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Continuity of Native Values:

Cree and Ojibwa

A Thesis

presented to the

Department of Philosophy

Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the

degree of Master of Arts

by

Lorraine F. Brundige ©

April 1997



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to provide an understanding of the value system that constitutes one of the fundamental elements in a Canadian Native world view. In a project of this scope and with such a diverse group of people I could not hope to outline a value system that is universal for all North American Native people; thus, I restricted my research to two distinct Canadian Native groups, the Cree people from Northern Manitoba and the Ojibwa from Northwestern Ontario.

My research objective was twofold. The first objective was to expand on the pioneering work of the late Dr. Clare Brant, a Mohawk psychiatrist. A number of questions had to be addressed in order to reach this goal. What are the Native values Brant proposes? Do these values correspond to the values Aboriginal peoples were demonstrating when first European contact occurred? Or, are these values a natural consequence of European influence? How are these values learned and transmitted.

How does one go about defining a value system that predates European contact when Aboriginal people did not keep written documents. Finding the answer is part of my second objective: an in-depth explanation of the methodological procedure used to obtain and verify continuity of Aboriginal values.

Aboriginal people have often been *studied* by non-Native researchers. My research is unique in that it seeks to avoid externalization by providing a thesis about Native people from the perspective of Native people.

***This is dedicated to my family,
whose tremendous encouragement and support
helped me to believe.***

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I would like to thank the entire philosophy department of Lakehead University for their tremendous support and belief in Native philosophy. In particular, I thank Dr. Douglas Rabb and Dennis McPherson, two special *teachers* who launched what became for me an exciting journey. I would also like to thank my advisor, Dr. Beverley Kent for her patience and encouragement. To Sandra Blackburn, secretary of the Philosophy Department, and Marie Taylor, friend and colleague, for all the tears they dried and temper tantrums patiently endured, I say thank you. Thank you to Dr. Don D. Roberts from the University of Waterloo, Ontario, for his insightful comments on an earlier draft of my thesis. I am also grateful for the support of Don Henderson, Andrew Nawagesic, Jim Turner and Paul Nadjiwon, fellow graduate students. I would also like to thank Doctor Viola Cordova, Jim Cheney, and Doctor Michael Pomedli, Visiting Fellows at Lakehead.

I would also like to thank the following Cree and Ojibway people; without their discussions this thesis could not have evolved: William Easter, Macleod George, Sheila George, Leona Massan, Ethel McKay, Walter Mink, Wally Umpherville, Nora Wasacase, Rita King, Andrew Nawagesic, Evelyne Susin, William Wilson, Owen Zoccole, and my Ojibwa Elder, you know who you are. To my Aboriginal friends who continually set my feet on the right path, over coffee and many hours of conversation, and David Groulx for his poem, "The Last Hunt," I say Megweetch. I'd like to acknowledge the late Dr. Clare Brant for his pioneer work in Native values.

Words cannot express the love and gratitude I feel toward my family for all their love and support.

To my family and friends I'd like to say, WE DID IT!

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THE LAST HUNT

A quarterside of Moose
was dropped off
at the
centre last night

Last night in the *West*
he got drunk
went to the shelter
and slept outside

last night
my friend froze to death

and they were

all full

last night

my friend¹

by David A. Groulx 1997

¹David A. Groulx, *The Last Hunt*. Unpublished poem. (1997).

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1990, Lakehead University offered a new and controversial course in philosophy entitled, *Canadian Native World Views*. As this was a philosophy course and, as such, involved the great thinkers throughout history, I was amazed. I had never encountered anything in an academic setting which related to Native people in Canada as thinking beings. Progress?? With a twinge of excitement and a lot of curiosity I registered for this class.

The question I, and many others, have been concerned with is: what is Native philosophy? Of the answers received in that class the most important (to myself) came from the work of the late Dr. Clare Brant. Dr. Brant, a Mohawk psychiatrist, pioneered work in Native values that catapulted me into a world where, like the philosopher Immanuel Kant, I was roused from my dogmatic slumber. Up until then, I had naively accepted what I had been taught about reality, knowledge and ethics without seriously questioning where those views came from. As a result of Dr. Brant's work I was no longer satisfied with just studying philosophy. I now wanted to "do" philosophy.

Years of therapeutic practise enabled Dr. Brant to formulate a list of values which he claimed were *traditional Native values*. The implication of this claim is that these values were operating in Native life long before European contact. Through personal psychoanalysis Brant found these values to be the underlying motivation for certain behaviours in his life. These values explained to Brant why it was he felt different from non-Natives. Brant worked with the Swampy Cree from Hudson and James Bay, the Ojibwa from southern Ontario and Iroquoian people from southern Ontario and Quebec. He claimed that the most frequently

occurring values in these groups of people as well as in himself were: the ethic of non-interference; anger must not be shown; and a distinctly native attitude toward the concept of time and the concept of sharing. Brant also discussed what he believed to be less influential principles such as gratitude, protocol and teaching.² Brant acknowledges that the manifestations of non-interference were first documented by Rosalie Wax. Each of these values will be examined fully in Part II of this thesis.

Dr. Brant believed these ethics and rules of behaviour would be present in some form in all tribes of North America. Unfortunately, comparative studies have not yet been undertaken. Therefore Brant's belief concerning these shared values is still not substantiated.

This problem is further compounded by the fact that Dr. Brant's data was collected from his life and therapeutic contact with Ojibwa in southern Ontario and Cree in northern Quebec. Therefore I would hesitate to generalize these ethics and principles to all Native people. Regardless of these limitations, Brant has made a significant contribution to the future study of philosophy. Dennis H. McPherson and J. Douglas Rabb in their book, *Indian From the Inside: A Study in Ethno-Metaphysics*, state, "... ethical and philosophical study of this unique worldview is at best just a beginning."³ Clare Brant has opened the door to future studies in the field of ethics and its relationship or non-relationship to Aboriginal people. That Brant held a belief in shared values among all North American Native people introduces us

² Clare Brant, "Native Ethics and Rules of Behaviour", *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 35, no. 6. (August, 1990), 535.

³ Dennis H. McPherson and J. Douglas Rabb, *Indian From The Inside: A Study in Ethno-Metaphysics* (Thunder Bay, ON.: Lakehead University, Centre for Northern Studies, 1993), 103.

to the concept of pan-Indianism. Rabb and McPherson touch on the topic of pan-Indianism in North America. However, Fred Sturm in his review of their book, suggests "...that the issue of pan-Indianism might be held in abeyance until comparative studies have been done with the world views of various indigenous civilizations...."⁴ Following up on Dr. Brant's work through comparative studies of North American Aboriginal peoples may be one way to approach this issue of pan-Indianism.

The values Brant attributed to Native people opened up a new world for me and I was consumed with a desire to continue his work. There were many questions still unanswered. Where do these values come from, how are they learned and, more importantly, has European contact affected what Brant calls Native values? In other words, how can we truly know what Native values are? Questions such as these led to this present work. Unfortunately, Brant failed to provide the necessary documentation supporting his claims about traditional Native values. One reason may be that he was not trying to *prove* a value system. Rather, as a psychiatrist, Brant was using these values to *explain* Native behaviours which have so often been misunderstood in the past as well as the present. This limitation, though not discrediting Brant's work, does challenge it. In this thesis I have taken these values and tested them. Are they valid Native values? Are they continuous with pre-contact values?

My research enabled me to confirm Brant's conclusions regarding the values. However, I found myself in disagreement with him over the origin of some of the values. Unlike Brant, I set out to provide *proof* of Native values. I provide the documented evidence

⁴ Fred G. Sturm, rev. of *Indian From The Inside: A Study in Ethno-Metaphysics* by Dennis H. McPherson and J. Douglas Rabb, *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, XXXII, 1 (Winter, 1996), 142.

that these are in fact traditional Native values within specific groups and not influenced by or adopted from European standards. These values are continuous with precontact values and they exist and are operating in many Native people's lives today in spite of European Influence.

In researching this thesis I was confronted with certain methodological problems which had to be dealt with in order to be successful. Due to the nature of this work I felt it necessary to begin with a description of the type of methodology I have employed in the present work. By combining a number of methods I was able to approach this study in a more holistic manner than has previously been utilized in philosophy. I have chosen to use interviews that I conducted with Elders and other Native people.⁵ I also use literature written by Native people. In addition, I examine Native narratives and draw on my own personal experience. In all instances I rely heavily on the oral tradition of Native people and try to remain true to a Native view by using information gathered from Native people. However, I also found it useful to cite some non-Native sources. One of the methods I chose required documents written as close to first contact as possible; therefore I relied on the seventy three volume collection of *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*. Each of these methods, along with my reasons for using them, will be discussed in Chapter I. This should assist others who may be interested in following a similar methodology in an investigation into North American Native values and the Native world view. As well, this process should aid the reader in understanding the complexity involved in an attempt to demonstrate continuity from the past to the present with a culture that did not keep written documents. It is also my

⁵ See appendix for transcribed interviews.

sincere hope that this study will show the importance of continuing with such research.

This thesis is also the result of a desire to discuss Native values from the perspective of native people. In conclusion, I believe that by approaching this investigation through a combination of methods I was able to provide checks and counterchecks for the validity of my findings. In Part II I have attempted to demonstrate the values and how they are learned. Stories and narratives along with interviews were included in these chapters for purposes of demonstrating the authenticity of contemporary Native values, and their continuity with precontact values. This was accomplished by a philosophical analysis of the *Jesuit Relations* (as early contact documents) from the perspective of a native person.

PART 1
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

CHAPTER I

1.1 IS THE ORAL TRADITION A VALID SOURCE IN RESEARCH ?

I was first confronted with the problem of how to go about verifying a value system that predates European contact. Native people in North America did not keep extensive written documents. The records that have survived are in the form of pictographs, petroglyphs and wampum belts. Information has always been passed down from generation to generation through an oral tradition. Neither is it useful to research standard ethical literature, for no reference is made to Native people in Canada. This problem is further compounded by the fact that what little information there is on Native people has mostly been written by non-Natives. As Dennis McPherson and Douglas Rabb from Lakehead University claim, such works "...tend to externalize Indians or Natives, leaving them to be studied as objects - studying them from the outside".⁶ McPherson and Rabb wonder how it is Native people view themselves and their world from the perspective of the Native, that is, "from the Inside"?⁷ To answer such questions I chose to go to the source, *Natives*, using the methodology outlined above.

In any philosophical research it is necessary to study the original work of the philosopher and not rely on interpreted or secondary sources. To avoid externalizing them

⁶ McPherson and Rabb, *Indian From The Inside*, ii.

⁷ *Ibid.*

it appears to be an academic necessity to go to Native people when investigating their values rather than to secondary sources such as are found in the works of non-Native scholars.

John Boatman, in the book, *My Elders Taught Me*, has argued that many contemporary scholars writing about Native Philosophy dismiss the statements of contemporary Elders.⁸ Confirmation for Boatman's claim can be found in the writings of J.B. Callicott and Thomas W. Overholt. Callicott claims that the way to get an Ojibwa world view is not through "...the personal wisdom of an exceptional Indian sage or philosopher".⁹ Callicott and Overholt insist a world view can be described in ways that are "more penetrating and reliable than,...interviewing reflective old people and/or native philosophers."¹⁰

Such blatant disrespect for the knowledge of the elders is certainly not a recent development. As early as the 1600's when the Jesuit missionaries were writing letters back to France we find similarly condemning comments. In one such letter, written between the summers of 1659 and 1660, the Jesuits report that:

We cannot go very far back in our researches in their past history as they have no Libraries other than the memory of their old men; and perhaps we should find nothing worthy of publication.¹¹

⁸ John F. Boatman, *My Elders Taught Me: Aspects of Western Great Lakes American Indian Philosophy* (Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin, 1991). 21.

⁹ J. Baird Callicott, "American Indian Land Wisdom?", *Essays In Environmental Philosophy* (Albany, 1989), 213.

¹⁰ Thomas W. Overholt and J. Baird Callicott, *Clothed-In-Fur and Other Tales: An Introduction to an Ojibwa World View* (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1982), 11.

¹¹ Reuben G. Thwaites, ed. *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* (New York: Pageant Book, 1959), XLV, 205.

Fortunately there are scholars who go beyond popular belief. The philosopher John Ladd wrote, *The Structure of a Moral Code: A Philosophical Analysis of Ethical Discourse Applied to the Ethics Of the Navaho Indians*. From this book, written in 1957, it is clear that Ladd would most likely disagree with the ideas that Elders are not reliable sources for their world view and with the Jesuit's claim that "... perhaps we should find nothing worthy of publication".¹²

Unlike Callicott and Overholt, Ladd based his work concerning the ethics of the Navaho people on the information received from the people in question. Unfortunately, Ladd relied mainly on information from *one* person. Ladd put total trust in this Indian thinker. Although Ladd placed great faith in the *thinker*, he discredits any accounts from the ordinary person. He makes a distinction between the thinker and the man of action. Ladd's informant was an eighty-five year old Navaho who was "...one of the most respected men in the community, and for many years its leader."¹³ Although I disagree with Ladd's distinction between *thinker* and *man of action* I was impressed to find someone who acknowledged that a Native person was the best authority on Native values.

Boatman claims further that not only do most scholars dismiss statements from contemporary Elders, they also choose instead to believe the: "Europeans and Euro-Americans whose early journals conveniently provide the *evidence* which fits their

¹² In the forward to Ladd's book Clyde Kluckholm congratulates Ladd on taking philosophy beyond the bounds of Western philosophy. What is especially welcome is the "eagerness to treat seriously and with sophistication the discourse, the artistic productions, the ideas and thought-processes of non-Western and non-literate peoples."

¹³ John Ladd, *The Structure of a Moral Code*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957). 199.

hypothesis."**[emphasis added]**¹⁴ Since first European contact, to the present day, North American Aboriginal people have been misrepresented by the non-Native person. The very name "Indian" is itself the first example of such misrepresentation. Then we have the letters from the Jesuit missionaries which inaccurately assumed First Nations people to be "savage...rude."¹⁵ As confirmation they allege that Natives are:

...savage, haunting the woods, ignorant, lawless and rude: they are wanderers with nothing to attach them to a place, neither homes nor relationship, neither possessions nor love of country, as people they have bad habits, are extremely lazy, gluttonous, profane, treacherous, cruel in their revenge, and given up to all kinds of lewdness, men and women alike, the men having several wives and abandoning them to others, and the women only serving them as slaves....¹⁶

Thus the Jesuits were able to provide *evidence* which fit their assumptions and led subsequent people to the same belief that the Natives were *savages*. The result was the *save the savages mission* which began with the Jesuits and continues with present day Government. The Jesuits were able to promote their mission and justify their being in this country by writing that Native people: "...are savages, it is to domesticate and civilize them that we have come here...."¹⁷ They further add that "it would be too much to...demand reason and maturity from a child,"¹⁸ an attitude which is still reflected in current Government policy. Such perceptions have seriously affected Native life. It is my hope that this thesis

¹⁴ Boatman, *My Elders Taught Me*, 21.

¹⁵ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, I, 173.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 183.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

may help to set aside the misconceptions about Native people that have prevailed for far too long.

Unlike the scholars Boatman criticizes, I am not relying solely on information provided by non-Native people. Neither do I make a distinction between a *thinker* and a *person of action* as Ladd did. I have relied primarily on information gathered from Native people of all ages. Ladd writing in 1957 may have been thinking only of the professional philosopher, or perhaps the philosopher king. By restricting his interviews to the *thinker* I believe Ladd seriously limited his research resulting in questionable conclusions.

Elders have a wealth of knowledge that has been passed down to them through the centuries by means of the oral tradition. The oral tradition is fundamental to this thesis.

The Western world is, however, suspicious of this form of communication. Suspicion of the oral tradition undermines most traditional Native knowledge. This has led to a rising concern among contemporary Native people. North American Aboriginal people's lives have centred around this medium for thousands of years. Native people know and understand the importance of this tradition and acknowledge its authenticity without questioning it.

Most academics would not agree with them but Douglas Rabb, from the philosophy department at Lakehead University, appears to be an exception. Rabb has done a number of studies on Native philosophy, and believes in the legitimacy of the oral tradition. Western academia however, requires more than acceptance of the oral tradition at face value. In his article *Prologues to Native Philosophy: Some research methodologies*, Rabb cites Native

scholars in an attempt to demonstrate validity of the oral tradition.¹⁹ Rabb notes that Mohawk artist Elwood Green believes the oral tradition is valid depending on who does it. Green argues from the continuity of the Iroquois ceremonies: "The Iroquois have used oral tradition for hundreds and thousands of years and its accuracy can be seen by the continuity of their ceremonies which are the same today as they were then."²⁰ The soundness of Green's argument rests on the continuity of the Iroquois ceremonies over the centuries.

Rabb then cites an argument for traditional songs by Charlotte Heth, a Cherokee ethnomusicologist. Native musicians have been singing these songs for centuries. Heth has argued for singers' incredible memories and how the songs that are around today are almost exactly the same as those recorded in 1883. The only difference today is a slight change in tempo or a word dropped here and there. However, as Heth states, "You will find that the songs fundamentally don't change."²¹ She further adds that "I think those of you who grew up in the oral tradition know that the things you remember in your mind stick with you longer than the things you read on paper."²²

In the Western world academics rely on the accuracy of written reports. To further support the oral tradition, Rabb cites an argument against written records from the perspective of Billy Two Rivers, a Mohawk from Kanawake. Two Rivers argues from an Indian

¹⁹ Douglas Rabb, "Prologues to Native Philosophy: Some Research Methodologies," *European Review of Native American Studies*, 9.1 (1995), 23.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

perspective:

In the early writings about Indians there were many distortions. And there was no one to correct them. The people who came from a generation or two afterward took that as truth, and consequently the written word that we get to this day comes through a counterfeit or distorted route.²³

Considering the way Native people have been documented historically (for which we have already seen some evidence) it is no surprise they would distrust the written word and favour an oral tradition. For, as Two Rivers states, "When you are handed an oral tradition...it's coming from your family, parents and grandparents. There is a feeling of legitimacy and truth in what is being passed down to you."²⁴

Rabb does not make it clear whether Two Rivers is against all writings about Native people or only those written by non-Natives. It is the Westerner's long dependency on the written word that has made them suspicious of the oral tradition and hence Rabb's attempt to justify it. Rabb's paper was designed to demonstrate the necessity of continuing research into North American Aboriginal people's world views through philosophical investigations. He successfully demonstrated the means by which one could build a bridge that can take us back to, and possibly beyond, the *documentary horizon*. Furthermore his discussion of a more *holistic* approach, provided me with the direction necessary to engage in this research.

Two Rivers is claiming the superiority of the oral over the written tradition. Aboriginal people in other parts of the world are making similar claims. One of my professors on a recent visit to New Zealand heard a Maori leader argue that written documentation failed

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

to convey the emotion oral communication conveys.

Sean Kane in the book, *Wisdom Of The Myhtellers* also notes its importance.²⁵ Kane claims there is a "...difference between printed and told narrative, a difference marked in every detail and reach of the story, in the quality of the pauses as well as in the rhythm of the overall composition."²⁶ He adds the writer is:

...absorbed in the task of presenting the illusion of a unity of consciousness achieved through properly constructed verbal sequences. In contrast, oral narrative is free of the arm's-length language. It is told with a voice in which many other voices sound with unexpected ranges and resonances, reverberating with tones here and tones there until the whole story starts to sing inside itself.²⁷

When a lesson is offered in the manner Kane describes, it has the tendency as Heth so nicely stated, to stay in your head longer than what you read. Another reason for accepting the oral tradition has to do with the countless and continued means by which it is transmitted.

According to Kane there are many ways "in which an oral culture is transmitted, through dance, ceremonies, song, oration, ritual costuming, mask wearing, the carving of totems, the painting of bodies, the watching of tasks being done expertly."²⁸ All of these are still being carried on, all across North America, in the way they have always been.

Another very important reason for adhering to the oral tradition has to do with sacred matters. Native people are not taught their spiritual beliefs through books such as *The Holy*

²⁵ Sean Kane, *Wisdom of the Myhtellers* (Peterborough, Ont: Broadview Press, 1994).

²⁶ *Ibid.* 188.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.* 186.

Bible or the *Koran*, but through oral narration. Many of these beliefs and practises are so sacred they have been kept secret and only certain people, such as those in the Midewiwin society, have knowledge of them.²⁹ These can only be passed down orally. To write about these sacred beliefs would open them up to dissemination. More importantly they would no longer be exclusive to Native people. Ward Churchill in the book, *Indians Are Us* discusses this very problem. Appropriation of Native spiritual practises is so serious that a group of respected Elders from different Nations have declared war against people exploiting Lakota spirituality.³⁰

There is no doubt in my mind that the oral tradition is valid today as it was hundreds of years ago. What I find sad is the need to justify using this tradition in an academic paper when no Native would ever doubt its validity or accuse it of being tainted by assimilation.

²⁹ The Midewiwin Society, as described in *The Orders of the Dreamed*, is an "esoteric association concerned with healing and sorcery." Jennifer S.H. Brown and Robert Brightman, *The Orders of the Dreamed: George Nelson on Cree and Northern Ojibwa Religion and Myth, 1823* (Winnipeg, Man: University of Manitoba Press, 1990) 174.

³⁰ Ward Churchill, *Indians Are Us?: Culture and Genocide in Native North America* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1994), 273-77.

1.2 ASSIMILATION AND LANGUAGE LOSS

Along with the oral tradition another concern which might be raised by academics is that European contact and assimilation over many generations may influence what we will be told about Native world views by Native Elders casting doubt on the legitimacy of such reports. Before further discussion an examination of the meaning of the word "assimilation" should clarify for the reader why I do not believe assimilation to be a problem. According to the Oxford Dictionary, assimilation means to absorb or be absorbed, with reference to absorbing ideas into the mind or being absorbed into a larger group. Let us take a look at the last definition for assimilation; it would appear to be the easiest to refute. If assimilation means being absorbed into a larger group then the most obvious implication would be that Native people would become indistinguishable from other people once in that larger group. But how ridiculous that would be, for any glance at a Native person quickly reveals significant physical differences between him or her and a non-Native person. Although physical distinction may impede cultural assimilation it does not negate the possibility therefore this may seem like an absurd argument but when we accuse a culture of not existing because of assimilation, then even the most absurd arguments should be examined. Another objection I have with this notion of being absorbed into the larger group is that, to the best of my knowledge there are still many Indian reserves in this country that are occupied by a significantly high number of Indian people. Contrary to popular belief, many Native people have not joined the larger group.

The second problem I have with the dictionary definition concerns absorbing ideas into the mind. This is a more difficult proposition to refute. We are well aware that people

are unable to access the minds of other people. Our only means of knowing the thoughts of others would be to ask them what they are thinking and what they believe in. How can we claim to know what Native people think, especially when we steadfastly refuse to ask them.

Even if we did ask Native people their opinion, (which of course is the only way we can *know* what their ideas are) how can we be sure that what we are told in fact reflects a Native world view? J.B. Callicott argues, "To buy guns, motors, and mackinaw jackets is to buy, however unintentionally, a world view to boot."³¹ Is Callicott right? Has assimilation caused Native people to buy, albeit unintentionally, a new world view? And whose world view is it? One can only assume that Callicott is referring to the Western world view. If by world view we mean that Native people have absorbed the *idea* of that world view into their minds through the purchase of implements and clothing, then I suppose Callicott may have a point. However, I question whether Callicott would also attribute a Western world view to the citizens of say Iran or other Middle Eastern countries, since they also buy into Western technology. Iranians buy guns, drive vehicles and some even dress in western style clothes.

Western technology does not replace a world view that has been in existence for thousands of years. Assimilation requires you to give up your cultural identity and adopt an identity based on another culture's values. Residential schools were one method used to force assimilation. They did not work as planned. In the event that a person gave up his or her cultural identity, whether through deliberate choice or otherwise, and adopted an identity based on another culture's values then yes, we can say that person has absorbed the *ideas* of another culture into his or her mind and thus has assimilated or become assimilated.

³¹ Callicott, "American Indian Land Wisdom?" *Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, 212.

I am not saying that European contact left no impact on Native people. Nor am I saying that assimilation is impossible or has never occurred. What I am claiming, is that a great number of Native people have not given up their identity. In fact contemporary society is faced with many North American Natives fighting to retain their cultural identity in spite of hundreds of years of interference.

Just because people wear similar apparel, drive similar vehicles and use similar weaponry does not make them culturally similar.

One may argue that Middle Eastern countries have a written tradition, therefore cannot be compared to the non-literate people of North America. But then I would have to ask; is it the *act of writing* that safeguards against the adoption of a different world view from one's own?

If so, then the real problem would seem to stem not from the content, *vis-a-vis* western in contrast to a Native world view but rather the medium by which it is presented e.g. oral narratives vs. written words. It would appear that we are once again confronted with a question of the validity of the oral tradition. Native people know and believe in their world view and have trust in their Elders, and the stories the Elders use to teach those world views. In the introduction to *Dancing With A Ghost*, Basil H. Johnston explains why there is such trust:

The Anishinaubaeg had a high regard akin to reverence for story-tellers, orators, and for language itself. The highest compliment or tribute they can pay a speaker was to say of him or her, 'w'daeb-wae', taken to mean 'he/she is right, correct, accurate, truthful'. It is an expression approximating the word for 'truth' in the English language except that it means that one casts one's knowledge as far as one has perceived it and as accurately as one can best describe it...the best one can do is to tell what one knows with the highest

degree of accuracy.³²

According to Johnston, as well as being complimentary when saying `w'daeb-wae' you are also affirming the other person's credibility. Speech and credibility were closely associated. Such a relationship was delicate and could easily be broken if a person was careless in his/her use of speech. "Once the bond was broken, trust and confidence in the speaker was lost."³³ If this were to occur then the speaker would lose his or her influence with an audience. "For a community to regard a person as worth listening to was the highest distinction they could confer."³⁴ Since speech and credibility are so important to Native people it is easy to see how distorting their world view would violate their memories. If a world view is presented for thousands of years in stories or legends that world view is unlikely to disappear as long as the stories persist.

One must remember that stories were told over and over. They were not related once, to each new generation, but many, many times throughout a person's life. For many people there was no sufficient time lapse where they could forget what had originally been related. If such were the case, for instance, if a hundred years passed between the telling of the story, then a serious distortion (new world view) in the story could have occurred without causing a comment. However, this is not the case with Native narratives or personal stories. Indeed, the speaker would lose his/her credibility if the world view presented in the story were distorted. A speaker behaving in such a way would lose his/her audience. Rather than

³² Rupert Ross, *Dancing With A Ghost*, (Markham, ON: Reed Books, 1996), xii.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

objecting the people would just stop listening. Without an audience the message or story cannot be passed down through the generations.

It is possible that the introduction of residential schools may have interrupted the sequence of story telling for a short period. However the interruption did not occur for all people. Another serious effect of residential schools was that many Native people lost their language. I had a conversation with an Ojibwa man who attended residential school. He remarked that residential school was where he lost the ability to speak his language.³⁵ Many people argue that if a language dies so would the culture. This would only hold true if language was all there was to a culture. I am not denying its significance for many words in the Native language are difficult if not impossible to translate into English. Many children lost their language and this interfered greatly with communication between generations. However it did not stop communication entirely. The beauty of the language with all its meanings may be beyond the comprehension of some people, however the content of all knowledge is not lost. There is a considerable number of people aware of, and practising traditional ways, whose only language is English.

While inability to speak the language may preclude some knowledge, it does not impede all teachings. Therefore, I am not convinced that an inability to speak one's language is synonymous with an inability to know one's culture.

Some linguists however, argue that a linkage does exist between language loss and culture loss. Michael Krauss argues, in the article *A Loss for Words* that "...language is

³⁵ Andrew Nawagesic, Appendix.

identity."³⁶ According to Krauss "As long as people speak a language apart, they will maintain their identity apart. If they do not, long term survival of the identity is—at best—in question."³⁷

Supposing a language such as Passamaquaddy were to disappear, he asks: what would "...set the Passamaquaddy Indians of Maine apart from other Americans except their facial features?"³⁸

My response to Krauss would be, "The culture itself." Krauss seems to be unaware that oral traditions represent the ongoing living practises of today's Aboriginal people. These traditions, as we have seen from Kane's writings, are numerous and not entirely dependent on the language being spoken. The importance of non-linguistic communication is apparently ignored. One does not learn a culture *only* by spoken words. There are many ways of absorbing the culture into one's mind. From birth on Native children are learning about their culture. In chapter 8 I give an example of how two mothers (Native and non-Native) teach their toddlers to perceive the world around them. One mother's teaching focuses on observation and connectedness while the other one's focus leads to separateness. Therefore, "By the time the child learns to speak he already knows the kind of world which his language will depict."³⁹ What I am interested in is the world of values and how they are learned. The example of these two mothers indicates a beginning to this learning. Both mothers were

³⁶ Michael E. Krauss, "A Loss for Words," *Earthwatch* (March/April, 1992b), 11.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Viola Cordova, *Hearing Other Voices*, (n.p. 1995), 17.

communicating in the English language. However, each was instilling quite different world views in her child.

