from the St. Lawrence River north to Ungava Bay and from James Bay and Hudson Bay on the west to the Atlantic Coast on the east. Despite relatively sparse populations in most of this large region, the collection of 150 coats over a span of approximately 250 years, particularly with the majority collected from 1882 onwards, has implications that require further analysis. (Of Burnham's sample of 60 coats, 20 or 33% were collected between 1882 and 1930.)

26. I would like to express my thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Richard Preston, for his clarifying statements about this theme.

Chapter 2:

1. According to Annie Oakley, Archivist for Canterbury Cathedral in a letter dated 25 May 1990: "Dr. Bargrave's standards as a collector were rather mixed...(he was) sometimes indifferent to perfection and authenticity alike; his antique figurines are all either damaged or false."

2. Two marvellous examples that remain intact are the Cabinet of Curiositiés of the Sainte-Geneviève Library in Paris, France and the Swiss Cottage Museum at Osborne House, Isle of Wight, England. The origins of the first example date back to Pere Du Molinet who died in 1687. The latter display was initiated much later by Prince Albert for the royal children at Queen Victoria's summer home. Completed in 1862, it was rearranged and classified in 1915 or 1916 with the various exhibits placed under specific headings at that time (information from Museum plaque).

3. While I wish to acknowledge that the development of museum philosophies and mandates has played a critical role in collection policies and management as it pertains to this research, it should be emphasized that a fuller coverage requires additional investigation (see Oberholtzer 1989b).

4. These baskets are similar to those collected by, or presented to, Lord Elgin during his tenure as Governor General of Canada 1847-1854. While the two sets are very similar in form, the Middleton baskets have rectangular bottoms and the Elgin ones are octagonal. With more examples, we might be able to correlate these shapes with specific groups and/or time periods.

5. Skinner (1911:8) delimits the East Cree territory as lying east of York Factory and Norway House to Lake Mistassini in Quebec (see map).

6. Cornelius Krieghoff's 1846 oil painting of an "Officer's Trophy Room" in Montreal is a rich documentary record that illustrates this passion for collecting. In the painting the walls from floor to ceiling are closely filled with an eclectic array of souvenirs: oil paintings, sculpture, hunting and fishing gear, and a number of native items. Respected art historian Russell Harper (1979:20-21) comments that many of the articles portrayed here are mementoes reflecting the popularity of the regimental officers and enlisted men who participated in the city's social and cultural activities: "The officers...collected items they found strange and attractive to remind them of their North American posting: young British officers brought home similar collections...as tangible evidence of their life in the forces..." (Harper 1979:21).

7. As a member of the burgeoning Canadian Institute Lefroy was acquainted with Sandford Fleming and Henry Youle Hind. In the course of his scientific travels he met John Maclean, Sir George Simpson, Rev. James Evans, Rev. William Cockran, William Mactavish as well as a number of Hudson's Bay Company men. Simpson "presented selected items [of his own private collection] to his friends and business acquaintances" (Coutts and Pettipas 1994:13). As well, Lefroy's marriage to the daughter of Chief Justice Sir John Beverly Robinson gained him entree into not only Toronto's elite but also that of Cobourg and Port Hope. These two small Ontario towns were popular retirement sites for HBC employees and/or their families (for example, George Gladman, Jr., and Erland Erlandson (Brown 1980)). This rather closed community could have been the source for the leggings in Lefroy's collection.

8. Similarly, Charles Iserhoff wrote from Mistassini on May 31, 1911 that during the summer of 1910 the Indian families remained at the Post between August 7th and September 10th "excepting the Men that was going back and fore to Nemeska" (probably as canoe freight brigades at the behest of the Hudson Bay Company).

9. Waller wrote four chronologically sequential diaries at Moose Factory between 1923 and 1930 which he designated as Book 1, Book 2, and so on. As these are unpaginated, I have devised my own system noting diary number then a dash followed by a sheet number (two facing pages comprise one sheet; Waller actually wrote across the two pages as if they were only one sheet.) (See also Oberholtzer 1992.)

10. According to curator J.C.H. King, "The Renouf collection is the only collection at the museum (Museum of Mankind) with any reasonable documentation" (letter to author dated 8 September 1988).

11. Although I have not physically assessed Skinner's collection housed in the American Museum of Natural History, information derived from Skinner's 1911 publication on the East Cree and a few published photographs provides comparative data. Skinner collected netted bags, moss bags, nimabans, woman's leggings, stone pipe, rabbitskin parka, boy's hooded coat, cradle board, bear's skulls, a drum, and more. As less than a decade separated this collection and the one made by Renouf, I feel that any of the differences may be explained by Skinner's interest in archaeology which entailed an awareness of the importance of specific items. The differences may also be an aspect of what was available for sale at that time.

12. In all probability, the bag was used to hold percussion caps.

13. Many Cree women expressed amazement at the photographs of beadwork done in the area and invariably asked where the makers obtained the beads.

14. Webber notes that as the Montagnais, Naskapi and James Bay or Eastern Cree "are often called Montagnais-Naskapi Indians", she "where possible, for the sake of brevity, (I) call[s] the Indians who live in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula simply "Naskapi"" (Webber 1988:1).

15. 'Powhatan's Mantle', collected in Virginia prior to 1638 and now in the Ashmolean Museum, still retains some of its shells belying this assumption.

16. In the sacred Mide narratives of the Ojibwa the porcupine's medicine at the base of its quills possesses exceptional healing powers and the porcupine literally and visually "surrounds himself with power" (Norman 1977:144).

Chapter 3:

1. Conversely, James G.E. Smith, in a letter to the author (1989), used the term "Eastern Cree" to cover the Montagnais, Naskapi, Tête de Boule (Attikimek), and the groups of Hudson's Bay Company "Home Guard" Indians and their descendants."

2. The presence of multiple forms suggests that we can not assume that the introduction of a particular **material** form into a group fits into the now-classic parameters of an invented tradition (cf Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983).

3. This is taken from Waller's notebook that he sent with his collection to the Ipswich Museum, England (Ipswich 1954.45: no pagination).

4. On the west coast, many of the elders stated that the material was either Inuit or Ojibwa; in other words, it was "theirs " or "others" but not "ours". On the east coast some collaborators provided more specific suggestions such as "Mistassini".

5. Photographs used for fieldwork were given numbers for easy reference. Moccasin #17 refers to Frankfurt NS 30020 ab, and moccasin #18 refers to Berlin 8112 ab.

6. The results of these interviews underline that oral history can be only one source of information about material culture created in the past.

7. One exception to this dichotomy among the Algonquian groups is the beaded sealskin tobacco pouches of the Montagnais which appear to use the lazy stitch technique (but which I have not yet validated).

8. Symmetric in the mathematical sense that one side can be superimposed, point for point, on its mirror image.

9. According to Michael G. Johnson 1974, this motif may have been used by the Plains Cree as well.

10. Imre Nagy, Plains ethnologist for the Tornyai Janos Muzeum in Hungary suggests that this motif in the beaded Plains material "is the result of the organic development of lazy-stitch beadwork" (1993 personal communication). With the introduction and development of beadwork among the Plains tribes, the geometric motifs of quillwork and painted hide were continued. According to Carrie Lyford (1940:67), in the "second seed bead period" circa 1870, the Eastern Sioux were the only Plains group to "adopt the floral style of their eastern neighbours."

11. The association of this motif on these particular loom-woven beadwork forms with these tantalizing hints of both gender-specific and mixed-gender usage coloured further by the ceremonial usage prior to, during, and following a change in social status requires further investigation.

12. VanStone (1985:37) notes that Strong called the wedge-triangle motif a "whaletail."

13. For an in-depth analysis of symmetry expressed in art see Washburn and Crowe (1988).

14. A certain refinement in the dating has been established by Dorothy Burnham (1992) based on the technical aspects of caribou coats from the Quebec-Labrador peninsula. The cut of a coat (correlated with dated European styles) as well as decorative techniques and the elaborateness of the design all play a role in her analysis to determine probable dates.

15. Burnham has concluded that certain coats are Montagnais. None of these bears the triangular motif.

16. One of the earliest documented extant pieces collected in the Hudson's Bay or James Bay region sometime between 1662 and 1676 is a netted porcupine neck ornament that **suggests** this key motif. See The Spirit Sings (1987b:Figure 81) for illustration.

17. By accepting this cultural identity, more intriguing issues can be pursued. Can we ascertain the meaning and/or significance of the individual motif? At what point, and for what reason(s) was there a shift from being a motif restricted to use on male coats and accessories to one used on certain items by young women? Or, is this evidence of semantic change in the meaning(s) of the sign as the shift of gender may indicate? (Preston raises this question based on an observed "generalizing process" that indicates a lesser kind

or degree of interest in such gender-differentiated cultural domains as dream spirits during his 1960s fieldwork than that noted by Flannery during the 1920s-30s.) Does this continued use demonstrate a traditional sign used as a status marker? Or is there another influence in the northern areas that parallels the Inuit graphic depiction of a stemmed triangle that has been interpreted by Linda Zernask (1992) to iconically represent the female pubic triangle, and thus, can be considered an element of femininity. How then do we interpret the stemmed triangle inserted between the wedge form (see Figure 18) which Burnham suggests, "must surely be a flower" (1992:90)? Can this be early example of embedded symbolism as discussed in Chapter Four?