We cannot ignore the impact our five senses have on knowledge acquisition. In understanding our world, verbal language is but one part of the process. The culture a child is raised in determines his understanding of the world. Thus, whether a child speaks in English or Cree his/her understanding reflects the understanding of a particular culture.

In *Returning To The Teachings*, Rupert Ross refers to judgmental and non-judgmental language. He claims that the English language is full of judgmental terms whereas in the Native language these terms are conspicuously absent.⁴⁰ Ross admits he "...never realized how 'harsh' the English language is, or how judgmental and argumentative we become as we speak it."⁴¹ He adds that he had no idea "that people could—and do—live otherwise, without having to respond to everything around them in such combative and judgmental ways."⁴² He also noted that even when speaking in English Native people have a tendency to avoid judgmental terms. This indicates to me that Native people while speaking in English are able to maintain an essential aspect of their culture. Within the Native language words are descriptive rather than judgmental and value laden. Many Native people are able to transcend the combative nature of the English language. Ross further adds that "In fact, the expression of judgments seemed to be avoided, rather than expected. At the same time, there did not

⁴⁰ Rupert Ross, *Returning to the Teachings* (Toronto, Ont: Penguin, 1996). 102.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

seem to be any loss of communication."⁴³

Furthermore, ask any Native person about his/her identity and you will quickly be told their Nation and location, for example "I'm a Cree from James Bay" or, "I'm an Ojibwa from Gull Bay." Cultural identity belongs not just to the language spoken. It would appear the greatest concern that language loss means culture loss comes from the culture whose language is not in question.

I, personally do not speak Cree yet that limitation has not prevented my understanding the lessons I've been taught from Cree and Ojibwa speakers translating the messages into English. A potential loss of culture comes not from the language loss alone, but from a refusal to listen. Native people listen with more than ears. If they were to stop sharing the knowledge and practice of their culture; if they were to stop listening with their ears, and hearts then yes, they may well lose their culture.

Government and Churches made an attempt to bring about that possibility but they were not successful.

Many traditional practices went underground but, as one Ojibwa Elder remarked when I asked if the culture was dying, "No, no, its going up...it's gonna go stronger. Because right here not too many, [know the traditional ways] but there's lot of them wanna learn. Cause I been all over the place like Colorado, Minnesota, all those places, South Dakota, um, New Mexico, -ah- lot of places yeah."⁴⁴ A young Native man who believes strongly in the oral tradition commented on the same question about the culture dying. His answer was:

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴⁴ William Wilson, Appendix.

I don't think it ever really left. Its still there, its just a self-fulfilling [that is, wishful thinking on the part of non-Natives] prophecy more or less, that Indians got wiped out, whether mentally or whether its physically. It's still there.[Indian culture] Its something that you can't find in a book. I know from where my community is, which is Eagle Lake, but we're not fixed [no reserve location] well, from what my father told me. What he used to tell me, us was, a piece of paper doesn't tell you where you belong your heart does. So from what I know and from the resources that I borrow from the earth I belong where the rice is, where the moose go, where rabbits, where the blueberries are.⁴⁵

The young man who made this comment understands who he is, he knows his identity.

He does not speak Ojibwa and does not have a reserve to go home to but he still knows who he is. He does not need, as he said, a piece of paper telling him who he is nor does he learn his culture from books. His knowledge comes from his parents. "From what my father told me" is a statement commonly heard among Native people as well as "my grandfather/grandmother told me". In spite of language difficulties the oral tradition is still alive.

Knowledge of ancestral language is not a sufficient condition for knowledge of the culture for I met with a Cree man who was fluent in his language yet knew nothing about his culture until quite recently.⁴⁶ Nor is knowledge of ancestral language a necessary condition for there are people around as I stated earlier, with knowledge of their culture, that do not speak their ancestral language.

I do not argue that ancestral languages are unnecessary. I fully recognize their vital importance in many aspects of the culture such as prayers and ceremonies. What I do argue

⁴⁵ Owen Zoccole, Appendix.

⁴⁶ Wally Umpherville, Appendix.

is that the culture would not be completely lost. Identity is not solely dependent on the language.

While many elements of a culture can survive in a foreign language, much is buried with the dead language. It is fortunate that many Native languages have survived. There are Natives who recognize that certain elements of their culture are beyond their understanding without knowledge of their language. In an attempt to rectify this problem many of them are in the process of learning their language.

The effects of Western education on language retention in the non-Native system has stirred considerable interest both in Native people and linguistic studies. In the past few years recognition of the large number of Native speakers whose ability to speak their language is rapidly declining has prompted the emergence of Native language courses in many schools around the country. Students are reclaiming their language at primary, secondary and post secondary schools. The future may well see a significant increase in Native speakers. For as previously stated, Native people are reclaiming their culture. Fortunately there are still Elders available to help with the transition.

Reports from Native spokespersons such as Elwood Green, Charlotte Heth, Billy Two Rivers and Basil Johnston, demonstrate "...the respect and reverence...Native people have for the oral tradition, as well, the importance of...the obligation to preserve that important inheritance as accurately as possible."⁴⁷ It was the search for legitimacy and truth that caused me to rely on the Native peoples' oral tradition as a fundamental requirement for this thesis.

⁴⁷ Rabb, "Prologues to Native Philosophy: Some Research Methodologies, *European Review of Native American Studies* 9, no.1 (1995), 23-25.

1.3 PHILOSOPHY BEHIND NATIVE NARRATIVE

Another method I believe to be useful is the philosophical analysis of the Native narratives. This procedure was utilized by Thomas W. Overholt and J. Baird Callicott in their book *Clothed In Fur And Other Tales*. I examined narratives in order to draw out of them the values that were integral to Native life. Examples of narratives and personal stories taken from books such as *Clothed-In-Fur And Other Tales*, as well as personal stories related by contemporary Native people are included in the last seven chapters, along with a philosophical analysis of each, and an indication of their relevance to Native values.

Narratives are an essential element in a Native world view. To some non-Native people the narrative may appear as just a fictional story, entertaining and yet sometimes confusing in context. For a Native person narratives are the embodiment of their traditions. The content usually holds a covert lesson which the listener is invited to recognize and internalize. Native narratives are instruments of instruction in history, morality, and indeed culture.

Narratives are an important way in which oral tradition passes on knowledge. Narratives continue to serve this function as will be demonstrated in later chapters. As well as being a medium for teaching, narratives were also meant to be entertaining. It is important to remember however, that entertainment was not their only or primary function. I believe narratives provide an essential contribution to a Native culture's world view and value system.

World views are not theoretical inventions or mystical presuppositions. Rather, they involve a complex web of practical implications. Whether a world view is acted upon overtly or covertly it includes models of appropriate behaviours. When I talk about covert models

of appropriate behaviour I am referring to the underlying directive, either implicit or explicit, in narratives and life itself. Lessons learned were not learned from direct intrusive moral instruction. Native people do not have anything like a formal code of ethical behaviour. Unlike Christianity, with its Ten Commandments, there are no rules to be followed by everyone. As Peter Woboditsch has argued in a Master's thesis entitled *Ojibwa World View and Environmental Ethic: An Investigative Study*, "The rules governing actions were particular to specific situations, but they were based on a universal idea of what was expected in relation to the rest of the world."⁴⁸ It was this unwritten, universal idea that has been passed on through the centuries by way of oral tradition. What does one mean by universal idea? I am not claiming that all Aboriginal people share a single universal truth in regard to ethics. In this context I am merely claiming a *universal idea* in reference to Indigenous people of North America. The universal idea is the cultural belief that they share a place in this universe with other beings, and as such, have moral obligations.

A reflective reading of the narratives may enable one to formulate some ideas about the ethics of the people. However, there are problems with relying only on written accounts, for as Kane so accurately states, the written story cannot catch "the power of the moment in which mythological tradition is most active, the moment when its orders of knowledge are most focused. That moment is the actual telling of a story."⁴⁹ As such, the printed word produces cold, unfeeling, impersonal information, whereas the true oral narration puts blood

⁴⁸ Peter Woboditsch, *Ojibwa World View and Environmental Ethic* (Windsor, Ont: n.p., 1994), 81.

⁴⁹ Kane, *Wisdom of the Mythtellers*, 186.

and life into the story, making it alive and personal to each individual listener. For this reason I have included not only reflective reading but more importantly, participation in the listening.

1.4 GOING HOME

As I mentioned earlier, the diversity of the Canadian Native population is such that it would be impossible to write about the entire culture. For this reason I found it necessary to set some parameters. The values I discuss will be restricted to those of the Cree in northern Manitoba and the Ojibwa of Northwestern Ontario. Due to the nature of my study, i.e. the use of interviews, I supplied consent forms to meet the requirements of the Lakehead University Ethics Committee. Whenever doing research that involves human subjects it is necessary to follow strict guidelines. You must not harm the participants in any way, be it psychological or physical, and when dealing with different cultures it is imperative not to violate their cultural norms. In the case of indigenous people, certain information cannot be documented without permission.

It is a necessary component of interviews with Native people that the questions concerning spiritual matters be respectful and non-invasive. Depending on the situation the interviews were either structured or unstructured in accordance with the wishes of the Elder. I complied with all requests for confidentiality. The knowledge of spiritual ceremonies that I encountered is not included in this thesis out of respect for their sacred nature. In the unstructured interviews I sought to glean lessons in the way my ancestors did.

This brings me to the part of the methodology where I draw upon my personal experience. I am Metis. My mother is a Cree woman from Manitoba and my Father was a Frenchman. I was born in the northern town of The Pas, Manitoba. I have a personal investment in this thesis; I believe it will establish a deeper sense of who I am, and why I have certain beliefs and behave as I do. Although I come from two distinct bloodlines I am aware

that my Native culture has formed my values to a greater extent than my non-Native culture. Such awareness was not always the case. Until I was thirty-eight years of age I believed I had been raised as a white child in a white society (my parents moved to Winnipeg when I was two weeks old). I was aware of my Native heritage, although most contact with that part of my family was limited to summer visits. I have been educated in the Western world. After an introduction to Native philosophy, through the course 2805, Canadian Native World View, taught by Douglas Rabb and Dennis McPherson at Lakehead University, this illusion, along with a lot of confusion dissolved.

I am a Metis woman who had been raised with my mother's Native values, but I was trying to live in a white society where I often found myself in conflict over the way I was told to behave and my inability to do so. I no longer have to wrestle with confusion over my values.

The method I employed, and one I believe to be essential in any study dealing with a particular culture, is ethnographic in nature. That is, in order to write about a culture I felt it necessary to immerse myself in it. Therefore, I made travelling to native communities the final method toward gaining an understanding of native values. I made arrangements to travel to northern Manitoba beginning July, 1996 and ending my travels October 7th, 1996. I travelled to the reserve at Grand Rapids, Manitoba, where I visited my mother's youngest sister. (My aunt, though no longer in the position, was voted in as the first woman chief of that reserve in 1976.) I travelled by car to the reserve at Easterville where I stayed one month with my niece and another month with my elder sister. I do not speak Cree but my sister, niece and nephew (who are fluent in the Cree language) could interpret for me, had the

occasion arisen. My main interest was in Easterville as it was a relatively isolated community until the 1960's when the Chemawawin Band was relocated as a result of a Hydro project, which flooded most of the Cedar Lake reserve. The bulk of my work was done on this reserve. Easterville had previously been called Cedar Lake Reserve, and it was at Cedar Lake that I spent memorable summer holidays as a child. From Easterville I travelled by boat to where Easterville was originally situated (Cedar Lake). Here I was once again able to experience the beauty of the original reserve. Along with a sense of nostalgia, the site of Cedar Lake also imbued me with a deep sadness. While touring the island I was confronted with the extent of damage caused by the hydro flooding. Gravestones could be seen partially above the water. Later I was driven to Thompson, Manitoba where I stayed with another sister. In all these locations I sought out Native Elders, participated in, and observed daily life. I maintained a diary on a daily basis, which proved to be a valuable source of information. When my trip was concluded I returned to Thunder Bay.

I am aware that a visit of such short duration would not make an *Indian expert* out of anyone. Nor do I claim to be an expert. I do however, intend to return to the reserve, not to become an *Indian expert*, but to become an expert *Indian*. The experience of learning my culture has only just begun. In this aspect I differ from many non-Native researchers who have written volumes *on* Indians. I am able to learn my culture from the "inside" while they are limited to learning it from the "outside".

1.5 EARLY CONTACT SOURCES

The last method I wish to describe is the philosophical analysis of the *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*. The *Relations* consist of seventy three volumes of letters written by Jesuit Priests. These letters were written from Canada to Superiors and friends of the Order in France and Italy. In order to demonstrate the continuity to precontact values I have relied on the extensive writings of the Jesuit missionaries for first contact documents.

The Jesuits wrote many letters to France, describing this new Canadian country but more importantly, they chronicled Native behaviour. An examination of these letters has provided me with a wealth of information on the values the Native people held precontact. These letters provide the documentary link I required in order to verify continuity thereby demonstrating that the values described by Clare Brant are indeed traditional Native values.

Although the letters were mainly about Iroquoian groups, the connection to western Nations was made possible through the work of Dr. Brant. Brant is a direct descendent of the people the Jesuits were chronicling. Therefore, his personal experiences corroborate the Jesuits' letters as do those of other Mohawk people. Brant recognized the same values operating in the Cree and Ojibwa. Given that many Cree and Ojibwa migrated from the east it is only reasonable to assume they have the same historical link to the behaviours documented in eastern groups. The behaviour of Algonquin people was also documented by the Jesuit fathers. The Algonquian language family group includes among others, the Cree and Ojibwa as well as the Algonquin; therefore a linguistic relationship exists. This linguistic relationship is also evident in the similarities between the narratives. Many Native people agree that narratives play a significant role in the adoption of values. Considering the

similarities in narratives and given that both Ojibwa and Cree people in today's society demonstrate the same values, it is safe to say they must have learned the same values their ancestors did.

Given that I have spent considerable time explaining the need for authentic Native documentation I need to say why I rely on the Jesuit letters. I am not claiming at this point that the Jesuits' letters are authentic representations of Native people whereas all others are incorrect or misleading.

I am not going to the *Relations* to confirm what Native people claim. On the contrary, I am going to Native people to confirm what the Jesuits have claimed. Native people are the only ones who can prove continuity in their value system. My task would have been easier had I been able to do comparative studies with original Native documents. However, that was not possible given that Native people did not use a written tradition.

My only alternative was to get descriptions of Native behaviour as close to contact as possible. I chose the Jesuits because it is my belief they were at least trying to be honest in their descriptions. Unfortunately the descriptions are coloured by a religious bias. However, this in itself causes no serious problems for as Rabb states, "...any trained philosopher should be able to make allowances for it."⁵⁰

Previous analysis of the *Relations* provided Michael M. Pomedli, from Saskatchewan, the opportunity to uncover precontact Native concepts. Rabb believes that works such as the *Relations* allowed Pomedli to gain "...insights into Huron spirituality usually overlooked by

⁵⁰ Rabb, "Prologues to Native Philosophy," 23.

modern anthropologists and ethnologists."⁵¹

I chose these volumes for the same purpose. It is my belief they provide insights into the morality of the Aboriginal people the Jesuits first encountered.

The Jesuit fathers often wrote letters praising the behaviour of the people for which no analysis is needed. At other times they criticized behaviours. It is on these critical comments that I focus my analysis.

The Jesuits provided lengthy descriptions of Native behaviour along with interpretations which reflect their own religious and cultural perspectives. In these records, it is the actual behaviour that suggests continuity with precontact peoples and which is open to reinterpretation.

What Pomedli accomplished concerning spirituality, I hope to accomplish with reference to values, and that is to "...allow what was original to shine forth through the forms it is presently embedded in--to dig beneath the foreign matter."⁵²

⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁵²Michael M. Pomedli, *Ethnophilosophical And Ethnolinguistic Perspectives On The Huron Indian Soul* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), xi.

PART II
NATIVE VALUES

CHAPTER I

An Introduction to Native Values

The great German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) wrote, "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end."⁵³ In other words, treat individuals with dignity and value. Hundreds of years before Kant's famous publication, North American Aborigines were living with values involving treating humanity with dignity and value. Kant believed humans have a dignity, an intrinsic worth that makes them valuable, "above all price."⁵⁴ Kant maintained that humans had this dignity because they are rational agents, capable, and free to make their own decisions, setting their own goals and guiding their conduct by reason. Although Kant and Aborigines would agree with the concepts of dignity and value, they would part company regarding who should be the recipients of dignity and value. Kant believed rational human beings were worthy of respect and as such were valuable. To Aboriginal people, dignity and value were accorded to all beings, both human and non-human.

According to John Boatman, Aboriginal people believe that all beings including

⁵³ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, H.J. Paton, trans. (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 96.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

humans were given the inherent responsibility to seek "...balance and to treat all other beings with honour and respect while functioning as the integral part of the created universe."⁵⁵ Aboriginal people would not limit who should receive respect, nor would they place less value on some persons. As well, Native people would disagree with Kant over *what* or *who* constitutes a person. Kant's belief of persons was limited to that of *human* persons, whereas Native people believe in *non-human* persons, or as Callicott and Overholt call them: "*other-than-human persons*."⁵⁶

Kant had a belief in the superiority of humans and he is certainly not alone in this supposition. Since ancient time humans have seen themselves as not only different from all creatures but superior to them. As a result of his Eurocentric view Kant said, "But so far as animals are concerned, we have no direct duties. Animals...are there merely as a means to an end. That end is man."⁵⁷ Kant thought we had indirect duties to animals not because they were morally important but because "...he who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men."⁵⁸ Thus by treating animals well we cultivate corresponding duties toward human beings. Conversely, American Aboriginal people believe we have *direct* duties to animals. This is one significant instance, where the aboriginal world view is diametrically opposed to that found in one particular non-Native world view.

⁵⁵ Boatman, *My Elders Taught Me*, 35.

⁵⁶ Overholt, *Clothed-In-Fur and Other Tales*, 143.

⁵⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, Louis Infield, trans. (New York: The Century Co., n.d.), 239.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 240.

Another ethical view which comes closer in two ways to that of Native people's, is the theory of Utilitarianism. John Stuart Mill advocated a utilitarian opinion that the standard of morality should be to bring about as much happiness as possible. Mill following the teachings of Jeremy Bentham, did not limit that happiness to human beings, "...but so far as the nature of things admits, to the whole of sentient creation."⁵⁹ Mill recognizes that animals also have a right to happiness. This view, like the Native view, is vastly different from Kant's. Kant thought we needed to cultivate duties toward animals only because if we mistreated them we may be inclined to mistreat humans. As I said earlier Mill's theory is a lot closer to that of Native ethics in two ways. The first concerns animals having rights (which will be discussed in later chapters). The second reason, we see later in letters written by the Jesuit fathers, has to do with happiness.

According to Boatman, Aboriginals have a view of the universe that is dynamic and organic, "...driven by constant interrelations between spirit and matter."⁶⁰ The Aboriginal people held deep spiritual beliefs and were highly moral (as will be demonstrated later). The advance of Europeans to the North American continent resulted in many misconceptions about Native people. The Europeans were filled with a conviction of their own sophisticated and civilized Western ideas. When they encountered the Aboriginals living here the Europeans witnessed a life style so different from their own *civilized* way of life that it led them to label the Aboriginals as *savage* and *uncivilized*. Due to their ethnocentrism the

⁵⁹ Robert C. Solomon, *Introducing Philosophy: A Text with Integrated Readings*, 5th. ed. (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College, 1992), 722.

⁶⁰ Boatman, *My Elders Taught Me*, 11.

Europeans missed the ethos of the Aboriginal people.

The Oxford dictionary describes savage as: 1. uncivilized, primitive, fierce, cruel; *colloq.* very angry. 2. n. member of a savage tribe; brutal or barbarous person. 3. vt. (of animal) attack savagely, maul; (of critic etc.) attack fiercely. [Ff. Rmc (L *silva* a wood)].⁶¹

The Aboriginals were savage *if* we remove the negative connotations of the *modern* description of the word and ascribe to it the original meaning "people who live in the woods". Unfortunately the negative connotation is the accepted meaning.

I, like other Aboriginal people, do not believe our ancestors deserved the name savage. Nor were they uncivilized as the early Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries described. On the contrary, they had a wide system of beliefs and values that, according to Viola Cordova, (an Apache Philosopher), allowed them to "...not only survive - but thrive -- on this continent for thousands of years."⁶² In addition to their beliefs and values, Aboriginals had strict sets of protocol that allowed them to function in a highly sophisticated and interpersonal system.

Attitudes toward Aboriginal people as inferior beings, savage, and in need of civilizing, have dominated European thought from earliest contact to present day society. It has been the creed of both religion and government "to civilize the savage." We saw earlier how the Jesuits wrote letters describing this particular duty.

The Canadian Government introduced the Indian Act which in 1857 was described

⁶¹ R.E. Allen ed., *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 1984 ed., s.v. "Savage".

⁶² Viola Cordova, "Hearing Other Voices," 10.

as "An Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes in this Province, and to Amend the Laws Respecting Indians/ assented to June 10, 1857."⁶³ Lakehead University scholar, Robert Robson, writes in *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* that, "From the mid-nineteenth century when government policy was directed at 'civilizing the Indians' to the present day...government activity is often undertaken to eradicate the so-called 'Indian problem'."⁶⁴ It is apparent from Robson's article that government is still trying to civilize the Indian. Although government is no longer incorporating derogatory words like "civilize" and "savage" we are not to mistake this for acceptance of Indian people. The intention is to civilize by way of assimilation.

Present day society is however, faced with the cultural and political resurgence of Aboriginal people.⁶⁵ Aboriginal people are tired of the labels they have endured for years and the disregard for their way of life. They are in the process of reclaiming their culture. Part of this process involves Aboriginals presenting their way of life from their perspective, rather than from under the microscope of non-Native academics. Aboriginal people have been the butt of many racial jokes and I am no exception. When I first started my investigation I was faced with the comment, "I didn't know Indians had values"! or "Indians value anything that isn't nailed down"! Possibly these people thought they were being funny by passing off bad

⁶³ Derek G. Smith, ed. *Canadian Indians and the Law: Selected Documents, 1663-1972*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), 50.

⁶⁴ Robert Robson, "The Indian Act: A Northern Manitoba Perspective," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 11, 2 (1991), 297.

⁶⁵ Donald Purich, *Our Land: Native Rights in Canada*, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co. 1986), 30.

jokes. I did not think so. In fact I seriously question who the real savages are. Aboriginal people may not have their own set of *Commandments*, but they do have, and have had for many centuries an enviable system of ethics. I say enviable because the Jesuits, when writing to France, often compared Indian behaviour with regrettable French behaviour:

Having spent a long time in that day in one of the large cabins of the Savages, where there were a number of men, women, and children of all kinds, I noticed their wonderful patience. If so many families were together in our France, there would be nothing but disputes, quarrels, and revilings.⁶⁶

Dr. Brant presented what he believed to be the ethics of Aboriginal people. His studies led to the explanation of the difficulties faced by Aboriginals in the medical and education systems. Brant's study was the result of therapeutic practice and not an investigation into *Ethics* as is normally found in Philosophy. Thus Brant uses the term *ethics* to describe what are commonly known as specific moral rules rather than the concept of ethics. The term *ethics* conveys more than just a specific moral rule or practice. For example, according to Robert C. Solomon, ethics "...is not concerned with specific moral rules but with the foundation of morality and with providing general principles that will...help us evaluate the validity of a moral rule."⁶⁷

In light of this definition it would be inappropriate to continue using this *term* when describing the above mentioned *ethics*. Respect for Dr. Brant's work required I first outline the values as he originally described them, that is, as ethics. However, from here on I will refer to them as Aboriginal values. It is my belief that the ethics for Aboriginals has as its

⁶⁶ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, V, 105.

⁶⁷ Solomon, *Introducing Philosophy*, 651-52.

foundation *Respect*.

Part of Western philosophical thought involves virtue ethics and consequentialist ethics. Neither of these theories are rule-oriented, nevertheless what has emerged in mainstream thought is rule-governed. In most Western or non-Native traditions morality can best be described as, "...a set of fundamental rules that guide our actions."⁶⁸ These rules are explicit, such as those found in the Ten Commandments, e.g. Thou Shalt Not Kill. These rules are often imposed by family, religions and government. Native tradition also has a set of fundamental rules; however they are not directly imposed by family, religion or government as is often the case with the Ten Commandments.

How then does one come to know Native morality? Native communities have an unwritten code of ethics. This unwritten code is transmitted to the community via the oral tradition.

This investigation begins with an examination of Dr. Brant's work and removes it from the confines of therapeutic practice to the lives of people, living on and off reserves.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 651.

CHAPTER II

Value of Non-Interference

*They treat their children with wonderful affection, but they preserve no discipline, for they neither themselves correct them nor allow others to do so.*⁶⁹

According to Dr. Brant the most prevalent value is that of non-interference. By this he meant that an Aboriginal person does not tell another Aboriginal what to do. The act of directly interfering in someone's life is considered rude. Brant claims that Native people believe in voluntary co-operation. He adds that they do not believe in direct coaxing, advising or pleading with people. Brant further states that if advice were asked for, it was given in such a way as to avoid offence. This value extended to children as well. Brant has claimed that children are allowed to make their own decisions without coercion. He illustrates this claim with a quote from Rosalie Wax and Robert Thomas, *American Indians and white people*. Brant writes that:

A Native child may be allowed at the age of six, for example, to make the decision on whether or not he goes to school even though he is required to do so by law. The child may be allowed to decide whether or not he will do his homework, have his assignment done on time, and even visit the dentist. Native parents will be reluctant to force the child into doing anything he does not choose to do.⁷⁰

It must be noted however, that although Native people cannot directly tell others what to do they can and often do persuade through the use of "teasing."⁷¹

⁶⁹Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, I, 277.

⁷⁰ Brant, "Native Ethics and Rules of Behaviour," 535.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 538.

Persuasion can also be accomplished indirectly through the use of stories. For example, in an interview with Nora Wasacase, I asked if they, (Nora and her siblings) were instructed by their parents not to steal as is the case with most non-Native parents. She responded with the following:

We weren't told not to do this and do this ...[or] this will happen to you if you steal...I can't remember anything like [being] told not to steal 'cause of this happening. But I remember being told a story about ah, somebody that stole something and...did this [stealing] then the night before and then the next day he couldn't use his arm. They didn't say you would be punished because you stole. They would tell stories like that, that this [consequence] happened to this person, because he stole. He would never be able to use his arms again or never [be] able to walk again or [he] lost his vision. Those are the kinds of things I remember.⁷²

Nora's response was similar to many others. Nora is a Cree woman who grew up on the original reserve of Cedar Lake, today known as Easterville. Nora's story demonstrates what many Native people claim to be the way Native parents teach their children. As we can see Native parents (at least in this example) indirectly teach their children not to steal.

Rita King from the Gull Bay Reserve is an Ojibwa woman. At the age of 33 Rita has this to say about non-interference:

But the rule of non-interference does exist and I know it is, especially in my community. Yet in the sense that people will not talk directly to a person, -ah- the person [that] has been doing something out of the ordinary. But they will

⁷² Nora Wasacase, Appendix.

confront the behaviour by using such a thing as actualization, telling gossip. It's called town gossip today but it's not. It's a form of -ah- people talking about the behaviour, in a more general sense, but not about the person.⁷³

Brant would also call Rita's example non-interference because the person is not directly being confronted and told they were wrong for doing what they did. Discipline took another form, one that Rita calls town gossip. The Jesuits describe a similar situation to the one Rita calls gossip.

When, for example, some one begins to assert himself and to act the Sagamore, when he does not render the tribute, when his people leave him; then as among us, also among them, there are reproaches and accusations, as that such a one is only a half Sagamore, is newly hatched like a three-days' old chicken, that his crest is only beginning to appear; that he is only a Sagamochin, that is, a baby Sagamore, a little dwarf.⁷⁴

It is interesting to note that the Jesuits attribute this behaviour to ambition and thus are able to make the claim "that ambition reigns beneath the thatched roofs, as well as under the gilded, and our ears need not be pulled much to learn these lessons."⁷⁵ At this point we are clearly able to see the cultural bias. I do not deny that Native people have ambition, I'm sure many hoped, "beneath the thatched roofs," to become great leaders. The reason for this gossip is, however, much more serious than simply derision of ambition. The key to this misinterpretation lies in the statement "When, for example, some one begins to assert himself and act the Sagamore, when he does not render the tribute...." I take this statement to mean, the person was not showing proper respect. Respectful attitude and proper behaviour will

⁷³ Rita King, Appendix.

⁷⁴ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, III, 89.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

be discussed in a later chapter on protocol. Not rendering tribute whether through sharing or acknowledging another person, would be a direct sign of disrespect. Not recognizing respect as a high value, it is understandable the Jesuits would attribute the gossip to ambition. Ambitious striving was something the Jesuits could identify and understand.

It is important to note that non-interference does not mean that Native society exists without rules for proper behaviour. As we will see later, the rules are embedded in the culture, they are not directly imposed. Non-interference simply means people are allowed to make their own choices for behaviour without being coerced.