18. The strong association of the floral patterns with roses and the visual appearance of this tri-lobate "flower" raises the possibility that this trefoil represents the apical three leaves of the wild rose (see Plate 25).

Chapter 4:

1. A written label dated July 7th, 1870 inside a hood (private collection) reads, "The beads are strung on the split sinews of the white arctic whale [Beluga], and are sewed on the cloth with sinew taken from the back of the reindeer."

2. A capote is a semi-structured blanket cloth coat with attached pointed hood and fastened at the waist with a sash.

3. Although situated at York Factory, Isham's comments were intended to describe the Cree more generally.

4. A photograph of Frank G. Speck flanked by a man wearing a headdress and a woman wearing a beaded hood in the Temagami District in 1913 suggests the possible use of 'stage props'. Photograph courtesy of the American Philosophical Society illustrated by Francis Harper 1964:Plate 17, Figure 2.

5. Preston (1994) notes that John Blackned of Waskaganish informed him that the tuft of hair left long in the centre of the forehead used to represent the person's spirit. Blackned did this himself into at least the 1970s.

6. Although somewhat tangential at this point, the fact that the Cree use the blooming of certain plant forms as natural signs of the 'florescence' of food sources presents an intriguing line to follow at some later point. For example, when the *Heracleum lanatum* (cow parsnip) was in bloom, this is

taken as a sign that the sturgeon are running (1990 fieldnotes, Fort Albany).

7. According to Richard Conn, "Experiments with techniques of bead embroidery suggested that...to work effectively with seed beads, needles and possibly thread are required" (paper entitled "The Pony Bead Period: A Cultural Problem of Western North America" presented at the Second Annual Meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Tucson, Arizona, January 9-11, 1969 cited in G. Nicks, The Archaeology of Two Hudson's Bay Company Posts: Buckingham House (1792-1800) and Edmonton House III (1810-1813). MA thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Alberta, 1969). Recent research by Turgeon suggests that Basque ships were probably supplying needles, pins and embroidery during the 1580s to the Natives through trade centred at the mouth of the Saguenay River (1990:83). However, based on examination of a number of museum examples, it would appear that the very fine sinew used to attach the strings of sinew-threaded beads to the cloth could be first moistened, twisted to form a point and then dried before use as combined needle and thread. As well, very fine bird bone needles dating from the second millennium B.C. were recovered from the Port au Choix site in northwestern arm of Newfoundland (Tuck 1988:79).

8. Written and visual documentation of men wearing hoods tends to locate them in a more traditional setting rather than at the posts. This raises a number of questions to be resolved at another time.

9. During fieldwork at Moosonee in 1990, a Cree bead worker estimated that it took her a day to bead a single moccasin apron (vamp). No preparation of materials was involved in this contemporary example.

10. Sylvia Van Kirk (1987:382n2) notes: "The studies of Jennifer Brown and myself focus on the experience of native women who married fur traders, a relatively small group in terms of the whole (emphasis added).

11. Brown (1980:196-198) also notes the practice of sending traders' children to live with other people.

12. While the Oblates arrived in the Red River settlement in 1818, it was 1844 before the Grey Nuns joined them there.

13. William Richards worked as a cooper and canoe-man with the HBC mainly at Moose Factory. Although his watercolours are not dated, it appears that he began painting in the early 1800s and ended with his death in 1811 (Johnson 1967:4-10).

14. Ruth B. Phillips' recent examination of floral metaphor in nineteenth century literature, especially women's magazines published between 1820 and 1870, underlines the use of floral imagery in the construction of 'femininity' (1990).

15. An aspect that I have not covered, but which must certainly be considered, is an assessment of 'public' versus 'private' use. Tanner (1979) effectively demonstrates the dichotomy in Cree behaviour between "bush" and "community."

16. Limited archival research has yielded little in the way of genealogical details. More work needs to be done along these lines. As well, despite the apparent demographic separation among the three groups (Coasters, Home Guard and Inlanders), there is a strong message that 'behaviour' rather than 'bloodline' establishes social status and identity.

17. These floral designs eventually became synonymous with native work. For as British anthropologist Beatrice Blackwood notes in her journal entry for Thursday, July 2nd, 1925 at Norway House: "Visited Mrs. Hart who was doing some elaborate silk embroidery for the fronts of moccasins. The HBC furnished the silk but the patterns are their own - they are to some extent becoming Europeanised - introducing a conventional wheel pattern instead of the floral ones..." (Blackwood Journal, Pitt Rivers Museum; emphasis added).