As I said earlier, advice when asked for was given in such a way as to avoid offence. Advice, when given, took the form of parables or stories. This would allow it to be taken or ignored without offence to either party. While at Cedar Lake I witnessed this method of giving advice through a parable. William Easter, an Elder from Easterville, told the people that they had been wrong not to bring children with them to the retreat at Cedar Lake. William did it without ever telling them they were wrong. It happened during a workshop where he was talking about restoring Native values. He said being at Cedar Lake was wonderful but something was missing. The year before, parents had brought their children and during the workshops the sound of children's laughter was everywhere, but this year, he said, it was silent, even the land was silent. He then talked about how children give meaning, and without children there was no life, there was no reason for adults to do anything. It was clear that he did not approve of the way children were left out of the retreat, however, he never once condemned the organizers of the retreat. In parables one can always say they missed the point being made. In the case of William's parable of the land being silent the

organizers could, if they chose, attribute his comments to simply missing children. William chose a respectful way to chastise the people. As a result no one felt humiliated and the workshop continued on in a friendly atmosphere.

This is not to say that people never interfere, but when they do it is in an indirect way designed not to offend. We saw this in the story about William Easter. If we offend or criticize someone, we are not showing proper respect for them.

There are times when interference is necessary; for example, it would be ridiculous to imagine a Native mother deliberately letting her child crawl into a burning fire-pit because that is where the child wanted to go. She would of course remove her child from the danger. It is important to stress that non-interference means not interfering in a manner that is likely to cause emotional harm. Dignity must not be harmed. All people are deserving of respect and dignity, even children.

One useful method for instructing or giving advice without directly interfering is through the telling of narratives. Quite often the characters in the stories have engaged in direct interference and have suffered dire consequences. The reason for the consequence or punishment is usually quite clear to the listener. The message then becomes internalized and the child or adult has learned not to interfere, without anyone having to instruct against interference. A good example of this type of lesson can be found in the following Ojibwa legend titled: He Who Over-Dreamed:

He Who Over-Dreamed

A certain old man was often urging his son to blacken (his face and fast); nevertheless at times he would cease from (his fasting), but again (the father) would insist upon his son blackening (his face to fast). Accordingly

then said the youth: "Already now have I really dreamed of everything. About how the whole earth looks, about how the winds repose from whence they blow, have I learned. And all kinds of doings have I dreamed of. And also about everything that is in the sky have I dreamed," (so) said the youth.

And this he said to his son: "Please, once more do you blacken (your face and fast). There surely must be something yet for you to dream about, something about which you do not yet know. Once more do you try." He gave his son some charcoal to blacken (his face and to go into a) deep (fast).

And the youth readily blackened (his face) once more. Many a time he had gone through a ten days' fast, to very severe hardship had he put himself. Accordingly he went away (to blacken his face and fast). By and by back home came the youth. After eight days were ended, then did (the father) try in vain to give his son some food to eat, but he would not take the food. Thereupon said the youth: "Now, O my father! do you give me the magic yellow paint. I wish to paint (myself)," he said.

Thereupon he gave some yellow magic paint to his son.

And the youth placed the yellow magic paint all over his bosom. And so straight up to his feet rose the youth: on out of doors he went; not was he like a human being in form, but like a bird he looked. As he went, he chirped; and this was the sound of his voice: "Tci ha ha ha!"

Outside rushed the old man when he heard the sound that his son made. Thereupon he saw him perched in a tree, chirping away: "No na-tci ga, no na-tci ga, tci ha ha ha!" He heard the voice of his son saying to him: "Such is the way I shall sound whenever any one is about to die. 'Chirper' shall I be called." And so up rose his son and flew away, not again did the youth come back.

Accordingly the name of the bird is the chirper or the robin, the one that was once a human being. And this is what the people say: "When the sound of the bird is heard, the omen is not good," (so) they say. One will meet with something (baneful) if one hears the cry of the bird saying: "I feel a foreboding." Like a human being does the bird speak. And that is what the people themselves sometimes say when they know that something is going to happen. "I feel a foreboding," they say. And that was what the chirper said long ago.⁷⁶

From this story it is clear that the father was never satisfied with his son's knowledge and kept pushing (cajoling, coaxing, pleading) his son to continue. The father exhibited behaviour that would be frowned upon by Native people. As a result of his constant

⁷⁶ Overholt, *Clothed-In-Fur*, 94.

interference with his son he was severely punished. His son became a bird and the old man never saw him again. The bird (his son) then becomes a dark omen for the people. The harbinger of bad news. With repeated narrating of this story children would learn and internalize non-interference. In addition every time children see a robin they would be reminded of the consequence of the old man's interference.

The use of personal stories and native narratives, rather than direct intrusive instruction, demonstrates the extent to which Native parents value the autonomy of their children. They have a high degree of respect for their offspring. They believe their children have the right to make their own decisions unhampered by parental coercion. Complete autonomy of children is not a concept often witnessed in the non-Native world. Rather the non-Native world appears to be based on a heteronomous relationship.

The philosopher Immanuel Kant also believed in respect and autonomy, however, he would not have applied these concepts to children. According to Kant, "Autonomy is...the ground of the dignity of human nature and of every rational nature."⁷⁷ An autonomous person is one who is free to impose laws on him/herself, therefore being a self-governing agent. We achieve this state, according to Kant, by acting out of moral principle rather than from desire. Thus only rational beings are capable of this ability to self-govern. As children we must first be governed by others. Kant calls this type of governing heteronomous. Autonomy then results from heteronomy.

The Bible claims, in Proverbs 22:15 that, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a

⁷⁷ Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, 103.

child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him."⁷⁸ The Bible, however, is full of contradictions. For example, in the New Testament Jesus rebukes his disciples when they stop children from being brought to him, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."⁷⁹ Although many contradictions can be found between the New and the Old Testament, the messages in Proverbs are still held and preached throughout the Christian kingdom.

The last thing the Native people at point of contact would have used on their children was "the rod of discipline," for as Father Le Jeune writes:

There is nothing for which these peoples have a greater horror than restraint. The very children cannot endure it, and live as they please in the houses of their parents, without fear of reprimand or of chastisement.⁸⁰

With Biblical attitudes prevailing for so long it is only reasonable to assume, as Kant did, that children are not capable of acting for the sake of moral principle. According to Kant, children must learn to impose laws on themselves, and they are only capable of this "after" having those laws imposed by others.

Historically non-Native parents have resorted to numerous corporal acts of punishment in order to train children to be moral agents. According to the Old Testament, it is deemed that parents have the God-given right or duty to discipline their children, whether physically or verbally. We read in Proverbs 13:24 that "He who spares the rod hates his son,

⁷⁸ *Holy Bible: New International Version*, Proverbs, 22:15.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Mark, 10:14

⁸⁰ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, III, 271.

but he who loves him is careful to discipline him."⁸¹

The Native people the Jesuits met not only had a horror of restraint which the Jesuits disapproved of but they [Native people] could not stand to see any child punished. The Jesuits were concerned that parental attitudes would get in the way of the priests instructing the children. Le Jeune writes to France with a story of how a Native man reacted to the forthcoming punishment of a French child:

One of them [a Hiroquois] was looking very attentatively at a little French boy who was beating a drum; and, going near to him so as to see him better, the little boy struck him a blow with one of his drumsticks, and made his head bleed badly, Immediately all the people of his tribe who were looking at the drummer, seeing this blow given, took offense at it. They went and found the French interpreter, and said to him: 'Behold, one of thy people has wounded one of ours; thou knowest our custom well; give us presents for this wound.' As there is no government among the Savages; if one among them kills or wounds another he is, providing he can escape, released from all punishment by making a few presents to the friends of the deceased or the wounded one. Our interpreter said: 'Thou knowest our custom; when any number does wrong we punish him. This child has wounded one of your people; he shall be whipped at once in thy presence.' The little boy was brought in; and when they saw that we were really in earnest, that we were stripping the little pounder of Savages and drums, and that the switches were all ready, they immediately began to pray for his pardon, alleging that it was only a child, that he had no mind, that he did not know what he was doing; but, as our people were nevertheless going to punish him, one of the Savages stripped himself entirely, threw his blanket over the child, and cried out to him who was going to do the whipping" 'Strike me, if thou wilt, but thou shalt not strike him;' and thus the little one escaped. All the Savage tribes of these quarters, and of Brazil, as we are assured, cannot chastise a child nor see one chastised. How much trouble this will give us in carrying out our plans to teaching the young!⁸²

In a later letter the fathers seek permission to send the children to France to be educated because of community attitude towards non-interference with children. If the

⁸¹ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*, Proverbs, 13:24.

⁸² Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, V, 219-21.

children could not be sent to France, it was requested that they be removed from the vicinity of their families. It would appear that the Jesuits started the first residential schools.

The attitudes of non-interference with the Natives and interference with the non-natives prevailed even in this century and residential schools were re-established. Children apparently had to be removed from their families because of the life style the Natives held. One could not assimilate children into Euro-Canadian culture while they held strongly to their own Native beliefs, and a major belief was that of non-interference.

The European or Euro-Canadian world view toward children has always been in direct opposition to that of the North American aboriginal people. Native people believe they are loving by allowing for autonomous choice. They do not believe as Kant, or other Europeans did, that children should be governed from without.

There are however, recent trends in non-Native parenting that sound promising. It is interesting to note that the concept of autocratic parenting is slowly being replaced by democratic parenting. Non-Native societies have introduced effectiveness training programs to help parents with their parenting skills. These programs were the result of research which found that:

[I]n a democracy each person must behave responsibly. If we are to develop responsible adults, we must begin in the home by developing responsible children. Because reward and punishment are not as effective as they were in the past, we need to create new relationships between children and adults. Since social equality is the ideal toward which the 'democratic' revolution is striving [sic]. These new child-rearing procedures must be based on democratic principles. Democratic child-training procedures are based on a principle of equality and respect.... [B]y "equality" we mean that children are equal to adults in terms of human worth and dignity. In a democracy, every person is entitled to respect and to self-determination within the limits prescribed by the society. Democracy permits choice. The democratic parents

provide opportunities for children to make decisions, within limits, and to be accountable for these decisions.⁸³

This new method of parenting sounds much like the Indian way in that it is providing opportunity rather than forcing acquiescence, but there is a significant distinction between the democratic parenting outlined above and that of Native parenting. It stems from the words, "within the limits prescribed by the society." Much of what is prescribed comes by way of direct rules of behaviour. It is questionable whether one can be said to be free to choose when the choice has already been made for him/her. Non-Native society has a prescribed set of rules that are to be followed by everyone. Disobedience of those rules is liable to result in punishment. This is where accountability comes into effect. The child in the democratic world is accountable for breaching rules that are enforced heteronomously.

According to the Dinkmeyer and McKay paper on democratic parenting, children must be accountable for their own decisions. It is not clear whether these authors are suggesting that the children are accountable to themselves alone or whether others hold them accountable. If the non-Native children are allowed to hold themselves accountable to themselves alone, then they will be in a situation similar to that of many Native children.

Native parents tell stories that involve indirect rules. Children are naturally expected to learn from them. This is a useful method for teaching obedience without forcefully demanding it. The Native child governs his/her actions based on rules the child has autonomously imposed. When we say a Native child is held accountable for his/her actions, we acknowledge that punishment stems from a natural consequence of the actions. The

⁸³ Dinkmeyer, *The Parents Handbook*, (American Guidance Service, 1982), 7.

punishment in most cases is not imposed from an outside source.

Ethel McKay's responses to my questions regarding non-interference are good examples of allowing children to choose their actions freely. The children are then in a position to suffer or enjoy the natural consequences of their actions. They alone hold themselves accountable.

Lorraine: If your child needed to go to the dentist but he didn't want to, would you make him go?

Ethel: No, because he's the one that's gonna be suffering [she laughs]. And if he doesn't wanna go, you know, like, but I wouldn't make them go.

Lorraine: What about bedtime? If it was bedtime and he had to go to school the next day but he wasn't tired, would you let him choose when he wants to go to sleep [bed]?

Ethel: No, as a matter of fact I had that problem with my children. They sort of learned that on their own. Like we were up later and they wanted to stay up later, like it was their choice if they wanted to stay up later. But they could pay for it the next day 'cause they'd be tired when they go to school so they'd know enough to go to bed early.⁸⁴

Ethel's first answer "he's the one that's gonna be suffering" indicates what she understands as a natural consequence of her children's choice. She does not see herself as being accountable for his suffering, therefore she need not be held responsible. In her opinion it is not her fault if her child suffers rather it is his fault. Nor does the child see his mother as responsible. He knows the choice was his. In Ethel's second response to my questions she indicates that her children learned on their own when to go to bed. They were accountable for their own choice therefore they had no one to blame but themselves and in the process

⁸⁴ Ethel McKay, Appendix.

learned to make choices that would result in more enjoyable consequences.

When children develop self-discipline and are responsible for their actions, they, in turn, develop their sense of human worth and dignity. As a result they come to know and respect themselves and, in turn, can know and respect others whether in the form of human or non-human.

In Ethel's case it could appear to some people that she was neglecting the welfare of her children. Should she be responsible for seeing they go to bed on time or go to dental appointments? A society founded on heteronomy would immediately respond "yes", but in Ethel's society her behaviour is the norm.

According to the value of non-interference Ethel is showing respect for the autonomy of her children. Non-interference is misunderstood by many non-natives and led to the forced removal of many Native children from their homes. In a non-native society one would expect Ethel's children to have grown up with little respect for her. On the contrary I know Ethel's children and the amount of respect they have for her cannot be described. Her home is filled with love and she and her children have a very strong bond.

Ethel is a wonderful example of a non-interfering mother. When we first started talking she said it was her duty as a mother to give advice although she thought giving advice was rude. She said she didn't teach her children with stories but would say "it's not right". She then admitted that she couldn't say:

You can't do this because it's not right. Like I could say 'you shouldn't be doing this because its not right' and it would be up to that person, like I say, it would be up to my children, if they wanted to. Like if they wanted to take the advice that I'm giving them. But if they don't take it, what can I do?

Ethel is from the Easterville reserve in Manitoba, she has three adult children and eight grandchildren and all of them visit her on a regular basis, especially at dinner time.

Another Cree woman, Leona Massan, told a story about how her grandfather would not come to her rescue, rather he made her face the consequences of her behaviour.

Leona: Like school time was school time and I used to be in trouble a lot [laughs] I wonder why? Like I would get into trouble for beating up kids. But I wouldn't like [the teacher phoning her guardians]. Like, grandpa wouldn't come to my rescue. Oh no, he'd walk me to school, take me to the office and leave me there. He wouldn't sit there even though they wanted parents there. He'd say "No, why should I go? I'm not the one that got in the fight." He says "I'm just gonna take you there." He'd say it to the principal too, "I never got in a fight, I never beat no one up. She's the one who did it, you talk to her." So I'm sitting alone with this principal. I go "Oh my god, he left me."...[when we left he'd ask] "So how'd you like it?" I started learning you can't do that anymore. I don't like going in there all by myself.⁸⁵

Leona related many stories to me about her grandparents. One particular story describes indirect punishment as well as the humour in Native life. Leona said they [her brothers and herself] learned never to complain around their grandmother because she would always find ways of dealing with it.

Leona: Like when I was plucking geese one time, they had bugs. I said "I don't want to clean these 'cause they have bugs." And we had this big garbage bag that we were putting all the feathers in and she grabs this bag and she dumps it on my head! And my aunt was sitting back and she laughs her head off. And my cousin Pauline there, they're just laughing at me. And she [grandmother] goes, "Well now you have bugs..." You can kind of complain when grandpa's around but not as much to Granny 'cause she just, [pauses] even with doing the pots and dishes and stuff, you complain there's too many pots, she'd go outside and dirty all the pots. She would go outside stick them in the mud, then, she'd bring `em inside and say, "There now, you have more pots". [Laughing],[no you] Don't complain!⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Leona Massan, Appendix.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

The Jesuits noted that the Natives "treat their children with wonderful affection, but they preserve no discipline, for they neither themselves correct them nor allow others to do so."⁸⁷ Sheila George from Easterville said, "And I would take it as a personal insult if someone told my kids 'this is how you're supposed to behave' and I try to teach them different." [laughing]⁸⁸

When I was at Easterville this summer an incident occurred that reminded me of the Jesuits' claim, that the Natives would not allow other people to discipline their children. There was a man in Easterville with a daughter four years old. The little girl was whining and irritating her uncle who was living with them. The uncle was in his late teens and had very little patience with this girl. Well, the uncle, thinking I was the only other one in the house, called the little girl a "suck." However, he spoke in Cree so at the time I was unaware of what he'd said. Unfortunately for him the child's father was in the bedroom and heard what his brother said. The father suddenly came running into the room and in a threatening voice said, "Never speak to my child like that!" Even though the child was driving us mad with her whining her father would not allow anyone to interfere. The father did nothing to correct her behaviour. Yet it appears that direct interference does sometimes occur. I noticed this reaction only when it involved someone hurting a child. This same move away from the norm was demonstrated earlier in a Jesuit letter about the Natives objecting to the whipping of a French child. Protection of children would appear to override the code of non-interference.

I saw a lot of fathers at the reserve being affectionate with their children but I never once saw or heard a disciplinary word or action directed at a child.

Sheila George agreed that it is rude for someone outside your family to give advice within your family. Sheila claimed to believe in giving advice to her family. I asked her whether she would tell her children what to do, or would she provide the opportunity for them to choose for themselves by providing options. Sheila responded emphatically:

Yes options. I always give them options and if they make their own decisions

⁸⁷ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, I, 277.

⁸⁸ Sheila George, Appendix.

then I expect them to take responsibility for their actions.[Gives an example]...[there is a school] in Winnipegosis and [her son] wants to go to Cranberry and I know that Cranberry has a huge dropout rate and I don't want him to go. So we sat down and talked about the pros and cons of both schools and then I said "Well, we'll go with what you decide, you know the pros and cons of both schools, And we'll stick by your decision. One thing we ask, Tom, we told him that you're gonna have to finish the semester. [If] he decides to go there then he's gonna have to be responsible to finish that, at least that semester."⁸⁹

I asked an Elder in Ontario what he thought about letting children make their own decisions. He said "Yeah , when, you finish teaching them, okay, so I [its] just like, look at the wolf. If you brought up the wolf in a cage, when you let him go he's not gonna like it. That's the same thing as a child."⁹⁰ As is the case with all parables each person will hear their own understanding. However I offer one possible interpretation.

The way I understood this statement is: if you raise a wolf in a cage he will not learn the skills necessary for his survival as a wolf. So when you release him and he is free to go, he will not be prepared for survival. Now if you raise a child within a restricted environment, when it is time to let go, he/she will not be properly prepared for the environment the child will be entering. In a society where you are taught from childhood to think, to listen, to make decisions, to accept responsibility and to respect all life, you will be more than prepared to be let go, you will survive.

A beautiful demonstration of non-interference came from an Elder in Manitoba. Every time he told me a story he would qualify it with the statement, "That's the way I see it

⁸⁹ Sheila George, Appendix.

⁹⁰ William Wilson, Appendix.

anyway."⁹¹ This was a subtle way of telling me that I could either take it or leave it. The choice was mine. He was indirectly instructing that all people have their own opinions. I was not to understand his comments as *truth*. I was to learn my own truth. We all have something to offer and whether we choose to accept what others say is a matter of personal choice. None of us are experts, the most we can offer is our experience as we understand it.

⁹¹ William Easter, Appendix.

CHAPTER III

Anger Must Not Be Shown

Now the Savages cannot endure in the least those who seem desirous of assuming superiority over the other; they place all virtue in a certain gentleness or apathy, recognizing scarcely any sin more enormous than anger.⁹²

As far as I am aware Brant had not read the *Relations* when he made the claim that one of the Native values is: Anger must not be shown. Suppression of anger, combined with consumption of alcohol, led to many serious difficulties both legally and mentally for Native people. Brant was concerned with the effects of this suppression which he encountered in his medical practice. Therefore, he was interested in finding out where this value came from, and how he could help Native people. That there is such a value I do not deny in spite of mounting evidence to the contrary in contemporary society. The problem of acting out in anger will be discussed late in this chapter.

Brant proposes two reasons why restraining anger may have been beneficial to native people. One reason has to do with survival, the second reason stems from a spiritual belief. There may however, be a third reason: It may have to do with respect and keeping an emotional balance.

One significant aspect of Native life which reflects the importance of socialization and hence the need to restrain anger, involves the division of large groups of people into smaller communities. These smaller groups may include all the members of one particular family or more than one family. These small communities would leave the larger group for purposes

⁹² Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, XVI, 165.

of hunting and trapping and return to form the larger community during summer months. At this time they would once again bond through socialization. This would be a time for visiting and renewing relationships; new marriages would be arranged and stories would be exchanged about the difficulties encountered during the winter months.

The larger community afforded a greater degree of safety and provisional security. However, in these communities, whether small or large, survival depended on co-operation. It was extremely important when living close together for long periods of time that anger not disrupt the unity of the community. The *emotion* of anger was in itself not dangerous, however, acting out verbally or physically in anger could upset the harmonious balance of living and working together. If that were to happen the survival of the entire group would be at risk. Russel Lawrence Barsh states in his article, *The Nature and Spirit of North American Political Systems*, that the "position of the Indian is entirely dependent upon his private virtue, and he is never permitted to forget that he does not live to himself alone."⁹³ As such, each person is responsible for the well being of his/her community, "Thus habits of perfect self control were early established, and grew through lifelong testing."⁹⁴

Native people have always participated in a number of rituals that serve to strengthen self-control, such as the Cree sundance, fasting, vision quests and sweat lodges. Each of these ceremonial rituals require self-discipline. As a result of these rituals the Native person develops amazing endurance and stamina, both mentally and physically.

⁹³Russell Lawrence Barsh, "The Nature and Spirit of North American Political Systems," *American Indian Quarterly*, (Spring, 1986), 185.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

The second reason why Native people should not show anger is, as I said earlier, due to a spiritual belief. Aboriginal people believe in shamans, or *witches* as some call them. They also believe these shamans or witches can be found everywhere. Witches were not always known to the people so it would be imperative not to show anger in case you provoked them (the witches). Even in cases where the identity of the witch was known it was still considered prudent not to arouse their anger and vengeance.

The importance of this belief in witches is seen over and over again by the numerous personal stories involving witches that are told to both children and adults. The book, *Ojibwa Myths and Tales*, by Col. Geo. E. Laidlaw, reprinted from *The Archaeological Report, 1918*, has twenty-five stories relating incidents with witches. The following story demonstrates a man's fear of provoking a witch.

The Old Bachelor's Witch Story (No.15)
Told By Lottie Marsden

An old bachelor told me this story, he said, "When I was young I had a nice young girl. I thought a lot of her and I used to go see her every night. One night I went to see her, I said 'let's go for a walk.' So we took a walk on the track. We came back and sat down on the bank. We sat there for a long time, and when it got about midnight we saw a light coming just to where we were, and I got frightened, but my girl laughed at me. She says 'I am not afraid of that.' It was a cat. Fire came out of her mouth and it came closer to where I was myself. My girl said to me 'don't be afraid,' and here it was herself that was the witch. From that time I did my best to please her and went with her a long time but I knew she was a witch, and I was afraid I'd make her mad (angry) and she'd kill me. She took sick one summer and died. I tell you I wasn't sorry for her. I was safe then." The end of the story. The Bachelor is dead now.⁹⁵

John Boatman describes the shaman, (he does not refer to witches) and the role of the

⁹⁵ George Laidlaw, *Ojibwa Myths and Tales*, (n.p. 1918), 29.

shaman in the book *My Elders Taught Me*. According to Boatman, "a shaman is a human being (male or female) who serves as a specialized technician in a power conduit relationship between the Atisokanak World and a Now-World."⁹⁶ "Atisokanak World" is the term Boatman uses to "describe a multidimensional energy 'world' which is the originating point of all 'power.'⁹⁷ In other words Boatman is referring to the spirit world. The Now-World is simply the world we humans live in.

Being a Shaman can be inherently dangerous, for when anyone "employs energy, whether physical or spiritual there is always the potential hazard of channelling not only positive, but negative 'power' into a Now-World."⁹⁸ This being the case, it is always possible that a person may, "make egotistical use of this other-worldly 'power' and walk on the negative side."⁹⁹ From what Boatman writes it is clear that walking on the negative side would result in an imbalance in the person's life.

Because of their power shamans are the most feared and respected individuals in a community. However, "If either a female or a male uses the gift of being a conduit improperly, it could (and according to the Elders often did) backfire to the detriment of the individual who misused the power and possibly imperil others close to the individual."¹⁰⁰ It was important that shamans use their ability appropriately and in a balanced manner.

⁹⁶ Boatman, *My Elders Taught Me*, 83.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

Although Boatman refers only to shamans when talking about negative power and having it backfire, the same applies to the witches. The following story demonstrates such a possibility.

**The Scugog Island Witch (No. 13)
Told By Lottie Marsden.**

On Scugog Island some time ago there was an old Indian woman. She had lots of children. She was an old witch. Even her children were afraid of her. One morning, it was in the winter time, she wanted a pair of new shoes. She said to one of her sons, "I want those shoes to-day, if I don't get them there won't be a soul (alive) in this house in four days." This young man was afraid then that she might kill him. Of course she was an old witch, so the young man got ready to go to the nearest town. He skated across, this was Christmas eve and the old witch wanted the shoes for Christmas. She didn't know that people all around knew she was an old witch. The poor young man when he was coming back, went too near the river, the ice was thin there and he fell in, and people that lived near could hear him yelling for help. It was a very stormy night and they could not find out just where he was. The next morning, Christmas, they looked for him, they only found the pair of shoes on the ice, and the old witch had all the blame, but the people didn't say much to her, so she took sick and she yelled all the time "I am burning." She died very unhappy. Everybody was afraid of her. She was buried, and never was known no more of her witch business. The end of the story.¹⁰¹

The message in this story is that the woman lost her son because she abused her power by threatening to use it for her own comfort and aggrandisement. While the story does not make clear any of her evil deeds, it does point to a threat to kill her entire household if she did not get what she wanted. Because of being the way she was, she not only lost her son but her own life. It was also obvious that her life ended painfully. To Native people the message implicit in this story is the possible consequence if you choose to misuse powers.

There are a number of people afraid of this power. An Elder from Easterville explains

¹⁰¹George Laidlow, *Ojibway Myths and Tales* (n.p. 1918), 28.

it this way: "Well, I guess they [get] mad at one another, but not at a specific person...like the person that...that has bad spirits, that[s] the way he watch [uses] the evil, the evil spirits would do that [for him]. And if you ask him [to use this power] he goes ahead, that is his way. But its very dangerous I would say. I wouldn't want to try it."¹⁰² This man recognizes the potential for harm both for the person requesting bad medicine and the person performing it.

The following is about an Elder who had the opportunity to harm another person:

There's people that believe in that, but they go out, like there's an old man, not a man here, in [location omitted for confidentiality], he does that an he heals people, a Medicine Man. An he tells you what's wrong, what causes it, you get sick, stuff like that. He's pretty good at it, pretty good. Sometimes it's true when he tells you something, you visualize what's happening, just like watching T.V. I seen it! I went to one old man one time here. I used to go down to [name omitted]. I took some people up here to get healed, lots of problems, so I took them. They asked me to take them so I took them there. And I was keep losing stuff, like when I went down to the lake there, I bought these two propellers for my motor, and I they were lying down. So I happen to go out there and I lost nets, I was fishing. I came home, I used to live over here and I didn't suspect my nets and leave em like that. The next morning when I woke up two of them were gone. So -ah- so, I asked the old man, I said, "Have you seen my stuff? Like I lost my nets, I don't know what happened." I said, "I don't know how I lost them, maybe somebody picked them up, helped themselves, I don't know. I want to know where my nets went." I said.

So -ah- he said, "Okay, we'll soon find out where your nets go." So he, it was dark in the room eh, put a light out, he started singing, he had a rattle and he played with his rattle and he started singing. And then I seen some kind of fog, like on this side and it was coming through a wall. It came up right in front of me and then it formed a square, I would say maybe ten by ten, something like that. And then it's kind of snowy, like when you first open the T.V.. It's kind of snowy eh, and then it clears up and the picture came on. Exactly what happened and I looked at it. There was this man puttin' my nets into a tub, the red tub, he filled it up, put em on his back and away he went. The thing went out, cuts out, he [the old man] put a light on. He said, "Yup,

¹⁰² William Easter, Appendix.

so what are you gonna do about it?"

"Nothing, I just wanna know, I just wanna know where they go. I'm not gonna do anything about it."

So that's it, that's the way, how he done it. I seen it. "That's what happened to your nets." He said.

Colour, in colour, even the man, the clothes he wears. Yup, I recognize the man too.

I said to the Elder, "You didn't want to do anything? How come?" He answered:

I don't, like, I don't know, if you ask maybe, whoever it is you ask, to do something for you; if you wanna hurt the person, stuff like that, it could happen. And I didn't wanna do that, it's no good. [using power to get revenge]. To me anyway, I don't know about other people. I don't like to hurt people, its not nice, I would say. But lot of times people -ah- wants to get rid of others so bad. But I don't think that's the right way to go, I wouldn't do that anyway. ¹⁰³

I included the two stories about witches to illustrate that Native people take the idea of power and witches seriously. In understanding the depth of feeling about witches and shamans it should be clear why Native people should not show anger. Another Elder tells that his grandfather would talk about dreams and that people could also *do* things to others in their dreams:

My grandfather used to tell me that they were using dreams at that time. Well, some people had bad dreams about other people there. If somebody goes out and hunts moose over there, then maybe that old man will [use his power and] then he [the hunter] well, he won't get nothing. Out of their dreams they can do that, by their dreams, so when somebody goes out there in the bush -ah- wilderness, [and] they're hunting moose or whatever he's doing, camping, and you can't get something [it's] because of that dream, because [of what] that old man is [doing]. I don't know how they did [it], they used their dreams anyway, somehow. I don't know how they used their dreams...[but] the dreams they come true. But whatever they want, it happens to somebody. He won't get nothing at all. So -ah- [pause] this is what my Grandfather used to

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, Appendix.

tell me.¹⁰⁴

Many Native people (in the past as well as in present day society) have a fear of having a spell put on them or being killed by a vengeful witch. This may cause them to refrain from demonstrating anger in public. It may appear at this point that the motive for restraint is purely one of self-interest, and therefore may not be ethically significant. However, I would caution against such a hasty judgement. As is the case with most misunderstood Native behaviour, the motive may only *appear* to be one of self-interest. However, the *self* is not as important to Native people as is the *community*. Protecting an individual from harm whether it is the person protecting him/herself or the community protecting the person, the reason or motive may be for the good of the community. Therefore it may not be a purely selfish motivation but a motivation based on the collective good. Rather than appearing egoistic it may reflect behaviour that, although not individualistic, is similar to utilitarianism as it will benefit the greater number.

If, for example, a great hunter or a medicine man were to anger a witch and as a result have serious harm or death inflicted on him/her the community would suffer. The first instance would result in less food being obtained which could ultimately lead to starvation. In the second case the loss of a medicine man would leave the community without anyone to heal the sick and injured. Once again I remind the reader of how Barsh claims that Native people do not live for themselves alone. All behaviour reflects responsibility for the community.

The first two reasons for not showing anger were discussed by Dr Brant. As I said

¹⁰⁴ Walter Mink, Appendix.

earlier the third reason for not showing anger, I suspect may simply be the lack of respect it shows. Respect is one of the most important concepts to native people. It follows that any action that undermines respect should be discouraged.

When the Europeans first came to this country the Natives were astounded at the French for displaying anger. The Jesuits recorded the reaction of the Natives upon encountering the anger of the Jesuits, "...They know nothing of anger, and at first were greatly surprised when the fathers censured their faults before the assembly; they thought that the fathers were madmen, because among peaceful hearers and friends they display such vehemence."¹⁰⁵ The Jesuits further acknowledged that the Natives "...consider themselves better than the French; 'For,' they say, 'you are always fighting and quarrelling among yourselves; we live peaceably.'¹⁰⁶

Maybe the answer for not showing anger had not so much to do with witches or survival but simply with respect, for as we read in the beginning of this chapter, "Now the Savages cannot endure in the least those who seem desirous of assuming superiority over the other; they place all virtue in a certain gentleness or apathy, recognizing scarcely any sin more enormous than anger."¹⁰⁷

Respect for each person would ultimately disintegrate should the behaviour of demonstrating anger be acceptable. More importantly, and as many Natives have witnessed, in contemporary society, demonstrations of anger have led to loss of respect both within the

¹⁰⁵ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, I, 275.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, XVI, 165.

community and within the angry people themselves.

Regardless of how this value first originated the fact remains that Native people, for whatever reasons they had, did not show anger and highly valued its restraint.

The result of the respect and strong self-control led the Jesuits to admire the stoical nature of the Native. Many letters were written to France describing this admirable trait:

The little offenses and quarrels are easily adjusted by the Sagamores and common friends. And in truth they are hardly ever offended long, as far as we know. I say, as far as we know, for we have never seen anything except always great respect and love among them; which was a great grief to us when we turned our eyes upon our own shortcomings. For to see an assembly of French people without reproaches, slights, envy, and quarrels with each other, is as difficult as to see the sea without waves, except in Monasteries and Convents, where grace triumphs over nature.¹⁰⁸

The Jesuits could not understand how the 'savages' were able to keep their tempers. It is also interesting to read that [if my interpretation is correct] the only way the French could compete with such moral behaviour was in the monasteries and convents. Even more interesting, is the claim that, the reason these institutions have people with similar attitudes i.e. morality is that "grace triumphs over nature."

Once again if my understanding is correct, by "nature", the missionary means *human nature*. That being the case then it stands that "grace" alone can overcome human nature. We know from history that Natives were seen as children of nature, unable at the time of contact with Europeans to enjoy anything beyond that of primitive human pleasures. Furthermore they had no knowledge of a supreme God, nor of his commandments; yet here we have a Jesuit remarking on the goodness of Native behaviour, a behaviour no lay

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, VI, 229.

Frenchman could equal. It is interesting to note that, rather than admit the Native was a virtuous person, the Jesuit chose instead to say, "They make a pretense of not getting angry, not for the beauty of this virtue, for which they have not even a name, but for their own contentment and happiness."¹⁰⁹

The Jesuits quite often wrote about the wonderful qualities the Natives had and then turn them around to suit the prevailing image they and others had. It would not have served the purpose of religious and non-religious invasion had the Jesuits done otherwise.

Images of the noble savage immediately came to mind as I read these letters without the Christian bias. It was easy to see how the term *noble savage* could be applied to these people. It is my belief that when the Europeans landed on this continent they found a highly moral group of people.

Col. Geo. E. Laidlaw deliberately included stories in his book that would show Native people as possessing the attributes of "joy, grief, sorrow, hate, envy, cruelty and superstition;"¹¹⁰ He did this because he wanted to demonstrate that Native people are not always the stoic people they have historically been portrayed to be. Laidlaw seems to have confused stoical behaviour with not having human attributes. It would be ridiculous to think Native people had no emotional involvement with their own or other people's behaviour.

A young Ojibwa man had this to say about stoicism: "Like I don't believe in, its not my belief that Indians were stoic, Kalija the wooden Indian, he just stood there and didn't

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, VI, 232.

¹¹⁰ Laidlaw, *Ojibwa Myths and Tales*, 2.

show his feelings. People get angry, not just Native people."¹¹¹

Native people believe in maintaining a balance within their entire universe. Emotional balance is a necessary component for harmonious relationships within that environment. Emotions such as, grief, pain and anger are understood are having potential to disrupt balance therefore they need to be controlled. Each raw emotion has its place in our lives and each is respected. Emotions are a part of our survival instincts. Fear, for example may be a warning of impending danger, anger may warn that something has gone wrong in our universe. In either case the emotion is useful but, an excessive amount of either can spell destruction.

Unfortunately, as the Jesuits also recognized, the introduction of alcohol into Native life played havoc with the Native person's ability to control anger:

...but at home they cultivate peace and carefully avoid quarrels, except those which the fury of drunkenness has aroused. Fortunate would they be if Europe had never introduced this scourge among them!¹¹²

I have established that Native people in earlier generations did not believe in showing anger although admittedly they must have felt it. The question now, is do they still value this attitude? The answers I received in my discussions with Native people showed clearly that they do believe it to be important. Unfortunately many circumstances have led to a growing disbelief in this value as being one held today.

The reasons why Natives are acting out in anger are too numerous to mention. Therefore, I will not include them in this paper with the exception of those alluded to in my

¹¹¹ Owen Zoccole, Appendix.

¹¹² Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, I, 275.

discussions with Native people. Why Native people are acting out in anger is not as important to my thesis as the question whether there are any people around today trying to maintain an emotional balance, or restraint, as the Jesuits have recorded.

One woman responded to my question of anger with the following statement:

Anger -ah- originally it was -ah- the way I was taught it was to practise humility, patience, kindness. Usually anger was released by talking to Elders, [or] finding a special spot and you know, just talking about your anger. Because when you're aware of your environment, the trees, flowers, birds, you become connected. So when you become connected even in our concrete world you know you'll see a little flower here or there, the birds, you become spiritually stronger. This um, connection to Mother Earth exists, this connection exists in all of us, this being, wanted to be connected to Mother Earth is there and when you're connected to Mother Earth there is nothing you and Mother Earth [can't do]. Try it, you know, um, when you find you, [or] us it, there's no need for anger....I guess in Native culture, Native societies they always practised balance and so -ah- by not showing anger or not being angry helps to maintain that cohesiveness in the community.¹¹³

The above story is about the means which this particular person uses to help control or get rid of anger. She fully understands that the emotion is there and has an affect, but believes it is important not to show anger. She chooses instead to deal with it in a positive way.

An Ojibwa Elder said she couldn't truthfully answer questions on how it had been in the past:

I know 'cause I never did see my Grandmother argue or say a cross word to my Grandpa or my mother or her own children...My Grandmother was really gentle, she was, what's the proper word, I don't know? What her spirit projected, her spirit was so strong yet so fragile....Old people knew things young ones didn't, because they lived before us. They advised but didn't tell you what to do. Sometimes their presence was enough. Just their being there

¹¹³ Evelyne Susin, Appendix.

gave you a feeling of security.¹¹⁴

It was interesting that she thought she couldn't answer truthfully because as a child she had not witnessed anger. Her response confirmed what I had been asking. For whatever reasons there were, her experience growing up was in an atmosphere without anger. I asked her, "is it important to keep an emotional balance?" She answered, "Oh yes, very important." She also said, "Always remember children are, what's that word?" I answered, "Observant." "Yeah" she said, "And they would learn. Parents are role models. [They took out] I guess frustrations, in physical ways. And the more, the harder they worked the more they laughed."¹¹⁵

Here we have a contemporary Elder, reminding us that angry behaviour will be modelled by children. She also provides two means by which to rid ourselves of anger. One way is to be around our Elders, for as she said "sometimes their presence is enough." The second way is to find a physical outlet for your frustrations before they become full blown anger.

Another Ojibwa Elder also commented about not seeing angry behaviour in his parents. Children are very important and he also mentions role modelling:

Yuh, okay, because that's how I see that with my mom and dad. I never see them argue, maybe they went and did it some other place. But this is how, if you see fighting when you're a child eh, that's the way you gonna be, because you're gonna learn that eh.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Ojibwa Elder, Appendix.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ William Wilson, Appendix.

As I had in my other discussions, I asked if it was important to keep your emotions in balance. His reply was:

Un-huh, yeah. Because it [if balance was upset], you look at things today, what's happening? If you get mad at something, you don't see. But sometimes we follow like that [get mad]. Because there must be a reason why its happened like that. 'Cause that's the way I usually look at it. Not to get mad for nothing. So, anger's inside, because we got to do it right away [get rid of it] because it's not supposed to be in, we got to balance everything. 'Cause that's why they teach you lot[s], respect, all those things.¹¹⁷

Sometimes things happen and we find ourselves getting angry but this Elder cautions that, if you get mad you can't see straight. There are reasons why things happen to get us angry and if we are seeing straight then we are able to see what's causing this anger. We are then in a position to do something about it. He also thinks it is necessary to do something about that anger right away because otherwise it will sit inside of us. We have to keep a balance; therefore the anger must be dealt with.

This Elder also talked about respect and its implications in angry behaviour:

Okay, go back about a hundred years ago, maybe two hundred. Because they already know where they go eh, there's no other family's gonna come there eh, they might come and visit, [but] not to go hunt the same place eh. They respect that eh, but ever since the alcohol come in, this is where the anger come in too uh. Because they used their medicine against people, but that's not the Indian way. This is what happening. So anyone after that person, whoever used the medicine, they gotta pay sooner or later. That's what happen today, lot of people, and another thing, that time the young children, ten years old, go to a vision quest, ten days uh. So they respect that knowledge they gonna get, yeah, they suffered for that.¹¹⁸

The Elder is giving a very important lesson. Before ceremonies were banned, children

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

went on vision quests and from those experiences they learned about respect among other things. Many Native people are starting to do vision quests again and children may once more be allowed to seek knowledge the way their grandparents did. If so, it is possible that the anger we now see in children will be replaced by an emotional strength. This Elder also talked about there being a law of the spirits. The spirits will take care of things, so I believe there is no need to get angry.

The vision quest was also mentioned by an Elder from Manitoba when he talked about there being no reason to show anger. He said, "There is nothing to get mad about. I don't see anything, there is nothing here...I have to understand. [Pause] When people go out four days and four nights, out in the bush." I asked if he was talking about a vision quest. He said, "Yeah, you go out, when you go out the first day you don't drink, you don't eat, for four days four nights. You go out there." He paused for a while then continued, "That's where the spirits come to you. They teach you things." Again he paused for a while, "and they teach you the good things, the things what you need to know and from there you pick up the understanding."¹¹⁹

With the resurgence of Native culture, many people who have lost traditional knowledge of spiritual matters will once again be in a position to learn. One young man in Manitoba, a few years back started to learn about traditional ways when he entered a Native treatment facility. He told me they were given lessons by an old man. He said: "Usually once a week and he told us about the past...and we're all [pause] given gifts so ah, we have to watch what we say because we may have a gift and that, and things, 'cause if we say

¹¹⁹ William Easter, Appendix.

something to someone and it might happen to them if we're mad."¹²⁰

The old man's teaching came back to him with clarity one day when:

Yeah, yuh, I remembered that old man when we were visiting at my [pause] father-in-law and I told my wife that one of these days one of these kids were gonna be run over, over there. And my boy was run over, over there. He had a broken leg and I remembered anyway about that old man and what he said.¹²¹

Coincidence? Who can say for sure. What is important is the young man whose experience was related above has learned to trust what the Elders have to say. He is eager to learn more about his culture. One Elder told me it was never too late to learn, the knowledge was buried in your heart and could be brought out with the help of a good teacher.

I will end this chapter with a short but significant lesson from an Elder in Manitoba:

You should respect everything, the wind, the whole thing but we don't. A lot of people don't respect that, especially each other. Its a gift, the Creator was so kind, he gave us all these gifts. He gave us this world, he gave us these animals to use, he gave us these birds to use. He gave us these drums, rattles, to use to help one another. Not to fight each other, to understand, to teach our children. This is why he gave us children, to teach the children. What he gave us, respect everything you see, what you step on, respect it. That's the way people should live.¹²²

¹²⁰ Wally Umpherville, Appendix.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² William Easter, Appendix.

CHAPTER IV

Time

*The perspective of Western Great Lakes American Indian metaphysics is not linear; it is cyclic, interwoven, and interconnecting in a spiralling and constantly manifesting space-time continuum with no distinct differences between past, present, and future.*¹²³

Another value Indians have stems, I believe, from their concept of time. The true meaning of *Indian Time* has nothing to do with popular notions of laziness or being late. Rather it comes from the metaphysical belief in a cyclic, interwoven, interdependent continuum.

According to Brant, "Time is, to an Indian, something which must be used and enjoyed."¹²⁴ It is important to note that Brant includes two uses for time, *used* and *enjoyed*. Unfortunately many people focus on the enjoyment part missing entirely the extreme importance of time being used.

Brant goes on to say that "When the time, the seasons, the conditions, the feelings, the manitou, the spirit, and everything are correct, then you proceed; pull out all stops and get the work done."¹²⁵ Evelyne Susin says "its not like when you hear somebody say 'I'll do it whenever I feel like it.' Its not like that at all. It means picking, harvesting, you know

¹²³ Boatman, *My Elders Taught Me*, 34.

¹²⁴ *Indian Thinking Indian Ways: A Dialogue Between Dr. Clare Brant and Dr. Bruce Sealy* (Kenora, ON., 1988), 39.

¹²⁵ Clare Brant, "Native Ethics and Principles," (n.p. essay, n.d.), 103.

roots, berries, medicines, when the time is right."¹²⁶ Evelyne is obviously talking about when the seasons are right. Many Native people while being interviewed expressed the same belief in the necessity of there *being the right time*.

Brant believed this principle of using and enjoying time must have originated out of the need to live in harmony with the environment. Indians used to be "...regulated by the seasons--by the sun, the migratory patterns of birds and animals...they had to depend upon the seasons and nature to supply them with food, with light...."¹²⁷ For survival they had to do things when it was the right time to do them.

The Jesuits were amazed at the dual nature of the Natives, for on the one hand they would demonstrate incredible ability for hard work, but on the other hand, would behave in a manner the Jesuits thought was extremely lazy. Father Pierre Biard writes:

To obtain the necessities of life they endured cold and hunger in an extraordinary manner. During eight or ten days, if the necessity is imposed on them, they will follow the chase in fasting, and they hunt with the greatest ardor when the snow is deepest and the cold most severe. And yet these same Savages, the offspring, so to speak, of Boreas¹²⁸ and the ice, when once they have returned with their booty and installed themselves in their tents, become indolent and unwilling to perform any labor whatever,...."¹²⁹

It is clear from this letter that nearly four hundred years ago Native people were living according to the notions of *use* and *enjoy*. The Jesuit referred to them as becoming "indolent" and "unwilling" to do any other labour. But in keeping with the belief in enjoying time as well

¹²⁶ Evelyne Susin, Appendix.

¹²⁷ Brant, *Native Ethics*, 536.

¹²⁸ In Greek Mythology, "the god of the North wind."

¹²⁹ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, II, 77.

as using it the Natives were demonstrating their time to *enjoy*. After all the Jesuits themselves had just described the amount of effort the Natives would engage in to complete their work.

In today's society many people are known to relax after a hard day at work. We would hardly call them indolent. Furthermore John McDougal in *Parsons on the Plains* writes "Nor was the life of the male Indian altogether that of a sinecure. Somehow or other the idea has gone abroad that these Indians led a very lazy Life. If the man who has ever thought this had spent some time with either wood or plain Indians and had accompanied them on their hunting and war expeditions, he would change his views."¹³⁰ McDougal writes at length about the amount of physical stamina required to successfully engage in these activities.

The attitude to time is both intuitive and flexible. You do what is needed when it is needed to be done. According to Brant, Indians have a great capacity for enormous activity, when the time is right for it. We saw by Father Biard's letter, when it was time to hunt they hunted with vigour, when it was time to rest they rested. According to Brant, a native person who; "...appears as if he is dragging his feet and actually can appear to White people as being incorrigibly lazy, can react with sudden energy, with a burst of energy, and get all kinds of work done when the time is right, that is to say, they will stay up all night and work."¹³¹ For these people the conditions and the feelings are right.

An Indian is brought up in a world that:

¹³⁰ John McDougal, *Parsons on the Plains*, Thomas Bredin, ed. (Don Mills, ON: Longman Canada, 1971), 185-86.

¹³¹ Brant, *Native Ethics and Principles*, 103.

...emphasizes interrelationships, interdependencies. His is a world of consequences. Actions are like pebbles tossed into a pond. The dropped pebble creates waves that radiate beyond the location of the pebble. He is not told, 'Don't make waves,' but shown instead that waves are inevitable and that he must be aware of the pattern of the waves that his action will set in motion. Consequences.¹³²

In some instances it may be possible that the *lazy Indian* is just contemplating the patterns before getting into action, an action which may or may not have severe repercussions for his people. We have already seen that the Native person does not live to himself alone, that "his is not a world of *I* but rather a world of *We*."¹³³

In an interdependent world the consequences of an individual action can and often does reflect on the collective good of the community. Consequences are a common reason for the deep reflection Native people are known for. Evelyne commented that "Time is when things are the right time to do but not to rush either and do things haphazardly. This is why they say take your time."¹³⁴ In the interview Evelyne talked about the possibility of being late for class, and having just ten minutes to get there, "I'm not gonna get into a car accident just to get here at nine o'clock".¹³⁵ Evelyne like many other people could risk speeding in order to be on time; however she is aware of the possible consequences and therefore she does not rush.

Indian Time has another aspect to it that many people find frustrating and that is the

¹³² Cordova, *Hearing Other Voices*, 18.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Evelyne Susin, Appendix.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

tendency to delay meetings or even ceremonies. If we understand what Brant is referring to when he talks of the spirit, the manitou, the feeling etc. being right, then we should understand that for Native people to engage in any activity that requires mental or physical strength such as a Government meeting or certain ceremonies they must first be spiritually, emotionally, and physically ready.

Ethel McKay and I were talking about how people get frustrated when having to wait for a meeting to begin and are often heard complaining, "Where are those people that are supposed to be here?" Ethel explained her attitude quite simply by stating that, "To me Indian Time meant like, these people weren't ready for this meeting yet and they came to the meeting when they were ready."¹³⁶ Ethel understands the importance of being mentally prepared for she often finds herself in similar positions due to her job.

This is an entirely different approach to time from that of non-Natives. It is difficult for them to grasp because non-Native people seem to be regulated by clocks, pressures, and the need to control internal as well as external situations. Native people do not operate out of a need to control. In the interview with Owen, he talks about temporal control and its importance on and off reserves:

Actually I can tell you from my own experience when I was sixteen years old my father and my mother took myself and my sister out into the middle of the bush to try to build a reserve from scratch. We went to live out there and we really didn't follow a calendar. We got up in the morning, we worked to try to build log cabins. We fished, hunted, picked berries, cleared brush and actually we, I spent about two months out in the bush and had no use for time, like even night and day, since you couldn't see too much only from the fire. Even night-time had no meaning. Once you got tired you go to sleep. Its more simplistic. Here in civilization I guess you have to follow a clock on a twenty-

¹³⁶ Ethel McKay, Appendix.

four basis. Its more etiquette than anything else. You're scheduled, [have a] timetable, an agenda, some guideline that you have to follow which really doesn't make sense. But out in nature, nature doesn't suppress you to keep up this time schedule. Whereas if you have time to do it you do it. Its not saying that you can be lazy in the bush, its a lot different.¹³⁷

I asked Owen what he thought about Indian time. He said "There is no such thing. Native people were the most precise, they didn't follow a calendar, minutes, seconds even days they just, Native people didn't hum and haw. There's a certain time and they inherently knew when to do and when not to do things."¹³⁸ Owen denies Indian time because he is equating it with the joke of always being late or procrastination. His understanding of Native people being precise indicates a more accurate meaning of Indian time.

As I said earlier Native people believe it is also essential to relax and enjoy time. During Evelyne's interview I asked her if Native people believe time is something to be enjoyed. She responded with, "Yes it is very much. You take the time to enjoy, ah, Native culture teaches you to be aware of all your surroundings. To listen even in silence, because when things are silent you can hear a lot of other things that you can't hear when you're busy like other people with other things. It's time to reflect on your inner self...now I'm taking time for myself...my connection with Mother Earth."¹³⁹ Enjoyment for Evelyne involves both relaxation and a time for learning. While enjoying time she is doing something positive for her well being so in this she is not wasting her time and as a result can truly enjoy her *time*.

The Jesuits tell of how the Natives were never in a hurry even when they have

¹³⁷ Owen Zoccole, Appendix.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Evelyne Susin, Appendix.

somewhere to go:

In order to thoroughly enjoy this, their lot, our foresters start off to their different places with as much pleasure as if they were going on a stroll or an excursion; they do this easily through the skilful use and great convenience of canoes...without any effort, in good weather you can make thirty or forty leagues a day; nevertheless we scarcely see these Savages posting along at this rate, for their days are all nothing but pastime. They are never in a hurry. Quite the opposite from us, who can never do anything without hurry and worry; worry...because our desire since polity is nothing else than the regulation and government of the Commonwealth.¹⁴⁰

Non-Native people have different priorities from the Native person. For many non-Natives, constructively using their time is a priority. For Native people enjoying time is a priority. I am reminded of how the Europeans once before had different priorities from the Native i.e. constructively using land, and the tremendous impact that had on Native life.

Once again Evelyne has a comment that I thought was significant to differences in Native and non-Native life. She said "In White society there is not enough time. There is a lot of information that has to be taken in, things to be met. Like I said deadlines. The result of that is stress and stress leads to illness like depression, heart attacks and all that."¹⁴¹

Brant neglects to mention that this value is founded on the concept of time being cyclic. To correct this problem I introduced this chapter with a quote from Boatman that succinctly describes this cyclical concept.

In discussing cyclical time, Boatman claims that, "Remembering into the future, is possible."¹⁴² During my interviews I met with a Cree Elder who said, "A person could go

¹⁴⁰ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, III, 83-85.

¹⁴¹ Evelyne Susin, Appendix.

¹⁴² Boatman, *My Elders Taught Me*, 34.

back, visualize these things, [pause] like two million years ago. You can go ahead, what's gonna happen in the future. What are we facing today."¹⁴³ This Elder claimed that being able to see the past and the future was something certain Native people could do. He called it a gift and said that many other people have this gift.

The idea that there are no distinct differences between past, present and future has powerful ethical implications for the Native who believes he is at one with all things and is therefore responsible for all things. According to Barsh:

Continuity in time connects ancestors with the unborn. Each that has come this way, and each that is yet to come, has a name. We are not born into the family and do not die out of it. Death does not end relationships, and relationships already exist with those who are yet to come...The spirit world, from which all souls come and to which they return, completes the circle of each lineage, so that each family extends both backwards and forwards through time, bridging the physical and spiritual worlds.¹⁴⁴

As you can see, this implies that the Indian has a responsibility not only to the living but to those long gone and those yet to come. An interview with Rita King showed her attitude towards our responsibility for future generations. We talked about past actions having an impact and Rita said time comes back on itself. She adds:

...that's true because there's a lot of elders talk about that in our healing circles. They talk about, say if you, you've done harm to maybe an animal or plants, then that thing comes back to you some way. You know, maybe not to you directly but to someone related to you. And I believe that that's true because I've heard stories about that. I know the stories exist and that they're true, they're true for us and how we understand our ways in the world.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ William Easter, Appendix.

¹⁴⁴ Barsh, "The Nature and Spirit of North American Political Systems," *American Indian Quarterly*, 187.

¹⁴⁵ Rita King, Appendix.

Vine Deloria explains, in the book, *God is Red* the insignificance of "clock time" for aboriginal people in North America. Deloria offers another aspect to Indian time. According to Deloria, western secular thought has a preoccupation with history. Deloria believes that it is very important to non-Natives that chronological records are kept. For example, the First World War began in 1914 and ended in 1918. The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour December 7th, 1941.

An on-going debate that pits religion against science is the problem of when the world began. Christianity believes the world began with God's creation. One scientific theory is that the world began with a "Big Bang." Both Christianity and Science need to produce *times* which will then validate their realities. Native people also have creation myths, yet they do not concern themselves with *when* the world began or *when* man first appeared. Nor do the creation stories place man in an exalted position on earth in relation to other beings, unlike the myth of Christianity.

Native people who passed records down orally would say "The way I heard it."¹⁴⁶ This indicates what was most important to them. For Native people it is the content of the story rather than its chronological location that is important. Rather than saying something occurred in 1807 or 1611, they would describe what happened or how they lived a "long time ago."

Since life is cyclical for the Native person and not linear, Native people are no more concerned with when the world began than when the world will end. Therefore many do not

¹⁴⁶Vine Deloria, *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*, (Golden, Col: Fulcrum, 1994), 98.

suffer the angst that stems from the fear of death. Death according to Deloria is just the continuation of life. The concept of cyclical time makes it possible for the Native person to appreciate time and be free to enjoy it.

This past summer on the reserve I was struck by an incredible freedom. It felt like I had walked into another world. The houses were semi-modern, there was indoor plumbing in many homes; some were even air conditioned. A number of people drove new vehicles. If it were not for the environmental surroundings of bush and lakes, I could very well have been in a poor suburb of any city. There was no reason to feel like I was in another world yet that is exactly what I felt. Time seemed to stand still. It is not easy to explain and it certainly was not a matter of people just hanging around idle. Nor were they living the way they had hundreds of years ago. I guess the best way to describe it is in the aura of the place. The attitude of the people was not harried, everywhere I went there was a relaxed atmosphere. People got things done, they organized retreats, went to work daily, travelled hundreds of miles at the drop of a hat and yet at no time did I feel the hustle and bustle or stress involved that I usually felt in the city when people were engaged in similar activities.

CHAPTER V

Sharing

*They do not open the hand half-way when they give....*¹⁴⁷

A value which Brant claims as being very important to Native people is the value of *sharing*. According to Brant the ethic of sharing means that everything a Native person has is to be shared. This includes (but is not limited to) clothing, food and tools.

The importance of *sharing* is such a significant factor in Native life that the concept and resulting behaviour has received manifold attention dating from earliest European contact to the writings of contemporary authors.

The Jesuit missionaries were constantly astounded by the generous nature of Native people. The missionaries' epistles to France were filled with numerous accounts of Native people's generosity. In a letter to the Father Provincial at Paris, dated the 31st of Jan. in the year 1612, Father Pierre Biard writes, "These Savages are extremely liberal toward each other; no one is willing to enjoy any good fortune by himself, but makes his friends sharers in the larger part of it."¹⁴⁸ It was also noted that the same liberality was shown to the French. Biard further notes that a Native when holding a feast will not sit down with his guests but waits upon them, distributing all the food keeping nothing for himself. The host would only eat if one of the guests in return shared the portion he had received.¹⁴⁹ In 1616 Biard writes about Native people that, "They are no wise ungrateful to each other, and share everything.

¹⁴⁷Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, VI, 239.