Chapter 5:

1. The orientation and visual impact of the attached tassels have strong physiological overtones suggesting the flow of gender-specific body fluids.

2. At Moosonee, Mrs. Joseph Wabano, over 80 years old and originally from Attiwapiskat, responding to my photographs of leggings commented that her mother and granny used to talk about the leggings although she had never seen any (1990 fieldnotes).

3. A similar pair made by Mrs. Clifford Lameboy of Fort George, Quebec (now Chisasibi) also exhibits this male

form but has been catalogued, perhaps erroneously, as "Woman's Leggings" (CMC III-D-292ab).

4. These leggings, believed to have been collected by Sir John Henry Lefroy at Eastmain in 1843, demonstrate the precarious nature of museum documentation. Biographical information and further research does not place Lefroy in Eastmain - or even in the James Bay area - at any time (see Lefroy 1883; Stanley 1955). However, there is a strong probability that he did collect and/or own them; in which case they were either collected in another location or were acquired by Lefroy from another collector.

5. To signal that caribou have been spotted, the Inuit lookout raises his arms to form a U that will be 'read' from a distance by his hunting mates (depicted by Inuit artist, Ruth Annaqtuusi Tuluiarialik). This custom is still practised by the Inuit at Great Whale River as demonstrated in a documentary film aired on TV Ontario, summer 1994.

6. The length of these leggings is given as 36 centimetres which falls within the range of women's leggings (Christie's 1989:51).

7. According to Ronnie Cowboy of Waskaganish, of the two lower legs of the caribou, "one is a man and one is a woman," representing the hunter and Deer Lady (Caribou Woman) in caribou dances (1991 fieldnotes).

8. Tanner notes the significance of walking, and that of all human body parts, the feet are treated with special importance demonstrated in the decoration of moccasins, especially those first worn by children, and snowshoes (1979:92-93): "It is the spirit of the moccasins and of the snowshoes that leads the hunter to his prey, and prevents his legs getting tired, and thus these items are decorated to please these spirits."

Chapter 6:

1. Frequently prompting required either an explanation of the function of the nets or clarification of the actual size of the items as photographic enlargements I showed them were perceived by the Cree to be life size and hence, confusing.

2. These beaded items may have been umbilical cords that were beaded and hung on the hoop of the tikanagan (Flannery 1962; Preston 1992). This cord which connects the

fetus to the mother is the biological link that provides the needed nourishment and protection for fetal development.

3. As I prepare this final draft, I have just become aware of one that Alika Podolinsky Webber had collected in 1962 made by Daisy Cheezo at Eastmain. Now part of the CMC collection (CMC III-D-126), the catalogue documentation for this 35.5cm long narrow net made of thread states that the native term was '*hibish*', and that it functioned as a necklace tied around a child's neck to catch illness as a net catches fish. See also discussion of the term *hiibii* below in the text.

4. The precedent for determining a particular culture's world view through the linking of myth to material culture established by P. G. Rivière (1969) is germane here.

5. Analysis is based on the following sources: Ahenakew E. 1929; Ahenakew F. 1988; Brightman 1989:138-142; Cresswell 1923:404-407; Hallowell 1960:366; Jones 1916: Lightwood 1976:23-24; Ray and Stevens 1988 [1971]:107-110; Simms 1916; Skinner 1911:100-104; Speck 1925:3-5,26; 1935:53-56,59; Waller PA83.17.5; PA83.17.6.

6. In a few versions it is the moon that is snared (for example, Lightwood 1976; Speck 1935:55-56).

7. Similar associations have been made by Robert Brightman although his approach has a somewhat different focus (1989:138-142).

8. According to stories told to her great granddaughter, a Cree woman from northern Ontario, strongly believed that "cat's cradle should be played in order to lengthen the day" (Adema 1993).

9. Scrying (staring into a bowl of water or mirror) has been documented by Adrian Tanner (1979:129,131) as one form of divination used by the Mistassini Cree to foretell the future.

10. The sacred nature of birch bark scrolls intimates that the addition of incised netted areas (outlines and complete images) were done by the men. See Feest 1980:62; Kenora Miner & News 1967; and Vastokas 1984 for illustrations.

11. The concept of mentally untying knots expressed by the term *ehbubukdaet* is "the symbolic realization of power and risk" undertaken by the men (Preston 1994). As such it

complements the physical tying of knots in netting by the women. Both processes are essential for protection and provision.

12. A number of other material items reflect this complementary production: the *tikanagan* board is made by the husband and the bag by the woman (Landes 1971:125); lacrosse sticks (Skinner 1911:38; *Toronto Telegram* 1970); as well, the fish and beaver nets are made by the women to be used by the men (Flannery 1992).

APPENDIX A: MUSEUM COLLECTIONS ASSESSEDAustria:

Museum für Völkerkunde

Vienna

Belgium:

Musée Royale de L'Afrique Centrale

Tervuren

Czechoslovakia:

Naprstkovo Muzeum

Prague

England:

American Museum

Bath

Ashmolean Museum

Oxford

Bargrave Museum, The Precincts

Canterbury

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

Birmingham

City of Bristol Museum

Bristol

Exeter City Museum and Art Gallery

Exeter

The Hancock Museum

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

The Horniman Museum and Library

London

Ipswich Museums and Galleries

Ipswich

Leeds City Museum

Leeds

Liverpool Museum

Liverpool

The Manchester Museum

Manchester

Museum and Art Gallery

Hastings

Museum of Mankind, British Museum

London

Pitt Rivers Museum

Oxford

Saffron Walden Museum

Saffron Walden

Swiss Cottage Museum at Osborne House

Isle of Wight

University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Cambridge

France:

Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève

Paris

Musée de l'Homme

Paris

Germany:

Deutsches Ledermuseum

Offenbach am Main

Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde

Hamburg

Museum für Völkerkunde

Berlin

Museum für Völkerkunde

Frankfurt am Main

Museum für Völkerkunde

Freiburg

Stadt Mannheim im Reiss-Museum

Mannheim

Übersee-Museum

Bremen

Völkerkunde-Abteilung

Hannover

Völkerkundemuseum Herrnhut

Herrnhut

The Netherlands

Rijksmuseum voor Volkerkunde

Leiden

Scotland:

The Earl of Elgin and Kincardine

Dunfermline

Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries

Glasgow

Hunterian Museum

Glasgow

Perth and Kinross Museum

Perth

Royal Museum of Scotland

Edinburgh

Switzerland:

Indianer-Museum der Stadt

Zurich

Völkerkundemuseum der Universität

Zurich

APPENDIX BEXAMPLES OF WEDGE-TRIANGLE MOTIF WORKED IN PORCUPINE QUILL

Object	Museum Number	Date	ID	Collector
pouch	Berlin IV B 71			
pouch	CMC III-D-565	pre 1840	Cree	Miss Halifax at Hudson's Bay
pouch	Edinburgh UC 297			
pouch	Hancock G049	pre 1840	Swampy Cree	
pouch	Hunterian E245		"Iroquois"	
pouch	Leeds PL90.1964	pre 1860		
pouch	Manchester O.9322/489			
pouch	MM 2584		Cree	Christy
pouch	MM 4725	19th c.	Cree	Christy
pouch	MM Q 79 Am10	19th c.	Cree	
pouch	MM 1970.Am9.1		Cree	
pouch	MM 1986.AM18	19th c.	Cree	
pouch	NMS L304.130			
pouch	PR no number			
pouch	SW no number	pre 1840	"Cree"	
pouch	SW H55	pre 1845		
pouch	SW 1882.482	pre 1882	subarctic	
pouch	SW 1882.487	pre 1847		
pouch	Vienna 11967	1820-1867		Schwarz
pouch	Southeby Auction 2512			
pouch	Private Collection	c1800	Cree	(Montana)
pouch	Private Collection	c1780-1820		(ex James Hooper)
belt	CMC III-X-233	18th c		
belt	CMC III-D-567	pre 1840	Cree	
belt	SW no number	pre 1845	Cree	
band	Berlin IV B 189,190	pre 1840	"Sioux"	
band	Berlin 12823		Cree	
band	CMC V-X-330	pre 1820		
band	Glasgow 89,56H			
band	Leiden 4262-1	1775-1820	Cree	
band	Lower Port Garry 3169	pre 1823		HBC - for cradle board
band	Mannheim 3112		Cree	
band	NMS UC 273		Algonquin Family	
band	NMS UC 277		Algonquin Family	
band	NMS 1908.312		Algonquin Family	
band	PR 1951.2.19	early 19th c.	Cree	
band	UM 38356	pre 1832		George Catlin
knife case	MM 1923.3-7.1			
knife case	MM 1949 Am 22 134			
knife case	Vienna 11965		Alegonk	Schwarz
hat band	Berlin IV B 8607		Cree	
headstall	ROM 965.78.1,2	1830-1840	Cree {Plains}	{for horse}