¹⁴⁸ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, II, 79.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

No one would dare to refuse the request of another....¹⁵⁰

While material needs are important, Native people place greater emphasis on spiritual resources. According to Barsh, "It was their belief that love of possessions is a weakness to be overcome."¹⁵¹ Barsh cautions that love of material things "will in time disturb the spiritual balance of man."¹⁵²

The Jesuits were often confronted with what they took to be the Native's belief that friendship was more important than love of material things. According to Paul Le Jeune, whenever the Jesuits would deny the Native requests for goods the Natives would respond with, "Khisakhitan, 'Thou lovest that,' sakhita, sakhita, 'Love it, love it;' as if they would say that we are attached to what we love, and prefer it to their friendship."¹⁵³ Although friendship is definitely more important to Native people than material goods it is possible that the Jesuits misunderstood the intent of those words.

Considering that Native people were known for teasing and using ridicule, it is possible that the words were spoken to convey contempt for the French *hanging on* to property. It may have appeared as quite a contradiction to the Native people that these *religious* men would place such importance on material rather than spiritual concerns.

Not only adults demonstrate sharing for as Barsh writes, "the child must early learn

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, III, 95.

¹⁵¹ Barsh, *Nature and Spirit of North American Political Systems*, 190.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, V, 171.

the beauty of generosity. He is taught to give what he prizes most."¹⁵⁴ Value is placed on people over material possessions.

I remember once telling a Native girl how much I admired a picture she had. She came to my house that evening and presented me with the gift of her picture. I was amazed for I had never intended my compliment to be construed as being covetous. At first I refused to take the picture. She became visibly upset by my refusal so I questioned her about it. She told me that because I liked the picture so much, if she didn't give it to me she would be saying that she valued a *thing* over me. She said it was very important to her that I accept the gift. I thanked her for the picture. That day I learned a valuable lesson. While admiring someone's possessions may be polite in some social circles in others it may not indicate admiration but rather a desire to obtain if not that particular object, at least one like it. The result being an obligation to appease that desire. I have since learned to phrase compliments so they do not imply desire for another's possessions.

Many people are jealous of their possessions and would see it as an infringement on their rights if someone borrowed something then forgot to return it. A Native person would take it in his/her stride and assume the other person just needed it more. According to the Jesuits, "These people seek a reputation for liberality and generosity; they give away their property freely and very seldom ask any return."¹⁵⁵

Many non-natives seek to gain power through individual prosperity and success. How many times have we heard the statement, "Keeping up with the Jones." Status and prestige

¹⁵⁴ Barsh, *The Nature and Spirit of North American Political Systems*, 190.

¹⁵⁵ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, I, 275.

are attributed to people who accumulate great wealth both monetary and through possessions. Native people are not as concerned with individual prosperity and those who achieve some form of prosperity believe they have a responsibility to share it with others. Rather than striving for power they seek equality for their community. I often hear from Native students that when they have finished university they will be returning home to help their community. The students may not achieve financial success however, the community will prosper from the students' sharing their knowledge. The students will also prosper, i.e. as recipients of community respect.

The Jesuits noticed that there were no poor among the Natives. One letter attributes this to the fact that all members of the tribe laboured. While there may be some truth to that claim I am inclined to believe the real reason for there being no poor among them was because they shared everything they had. A society that in practise shares everything could not have any individual poverty. Collective poverty is a different matter and one which could occur if the results of hunting were scarce. This is confirmed by a letter written between the summers of 1656 and 1657, by the Jesuit Paul Le Jeune. He writes that;

However, amid so many defects due to their blindness and to their barbarous training, they still possess virtues which might cause shame to most Christians. No hospitals are needed among them, because there are neither mendicants nor paupers as long as there are any rich people among them. Their kindness, humanity, and courtesy not only make them liberal with what they have, but cause them to possess hardly anything except in common. A whole village must be without corn, before any individual can be obliged to endure privation. They divide the produce of their fisheries equally with all who come; and the only reproach they address to us is our hesitation to send to them oftener for our supply of provisions.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, XLIII, 271.

The Jesuits were writing about a group of people who did not talk theoretically about the virtue of sharing but rather practised the actual behaviour. As such they would be disgusted with people who did not demonstrate the same generosity. If I am correct, we saw this in the ironic way the Natives talked of the French loving *things*.

The Jesuits claim that the Natives believed they were better than the French because of this virtue. The Jesuits wrote that the Natives would say to the French, "you are covetous, and are neither generous nor kind; as for us, if we have a morsel of bread we share it with our neighbour."¹⁵⁷ But, just because a Native intelligently notices that his own values have much better effects does not necessarily mean that he would claim to be, himself, *better than* those who lack those values.

According to Barsh, "Each individual is intensely aware of his accountability for the welfare of others."¹⁵⁸ Once again we are confronted with the reality of the Native belief that one "does not live to himself alone,"¹⁵⁹ Nor can we say that sharing as described above was limited to the people the Europeans first met when they came to this country. Through the course of my interviewing I continually came across people who still believe in sharing in spite of the pervasive consumerism of the dominant culture.

When questioned about whether her grandparents believed in sharing, Leona Massan responded, "Oh, they always did. Yup he'd [grandfather] always go around. My brother does that to this very day...when he kills game, like caribou or stuff, he'll keep just enough for his

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 73.

¹⁵⁸ Barsh, *The Nature and Spirit of North American Political System*, 62.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 181.

family and he'll go around and give the rest away. That's how Grandpa was too."¹⁶⁰

Ethel McKay from Easterville also believes sharing is very important, "when you have something you share it with other people."¹⁶¹ I stayed with Ethel in Easterville for about a month and during the entire time her home was open to everyone. Ethel lives by a principle of sharing. At meal time she had enough food to feed her children and grandchildren, none of whom live with her, and never refused anyone anything. My niece quite often dropped by at mealtimes and freely helped herself to food. There was a standing joke that Maxine would show up as soon as the food was laid out.

When I first went to Ethel's house, her four year old granddaughter let me in and told me to make myself coffee. At first I thought no one else was there but the child's father was, he just didn't come out while I was there. When Ethel got home she told me I was welcome to come to her home any time, I was also to help myself should I get hungry or thirsty.

Macleod, an Elder from Easterville talked about sharing at the Old Post before they were relocated.

Oh yeah, that's right, yeah we were sharing that if you have a anything at all you know everybody share, all the food and meat and berries and all that. That's a lot of sharing. Not only one family using, lots and lots of people they use that stuff. Yeah, sometimes I got two moose. I was out with the dogs in the winter time. I gave them a load of meat, it bring it home and sometimes I only have two, three lbs left. I give it yeah, to all the people. Yes I guess that's all I can say.¹⁶²

The people from Easterville live in an area where the hunting and trapping is

¹⁶⁰ Leona Massan, Appendix.

¹⁶¹ Ethel McKay, Appendix.

¹⁶² Macleod George, Appendix.

extremely poor yet many people still believe in sharing. Sheila George, Macleod's daughter-in-law, had heard many stories about sharing at the old post but was sceptical as to the reason for it. She admits to thinking the only reason people shared that way was out of necessity. They had no refrigeration back then so they could not keep all the meat. I argued that they didn't have to share because they could have smoked the meat which would prevent spoiling. Later when talking about sharing in their present reserve she said:

Yes, they could have done that [smoked the meat] maybe that's what they did when they got the meat but I've always know that they don't bring in the meat until you take what you want. But now you cut it up throw it in the freezer and if somebody comes around asking for meat you give it to them. Same thing with fish. Well my husband's a fisherman and if some old people, not only old people but people from around ask us for fish and he's sure to get them fish the next time he's out on the lake.¹⁶³

The most interesting part of Sheila's discussion was her insistence on people sharing because they had no other choice and then without realizing what she was telling me went on to show how she and her husband still practise the sharing principle. The only difference between her behaviour and that of the past is she gives the meat directly from her freezer rather than from a freshly slaughtered animal. What is important in her story is that sharing still exists.

Recently there have been investigations into what may amount to a Native Environmental Ethic. When the Europeans first came to this continent they found a country they described as paradise. Unfortunately the past five hundred years have witnessed the destruction of much of this paradise. Consequently considerable concern over environmental problems has arisen.

¹⁶³ Sheila Macleod, Appendix.

Some researchers are turning to the Native people for a possible solution or at the very least, a partial solution to the environmental problem.¹⁶⁴ The answer I would propose is quite simple from a Native perspective, but I do not believe it could be understood entirely by non-Natives. A complete understanding would require full assimilation into the Native way of life.

Native people do not believe they hold dominion over the plants and animals on this planet. The world is not *their* world to manipulate and control. Rather, they believe they must share the earth with all beings who occupy it, both animals and plants. A concept that has confused many non-Natives is the relationship Native people have with those referred to as non-human people. Some environmental researchers have investigated this relationship as well as the concept of non-human people. Callicott for one, claims that Natives have an explicit environmental ethic that is set out in Native narratives. He states that,

Rather, animals and plants are portrayed as non-human persons living in their own families and societies. The representation of the relations between human persons and animal and plant persons is moulded on intertribal exchange. Just as one tribe may commerce with another—trading, say, obsidian arrowheads for copper ornaments—so animals are portrayed as enthusiastic trading partners with human beings. The animals willingly exchange their flesh and fur for the artifacts and cultivars that only human beings can produce.¹⁶⁵

How Callicott derives an environmental ethic from what would appear to be a

¹⁶⁴ Annie L. Booth and Harvey M. Jacobs, "Ties That Bind: Native American Beliefs as a Foundation for Environmental Consciousness," *Environmental Ethics: Divergence and Convergence*, by Susan J. Armstrong and Richard G. Botzler, (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993) 519-26.

¹⁶⁵ J. Baird Callicott, *Earth's Insights: A Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 127.

relationship between people is not at issue in this thesis. The importance in Callicott's presentation is rather, the notion of animals and plants as persons. Based on Native socialization it should be clear to the reader that the principle governing the concept of sharing is applicable to both animal and plant persons.

Many narratives related by Native story-tellers involve the practise of sharing. Both children and adults benefit from these stories. Children learn, while adults are again reminded of the beauty of generosity. It has already been demonstrated that lessons were not directly imposed on children. Rather than admonishing children to share, they were indirectly taught the consequences of selfish behaviour. Many stories relate the experiences of heroes. Most often the hero deliberately refuses to share and as such brings about unfortunate consequences for him/herself.

The Cree and Ojibwa have two such heroes. In the Cree tradition the hero is a trickster named Weesakayjac, also known as the "spirit being of humanity."¹⁶⁶ In the Ojibwa tradition the hero is the trickster Nanabush, also referred to as Nanabozho or Nanabushu. Nanabush is also a creator. Both Weesakayjac and Nanabush have powers beyond those of humans and as such are referred to as part human and part spirit. In both cultures the hero is continually bungling and making mistakes thereby instilling the story with humour. As a result the story is entertaining as well as instructional. Nothing would interfere more with a teaching than having to listen to a dull, boring lecture.

In the following story Nanabozho is forced to go hungry as a consequence of not

¹⁶⁶ James R. Stevens, *Legends From The Forest* (Moonbeam, ON.: Penumbra Press, 1985), 12.

sharing.

One autumn day as Nanabozho passed through the forest he noticed some chipmunks hurrying along with their cheek pouches filled with nuts and seeds. He looked overhead and saw that the birds had gathered in flocks; they would soon set out on their long journey to the warm lands of the south, leaving only the faithful winter birds—chickadees and jays and ravens, the grosbeaks and some of the woodpeckers—to keep him company through the winter. The bronze leaves of the birch trees that he saw around him, the brilliant reds of the rock maples, and the sunny gold of the poplars—all would soon lie in a carpet on the ground.

For a moment Nanabozho was touched with melancholy. But he was not depressed for long. The crisp air with its warm autumn scents was good to breathe. Suddenly he realized that he was hungry. He looked at all the busy feasters about him, but their food did not appeal to his huge appetite. Then he noticed a large black bear coming towards him through the thinning underbrush. It was slow and lazy, well fattened from feasting on berries and honey, and almost ready for its long winter sleep.

Uprooting a small tree, the Big Man patiently waited until the bear drew near. Then, chanting a song of apology to the bear (explaining that he, Nanabozho, was hungry and needed its body for food and its fur for the warmth in the winter days ahead, and begging the animal's spirit not to be angry), he showered blows on the animal with the tree-root. The bear was much too drowsy to protest.

Nanabozho removed the bear's heavy coat and hung it to dry on a tree, then cut up the meat and roasted it over a fire. When it was cooked, he cut it up into small pieces, for he intended to enjoy his feast by eating it slowly.

As he was about to take his first mouthful he was startled by a strange sound in some nearby birch trees whose branches rubbed together as the wind blew.

"Greedy fellow! Greedy fellow!" they seemed to say. Nanabozho thought they were scolding him for keeping the feast to himself (a large animal such as a bear was always shared by his people), and he shouted to the trees to stop. But the wind continued to blow and the trees to creak, "Greedy fellow! Greedy fellow!"

Nanabozho was now in a rage. Leaving his feast beside the fire, he climbed the nearest birch to the spot where a neighbouring tree pressed against it. He tried to pull them apart, but even his great strength could not make them yield. The gusts of wind that whined about his ears pressed the trees tightly together and, in his struggle to part them, he caught his hand.

While he tried to free himself, he heard a great commotion in the forest below. Looking down through the branches, he saw a number of wolves approaching. The keen-nosed animals had smelled the meat cooking and had

come to share in the feast. They were overjoyed to find the meat so nicely prepared for them and proceeded to devour it.

Nanabozho fought desperately to free his hand. He yelled and stormed at the wolves, but they ignored him. "That is our brother, Nanabozho," one of them said, "climbing trees like a boy. Let us pretend not to see him, for he would be embarrassed to be caught in such a pastime." The wolves quickly finished the food, howled their thanks, and continued on their way through the forest, pleased with themselves for taking advantage of the helpless Nanabozho.

At last the Big Man managed to free himself and came down from the tree. Nothing was left of his meal but the bones of the bear. He tore enough boughs off a willow tree to make a great whip. Then he lashed out with all his strength at the birches that had held him prisoner.

Until then the birch had been the most beautiful of trees, with a trunk of pure glossy white, but the whipping left many wounds, and the white birch is scarred to this day. Once again Nanabozho had left his mark upon the world, a mark of anger.¹⁶⁷

From this story we learn that had Nanabozho shared his feast he would not have gone away hungry but because he was greedy and not willing to share he lost it all. What does this lesson indirectly tell a child? Most likely that to have a little of something is better than having nothing. Once again we see in a story a *reminder* to children of the consequence of greed. The sight of white birch trees may cause them to remember Nanabozho's greed and how he went hungry; it is possible they may also equate greed with showing anger thus learning two lessons.

The Cree have a similar story to the one above involving the escapades of Weesaykayjac. The Cree narrative teaches the same values we saw in the Ojibwa narrative. Other notable Cree figures are mentioned in the writings of the fur trader George Nelson that were documented in the book, *The Orders of the Dreamed* by Jennifer S.H. Brown and Robert Brightman. Brown and Brightman included in their book a contribution by a Cree

¹⁶⁷ Dorothy M. Reid, *Tales of Nanabozho* (Toronto, ON: Bryant Press, 1963), 47.

language instructor Stan Cuthand. In a section titled, "On Nelson's Text," Cuthand claims, "There is a very strong relationship between Cree myths and Cree society."¹⁶⁸ According to Cuthand, the Woodland and Plains Cree have stories about a skeleton being called Pakahk which reinforce sharing of food and other material goods.¹⁶⁹

An Ojibwa Elder commenting on sharing said "And this is what they do today and they go hunting they're supposed to offer something before or tobacco or [pause] so when you kill it, now what they do, they put it in the fridge. They keep it for themselves. So the next time they don't get [game] cause they're supposed to share that animal, whoever is in that reserve. Some people that's what they do today."¹⁷⁰ This Elder is telling us that greed results in loss just as in the story of Nanabozho

It should be clear by now how important sharing is to Native people. Nor is sharing limited to human persons as both Callicott and the above story illustrate.

Even the French received a share of provision when they had nothing, in spite of the fact that the Natives many times thought of them as an enemy.

At the beginning of this discussion on sharing, I said sharing was not limited to clothing, food or tools. Before leaving this discussion I think it is important to mention two more aspects of sharing that are demonstrated by Natives people. The first aspect involves sharing in another person's emotional pain.

¹⁶⁸ Jennifer S.H. Brown and Robert Brightman, *The Orders of the Dreamed: George Nelson on Cree and Northern Ojibwa Religion and Myth, 1823* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1990), 195.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ William Wilson, Appendix.

Paul Le Jeune speaking of the Iroquois, then known as the Onontaghe Nation, writes:

The chief men among them came with mournful cries to console us for the death of two of our French. He who carried the presents of condolence addressed himself to the Father Superior, saying: "The Elders of our country have the custom of wiping away one another's tears when they are afflicted by any misfortune. We come, Achiendase, [name given to Father Superior] to perform that friendly duty toward thee. We weep with thee, because misfortune cannot touch thee without piercing us by the same blow; and we cannot, without extreme regret, see thee suffer so in our country, after having left thine own, where thou wert perfectly comfortable."¹⁷¹

Native people at the time of the Jesuit's writings sincerely believed in sharing with the Jesuit Fathers in their time of sorrow. Native people have, in my experiences growing up, always shared in each other's grief. Sharing in another's grief helps to lighten the pain. Shortly before losing my father to cancer my mother's sisters and many of their children moved into my parents' house to be with my mother. Every day his hospital room was filled with people. Nor were these visits brief. Once in a while non-Native relatives came to visit and I was struck with the difference in my relatives. My father's family seemed quite uncomfortable and kept their visits short. My mother's family were with us the whole time.

Had we been on the reserve a wake would have been held, but my father's family do not share the same belief. Nora Wasacase talks about what funerals were like at Cedar Lake when she was growing up: "...when someone passed away everybody then looked after that...they have a wake for two nights; and everybody would be fed, and they sit up all night, you could get real tired. Sometimes for three nights they would sit up...I guess this is a way of supervising people in mourning...."¹⁷² Nora chose a strange word, 'supervising' to describe

¹⁷¹ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, XLIII, 277.

¹⁷² Nora Wasacase, Appendix.

the mourners. Normally we would assume this word to imply that mourners needed watching over. Yet I believe Nora meant the community members were taking care of the mourners not guarding or supervising them. When people take care of others in a state of grief it is normally because they share the grief.

The last aspect of sharing I wish to comment on is that of sharing knowledge. When we think of sharing we usually think of it in the physical sense whereas with grief and knowledge there is nothing physical transferred to another person. The sharing of knowledge is as important to Native people as any other type of sharing. This may very well be the main reason for the survival of Native culture. Although substantial effort was put forth to eliminate traditional practises from Native life it has not been completely successful. The oral tradition has allowed knowledge to be passed down generation after generation. An Ojibwa woman put sharing this way:

Okay, as I was saying the principle of sharing does exist but with more external pressures of Western thinking in our system we have to have people conscious, reminder of, to ourselves that we must continue that principle of sharing. Whereas it used to be just sharing up staples and stuff before, now we're sharing information and knowledge.¹⁷³

Today there is more openness as to the sharing of information. In the past with the advent of residential schools sharing of this nature was forbidden. Rita King said Native people have to empower themselves and the way to do that is to openly share knowledge.

Evelyne Susin wisely commented about sharing that "Oh yes, it's very important. Its um, I think without sharing how else would we ah, share our knowledge. If we didn't share

¹⁷³ Rita King, Appendix.

what we know I guess we would be a lost society, lost culture."¹⁷⁴

A young man responded with, "Oh yes. It's my belief that uh, well actually it was my parents' belief that we share time, or I guess quality time [laughs], ideals, thoughts, and it's the way to be sharing I guess. Even the knowledge as well as objects, food or something."¹⁷⁵

An Elder put forth the concept of sharing as, "It's very important that's why [pause] sometime you have a chance to talk, you share whatever you learn. But some people they keep it in. But this is why [pause] I guess when you teach the young children what you teach them then, they go tell other children, 'This is what I learned,' sharing what they passed on eh. Yup and the knowledge."¹⁷⁶

Given the importance of sharing in the above comments how does one justify secret ceremonies? How is it possible to respect not sharing? The answer to these questions can be found in the Aboriginal social structure.

Aboriginal society recognizes an appropriate time, place and person or persons with whom to pass on knowledge. It is understood that sharing knowledge involves the recipient being capable of understanding. There are many teachers in this society and they intuitively know who to share their experiences with. It is understood by all that certain persons may not be ready to receive different types of knowledge. In this case it is pertinent rather than disrespectful to withhold information.

The notion of secret ceremonies poses another question. Is it necessary to share

¹⁷⁴ Evelyne Susin, Appendix.

¹⁷⁵ Owen Zoccole, Appendix.

¹⁷⁶ William Wilson, Appendix.

knowledge of or participation in these ceremonies? Another question is, who are these ceremonies kept secret from? The answer to the first question is no, it is not necessary. Certain ceremonies such as those conducted by the Midewiwin society were banned and the tools were destroyed. It became illegal for Native people to conduct their ceremonies. Of necessity these ceremonies were taken underground. In today's society the ceremonies have resurfaced. The location may still be kept secret but that is mostly to protect the people involved. Young people are once again being trained on how to conduct the ceremonies.

The answer to the second question stems in part from the first answer. The ceremonies are kept secret from most *non-Natives*. The reason for this should have become apparent in the above discussion. A second reason for not sharing sacred ceremonial knowledge has to do with what Ward Churchill in *Indians Are Us?*, describes as, "...Abuse and Exploitation of American Indian Sacred Traditions." According to Churchill, exploitation of sacred ceremonies amounts to another phase of what he calls "cultural genocide." He believes it to be imperative that Native people keep these ceremonies secret from non-Native people. Churchill thinks that non-Natives are using the ceremonies in ways that are not respectful. He claims that the ceremonies are gifts given to the Native people, gifts that have helped them to survive and maintain their culture.¹⁷⁷

Societies, both Native and non-Native alike have secret ceremonies. However this has not prevented the knowledge being shared with others. Native society understands why some knowledge is kept secret and Natives maintain respect for that secrecy just as they

¹⁷⁷Ward Churchill, *Indians are Us: Culture and Genocide in Native North America* (Monroe, ME.: Common Courage Press, 1994), 279-80.

respect sharing with those in need.

The above comments illustrate the importance of both sharing and not sharing knowledge. Both behaviours are equally important to preserving the culture.

I'd like to leave this chapter with a story one Elder gave me about sharing in Native life:

Like in the old days, everybody was working for themselves and a lot of people was saying there...was no welfare in those days. But there was welfare in the old days, all these moose, water-fowl everything, all those things were welfare to the people. But you have to get it for yourself, to work for it, in order to get something. All that was welfare at the old camp, everything was free them days. It was nothing to go kill a moose or things like that that we live on. Don't pay nothing for it though. Everybody give something to somebody. Everybody had a little bit. When somebody goes out and get a moose, before he takes his meat out to take home everybody went down there. Everybody had a piece. Then you would go home to eat it.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ Walter Mink, Appendix.

CHAPTER VI

Attitude of Gratitude

*They are in no wise ungrateful to each other....*¹⁷⁹

Brant's early research into Native ethics led to a value he first described as *Attitude of Gratitude*. Brant arrived at this value because he noticed that among Native people, "Gratitude is very rarely shown or verbalized."¹⁸⁰

He (Brant) has since changed *Attitude of Gratitude* to *The Ethic of Excellence of Gratitude not Shown*.¹⁸¹

Brant's reason for making this change, I would suspect, had to do with *why* Native people do not as a rule show gratitude. At least it is not shown in a way that is understandable to non-Natives.

Brant in his early research often put forth an hypothesis as to why these particular values were adopted by Native people. As in the case of not showing gratitude Brant proposed that this behaviour (or lack of behaviour) may stem from the notion that excellence is expected.

Brant thought that this attitude towards gratitude may have risen from the historical importance of excellence for Native people. This notion is easy enough to understand. It would be essential to a society that lived with severe winters that excellence be achieved. If a wife made a poor job of sewing her husband's jacket serious harm or possibly death could

¹⁷⁹Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, III, 95.

¹⁸⁰ Brant, *Indian Thinking Indian Ways*, 44.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

result should the jacket come apart while he was out hunting. If a hunter were inexperienced starvation could result. Warriors had to be brave as well as to excel in warfare otherwise the entire community would suffer.

Although historical importance shows that excellence was a necessary component of survival, I do not agree that it may have led to the attitude toward gratitude. I think that excellence naturally developed from the teaching method used by parents. Not showing gratitude may have come about out of respect for each person's worth. By not showing overt gratitude it would be easy to maintain equality within a group. When offering a thank you, you are in effect admitting that someone has done something special thereby elevating that person socially. V.F. Cordova and I were discussing this concept of gratitude one day and she said it was very difficult for her to learn to adjust to the non-Native practise of saying thank you. Overt gestures of thanks were not used in her community. She believes that saying thank you disrupts social equality.

According to Brant, Native people are *expected* to behave in ways which non-native societies "would view as helpful and constructive enough to illicit [elicit] thanks, or praise."¹⁸² Unlike non-Native society where helpful or constructive behaviour are rewarded, in Native society the behaviour is *expected*, therefore there is no need to praise or give thanks. For example, if a Native person were to give up his/her seat on a crowded bus for an elderly person he/she would not expect to receive a thank you nor to be praised for that behaviour. The behaviour is one they would simply expect of themselves.

It is interesting to note that in Western literature there is a debate as to whether

¹⁸²*Ibid.*

morally good behaviour actually exists. Since the writings of Plato there has been argument that what appears to be *moral* may just be a result of pure self-interest. Psychological egoism in fact states that "...the only reason why people act respectfully or kindly toward each other is that that too, for one reason or another, is to their advantage."¹⁸³ Behaviour, with expected rewards either in this life or life after death, give little moral value. While philosophers dispute psychological egoism, some do defend ethical egoism which claims that: we ought to act in self-interest even though we may be inclined otherwise.

At the other extreme Kant argued that people ought to act out of a moral duty and for no other purpose. According to Kant, a reward or expected reward would cause the action to become morally insignificant. Furthermore, people should overcome all their desires when making moral decisions and act only as duty commands.

Native people appear to expect moral or successful behaviour without the desire or need to be rewarded. At this point it would appear that Native people may come close to Kant's idea of a moral agent.

Brant claims that Native professionals would not be rewarded for being good teachers, good social workers or good nurses. People do not go into these professions with the intent to be bad teachers, bad social workers and bad nurses therefore why should they be rewarded or praised for doing what they are supposed to do. Again this reminds me of Kant's notion of duty. Is it possible that Native people are acting from a sense of duty rather than for reward?

In one of my interviews I questioned a young man on his attitude toward gratitude.

¹⁸³ Solomon, *Introducing Philosophy*, 664.

I was interested in whether he thought a good deed performed by one person put the recipient under obligation to respond in kind. In other words, is it expected that you return the favour by rewarding the person for what they've done? His response was, "Not really, it should be a given just because your talents and my talents differ. So it's more of a survival. I don't help you out expecting praise. I help you out because you need help. And hopefully someday you can return the favour but I don't hold that against you or ask for that kind of help."¹⁸⁴

For Owen, praise, gratitude and reward are not important. What is important is the ability to do something for someone. Neither would he expect or demand a return for his help. The expectation should be that you will be helped, not that you will gain a reward.

Many non-natives expect and even require praise and gratitude. Not receiving the expected gratitude from a Native person may result in the non-native feeling hurt (in the case of needing praise) or anger (in the case of wanting gratitude). At a seminar held in Kenora, Ontario, Brant asked the people how many times they heard the phrase "Ungrateful Indian"? I did not have to be at that seminar to imagine the response such a question would elicit. In my own life I have heard that phrase many times.

According to Brant the reward for being a good general practitioner is to have twice as many cases as one can manage. Unfortunately, as in Northern Ontario, that could just signify a shortage of doctors. The important point Brant is making is that Native people show their gratitude by revisiting the doctor or social worker or any professional who has done that person a service. This is similar to non-interference in that it is an indirect way of showing gratitude.

¹⁸⁴ Owen Zoccole, Appendix.

Brant talked about gratitude not being shown, possibly resulting from Native people expecting excellence. I disagree with such a notion. Many Native people today live with the notion of excellence or perfection, but it came, not from the natural occurrence of parental teaching, but from forced instruction at residential schools. Owen, in an interview, stated that, "My mother she's a perfectionist beyond most perfectionists and well I find I'm good in all things that I do, and ah, that has more to do with being slapped around by Mother Superior¹⁸⁵ at residential school. Like my mother used to tell me stories about being made to be perfectionists."¹⁸⁶ Owen also talked about Native people receiving praise, good marks and medals for their accomplishments at residential school. Although he believes Native people to be highly talented in whatever they choose to do, Owen attributes residential successes to abuse, as such praise could be seen as insulting rather than as rewarding.

Brant does demonstrate clearly an indirect method of giving praise or gratitude by his example of a practitioner being revisited by patients. It is my belief, however, that Native people live a life of respect and the gratitude they have for what has been given to them is constantly being revealed through indirect means. Not, as Brant claims, because of excellence being expected but, rather, because of a heartfelt gratitude for Mother Earth and her provision.

Rather than directly or verbally praising an action, the Native person would let you perform the action again. An example may clarify what I mean. Suppose a young child wants to help his grandfather clean fish. The grandfather would hand the child a fish. When the

¹⁸⁵ Owen is referring to the cause of his Mother's perfectionism not his own.

¹⁸⁶ Owen Zoccole, Appendix.

child has completed the task he/she turns to the grandfather. Without saying a word the grandfather hands the child another fish. The child has been praised without a word of praise being uttered for the grandfather is letting the child clean another fish. Now suppose the child, while cleaning the fish, mangled it so badly there was hardly any meat left. Would the grandfather reprimand the child for sloppiness, would he just ignore it and let the child waste another fish, or would he find another job for the child where the child would be constructive rather than destructive? In my opinion the grandfather would quickly find another job for the child. How then would the child learn to clean fish? The answer to this question will be addressed below.

A number of important points can be made from the above scenario. 1. The grandfather gave the child a fish to clean allowing the child to learn. 2. The grandfather would not punish the child thereby saving the child from humiliation. 3. The grandfather would not insult the child by giving praise that was not deserved. The child could not in this scenario receive the message that less than excellent performance is acceptable. Some people confuse not showing gratitude with not having gratitude, for example, the ungrateful Indian. But this is not true of Native people. Their entire lives encompass gratitude. This was demonstrated over and over by Native people I interviewed. Some excerpts of the interviews are as follows:

Rita King: Talking about gratitude in a Native sense then I would say that gratitude does exist by people showing good gestures to somebody. Say if I was thanking my uncle and instead of saying directly to him thank you, then I would do something good for him so then he would know that first of all it's been appreciated. So gratitude that way is doing things in a good way, always try to do something polite or help somebody or try to be a good person in your way of life...So by showing gifts, or showing extension of helping them

do something that they're doing, taking part in their interest then its showing gratitude, but that's not, again its indirect but its direct in a sense because the person would already know that that value is already inherent in our system.¹⁸⁷

We see that Rita demonstrates gratitude indirectly by doing something for the person she is grateful to or by presenting them with a gift. Her method is reciprocal for each party has given something to the other. Although she admits her method of showing gratitude is indirect, she also recognizes it as direct. She calls it direct because her people understand that gratitude has been demonstrated. Gratitude is inherent in their system. Verbal expression is unnecessary.

Nora Wasacase: Coming from a large family, one of my sisters was good with the kids, she was the children's worker. Then I was good with um, cooking and cleaning, more or less cleaning, so I guess my job was cleaning. My sister was good at bannock making and cooking, so she was the cook. We more or less had a specific job that we're good at. So when it was time to cook that was her work, but then she'll have the other kids who will help her. So that's her teaching and I'm teaching the younger kids the cleaning...if I made bannock and it was really good, then when it was time to sit down my parents would say something; "oh this is really good bannock, who made this bannock, who did all this cooking?" You know they really made a big deal about this good tasting bannock, or the good soup on the stove. Even though they knew who made it they would never [say] "oh this soup is so good, this bannock is so good, you did a good job". They wouldn't say it, they more or less go about it in a round way...Yeah, we didn't get, nobody got a specific praise.¹⁸⁸

Nora explains gratitude in a different way. Her parents were grateful when they noticed jobs were performed well. They did not directly address the person but the job. For Nora, parental gratitude involved expression in a round about way. The method is still indirect. Similar to Rita's story, the gratitude for Nora was also inherent in that each person

¹⁸⁷ Rita King, Appendix.

¹⁸⁸ Nora Wasacase, Appendix,

understood they had been praised. It is interesting to note again that the parents acknowledged the deed, not the person.

Evelyne Susin: In more subtle ways. I think ah, gratitude when you see a person ah, when you show or share something with a person and they show you, just from looking at them their aura...that you've made them happy or you've done something to lighten their load or whatever it was and that was the thanks.¹⁸⁹

Evelyne talks of gratitude in a way completely different from the previous two examples. Rather than demonstrating reciprocal behaviour or praising the deed, she explains recognition of gratitude. Evelyne reads the aura in the person's face thus recognizing the gratitude in the recipient's response. In other words, the light in someone's eyes or a smile tell Evelyne that gratitude has been expressed. Like the other examples, Evelyne's way is also indirect in that no words were necessary. The three examples above show clearly the *recognition of* and *behaving in* an indirect way are suitable methods for demonstrating gratitude to others. The behaviours demonstrated by the above illustrations are similar to ones demonstrated in human and non-human interactions.

Many narratives show how both humans and animals behave in a reciprocal relationship whereby each gives something to the other and in turn each benefits. This reciprocal relationship is founded on respect. It is necessary that each party demonstrate the proper respect. The animals show their respect for humans by giving their bodies to be used for food and their hide for clothing. The humans in turn show their respect by treating the animal remains with respect. The Jesuits noted the importance to Native people regarding proper handling of animal bones:

¹⁸⁹ Evelyne Susin, Appendix.

[T]hey consider it a sin to throw the bones to the dogs; they either burn them in the fire or bury them in the ground. For, they say, if the bears, beaver, and other wild animals which we capture in hunting should know that their bones were given to dogs and broken to pieces, they would not suffer themselves to be taken so easily.¹⁹⁰

In addition to animal bones it was also important to treat the blood with respect as Le

Jeune notes:

On the 22nd, our brother Pierre having caught a Beaver, a Savage skinned and our brother washed it. This woman seeing that he let some of the blood of the animal fall to the ground, cried out: 'In truth, this man has no sense;' and turning to Pierre she said: 'Thou wilt take no more Beavers, for the blood of thine has been spilled.' It is one of their superstitions that you must not spill the pure blood of the Beaver upon the ground, if you wish to have good hunting, at least Pierre has told us so.¹⁹¹

From these letters we see that the Natives believed that an improper attitude, or lack of respect, toward animal remains would result in the inability to be successful in hunting. In many narratives the human is instructed by the animal on how to treat the bones. Humans are admonished that if they do not treat the animals with the proper respect they (the animals) will not allow themselves to be hunted. Successful hunting has nothing to do with a good hunter but rather the beneficence of the animals. The following excerpt from an Ojibwa narrative clearly demonstrates this:

At once up spoke Muskrat: "See what Clothed-in-Fur has in mind! 'Would that I might eat my sister-in-law!' he thinks."

Now ashamed became the man. Whereupon said the old man: "Well, let him go ahead and eat her!" Thereupon, after they slew that woman, they cooked her. And so he was fed. "Don't break the joints at any place!" After he had eaten, then the bones were gathered up; to the water then were the bones taken and thrown in. And after a while in came the woman again; she

¹⁹⁰ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, I, 283.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.* V, 179.

was alive. And that was always what was done to the man whenever he had the desire to eat them; sometimes it was his mother-in-law, and sometimes it was his brother-in-law, he ate. And once he pulled apart the foot (of the one he had eaten). So when the one he had eaten came in, it then had two nails. That was what Clothed-in-Fur had done to it.

Now, once said Muskrat: "To-morrow by a being with a full set of teeth shall we be given a visit." And on the morrow, sure enough, a human being came walking hitherward. He climbed upon the dwelling, whereupon they all gazed upon him to see how he looked. Laughed the beavers when the human being started on his homeward way. They addressed (Muskrat), saying: "Muskrat, do go and listen to what the human being may have to say!"

So Muskrat slid on his feet off the log, and then started away. And when Muskrat came back, they asked him: "What did the human being say?"

"Very troublesome is the dwelling-place of the Beavers," he said.

"Yes," they said. And when evening was come, (the stem of) a pipe moved into where they lived (as a sign of invitation to smoke). Thereupon to his wife said the old Beaver: "Come receive the pipe!"

The old woman then received the pipe; she gave it to her husband; and then all drew a puff from that pipe. Back moved the pipe after they had all drawn a puff.

So on the morrow came the people, they had come to get some Beavers.

And all gave themselves up to be killed. And all were taken away except Clothed-in-Fur; he was not slain. And in the evening they all returned alive. On another occasion up spoke Muskrat: "To-morrow by a being with a full set of teeth shall we be given a visit."

So on the morrow, sure enough, a man came walking hitherward. There was very little water where they lived. Once more climbed the man upon the dwelling. Again they laughed at how he looked. After the man had gone back home, again Muskrat was commanded: "Do go and hear what he may say!"

And truly Muskrat went. And when home Muskrat was come, he was asked: "What did the man say?"

"There is very little water where the Beavers dwell, and all we have to do is simply to go to the Beavers," he said.

Then angry became the old Beaver. "Therefore let us hide!" Thereupon away they went for the dam. They drew along a great tree that was there at the dam, and to that place was where they went. Furthermore, they closed it up. After they had concealed themselves, they made a beaver-hole, into which they went.

On the morrow came the people for the purpose of killing some Beavers, but they did not find them. Back home they went.

On the next morning a pipe came moving in, but they did not receive it.

So on the following day back came the people. All day long they worked in vain to kill the Beavers, but they did not find where they were, even though they had fetched their dogs, that were good at hunting, and even though they went to where the Beavers were. And the Beavers spoke to the Dogs: "Away, away, away!" Yet (the Beavers) were not barked at. In the evening all went back home, they did not kill a Beaver.¹⁹²

We see from this story, 1. how the bones must be treated; 2. how the animals instruct the people; 3. how arrogance, that is lack of respect, results in not being able to hunt successfully.

Material gifts were a way in which Native people would thank the animal for the gift of his flesh. The animals, grateful for the gifts, would continue to give themselves for food unless the people showed disrespect thus indicating material things were not as important as respect. The people in turn grateful for the food would continue to supply the animals with gifts of tobacco as well as other articles. The following two excerpts illustrate this gift exchange. One is from a Cree narrative the other from an Ojibwa narrative. Both give examples of the types of gifts that people would give to the animals. I specifically chose these narratives to show the similarity between Cree and Ojibwa stories. Both stories are about a moose and his family, both indicate gifts received and both indicate the belief that the animals return to life. The main difference is in how the gifts are received. In the Cree story the moose wake to find the guns by their head. In the Ojibwa story the moose are invited to the humans dwelling where they are given their gifts. The other difference is in the type of gift received. The Cree narrative tells us that:

...mysteriously, all the moose that were killed reappeared back in their lodgings. In the morning, the young bull moose awoke and found a musket by

¹⁹² Overholt, *Clothed-In-Fur*, 71-72.

his pillow. He inspected it and rubbed the barrel with his hands. The same thing occurred when the cow got up she inspected the musket by her head....¹⁹³

The Ojibwa narrative tells that:

...after those were disposed of that had been killed at yonder place, then back again to life they came. Forthwith they fixed up the place where they lived. It was now growing dark. And after a while there came some one to invite them, whereupon all that were there were asked to come. They departed on their way to where the people dwelt. After they had gone inside, then they smoked. They were also fed, and they were given raiment. Truly happy were they. The old woman was given ear-rings and leggings. And all the various things that people have they were given. And the boy was given a cedar-bark pouch to keep powder in....¹⁹⁴

The above narratives and personal stories clearly demonstrate that Native people have gratitude and do say thank you. The method of demonstrating gratitude is non-verbal therefore it may be misunderstood. It is important to know that gifts can be anything from physical articles such as tobacco, food, and guns, to something as intangible as time. For example, someone may show gratitude to another person simply by giving some of his/her time, even if that just means sitting and listening while the other person talks. Time is a valuable gift. Like many of Native teachings, a gift may have been received but not understood as a gift until long afterwards.

¹⁹³ Stevens, *Legends From the Forest*, 34.

¹⁹⁴ Overholt, *Clothed-In-Fur*, 84.

CHAPTER VII

Value of Protocol

*All their talks, treaties, welcomes, and endearments are made under the fumes of this tobacco. They gather around the fire, chatting and passing the pipe from hand to hand....*¹⁹⁵

Native society is not a *do-as-you-please* society. According to Brant Native society is highly structured and has one of the most demanding sets of manners for social behaviour.¹⁹⁶ Native protocol may be misunderstood by non-Natives because it is not predicated on factors that govern non-Native behaviour. Time and religious doctrine are two of the many factors which differentiate the two cultures..

Bruce Sealy, a Cree from Manitoba, also talks about protocol. Sealy attended a seminar in Kenora with Brant where he (Sealy) used the word *mamaysis* to describe the importance of protocol for the Cree. Sealy uses the word *mamaysis* which is an English pronunciation because he says the actual Cree word would be too difficult for a non-Cree to pronounce. Basically *mamaysis* means "order of priorities". Essentially it is what a Cree person thinks is important in his life.¹⁹⁷ Protocol means the proper way to do things. Sealy tells us that protocol is important to the Cree therefore protocol is *mamaysis*.

Brant writes, "Protocol includes notions, such as manners, ceremony, and savoir faire."¹⁹⁸ The structure of Native society is dependent on each group, therefore, protocol

¹⁹⁵Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, III, 117.

¹⁹⁶ Brant, *Native Ethics*, 537.

¹⁹⁷"Indian Thinking Indian Ways," 14.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

varies from group to group. For example: What may be good manners in one group is considered bad manners in another. The Cree and the Mohawk provided Brant with excellent illustrations. When the Cree are invited to a feast they believe it good manners to eat everything they are offered. In this way they show respect and gratitude to the host for providing the feast. The Mohawk believe it good manners when invited to a feast to leave some portion. In this way they are showing respect and gratitude to the host for providing more than they can eat. The Mohawk believe a sign of their generosity is to lay out as much food as possible at a feast. You can well imagine the problem that would arise if the Mohawk invited the Cree to a feast. Brant was fond of relating his experiences with the Moose Factory Cree. Whenever he would give a presentation on Native beliefs Brant would use the following story:

Well what happens when the Cree from Moose Factory come down to the Mohawks on the Bay of Quinte for a feast or a banquet and all this food is put out? The tables are groaning with the weight of this food, and the Cree people feel that the proper thing to do is to eat it all before it spoils. They're making themselves sick, the Mohawks were horrified that they were pigging out, and the Cree were getting paranoid that we were trying to kill them.¹⁹⁹

Ceremonies are also conducted according to tribal affiliation. The reason for conducting a ceremony may be similar in different groups. However the protocol or set of procedures, may be entirely different for each, for example a Cree Medicine man from Manitoba may hold a healing ceremony which differs from that of an Ojibwa Medicine man from Ontario. This summer, while at a pow-wow at The Pas, Manitoba I noticed that the position of the drummers was entirely different from the Ojibwa drummers in Thunder Bay,

¹⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 50-51.

Ontario. The Cree men at The Pas circled their drums on the outside of the arena leaving the dancers to dance within the circle of drums. In Thunder Bay the drummers are clustered in the centre leaving the dancers to dance around the outside of the drummers. Pow-wows are conducted all over North America and I'm sure positioning of the drums is equally important to all of them, yet they do not have to be positioned in the same fashion. This does not take away from the ceremony, rather, it demonstrates each group's specific needs.

The rules about how to behave are specific to each group. They are not given to you directly because articulating the rules would be a breach in the value of non-interference. Thus they are taught by non-intrusive, non-direct means: Narratives and personal stories are typical methods used.

The problem with not being able to articulate rules means that it would be easy to make protocol mistakes as we saw in Brant's story above. According to Brant breaches in protocol can be overlooked when they result from outsiders. People from other groups are not expected to know everyone's protocol procedures. Brant states that if you are innocent you will be forgiven, especially if "more fundamental and less arbitrary values such as sharing and non-interference are observed."²⁰⁰ At the end of Brant's story about the Cree and Mohawk, Brant's sister "noticed what was going on, and she said, 'Well, when you invite them back [the Cree], you know, you'll just have to put a little so that they don't do themselves a mischief.'²⁰¹

Brant also claims that in Native society what may seem like a rather loosely structured

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 48-49.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 51.

society is not. In fact, the opposite is quite true. According to Sealy, "You [Native people] learn that there is a certain way of doing things and you do it that way. It has to be predictable for the entire group."²⁰² Predictable means structured. Sealy states that there is a certain way to walk in a teepee. How you walk in a teepee must be predictable, for after all you do not normally live there alone, a lot of other people live with you.²⁰³

The Jesuits recognized that the Native people had certain ways of doing things and that each person knew what was expected of him/her and did what they had to do without interfering in the other's labours:

It is true that the Savages are very patient, but the order which they maintain in their occupations aids them in preserving peace in their households. The women know what they are to do, and the men also; and one never meddles with the work of the other. The men make the frames of their canoes, and the women sew the bark with willow withes or similar small wood. The men shape the wood of the racquets, and the women do the sewing on them. Men go hunting, and kill the animals; and the women go after them, skin them, and clean the hides. It is they [women] who go in search of wood that is burned. In fact they would make fun of a man who, except in some great necessity, would do anything that should be done by a women. One Savage, seeing Father de Noue carrying wood, began to laugh, saying: 'He's really a woman'; meaning he was doing woman's work. But a short time afterward, his wife falling sick, and having no one in his cabin who could assist him, he was compelled to go out himself in search of supplies; but in truth he went only at night, when no one could see him.²⁰⁴

It is obvious from this letter that the Native people had a tight social structure, each knowing their place in that system and the rules to be followed. We also see that the rules were situation specific and when necessary the rules could be bent. In the above story we saw

²⁰²*Ibid.*, 20.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁰⁴ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, V, 133.

that the man engaged in women's work when there was no other alternative.

Unfortunately the Jesuits did not recognize the fact that the Natives had rules. They perceived the Native people's structure to be simply a means for keeping the peace. The Jesuits did not recognize the existence of the structure itself. Neither did they recognize the protocol involved in treating animal remains with respect; rather they referred to it as superstition. Even ceremonies were seen as highly ritualized satanic practises, rather than highly structured systems.

Father Le Jeune writes that the Natives "recognize some nature superior to the nature of man."²⁰⁵ He (le Jeune) then goes on to say, "I confess that the Savages have no public or common prayer, nor any form of worship usually rendered to one whom they hold as God."²⁰⁶ It is clear that Le Jeune is interpreting through a Christian bias, for he goes on to say, "...they have neither laws nor government, therefore there is no ordinance which concerns the service of this superior nature; each one acts according to his own understanding."²⁰⁷

It is clear that Native people did not have written ordinances with which to guide them spiritually or otherwise. However, the Jesuit was wrong to say they had none. Just because Native people did not observe the type of structure known to the Jesuits, for example, the procedure involved in Catholic prayers or formally structured Mass, did not mean the Natives had no spiritual structure of their own. Nor does it mean, as the Jesuits wrote, that what ceremony there was, could only be superstition. An Elder in Thunder Bay compared two

²⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 153.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

important Native rituals which Jesuits regarded as superstition yet are widely embraced and respected in the Catholic faith.

The Elder explains, "its the same way we do here, like, Jesus went to vision quest too."²⁰⁸ In *The Bible*, the book of Mark tells that "the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and the angels attended him."²⁰⁹ Another account in the book of Matthew states "After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him."²¹⁰ Jesus then entered into a dialogue with this spirit on temptation.

A Native person reading these bible passages would immediately understand them as a vision quest. During a vision quest the man having fasted for a minimum of four days is visited by spirit. The spirit then talks to the person. William also said "its the same way when they [Natives] light the sage, what do they [priests] use?" "Incense" [I answered]. "Yeah, [responds William] so its the same way." William understands the waving of the burning incense in its vessel to be analogous to the waving of burning sage in its vessel at Native ceremonies.

Native people did not have structured forms of worship to God because they did not worship a *God*. They did however conduct highly ritualized spiritual ceremonies due to a strong belief in spirits. Many of these ceremonies are still practised in today's society. Accounts of the vision quest, sweat lodges and shaking tents are available in numerous text

²⁰⁸ William Wilson, Appendix.

²⁰⁹ *The Holy Bible*, N.I.V., Mark, 1:13.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Matthew, 4:2-3.

books²¹¹ as well as stories from contemporary Native people.

The very fact that each person acts according to his/her understanding underlies one of the most important ordinances to Native people, that is, non-interference.

In addition to ceremonies, Brant talks about protocol as including the notion of manners. I asked many Cree and Ojibwa people whether there was a proper way to approach their Elders. The unanimous response was affirmative. In some of my interviews the following comments were made: Evelyne Susin said, "The protocol is to give an Elder tobacco if you want to talk to them." Owen Zoccole said, "You usually give tobacco..." I asked Sheila George if she knew about giving tobacco. She answered, "Yes, I do...But I've always wondered what they do with the tobacco, the ones that don't smoke, do they burn it?"²¹²

I questioned different Elders on the practise of offering tobacco. A concern I had was that it might be misinterpreted as *having* to pay the Elders in order to talk to them. One of the Ojibwa Elders said:

This is what you do,...offer tobacco...Okay, what he does after you finish talking, that tobacco he doesn't use it himself. Okay, the Elder's just a messenger. If I gave just like this [points to a pouch of tobacco] do you know where I'm gonna put it? I'm gonna offer it to the Mother Earth eh, this who I'm working for, or the higher. See if you just keep this [points to his chest] whatever you ask me that's just where that'll be. You got to go, just like I'm a messenger I guess, or spiritual advisor or something like that. So this is what I'm doing and then you go put it over there [points to the outside]²¹³

²¹¹ For further information on vision quests, shaking tents and sweat lodges refer to Brown, *The Orders of the Dreamed*.

²¹² Sheila George, Evelyne Susin, Owen Zoccole, Appendix.

²¹³ William Wilson, Appendix.

After talking to this Elder it became clear to me that tobacco is not a payment to the Elder. Rather it is a means by which the Elder is able to seek answers for you. After receiving the tobacco and your request the Elder then takes the tobacco and in turn offers it to the spirits. This may be done outdoors in the bush or indoors. From this he receives the spiritual guidance necessary to help you. Tobacco is offered to Elders when seeking counsel or requesting a healing. Many times the answer a person is waiting for may not be forthcoming till long afterwards. One Elder told me this was to see how much patience a person had. He said, "They will call you a month later or sometime like that [he then laughs]. 'Cause I used to watch my Grandfather, he was a Medicine Man uh. So one of these old ladies come uh, he sit there almost twenty minutes before he answered, see that's how they were."²¹⁴

Protocol requires the person to wait however long it takes, for the answer they are seeking. You do not interrupt an Elder when he is speaking nor rush him/her for help. The help will come when it is time.

Walter Mink, an Elder from Easterville reserve talks about the protocol of giving tobacco to an Elder in a pragmatic sense. According to Walter,

...when you ask something from an Elder or anybody that knows something about it (pause), before you ask him you gotta give him something like that package of tobacco there. Well that works 'cause he's gonna tell you everything what he knows. And that's what the Old people used to do in the old days, because there was no doctors, there was no hospital in the old days. All these things that you see in this world, the trees, plants, everything, they use these things for medicine in them days. But when they get something -ah- an herb or something to use for medicine they put tobacco, a little bit they bury here. And that thing works. It works when you put tobacco in there. And

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Appendix.

same with Elders, its gonna work cause he's gonna tell you everything he knows.²¹⁵

Walter's understanding of giving tobacco as we saw was functional as well as spiritual. The Jesuits noted that, "All their talks, treaties, welcomes, and endearments are made under the fumes of this tobacco. They gather around the fire, chatting and passing the pipe from hand to hand, enjoying themselves in this way for several hours. Such is their inclination and custom."²¹⁶

Historically there are numerous accounts of Indians holding up meetings because they had to smoke a pipe first. One reason may be as Walter stated, that tobacco promotes honesty. Another reason is the belief that smoking tobacco promotes better reasoning.

Walter also alluded to the practise of burying tobacco. Offering tobacco to Mother Earth was another practise many Natives understand. This practice is conducted by Native people of all ages. A seventeen year old at Easterville told me it is important to give tobacco to the earth whenever you take something from it.

A young man in his early twenties said "Well of course, first thing you always use when you take something from Mother Earth is you put tobacco."²¹⁷

A woman in her early thirties said "I'd say so because in our teachings right, um, there are different rituals or ceremonies that are performed prior to taking certain things from the

²¹⁵ Walter Mink, Appendix.

²¹⁶ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, III, 117.

²¹⁷ Owen Zoccole, Appendix.

earth...give back to the earth what I've taken."²¹⁸

A woman in her early fifties gave an interesting description for proper protocol:

Definitely um, especially when you're taking something from Mother Earth you always put back something in return for taking something from her. In the morning or before I go out what I usually do is smudge and I pray to the Creator because I'm gonna go out there and take, like if I wanted to go out and get some sage. There's a certain time of the year that you pick sage and um, that would be in mid summer or early fall. So when you ah, I always place tobacco first on the, usually on the east side because its where life starts on the east side. And then you well, you bend, when you're breaking it off you bend it towards the west. You don't pull it out by the roots you break it off. You know, above the roots so that that sage will grow again. This is one of the things I was taught. Now again I know that some people pull them all out and ah, because in the Fall because the seeds are there and they will fall back in the earth but I was taught to break it off and you know, not to pull the roots off. So there is protocol when you go and take stuff and its the same even if I wanted to go and make a canoe. There is a certain time of the year that you do that. If I want, like I need birch bark um, you collect, well first of all you offer tobacco and then this is done in mid June ah, because ah, there is different birchbark...I don't know if texture is the right word...there's different grades of bark. So you pick it in mid June because the sap separates the layers of the bark. Like in the spring the sap goes up the trees and in the fall it goes down into the roots . So if you pick it in the fall or winter you take away that force for the tree to survive. Its the same when you tan hides. You usually do that in the spring and winter. It's not done in the summer because of the heat. Insects can get on the hide and make stains, ah, stain the hide. Plus ah, the hide is thinner. So you have to know all these things before you, you just don't go ahead and start doing all these things.²¹⁹

Another Elder who wished to remain anonymous answered the question "Do Native people still have a strong set of rules?" with the comment that, "Oh yes, I think there is um, just as nature is. We were taught to watch the animal life, birds, all animal life. And follow the rules of the land. And from my understanding that is our set of rules that keeps us in line with

²¹⁸ Rita King, Appendix.

²¹⁹ Evelyne Susin, Appendix.

the environment."²²⁰ The above quote demonstrates this notion of learning from nature. The procedures for picking sage, building a canoe or tanning hides were dictated by Nature. In another interview a young woman said, "...people call it protocol but I guess maybe I would say we call it, way of life." A way of doing things. Rituals or ceremonies are done in a certain way um, help in our life here. And I think um, ceremonies and rituals, whatever you want to call them, is a tool that we need to use to help us better our lives."²²¹

We have already seen that there is a certain way to do things and this must be predictable in order for harmonious relationships to occur. In the chapter on gratitude I included a story about the beavers and the expected behaviour of humans when hunting. The humans in the story arrogantly thought they could rely on their own resources and avoid the proper way to do things, in effect showing disrespect to the beavers. The humans did not send the pipe to the beavers prior to hunting them. Subsequently the beavers would not allow the people a successful hunt. The humans deliberately and through arrogance breached protocol thereby disrupting the harmonious and reciprocal relationship they had with the beavers. This story warns what can happen when protocol is broken intentionally. There are many other narratives which can also be used to teach the importance of protocol.

Earlier I talked about how Brant said a breach in protocol would be overlooked or forgiven if the person was innocent or ignorant of the proper procedure. I'd like to tell a story about what happened to me when I broke protocol at Easterville. The Elder was aware that I knew better therefore I expected some sort of reprimand. When it came, it was given in

²²⁰Ojibwa Elder, Appendix.

²²¹Rita King, Appendix.

such a way that I didn't take offense, I understood what he was telling me.

It happened at my first interview. I had never met the man I was going to see but I had been told about him from my niece. My niece lives with the Elder's son and they knew I was there doing research. William Jr., nicknamed Junior, offered to talk to his dad for me and set up an appointment. The first day I was at the reserve Junior went to see his dad about meeting with me. I waited and waited, day after day till it seemed to me that William Sr. was not interested in the interview. One day while visiting my niece Junior showed up and said, "My dad will see you tomorrow afternoon. I'll take you there." Needless to say I was not prepared; I did not have any tobacco on hand but wasn't too concerned as I could buy some on the way to his house the next day. I had no way of knowing where this man lived and for some reason I assumed he lived on the other side of the reserve. As I waited for Junior to get home from work I started to get nervous, I tried to remember everything I had been taught about protocol. I tormented myself with dozens of questions; What if he won't talk when I get there? What if he decides to think for a long time? What if I run out of tape? What if I insult him by asking too many direct questions? Should I or shouldn't I make eye contact? Should I have brought gifts? By the time Junior came for me I was not overly anxious to meet his father. In fact I had almost convinced myself the meeting was unnecessary. William's house turned out to be a two minute walk from Junior's. I told Junior I couldn't go there till I went to the store but he said he would go buy the tobacco for me and took me straight to his dad's house.

William was a slender man with long black hair streaked with grey tied back in a ponytail. His beliefs were such that he would not let me photograph him. He had been

watching *The Brady Bunch* on television and did not turn it off when we began to talk. We sat at the kitchen table and talked with *The Brady Bunch* in the background. He was a friendly man and I was quickly put at ease. Junior left immediately after introducing us, I knew he was on his way to buy the tobacco .