APPENDIX CEXAMPLES OF WEDGE-TRIANGLE MOTIF WORKED IN BEADS

Object	Museum Number	Date	ID	Collector
pouch	Birmingham 1295'63		Plains Cree	
pouch	FMNH 176528	1928	Naskapi	Strong (Davis Inlet)
pouch	Manchester 0.9322/323	pre 1865		
pouch	Liverpool 1971.112.5		Eastern Woodlands	
band	Berlin 8880	1923	Naskapi	
band	CMC III-B-41	1929	Naskapi	White
band	FMNH 176737	1928	Naskapi	Strong (Barren Ground)
band	FMNH 176732a,b	1928	Naskapi	Strong
band	FMNH 176757	1928	Naskapi	Strong (Barren Ground)
band	FMNH 176523	1928	Naskapi	Strong (Barren Ground)
band	FMNH 176524	1928	Naskapi	Strong (Barren Ground)
band	FMNH 176572	1928	Naskapi	Strong (Barren Ground)
band	Glasgow 15-16b			
band	Liverpool 4.12.14.4			
band	MM 1921.10.4.174	1915	Cree	Renouf - Gt. Whale R.
band	MM 1921.10.4.175	1915	Cree	Renouf - Gt. Whale R.
band	Perth 1978.440	1937	Cree	Stewart
belt	FMNH 176511	1928	Naskapi	Strong
fox lip	CMC III-D-34	1915	Cree	Renouf
hair ornaments	Bremen C11936	1981	Naskapi	(Shefferville)
hair ornaments	FMNH 176745a,b	1928	Naskapi	Strong (Barren Ground)
hair ornaments	MM 1921.10.4.184	1915	Cree	Renouf
hair ornaments	MM 1921.10.4.185	1915	Cree	Renouf
hair ornaments	MM 1921.10.4.186	1915	Cree	Renouf
hair ornaments	MM 1921.10.4.187	1915	Cree	Renouf
hair ornaments	MM 1921.10.4.188	1915	Cree	Renouf
hair ornaments	MM 1921.10.4.189	1915	Cree	Renouf
hair ornaments	MM 1921.10.4.190	1915	Cree	Renouf
hair ornaments	Bremen C11936	1981	Naskapi	(Shefferville)
natutshikan (a healing necklace)			Naskapi	Webber
pipe strip	Perth 1978.440	pre 1937	Cree	Stewart

APPENDIX DEXAMPLES OF WEDGE-TRIANGLE MOTIF WORKED IN PAINT

Object	Museum Number	Date	ID	Collector
band	FMNH 176526	1928	Naskapi	Strong
knife sheath	DAM 1951.260			
pouch	DAM 1949.3651			
pouch	CMC III-B-163	c1930	Naskapi	White
coat	Basel IVa41	1820-30	M-N	Vischer
coat	Berlin IVB12823	pre 1800	Cree	ex Speyer
coat	Berlin IVB12730	c1800		ex Speyer
coat	Bristol B6140	c1840	Naskapi	
coat	CMC III-B-20	1921-1922	Naskapi	Waugh
coat	CMC III-B-574	c1908	Naskapi	Wakefield
coat	CMC III-B-590	early 18th c		ex Speyer
coat	CMC III-B-632	1765-1775	Naskapi	
coat	Denmark 1928. No. HI 1	c1926		Birket-Smith
coat	FMNH 176522	1928	Naskapi	Strong
coat	FMNH 176946	1928	Naskapi	Strong
coat	FMNH 176945	1928	Naskapi	Strong
coat	Frankfurt NS4287	c1780	M-N	
coat	Glasgow 89.56h			
coat	Glasgow Eth/NN/564		"NnWoodlands"	
coat	Hancock G112	pre 1886		
coat	Horniman 635.F36	c1800		
coat	Hunterian B128	c1700	Naskapi or Cree	
coat	LPG (no number)	pre 1821	Cree	
coat	MM 1949 Am 22 175	1800s		
coat	NMS UC277		Algonquin Family	
coat	NMS 1881.37.44	c1800-1850	Wood Indians	
coat	NMS 1870.45		Hudson Bay Inds.	
coat	NMS L402	late 18th c	M-N	
coat	NMS 1908.312			
coat	PR IV 11	c1800		
coat	PR 1951.2.19	early 19th c		
coat	PR 1952.5.01	c1700		
coat	PR 1954.9.1	c1900		
coat	ROM HC.2250	1910-1912	Cree	Flaherty - Gt. Whale R.
coat	ROM 958.131.641	c1930		White
coat	ROM 958.11.630	c1930	Naskapi	White
coat	ROM 958.131.618	c1930	Naskapi	White
coat	ROM 959.145	c1908	Naskapi	Wakefield
coat	SW LNC 2332	c1820		
coat	Smithsonian 74449	1882-1884	Cree	Turner
coat	Smithsonian 90242	1882-1884	Cree	Turner
coat	Smithsonian 90243	1882-1884	Cree	Turner
coat	Tervuren 70.14.1		Naskapi	
coat	Vienna 145.506			
coat	Zurich-Indianer 494	c1700		
coat	Private Collection	1770	Cree	(Montana)

APPENDIX EEXAMPLES OF U-MOTIF

Object	Museum Number	Date	ID	Collector
pouch	AMNH 50-7476	1908	Cree	Skinner ¹
pouch	CMC III-B-6	c.1910	Naskapi	E. Sapir ²
pouch	CMC III-D-29	c.1914	Cree	E. Renouf - Gt. Whale R.
pouch	DAM 1969.219.	c.1830	Cree	
pouch	McCord ME987.120.6.	pre1908.	Cree	
pouch	NM 1921.10.4.170			Renouf
pouch	NM 1921.10.4.180			Renouf
pouch	NM 1921.10.4.182			Renouf
"headdress"	McCord ME987.120.3	c1885-90	Cree	
hood	CMC III-D-606	1805-1865	Cree	Gladman
hood	Frankfurt NS 52 413			
leggings	Christie's (1989:50)	pre 1987	Cree	McTavish
leggings	CMC III-D-584a		Cree	
leggings	Mannheim 3106.	c1845	Cree	(Eastmain?)
leggings	AMNH 50-7056.	1908	Cree	Skinner - Eastmain
coat	Glenbow Museum AR215		Naskapi	
mittens	Sheffield Museum	c1840	Eastern Cree	
mittens	794-38-10/87064	pre 1892	Montagnais	(Sn Quebec)

¹ Collected at Fort Albany, the arms of the U are topped by four-lobed flowers.

² Acquired at Pointe-Bleue, Quebec in 1911 from Louis Claire, who received it from a Naskapi woman.

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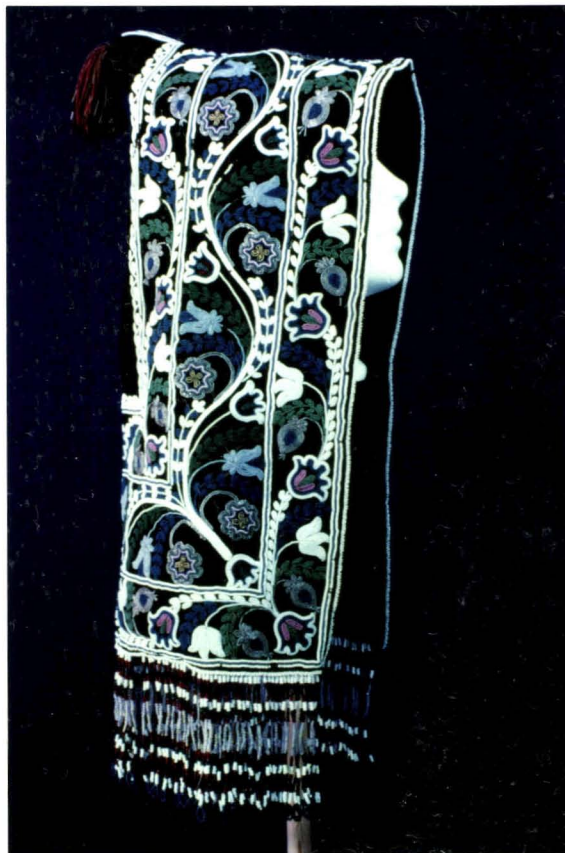
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Photograph 1 (left): Hood (Cree) Silk applique on cloth (MM Eal1042).



Photograph 2 (right): Hood (Swampy Cree) beads on cloth (Berlin 12827).



Photograph 3: Hood (Cree) beads on cloth (PMA H64.64.34). Courtesy of the Ethnology Program, Provincial Museum of Alberta.



Photograph 4: Hood (Cree) beads on cloth, front orientation (Birmingham 242,60).