I had been so nervous when we first started the interview that I somehow set up the recorder wrong and by the time I noticed about ten minutes had already gone by. Not wanting to appear as if I didn't know what I was doing I calmly pressed record and continued talking. Junior came in shortly afterward and gave me the tobacco while his father sat quietly watching us. I set the tobacco beside my recorder across the table from him without saying anything. When the interview was concluded I handed it to William in what I thought was a respectful manner.

He sombrely accepted my offer and tapping the recorder said very softly as if talking to himself, " when you want something from someone you give the tobacco first." Then he laughed. I tried to justify myself by saying his son wouldn't let me walk to the store. He started walking around the room and then said how he always has people coming round to his place, pointing to his cupboards he told me that he always keeps tobacco on hand because he never knows when someone may need it. Again he started to laugh. His eyes twinkled and I knew he wasn't angry, that he was teasing me, but I got the message anyway. Coming to the reserve knowing I would be doing interviews I should have had the tobacco put away. I should not have waited till the last moment to try and get some. I knew what was expected so I had no real excuse. I learned a valuable lesson that day; no excuse is a good excuse when breaking protocol but, yes, you can be forgiven. I left William's home knowing I'd made a

friend.

CHAPTER VIII

Teaching By Example

...watching your parents....You watch them, whatever they do you will do....²²²

I have shown many times the importance of non-interference in Native life. I have repeatedly demonstrated how children and even adults can learn something as intangible as values. But how does one, without violating non-interference, instruct children on how to do certain things? How for example would a mother teach her child to cook? How would a father teach a son to shoot a gun? The answer to these questions will soon become clear.

One significant difference between Native and non-Native societies is the methods which they employ to teach children. According to Brant, "...in the Indian society instruction is based on modelling rather than shaping. One is shown how rather than told how."²²³

Brant explains that "The White people by and large use shaping which is in behaviour therapy rewarding successive approximations of the behaviour you want to teach."²²⁴ Brant uses an illustration of dressing a child to demonstrate how a Native mother and non-Native mother would approach the teaching of this basic skill: "If you're [referring to non-native mothers] teaching a child to dress himself, beginning to put a sock and then give him some kind of reward. Then, two socks are the next thing, then the trousers the next, etc. and you take a month to do that...An Indian mother will dress her kid, she'll just keep dressing him and

²²²Ojibwa Elder, Appendix.

²²³ Brant, Native Ethics, 51.

²²⁴*Ibid.*

one day he'll take over and do it by himself, and will do it ever after unless he's sick or temporarily unable."²²⁵

Someone may say that is all very well for getting dressed; after all, there is no danger involved, but what of cooking or shooting a gun? If the child is not told how to do it they could seriously injure themselves. The Native parent may respond that it is not necessary to tell them how but rather show them how. No parent would provide the child with the means to engage in these activities until they were sure the child had the ability to do so.

V.F. Cordova explains that Native people see their children as learning creatures who cannot possibly fail to learn from the world around them unless of course they suffer some physical or mental impairment. They believe a child need not be taught, only set into a learning environment. Native people, rather than telling the child what to do, guide the child.²²⁶

Cordova adds that, "Teaching in a Western sense is something that one person does to another. Learning, in a Native sense, is something that happens in an environment set up for learning experiences."²²⁷

I asked a Cree Elder in Manitoba how he learned to trap. "Me?" he asked, "I learned by my own." The tone of this man's voice when he first asked, "Me?" was full of surprise. He was astonished that I would even ask him such a question. You see, he understood that no one had directly taught him. He then indicated that he must have learned

²²⁵"Indian Thinking Indian Ways," 51-52.

²²⁶ Cordova, *Hearing Other Voices*, 17.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

from his dad and others. I asked him if he had learned by watching them. He answered, "Yeah, oh yeah, I [was] watching what they [were] doing. Yeah, I guess I learn to do the same thing." He then laughed.²²⁸ It was clear he had never thought about it before, learning was just something that happened. This man learned to trap because he had been raised in an environment that, as Cordova explained, was set up for learning.

It is important to understand that the environment Native people live in is not normally understood the same way by non-Native people. Cordova relates a personal story that offers an example of this difference and how children come to learn *their* understanding of *their* environment:

I watched my daughter and her friend--both had infants--take their children outdoors. My daughter sat her child on the ground and proceeded to introduce the child to the feel of the earth: there was the smell of dirt; the gentle breeze playing on the child's skin; there were odors to be brought to attention, and clouds, vegetation and ants.

My daughter's friend was not Native American. She hovered over her child somewhat nervously: "Don't touch that," "That's dirty-Yuk!," "Be careful," "Don't go away."

The one young woman introduces her child to a world of numerous experiences as a rightful world. The other introduces her child to a world of hazard. One makes the focus the world and the child's part in that world; the other emphasizes the child and its separateness from a hostile environment.

By the time the child learns to speak he already knows the kind of world which his language will depict.²²⁹

This story also illustrates another important aspect of Native teaching. The Native child is being taught 'how' to perceive through all the senses. The other child is not being shown how to perceive but, rather, *what* to avoid. Perception for one child offers deep

²²⁸ Macleod George, Appendix.

²²⁹ Cordova, *Hearing Other Voices*, 17.

insight into the subject of observation and connectedness. The other child gains only superficial knowledge thereby furthering alienation with the subject.

The type of learning environment Cordova talks about where a child learns about "separateness from a hostile environment", has been experienced by many Native children once faced with non-Native learning institutions. For this reason (separate/hostile environment) children raised in an atmosphere where teaching involved being "a part of" experienced severe emotional trauma when first sent to residential schools. For the first time these children were introduced to the concept of a separate hostile environment.

One Ojibwa Elder describes the difference in teaching by way of residential school as "forced" compared to Native teaching which she calls "gentle". I questioned her on teaching and she replied, "Teaching, I don't know everything and I'm the first to admit it. And I'm not a judge of anything so all I can [do] is share my experience...I believe teaching is to respect one another...I'm just a learner too. It takes a lifetime to learn...."²³⁰ This Elder believes teaching should involve respectful behaviour. Part of that respect involves the recognition that she is not an expert and that she has much to learn. Though she is a teacher she is at the same time, a student. She does not believe in forcing her knowledge onto anyone or demanding that they should accept what she has to offer. Rather, she shares her experiences.

I asked her whether children learned through watching others. She answered that she had been asked that question many times. As she thought about the answer she began to realize that learning was done by watching parents as they were the role models. She said,

²³⁰Ojibwa Elder, Appendix.

"You watch them; whatever they do, you will do."²³¹ It was obvious that she, like the Cree Elder mentioned above, had to think about how it was they came to learn. Neither Elder was aware of being taught, at least not in the Western sense of teaching, that is by shaping.

In the chapter on non-interference I talked about a mother who provides options for her child to help him make decisions. Both the method used by this mother and the method discussed by the Elder are means for teaching responsibility or abilities such as hunting, trapping and cooking that are accomplished through a way of life called "respect." Children watch then, they [model] engage in the activity.

No one would deny that modelling is also used in the non-Native world. Manifestations of modelling are often portrayed by the media. Courts are starting to examine the effects of modelling in many of the cases brought forth. There is no denying its significant impact on the lives of all people, Native and non-Native alike.

Moral behaviour aside, what is argued is that Native people teach everything by the concept of modelling. Native children are taught to listen and watch, to take the time necessary for learning. This a major difference between the two cultures.

In schools, teaching is crammed into a few years. Everything is based on time pressures, calendars and curricula; children are not allowed the time needed for deep understanding. Those few who do succeed become the *experts* to whom others look up to and turn to for answers.

Native society does not believe in the *expert*. In Native understanding, a lifetime of learning does not make an *expert*. One's knowledge extends as far as one's experiences. For

²³¹ *Ibid.*

this reason my Elder friend in Manitoba always ends his stories or lessons with the comment, "That's the way I see it anyway."

It is also understood in Native culture that it takes time to learn, therefore no one is rushed to learn, they are allowed to wait, watch and in time, learn. What people have learned then becomes valuable, not because they are experts at something but because they have useful experiences to share with others.

Many people may express concern about children engaging in hunting and cooking practises. It is important, however, to remember that for a Native child, the learning environment is present immediately after birth. Cordova reminds us that a child of five is not a blank slate waiting to be filled.²³²

Knowledge of guns, fire, or stoves and the dangers involved were introduced and understood long before a child would ever go near or touch one. Observation and repeated presentations precede actions. Native children learn through observing and practising other people's behaviour.

I had a conversation with a thirty-two year old Cree male from Easterville in which he talked about learning to hunt and fish:

Lorraine: Tell me how you learned to hunt.

Wally: Um, let's see, I started going out with Garfield [step-father] and Walter [his grandmother's husband].

Lorraine: How did you learn to shoot?

Wally: I had to teach myself how to shoot.

²³² Cordova, *Hearing Other Voices*, 17.

Lorraine: You had to teach yourself?

Wally: I had to learn by myself.

Lorraine: How to shoot a gun? Okay! What about fishing? Who taught you how to fish?

Wally: Um, I like[d] watching them. I liked following them when they were fishing, gradually I started dressing the fish.

Lorraine: So you learned slowly?

Wally: Yuh.²³³

An Ojibwa man tells a story about the learning process that is similar to the one told by Wally. The following is Owen's story:

It was a natural progression, we'd go with our father during August, early September, this was our, myself and my sister's summer vacation, so we'd bring our rubber boots and go play around the campsite while my father and uncles went rice picking. So you learn all these chores from first playing while the others picked or harvested I guess, and its as you got a little bit older you'd be interested in what they were actually doing. So you'd watch, observe, then maybe a year after you'd be able to do it yourself and finally they would take you out. Not without telling you, but you gave your own interest on your own you know, rather, than someone telling you; just by [your] being there.

You're gaining your own interest in either harvesting or whatever; just by being there you will be able to naturally progress [to] it yourself. Just by, well, not being interested at first [to] 'cause dad's taking a long time I wonder what he's doing, to, hey, that's kind of neat what they're doing; to actually participating in doing it yourself.²³⁴

Owen has described a progression from total non-interest to minimal interest, eventually followed by participation in the activity. Frequently practise begins in their games and playtime. Parents observe the children imitating adult behaviour and are often amused.

²³³ Wally Umpherville, Appendix.

²³⁴ Owen Zoccole, Appendix.

However, types of games and play allow the parents to assess the child's maturity and ability to handle real life situations. Understanding of stories about legends and personal stories is another way to assess the child's maturity. This way the parents know when the time is right. Some children are given guns at the age of eleven, others may not receive one till some time later.

I was talking to an Ojibwa Elder in Thunder Bay about modelling and he told me a humorous story involving his first moose hunt:

Yeah, that's the same way [I learned], 'cause the first time I got a rifle I [was] eleven years old, uh, 'cause I was already big eh. I was working and then my grandfather [said you] gotta use that [gun] in the same day when I buy that, so I didn't go to work. One of my uncles took me to the lake and we seen a moose over there. I was just shaking [we both laughed]. First shot went right through the trees, second one got him. [Again we laughed] I thought he [uncle] was gonna help me cut the moose up but he didn't. "Go ahead" [he said] I had to do it myself. And then another thing happened [when he first shot the moose], it fell in the water uh. And then after awhile, the next day I guess, he must have tell [told] my grandfather...my grandfather came up to me, he told [teasing] me "The next time you want to shoot up, shoot him way in the bush so he won't fall in the water." 'Cause I was nervous this time, I want to kill the moose right away. [we laugh]...You got to do things, just like [the] first time I make snowshoes eh. Those laces eh [he] shows me how. I watched how it[s] [done] and that's how I learned [a] lot of things eh.²³⁵

He also told me that today people, "ain't gonna hang on to anything." The reason is because they do not take the time to learn. Depending on what you want to do, you cannot learn the first time you see it being done. You need time. He said it was the same thing with cleaning rabbits, muskrat, beaver or tanning moosehide.

We saw in Cordova's story that children are taught from early childhood and thus internalize parental attitudes. Native people have a respect for their environment so that they

²³⁵ William Wilson, Appendix.

are able to instill that respect into their children. As a result firearms do not hold the same *power* fascination that they may have for children raised in other environments. Native parents do not have the same fear non-Native parents have when, for example, Native children want to use guns or cook for the first time.

We have seen that Native children learn their skills from modelling that of their family and friends, but how do they learn coping skills that cannot be modelled? How do they learn necessary survival information if there is no direct formal instruction? My answer is through the use of stories.

Personal stories often involve anecdotes about injuries and what caused them. It is often said that a person cannot learn from another person's mistakes. I do not believe that to be true. In Native society another's mistakes are a prime method for teaching. The use of legends are an instance where children can learn from another's mistakes.

Many of the legends have the hero doing things wrong and suffering unpleasant consequences. One legend in particular came to mind earlier when I related the story of the young man who had been warned about saying things in anger and later having those things come true. His experience taught him a powerful lesson and he is now careful and considers the impact of his words. His personal experience also had a bearing on others, though they did not have the same experience, they learned from his experience.

The story I was reminded of is from the book, *Clothed-In-Fur and Other Tales* and is called: "The Person That Made Medicine." The importance of this story is the warning about obedience. The result of a man's jealousy and arrogant refusal to accept a gift led ultimately to his death. Although no direct inappropriate use of words was demonstrated the

people learned to speak with caution.

Once on a time a man was engaged in song,--in manitou song of the mystic rite of the serpent. All kinds of medicine he made. Songs in great number he composed. It was over there, at the so-called Place-of-the-Pipe-Stone,²³⁶ where lived that man. By many people was he given ear when he was teaching songs and medicine.

Now at the time there was another man who was doing the same thing, and he who had first been making the medicine was not pleased. Now, all sorts of things were they giving one another when they were asking for medicine. That was the cause of the anger of him who had first made the medicine.

So once they (all) went together to yonder steep cliff, many canoes they used; they went in company with many people. All sorts of things they cast into water for an offering, --tobacco, and ribbon, and effects; thereupon they sang, and at the same time they smoked. And presently out opened the cliff at the bottom of the water, and thereupon out flowed from thence every kind of medicine there was. Now, the man who had first been making the medicine did not take any of it. So when it was observed by the manitou that he was not taking the medicine, then back into its place went floating the medicine; up closed the cliff. Thereupon they saw many wild pygmies, whereupon that man began to be stoned (by the pygmies); even though he tried to flee far out upon the water, yet not at all got he out of the range (of their stones). The people that were in their canoes heard the whirl of the passing stones. And when he was come a long way off, at a place where there was another cliff, then from that place over there was he pelted again; straight for the mouth of the river was where he tried to flee. Another mountain, one that is called Moose Mountain, was a place from which he was again struck. Straight out for the open water he tried in vain to pursue his flight. Now, there is another island, known by the name of the Place-to-hunt-Moose, an exceedingly high cliff, (which) was another place from where he was pelted by the little wild pygmies. At last he was struck square on the head; (the missile) went into his head, with a piece of metal was he hit; whereupon he was killed.

So back home went all the people. Again they held a great smoker, (and) they made offerings. Again they propitiated their manitous. And that is why people are never allowed to speak nonsense upon a cliff or upon the water, and very seriously do people forbid one another to talk nonsense (in such places); therefore that is why the people are careful.

Such is what I have heard of what happened long ago. But to-day

²³⁶ Overholt and Callicott state that the place of the Pipe-Stone is Nipigon, Ont. *Clothed-In-Fur*. 137.

nobody is very careful, even in the composition of songs. Differently nowadays do people do (things).²³⁷

Stories such as the above indicate how important it is to speak carefully, one could say respectfully. In the spiritual sense one could never know for certain whether or not a spirit was listening. This was discussed in the chapter on anger.

In the non-spiritual sense, words often come back to haunt people. How often do we hear people say "I wish I hadn't said that." The best example of this is malicious gossip. It is not just the Native world where people need to be careful in their choice of words.

One Cree woman put it this way, "It's all gonna come back. Whatever we're doing it's gonna come back. And it's just like living too; whoever you hurt in life and how you hurt them, it's gonna come back on you, it's a circle and it's gonna come back even more than it's dished out, it's the path you lead."²³⁸ Although she was not specifically talking about words the result would be the same, whether because the spirits may get angry and retaliate or people may.

These lessons should tell us the importance of taking the time to think out our behaviour whether verbal or physical. As I said earlier there are many narratives which illustrate the consequences of inappropriate behaviour all that remains for us is to understand what the story is teaching and follow with the right choice.

Teaching by use of stories is not only useful for modelling appropriate social behaviour; they also teach children indirectly about their environment. Survival depends on

²³⁷ Overholt, *Clothed-In-Fur*, 108.

²³⁸ Leona Massan, Appendix.

practical environmental knowledge and the stories are full of them.

Howard Norman in the introduction to the book, *Where The Chill Came From*, discusses the significance of story telling during the winter months. According to Norman during these winters, before the camps are built, while out hunting and after meals, the Cree relate old hunting stories as well as discuss the habits of the animals.²³⁹ Norman admits that these "discussions articulate the Cree's remarkable ecological perception."²⁴⁰ He also notes that much of their knowledge is carried inside them. One of the hunters Norman talked to said: "At those times, everything we know comes out in talk, but there may not be many words spoken altogether."²⁴¹ Although few words may be spoken, Norman admits that "each discussion has the background of centuries of hunting knowledge."²⁴²

Norman used the following anecdote to illustrate the above comments:

So we were joking with this man (a trapper from further south, who spoke very poor Cree). and we said to him, "Where are you going to hunt?" He said, "Well, I was going north. Walking." So we asked, "How many porcupines to the north are you going?" So that got everyone to laughing, because this man, he didn't know...he didn't know about porcupines that way....²⁴³

Norman used this anecdote to demonstrate the amount of knowledge that is contained in the few words, "how many porcupines to the north." To most people that question is either

²³⁹Howard Norman, *Where The Chill Came From* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1982), 15.

²⁴⁰*Ibid.*

²⁴¹*Ibid.*

²⁴²*Ibid.*

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

ambiguous or totally without merit. However, for these Cree it includes a wealth of information as Norman was able to clarify.

The question "How many porcupines to the north are you going?" refers to the territoriality of that animal. While their boundaries may depend on terrain and availability of food bark, porcupines tend to maintain territories of roughly three to five square miles. Therefore, a walk of two porcupines to the north would be approximately six to ten miles. But something of that environment is also revealed in referring to porcupine territories: porcupines feed mainly on aspen and other barks. Fishers, wolverines, martins, and occasionally coyote, fox and wolves prey on porcupines, so they too may be about. This predator-prey relationship is indicated in a narrative I heard about the trickster figure Wichikapache....²⁴⁴

The amount of information contained in so few words is remarkable. This is the type of information Cree children learn and the method by which it is passed on. Nor is teaching this way limited to the Cree. A young Ojibwa man, after discussing Native values with me, showed me an essay he had written for one of his classes. The essay was about his experience learning to harvest wild rice. I was struck by the significance of harvesting to the resulting incorporation of teachings that naturally ensued from the hard physical labour. The story is well worth reading and cannot be adequately summarized here, therefore, with his permission the entire essay has been included in the appendix as he first wrote it.

Many of his comments illustrate the humour so often found in Native stories. One particular example was when he paddled the canoe too far from the rice. He thought he had been doing a good job until his father said, "It's pretty hard to pick rice in all this open space," and, "It's pretty hard to pick rice, when you're stopped." Notice the interesting way the father used humour to get his message across. The son learned to correct his mistakes without

²⁴⁴*Ibid.*

being verbally chastised by his father with words such as "you are wrong," or, "that's not the right way to do it."²⁴⁵

Many subtle lessons were learned from the experience of harvesting rice with his father. In retrospect he claims that, "most of the things that I have learnt about life from him were not said, they were merely expressed by his deeds and methods."²⁴⁶ Some of the teachings that resulted from this young man's experience with harvesting were, patience, learning to choose a path of determination and persevere, drive and resilience, and the importance of remembering what you have already learned.

It is interesting to note that many Native children have an encyclopaedia of knowledge contained inside their heads long before they reach high school. I read a subtle hint in an article recently that spending time with Native pre-school children may help some non-Native scholars.

Considering the knowledge that many of them carry I would have to admit that this notion is not too off the mark. I have heard many Native students at university talk about the difficulty in expressing themselves on paper. I believe this to be a result of living with relatively few words, thus, the need to write essays, becomes a cultural hurdle.

²⁴⁵Owen Zoccole, Appendix.

²⁴⁶*Ibid.*

CONCLUSION

Basil Johnston in the forward to *Dancing With A Ghost* claims "...that North American Indians have different values and institutions that have not lost their relevance and application despite five hundred years of cultural and technological advances...."²⁴⁷

Johnston's attitude toward values is the attitude that guided my work in this thesis. I sought to demonstrate throughout this thesis that the Native values posed by Dr. Brant are in fact traditional for Native people. The claim Johnston makes that values exist and have existed for at least five hundred years was demonstrated repeatedly in my thesis.

An examination of the *Jesuit Relations* has indeed provided documentary evidence that the values of non-interference, sharing, not showing anger, protocol, gratitude, attitude to time, and modelling, are in fact, traditional Native values.

Nor is it possible that these values were adopted as a result of French influence. The missionaries repeatedly lamented the fact that the French did not behave in the admirable manner the Natives were demonstrating. The Jesuits were not just referring to the absence of such behaviour among the French in Canada but also among those in France.

Although I agree with Brant about the continuity of the above mentioned values, I differ in opinion as to their origin. In the conclusion to his article, *Native Ethics and Rules of Behaviour* Brant claims:

To ensure survival in an often hostile environment, Native societies found it essential to maintain group unity and cohesiveness. Hence every effort was made to avoid interpersonal conflict among members of the group, a tendency

²⁴⁷ Ross, *Dancing With A Ghost*, ix

that has persisted even into modern times.²⁴⁸

My first disagreement is with reference to a "hostile environment." In my opinion Native people did not regard their environment as "hostile." Understandably difficulties were encountered, for example, varying weather conditions sometimes fostered starvation. Since reports of starvation are well documented, contemporary society would assume it resulted from a "hostile environment."

In chapter I, we saw the difference in non-judgmental terminology between Native language and non-Native language. From those descriptions it should be clear that application of judgmental terms is more appropriate to non-Native culture.

Native people are documented as facing adversity with a calm demeanour. A letter from one of the Jesuits claims;

Whatever misfortune may befall them, they never allow themselves to lose their calm composure of mind, in which they think that happiness especially consists. They endure many days' fasting, also diseases and trials, with the greatest cheerfulness and patience.²⁴⁹

Furthermore, they quite often used humour to help them cope. They did not attribute adversity to a "hostile environment." The Jesuits wrote about how a Native man cautioned the Jesuits against letting hunger overcome them: "...let thy soul be strong to endure suffering and hardship; keep thyself from being sad, otherwise thou wilt be sick; see how we do not cease to laugh, although we have little to eat."²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Brant, *Native Ethics*, 538.

²⁴⁹ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, I, 275.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, VI, 233.

Brown and Brightman write that George Nelson, a fur trader working among the Cree and Ojibwa in the early 1800's, documented the same behaviour: "They are so lighthearted that in their greatest distresses and Starvation they cannot, it would seem, refrain from 'cracking their jokes' on each other."²⁵¹ Notice in the above two descriptions there is an apparent lack of attributing hostility to their environment.

In addition to maintaining cheerfulness and patience, we find that, "Friends never indulge in complaint or expostulation to friends, wives to their husbands, or husbands to their wives."²⁵² Even when encountering difficulties the people would not complain or place blame. They continued to behave respectfully towards friends and families. It is only reasonable to assume the same respect would hold for their environment.

I agree with Brant that Native people maintained "group unity and cohesiveness" but again I disagree with him as to the reason. Brant uses the word "essential", I, on the other hand believe unity and cohesiveness were the natural result of respect for each other as well as for the environment.

Brant thought the value of not showing anger may have originated from a fear of spiritual retribution. I admit that such a fear is a reality for many Native people, but I do not hold it to be a prime motivator for not showing anger. I propose that it may be *respect* that motivates such behaviour. Losing your temper could result in decreased respect both from others and for oneself. It is only reasonable to assume that if interference is regarded as rude because each person is worthy of respect, then, demonstrating anger would also be seen in

²⁵¹ Brown, *The Orders of the Dreamed*, 12.

²⁵² Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, I, 275.

a negative light.

I found myself in complete disagreement with Brant's claim that gratitude was "rarely shown or even verbalized."²⁵³ I acknowledge that gratitude is rarely verbalized; however Brant was wrong to claim it was rarely shown. Native people regularly demonstrate gratitude by non-verbal acts. The chapter on gratitude included many descriptions of *how* Native people both learn and show this behaviour.

I agree with Brant, that gratitude is rarely verbalized. But, once again I do not agree on the reason. Brant proposed that the reason was due to excellence being expected. Why praise someone for doing what is expected of them? Rather than seeing perfection as something that is expected, I would argue that perfection is the natural occurrence of parental teaching. Native teaching was such that it allowed for a natural progression to perfection. This is not forced perfection. As I have already stated, it is the natural outcome of teaching.

A natural progression to perfection is not the same as forced progression. Many Native children were faced with forced perfection in residential schools. In many cases the praise resulting from this type of teaching could be seen as insulting. Praise is normally proffered when an individual has achieved a recognized goal. But when that goal has been achieved through force by intimidation or physical punishment, as was often the case in residential schools, it can scarcely be recognized by the Native person as resulting from his/her own personal accomplishment. The achievement stems from an external source rather than an internal source, thereby negating its worth. Praise in this case would belong to the external means of force and not to the person. Praise and gratitude are recognized as being

²⁵³ Brant, *Native Ethics*, 536.

deserved when an achievement originates from a naturally acquired accomplishment.

In the discussions of time and sharing I have expanded the extent to which they operate. I have broadened Brant's concept of sharing to include the idea of sharing knowledge as well as food and other necessities. Sharing in another person's grief was also discussed.

In my discussion of the attitude toward time I included the source of Native belief in time and in discussing the concept of cyclical time I was able to show the serious nature of responsibility. I also clarified the true meaning of Indian time. Indian time does not mean doing things whenever you feel like it. Rather, there is a certain time when things must be done. Brant was correct in attributing this to seasonal determinants. However, he limited his discussion by not including the concept of cyclical time.

In her article, *EcoIndian*, Cordova writes:

The easy dismissal of contemporary Native Americans as sources of information concerning their religious beliefs, their value system, and their attitudes toward their world allows those who would present Native American ideas or "philosophies" for examination to avoid any possible checks on the authenticity of such interpretations. The Native American, under such circumstances, can be whatever it is the interpreter wishes him to be for whatever purposes the image is to be used.²⁵⁴

This thesis has sought to avoid criticisms such as those outlined above. It was essential for my purpose that information about Native people be provided by contemporary Native people. As I said at the beginning of this thesis, in order to write about a Native world view or any aspect of it, it is necessary to go directly to the source. It does not seem feasible

²⁵⁴ Cordova, "EcoIndian: A Response to J. Baird Callicott," *International Journal of Indigenous Philosophy* (Spring, 1997), 39.

to me that an argument for continuity of Native values could ever be made without talking to contemporary Native people.

Woboditsch wrote a thesis on an Ojibwa environmental ethic based on the works of Callicott and Overholt. While admitting the limitation of relying solely on narratives to arrive at his conclusions, he argues that the study of narratives provides a means for uncovering an Ojibwa world view. At the end of his conclusion however, he suggests: "To explore these insights in more detail (and countless other contributions the Ojibwa undoubtedly have made), it would be necessary to explore other aspects of the Ojibwa culture, and not just the narratives alone."²⁵⁵

Going beyond narratives to obtain a particular view is what this thesis has accomplished. In doing this, I have provided a number of methods which have allowed me to check and countercheck the authenticity of my thesis. Relying on the oral tradition gave me the opportunity to ask Native people their opinions. Literature by Native people helped to corroborate what I was being told by the people. My own experience as a Native person along with my observations at the reserve also helped strengthen my thesis.

In addition I have tried to stay away as much as possible from reinterpreting the comments of the people who were kind enough to consent to interviews. It was not my intention to distort their comments. I have included their comments as they were related to me. The only changes to the originals are the addition of a word here or there to help smooth the flow of connected thought. My additions in no way alter the meaning of the statements.

It may be argued that in my discussions I often posed leading questions thereby

²⁵⁵ Woboditsch, *Ojibwa World View*, 104.

influencing the responses. In defense, I would have to clarify that the interviews were structured only in the sense that I arranged for specific dates and times to meet. All participants were informed as to the purpose of my study. What ensued was an informal philosophical discussion of the values. On occasion, I was aware that my questions were not being understood. At such times I found it necessary to pose direct questions, often followed by an explanation.

I argue that the values discussed in this thesis are the continuous manifestation of precontact values. I am not so naive as to believe these values are still held by *all* Native people. I am not unaware of the problem of assimilation. However, I do argue that a significant number of Cree and Ojibwa hold to their traditional values.

Cultural resurgence is a reality and therefore my outlook for the continuation of these values is optimistic. I have met enough Elders to convince me the teachers are still here. More than one Elder has claimed that the young people are starting to come for help, they want their culture back. Those who have never lost the culture are willing to share their experiences.

The cyclical concept of time is undeniably a strong motivation for all Native values as is the notion of respect. The Western world has long since divorced metaphysics from ethics. The Native world has not divorced the metaphysical reality of their morality. At least not that segment of the Native population that I have talked about in this thesis.