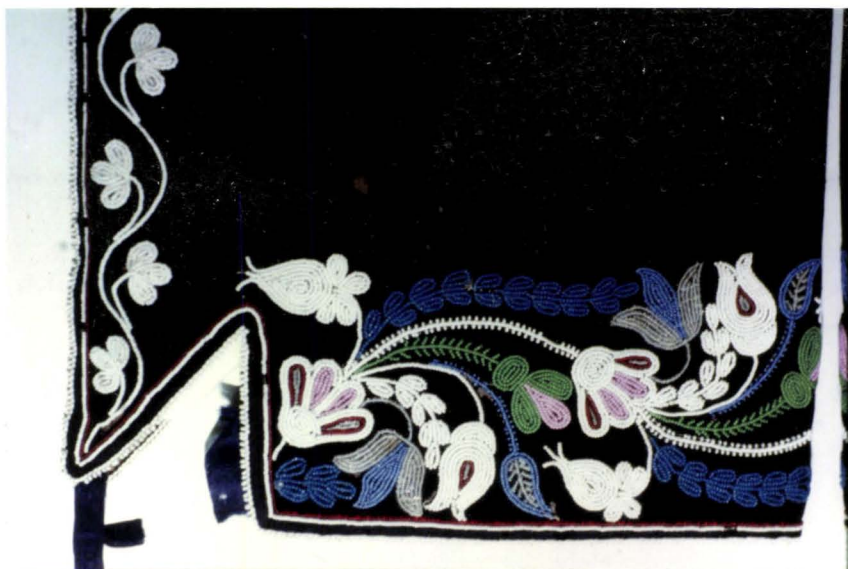
Photograph 7: Leggings (East Cree) beads on cloth (Mannheim 3106).



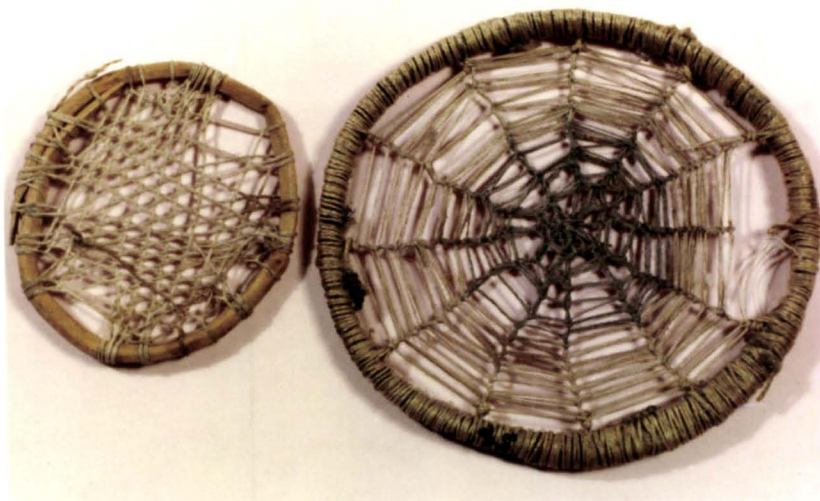
Photograph 8: Leggings (East Cree) bottom detail (Mannheim 3106).



Photograph 9: Leggings (East Cree) beads on cloth (Edinburgh 1968.731 A.B.).



Photograph 10: Leggings (East Cree) beads on cloth, bottom detail (McCord MB938.1, 1&2)



Photograph 11; Baby net charms (East Cree) (smaller: Ipswich 1966.1.1183; larger: Ipswich 1966.1.1184).



Photograph 12: Bear chin (East Cree) open with beaded lytta attached (CMC III-B-1).



Photograph 13: Bear chin (East Cree) folded with lytta inside (CMC III-D-262).



Photograph 14: Belt (East Cree) loom-woven beading (NM 1921.10.4.174).



Photograph 15: Ear ornaments (East Cree) loom-woven beading (MM 1921.10.4.190 AB).



Photograph 16: Coat epaulette (HBC Indian) porcupine quillwork (Edinburgh 1908.312).



Photograph 17: Coat (Cree) painted caribou hide (Berlin 12823).



Photograph 18 (left): Pouch (Cree) porcupine quillwork on hide (Leeds FL70.1964).



Photograph 19 (right): Cartridge pouch (East Cree) beads on cloth (MW 1921.10.4.170).



Photograph 20: Male doll (East Cree) moccasin and legging details (MM 1923.6.194c).



Photograph 21: Moccasin (East Cree) 'caribou tooth' (McCord M 2161.1).



Photograph 22: Moccasin (East Cree) seamed pointed toe from Moose Factory (Ipswich 1966.1.688.2).



Photograph 23: Moccasin (Cree) child's round toe (Berlin 8112 ab).



Photograph 24: Wild rose bud photographed at Kashechewan, 1990.



Photograph 25: Wild rose leaves photographed at Kashechewan, 1990; one cent coin for scale.