The values I have discussed are only a few of the many that can be found in Native life. Brant also recognized that the values he outlined were but a beginning. An essential part of Native ethics not covered by Brant involves the notion of reciprocity. I believe this

behaviour was clearly demonstrated in the narratives I chose for this thesis along with a brief discussion by an Ojibwa woman.

Reciprocity involves the mutual interaction between all persons whether human or non-human. The relationship between all beings is founded on respect and reciprocity, and reciprocity is one way that respect is maintained.

Brant suggests that continuing research into Native values may help to further an understanding of Native behaviour. I would add that two important areas of future research include the concepts of respect and reciprocity .

It is important to remember that although I have not argued for pan-Indianism in this thesis, a connection between the values discussed was found to exist between the Ojibwa, the Cree and Mohawks within a specific geographical region.

In the beginning of this thesis I quoted a recommendation from Fred Sturm that the issue of pan-Indianism be held in abeyance until comparative studies have been undertaken with all Aboriginal groups.

The results of this research lead me to believe that the possibility may exist for a commonality in the underlying value system of North American Aboriginal people. I found it intriguing that two conversations with Native women, one from New Mexico and another from Texas led to the same conclusions. Both of them acknowledged similar values operating within their respective Nations.

How can these values, some of which may be in opposition to a modern, quickly evolving, technological world, continue to survive? I cannot answer conclusively, but I can say that Native people have survived for thousands of years and have often had to adapt to

changing circumstances; therefore I see no reason to doubt that they and their values will continue to survive.

With the serious nature of environmental problems encompassing the entire planet, it may be that the culture that needs to adapt, modify or change its values might not be that of Aboriginal peoples.

That's the way I see it anyway!

The Shock

Brown skin stretched over sunken eye and bony cheeks

White hair pulled over wrinkled ears

A rainbow of red, yellow, blue, white

fringes,

ribbons,

eagle feathers

flow from tanned moose-hide shirt

White buffalo-bone-covered neck

Beaded tie falls towards bone breast shield

Strong hands grasp medicine pipe

Beaded moccasins tap earth

Bells jingle from ankles

Drums pound, pound, pound

White eyes watch with disbelief

Indians are still here!

Jacqueline Oker²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶Jacqueline Oker, "The Shock," in *Let the Drums Be Your Heart*, Joel T. Maki, ed. (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1996), 216.

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WILLIAM EASTER

William Easter consented to a taped discussion, but would not allow a photograph to be taken. William is a recognized community healer. His age is indeterminate and politeness prevented my asking it directly. William is fluent in Cree and English. We met in his home at Easterville, Man. on July 9, 1996.

LORRAINE: Will you tell me what life was like at the Old Post?

WILLIAM: The people cut their own logs, they building their own lumber. And -ah- the trader we have there since I remember was Pauliette, Armand Pauliette. That's where people used to go and get their -ah- groceries, you know credit. No, no cash nothing like that, they just give out credit. Then when people -ah- working we used to work for four dollars a day, sixteen hours a day, six days a week. We used to have some money coming, even with that salary. And oh we do the hunting at the same time, like after work eh, we go and shoot a couple of ducks. We'll have a feed on a duck and -ah- that's the way people lived. None of this you go every month to collect your welfare. It was \$260.00 a month which is not very much, your gonna have a hard time making a living that way. Now the government cut it down to \$205.00, that's all he gives out. And then -ah- so that's today and I believe its gonna get worse. But the people made a good living out there then, and then they had this, start working on this -ah- hydro project they call it, they're gonna put a dam up here, down here in Grand Rapids. So that's what they did. They had meetings, lots of meetings, the government promised lot of good things to the people, but he never fulfilled his promises. And then, -ah- and then people, -ah- moved. They were building houses here. I worked there when they building houses. I wasn't working at the house, but I was helping out hauling materials to the sites where they build the house. Drop the materials off here and there. We were working for the government that time. We didn't get paid very much either, just to get by. I guess that's what the government always do, he gives you money just to get by, to keep you quiet I guess. [laughs] But -ah- so we been here for thirty two years, if it's not more, it could be more than thirty two years by now since we moved here, doesn't seem that long. But -ah-.

LORRAINE: Have you seen a change in the young people, the way they behave today, compared to the young people back in Cedar Lake there?

WILLIAM: Oh yeah, Oh yeah! Yup, lots of changes totally. Nothing like before, not today. Like today, young people start picking up -ah- more and more vandalism. More and more stealing, breaking into peoples homes taking away whatever they find there, I guess, I don't know, look at me I got that car over there it was a nice car, all I needed was seats that car, next thing I knew the windows were all smashed. And then I had this truck here, it was okay. [undecipherable] truck there I tried, I went to Winnipeg here for some meeting, I come

back and somebody broke the headlights, tail lights they smashed everything except for the windows. That's how bad it is, windows, can't leave windows like that. When you work someplace, like if you have a shop where you work they break in there they take some of your tools, that's what happens.

Lots of change, it change quite a bit, totally. I guess change the young people because long time ago people used to look after their families very well, they made a, they did a good job looking after their families because there was no interference, nothing interfering. No booze, no [undecipherable] none of these, you have to go over here and go and play slots, you have to go here, none of that. All they stayed at home, everybody stayed where they stayed. In their own little yard eh, they stayed there. They fished, they cleaned a fish they teached, they teached their kids like that. And that way when a man kills a moose brings it home and they cut it up, the tribe you know they make up -ah- what do you call that, some kind of a rack I guess where they put the meat, smoke it, there wasn't any fridges, freezer, nothing like that. But they have to make a fire and smoke the -ah- the meat so the flies won't get at it, so it won't get spoiled, it take a long time that way. Even fish, they do the same thing with fish, they smoke the fish so they can keep it.

At this time of the year they pick up berries, lots of berries they pick up to last them through the winter. Different kinds, raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, different kinds, anything to last them through the winter.

This is where they pick, the whole family goes, and when the summer there's no work nothing like that to make a living, the whole family moved out to the camp, to go and make a camp somewhere where they look for snake root. We go out there and pick up snake root, [seneca root] we dry it then sell it. From there they buy lard, tea, whatever they need. Stuff like that, not so much clothes just enough to get by. That's how people make their living.

LORRAINE: And the entire family did everything together?

WILLIAM: Yup.

LORRAINE: The father didn't go off and leave the family alone to survive.

WILLIAM: No, they didn't do that, some of them young people go out but not very often, some of them they died. Some of them for the whole summer, like in winter time they fish, they sell their fish at the fish station. And same thing in the summer there's people started to fish and sell their fish to -ah- [undecipherable] fishes. They used to call them the agent, that's the one that bought the fishes, to come down with a big barge, the boat from -ah- The Pas down the river to pick up their load. And that's how the -ah- the store trader used to get his supplies, in the boat down the river, the Saskatchewan river.

But in the winter time they said they used to use horses before, but I didn't see that, but there was no skidoos or anything like that. -ah- People used to use dog teams for their transportation and horses. Like there was no hydro, no electricity whatsoever, people they used lamps for a gas-lamp. Finally they had gas-lamps, that's what they used to use, they bought this camp fuel whatever they call it, the coal oil they call it, that's the ones they used

in -ah- their lamps. And they had wood stoves, cooking stoves none of this -ah- range, electric range. They used to -ah- light the fire outside in the summer when it's hot like it is today, they didn't do any -ah- cooking inside.

LORRAINE: It almost sounds like when there was less technology and you had to work harder people were happier.

WILLIAM: Oh yeah, they were, like today it's totally different, totally different today. But -ah- and today the way I find it people are moving less, they stay very still, and people get sick because it's not enough circulation in their system. They get sugar diabetics, stuff like that, because they don't burn out the stuff they take it in. They're too still. I think that's the problem, a lot of people get sick. People dying off, some of them before eighties, lots of people die before eighties. Very few people pass eighty.

LORRAINE: And they used to live a long time?

WILLIAM: Oh yeah, one hundred years and they were still running around. There was one old man I seen he was ninety years old. He was still running around here till I think he was ninety six, he wasn't looked like ninety six or close to that. He was still hanging around. And today in your fifties, sixties, can't even go hundred feet back.

LORRAINE: My Mother is very sick.

WILLIAM: Yeah; She is a diabetic. Yeah. Yeah look at [pause] I got sick too. Like -ah- I couldn't walk very far, I couldn't go down here to the Northern store, [old Hudson's Bay store] maybe four or five times I would have to stop and sit down, that's how bad it was. So I couldn't figure out what's wrong. So I thought; I'll, I think about it and then I quit. I used to smoke lots so I said, "I better quit this."

LORRAINE: Do many people here still do traditional ceremonies, traditional things, or are they all going away from that?

WILLIAM: No, No they -ah- people do that, not in the community. There's people that believe in that, but they go out, like there's an old man, not an old man here, in Rainy River, he does that an he heals people, a Medicine Man. An he tells you what's wrong, what causes it you get sick, stuff like that, he's pretty good at it, pretty good. Sometimes it's true when he tells you something, you visualize what's happening just like watching T.V. I seen it! I went to one old man one time here. I used to go down to Long Plains. I took some people up here to get healed, lots of problems, so I took them, they asked me to take them so I took them there. And I was keep losing some stuff, like when I went down to the lake there I bought these two propellers for my motor, and I, they were lying down. So I happen to go out there and I lost nets, I was fishing, I came home I used to live over here and I didn't suspect my nets and leave em like that. The next morning when I woke up two of them were

gone. So -ah- so I asked the old man, I said, "Have you seen my stuff? Like I lost my nets, I don't what happened." I said, "I don't know how I lost them, maybe somebody picked them up, helped themselves, I don't know. I want to know where my nets went." I said.

So -ah- he said, "Okay, we'll soon find out where your nets go." So he, it was dark in the room eh, put a light out, he started singing, he had a rattle and he played with his rattle and he started singing, and then I seen some kind of a fog like on this side and it was coming through a wall. It came up right in front of me and then it formed into a square, I would say maybe ten by ten something like that. And then it's kind of snowy like when you first open the T.V., it's kind of snowy eh and then it clears up and the picture came on. Exactly what happened and I looked at it, there was a man puttin' my nets into a tub, the red tub, he filled it up, put em on his back and away he went. The thing went, cuts out, he [Medicine Man] put a light on. He said, "Yup. So what are you gonna do about it?"

"Nothing, I just wanna know, I just wanna know where they go. I'm not gonna do anything about it." So that's it, that's the way, how he did it. I seen it. "That's what happened to your nets," He said. Colour, in colour, even the man, the, the clothes he wears. Yup, I recognize the man too.

LORRAINE: You didn't want to do anything? How come?

WILLIAM: I don't, like, I don't know, if you ask maybe, whoever it is you ask to do something for you, if you wanna hurt the person, stuff like that, it could happen. And I didn't wanna do that, it's no good. [referring to having a Medicine Man perform 'Bad Medicine' toward someone for revenge] To me anyway, I don't know about other people. I don't like to hurt people, it's not nice. I would say. But lot of times people -ah- wants to get rid of others so bad. But I don't think that's the right way to go, I wouldn't do that anyway.

LORRAINE: Dr. Brant; he said that a long time ago Native people would not display anger, they wouldn't show anger, and one of the reasons was; when you live in a small community and if you're going to get mad at everybody and fight, then you can't survive very well. But another one was because they were afraid of spirits, and they didn't know who could do something bad to them or not. Do you think that's true? That people wouldn't get angry because they were scared?

WILLIAM: Well I guess they [get] mad at one another, but not at specific person, like the person that knows, that has bad spirits, [person that practices 'Bad Medicine'] that the way he watch the evil, the evil spirits would do that. And if you ask him he goes ahead, that is his way. But it's very dangerous I would say. I wouldn't want to try it. [laughter]

LORRAINE: I wouldn't want to try it either. How about sharing? That's another one. [of Brant's claims] A long time ago there was no such thing as stealing.

WILLIAM: No.

LORRAINE: What you had belonged to everyone? If they needed it they could use it?

WILLIAM: Well they don't come and take it when you're not there. If you have the thing they want it, and they won't, if you're not there they leave it alone. This is what they're like and they wait till you come back. People were very honest to each other. They wouldn't take it until you say, okay you can have it, take it. They won't go there and take it up, take it away. These people wouldn't do that. You can leave, you can come to a boat, you can have your gas, your tools in your boat and then when you leave, you can have all your dressing nets, your hooks that you pick the fish with, you can leave it there couple a days nobody will touch it. Even people come there and see it, they won't touch it. Maybe if he's got some kind of a problem maybe he needs a knife right there, he'll pick up your knife and use it and put it back where he picked it up. He won't carry it away or anything like that, he would make sure it's there. And today if I leave a wrench here and I turn around, my wrench will be gone if somebody walks by here. That's today. People didn't do that. [in earlier times]

LORRAINE: There was a lot of interference; with non-native people coming in and interfering with the way of life and the ceremonies.

WILLIAM: The -ah- I don't know who to blame. Maybe, [pause] I guess, [pause] you can't really blame anybody, it's up to us to make that decision how we live and how we teach, how we teach our families. That's the way I look at it.

When two people get married, young people, and they start having families, the way I see things today, as soon as the child is born, couple of days old, and if these parents start fighting and that's the way that child will be brought up. Right there you start teaching him from day one. And that's the way he will be, how he will grow up. A person will have to be very careful when he has kids, very careful. You don't wanna, you don't want your children to listen to you even when you have conversation with someone. If somebody comes to visit you, your friend, that's the way my Mother used to do. When her sister comes and visit, "Okay you guys, go and play outside, don't come in until she goes." I don't know whatever they talked about, we didn't hear, we were outside. Same with my Dad. My Dad used to tell us, "Okay you guys, go over there. Go and do this." Then we used to go over there and then -ah- we didn't know what they were talking about.

And today people drinking, do everything right in front of their kids, even a little child crawling, crawling around on a floor. Fights here and there and they swear, anything, they do anything.

LORRAINE: They copy the behaviour, don't they?

WILLIAM: Yeah, Yup.

LORRAINE: A long time ago the people listened to the elders. Do the young people still go to the elders to learn from them?

WILLIAM: Nope: there is no respect whatsoever today, none. Maybe one or two families may respect their Mom and Dad but not with other people. There is no respect, no understanding. Lot of times I tried to -ah- explain. Lot of times I asked the leaders to try and get some funds so we can put workshops to bring these things forward, what the understanding was like, the -ah- why is like -ah- how you say that [pause] the -ah- [pause] why are we here in this planet, let's put it that way. [pause]

Why did the creator create this world and create us. And when people start walking, start going, we don't understand these things we see. [pause] Lots of us don't understand. [pause]

LORRAINE: Long ago there was respect for trees and the water, Native people had respect for everything.

WILLIAM: I find that when you're talking about that, I had a problem, I would say a few years ago: [pause] I got sick, I couldn't work, couldn't even split a block like that, like this, to bring it in to light a fire in the stove, got sick. Soon as I start doing something like start splitting wood I get sick. I couldn't even get up to help myself, to bring myself inside the house. [pause] People have to come and bring me, put me into bed and I stayed there two days at a time. Sometimes I really got sick. I couldn't even lift my head up and the wife had to bring me some water in a spoon, to drink it off the spoon, that's how sick I was. And I go to a doctor and the doctor said, "You're, nothing wrong with you, you're 100% healthy." I keep going back, going back, couldn't find anything wrong. So I met this drinking buddy of mine, he says, "There's a Medicine Man here," he says, "He's good and he will find out what's wrong with you if the doctor can't find it." He says, "You go to Young's Point, that's where he stays overnight and tomorrow he's going back." I went there, he was gone. There was a phone call for him to go right away, so he went back. And -ah- [pause] I went back to town, then I -ah- run into my friend again and he says, "Did you see him?"

"Nope, he's gone, I missed him."

So anyway, he said, "Go to Long Plains, that's where he's from. You go there, you go to Portage La Prairie and you ask there, they'll know. Go and find him."

Sure enough the next day I went. I head for Long Plains, I went to Portage La Prairie and I ask around and they showed me where to go. I come to Long Plains Indian Reserve and I asked people there, "Where's the old man?" And they showed me where to go, so I finally caught up to his house. I knocked on the door and I asked for him. And the girl who opened the door says,

"He's gone, he's not here he went to States." He says, "he just pick up his clothes here and took off for States. That's where they want him."

"Oh," I said, "I came from about three hundred miles north of here." [pause] And -ah-.

"But if you came that far," he says, "you can [go] to that house over there, the white one. You see it?"

"Yup, I see that house."

"You go there," he says, "his brother live there." He says, "doesn't do anything different, go and see him. He'll tell you what's wrong."

I went there and I knocked on the door and I asked for the old man. That girl over there tell me the name of the old man. So I went there, knocked on the door the old man opened it so I asked for him.

"It's me," he said, "come inside." I walked in. [pause] He said, "sit down." I sat down on a table.

I said, "I got my friends outside in a car waiting for me."

"Well go and get em, bring em inside. Ask them to come and have some tea with us." Oh I went out and I went called up my buddies and I, we came in and had some tea. So anyway the old man asked me, "Okay, what do you guys want?"

I said, "I'm sick and I need to, I need to find out what's wrong. The doctor doesn't seem to know what's wrong with me." I put down some tobacco, [pause] I put down some money, that's my offering. I [pause] didn't know what to offer eh, and I didn't know how much to offer. I didn't know these things. This was my first time. I didn't even know what the pipes looked like, rattles, so forth. I didn't know these things. When my friend told me, I heard about, I heard about Medicine People, I heard about that since I was a kid. [pause] And I used to see people helping one another but I never seen these things. But I seen them picking up herbs and putting dressing on their cuts, whatever they cut, with herbs and so forth to heal faster. That's all I seen, but nothing like this.

Well anyway, the old man started singing, he smoked this pipe, a great big pipe about that, that, that thing was about like that. [indicates size with hands] He filled it up and he smoked it and find it four directions and to the Mother Earth, that's how he did it. And then when he finished that he put the light out and started praying with his rattle, and he was talking away and then he put the light out. And then he put it on. Then he said,

"I'm sorry." He says, "I can't help you. [pause] But I tell you what, if you're not in a hurry, if you want to come back tomorrow, same time tomorrow I want you to bring me some rice and raisins, that's what I need." He said, [pause] "I don't see anything." He said, "It's totally dark."

So the next day I hung around. I stayed in a room Portage La Prairie there. I had a room there. So that's where we stayed. And then I, the next day I went and bought some rice and raisins. I went back to the old man. [pause] About the same time I went back there and he was waiting for me already. So -ah- [pause] so he put a paint here on my cheek, two different colours, a yellow and a blue. He says, "I'll have to give you an Indian name, that's the only way I'll know. Without the Indian name," he says, "I can't, [pause] I don't know, I can't see anything." So he says, "okay, lets do it."

So anyway he started to -ah- he started to sing and he was talking to this, somebody here again. [pause] So he finished talking away, then he put a light on. [pause] Then he says, "okay, your Indian name." Then he told me my Indian name, and that's it. Then he says, "now we'll find out what's wrong now," he says. So put light on [off?] again, starts singing with his rattle. Not very long, less than two minutes I guess, opened the light again and said, "okay, you know what the problem with you?" [pause] He says, "you see these.?" He's got rattles, drums, feathers, pipes, lot of stuff there. "You see what I'm doing here, this is what you have to do. This was your gift and you don't do it. It's up to you [pause] to make that decision. You want to take it or leave it. [pause] If you don't take it you have ten days to

live. If you want to do it you can. There's a man here who makes pipes, you go there and have your pipe made."

"Where would I get these other stuff?" I said.

"Well," he says, "don't worry they'll come to you. They'll come to you," he said, "don't worry about that."

So I went to see the guy. I brought him some tobacco and money again. He made me a pipe, and the rest it came exactly what the old man told me. No nothing, [pause] that was few years ago. [pause] You see that's the way it is when people are having that gift like that.

But when you talk, you're talking about before the people were here. A person could go back, visualize these things, [pause] like two millions of years ago. You can go ahead, what's gonna happen in the future. What are we facing today. [pause] People don't believe in this. [pause]

LORRAINE: People in the community don't, or outsiders?

WILLIAM: I would say the people in the community. They, I know. And I know a lot of people know this, but in their mind they don't. They have this, people in this community have this gift, but they don't use it. They don't know how to use it. If they misuse it that's their problem. They should find somebody. To me, this is why there is more vandalism and so forth, people don't use their gift. They don't want to understand it, they don't want to follow it. [pause]

Like me, I look back, like I said before earlier, people do need a lot of understanding here in this community because like you said, people need to respect trees, animals, birds, even the earth itself. You should respect everything, the wind the whole thing, but see we don't. A lot of people don't respect that, especially each other. It's a gift, the creator was so kind, he gave us all these gifts. He gave us this world, he gave us these animals to use, he gave us these birds to use. He gave us these drums, rattles, to use to help one another. Not to fight each other, to understand, to teach our children. This is why he gave us children, to teach the children. What he gave us, respect everything what you see, what you step on, respect it. That's the way people should live.

There is nothing here to get mad about, I don't see anything, there is nothing here. And today the mouths making up like that, the two people are bringing away, apart, trying to hurt each other. But if one of these people understand, they won't get hurt, the other one that doesn't understand will get hurt. That's the way I see these things.

If your partner wants to leave you, that's fine, don't take it too hard. [pause] And he has to make sure he knows where he wants to stay. That is the only question you have to ask. "Okay, what are you gonna do? You gonna leave me, you gonna stay over here you're not gonna come back." If your partner starts going back and forth you better stop that right there see. [pause] "Make up your mind, if you wanna go over there you go, stay there, you don't come back here. Make up your mind now, pick up your stuff and leave. I'm not kicking you out or anything but make up your mind, if you wanna stay here you stay here." [pause] And there's nothing to get mad about if this is what she wants, if this is, if she figures this is good

for her, let her go. And if you think this is good for you, you stay here. You have to look out for yourself. And wherever the kids are, they [wife or partner] usually take you to court to get the -ah- what do you call that?

LORRAINE: Support.

WILLIAM: Yes, child support, but [pause] the person is [not] entitled to pay child support, not to me anyway. I don't do that. I wouldn't pay child support If my wife stays with another man. I don't pay child support, the man will look after that, not me.

LORRAINE: Is that because he has chosen to take your wife and family?

WILLIAM: Yes.

LORRAINE: Well it's not like that in the non-Native world. They would give you a hard time.

WILLIAM: That's what I think, that's what I do, that's the way I look at things. I'm not jealous, why should I be? I have to understand. [pause] When people go out four days and four nights, out in the bush. [pause]

LORRAINE: Vision Quest?

WILLIAM: Yeah. You go out, when you go out the first day you don't drink, you don't eat for four days four nights. You go out there. [pause] That's where the Spirits come to you. They teach you, [pause] and they teach you the good things, the things what you need to know and from there you pick up the understanding. [pause] It's hard but not as hard as what [pause] Jesus was facing. It's hard but not anywhere near close to that. This is something you learn.

LORRAINE: Do very many young people go there to have a Vision Quest?

WILLIAM: No.

LORRAINE: It used to be, a long time ago, that a boy was around twelve years old when he went.

WILLIAM: Well, it's better to start when you're young. It's much easier, you have your, you see, how do you say that, [pause] a person is dirty inside but you have to clean that out. First you have to clean your spirit, -ah- stuff like that, but when they're dirty there's nothing, you can't visualize anything. That's why people go in a sweat lodge, to clean themselves out.

LORRAINE: Do people here do smudges?

WILLIAM: No, not that I know of. No, I don't know.

LORRAINE: There is no way, or is there a way, to get back some traditional ways. You said you approached the band a number of times to get funds to try to do that, they won't agree?

WILLIAM: I don't know what happened, I don't know if they're looking for it, I didn't ask. But [pause] people come here to help people, traditional people. Sometimes they come stay for a couple of days and they took off, just like few people. I don't know why they do that.

Like there was one old lady, he [she] wanted to come here so bad so I -ah- I put her up, okay. "You can use this room four days if you want to stay. You can stay in this room." Okay she was happy. People started coming in, probably people in there. First night he [she] was there, the next morning we were having breakfast, she started asking me questions.

She says, "how long you been here in this house?"

"Why," I said, "I lived here long time."

She says, "you better move out. You ever feel anything here?" She says, "there's something here trying to push you out of here."

"Oh," I said, "I don't think so, not me." [pause] -ah- then:

He [she] says, "this evening," he [she] says, "can you take me to Ashern? I'm going home; I can't stay here." He [she] says, "This place here, I don't know, there's a lot of power here," he [she] says.

"Oh," I says, "I couldn't." I was just teasing her huh. So I took her to Ashern, somebody came from Winnipeg and pick her up there and away they go.

I come home and I start hearing this, [pause] somebody walking around the house, I was watching T.V., somebody's walking around, I turned my head to see, he's gone, he's not there. Sometimes there was a phone start ringing, and I know the phone is cut off. I pull the wires off, the wires outside, and the phone is still ringing. I left it like that, took it off threw it under the bed, didn't ring anymore. [laughs] So -ah- that's what happened. I never told anybody that.

Somebody left like that one time when I was sleeping. Wake me up, just lift the bed like that.

LORRAINE: Are they trying to tell you something?

WILLIAM: That I don't know, as of today I don't know these things. I don't bother trying to find what went wrong.

When I left the door, I was, my wife left eh, separated. Awasis [Children's Aid] took my kids, all my children, took all my children. [pause] So I was all by myself. I was sleeping in the room, the far end. I could hear pots and pans rattling, a lot of noise. Maybe a drunk walked in, I don't know. [laughs] I got up and I checked the door, the door is locked, everything. Pots and pans were all tidy inside the cupboard. Anyway I went back about halfway to my bed, these things starts again. I went back, I wanna make sure, went to see

what's there. I stand there, the noise is right here, it's totally dark, I stand right here, I hear this noise right here. So I'm looking for a light switch, so I could feel it, I was hanging on to this switch and this noise was making a lot of noise and I threw the switch on and it quit, nothing there. Pick up the chair put it right here, put the switch out try it again. I sat there, finally start falling asleep, no noise nothing. I just sat there [pause] and I got up walked back to my room to, and go to sleep, never heard the sound again.

There was a friend of mine came. I went down to Easterville and I ran into this friend of mine, and he says, "anybody staying with you up at the house?"

"Nope."

"I'll go and sleep overnight," he says, "I'll sleep over with you." He says, "I'm gonna sleep over here on the couch."

"Okay go ahead."

So we had some tea. All of a sudden I hear this, somebody frying something on the stove. I fall back asleep, boy, I heard this again, wake up again, I heard it still frying something. Maybe my friend is hungry and wants to eat something, so I got up and I hit something on the floor when I put my feet down. So I guess my friend came in and made his bed right there beside me, but on the floor. I guess he got scared. Somebody walking around looking for stuff, he got up and he came into my room, I didn't know, I was asleep I guess. So he got up, I got up, he wasn't sleeping just lying there.

He says, [I say?] "do you hear that, somebody over there frying, cooking something?"

"Yup," he says, "don't go there."

"Well I'm gonna go check, see what it is." Walked out of the room and checked anyways, It's gone, no heat on the frying pan, just hearing that eh. I went back to the room and I fall asleep. I guess he didn't sleep all night. The next morning when I woke up I made some breakfast, and he was up all night he says.

"Okay, I'm gonna go to Easterville," I said, "I'll be back maybe in couple hours or so." So he went to sleep. Nobody ever came and stayed over night again after that. I didn't mind, wasn't scared.

LORRAINE: Maybe you knew you were okay? [William just laughs] There is so much; a long time ago young people would go and sit and listen to stories, they wanted to hear everything so they could learn.

WILLIAM: Well, there's none of that, there's none of that today. You see when I was a small boy, there was an old lady lived next -ah- couple houses down, now all us children used to go there towards the evening. We used to sit around outside in a big circle and the old lady used to sit here. She used to tell stories. She would tell about two or three stories a day, or once a week. I forget them stories, they used to be nice. [pause]

LORRAINE: And nobody does that now?

WILLIAM: Not that I know of, no. [pause]

LORRAINE: There was a man from B.C., an elder, he said he liked to tell stories to his grandchildren just before they went to sleep, because then the story works on them all night and they learn in their sleep, and when they wake up, he said, they know it and don't forget. They learn.

WILLIAM: Yeah, oh yeah.

LORRAINE: There are lots of stories in B.C., and lots in Ontario, and now they are starting to write the books so you can tell it. It's not quite the same.

WILLIAM: Because, because like when you tell something to somebody face to face it's better than when you read something from the paper, it's not the same. The thing that's written here it doesn't have a soul or anything. [laughs] But a person has a spirit and when he talks to you it sticks, that's why that old man tells his grandchildren just before they go to sleep. [pause] See that thing sticks in his head. But when you try to tell people, like you have 200 people right in front of you, you have to listen very carefully. Not to take anything, those people they'll call you names, they'll do anything to distract you, distraction to get you off. [pause] They can't do it, just because you know what you're doing. If you don't you won't be able to spend couple hours with them in the room, or in a hall, it's hard to do that. I used to do it, but I don't know about now. [pause] I guess the -ah-, a long time ago whatever happened to the people, whatever they believe their beliefs are, it's coming back, it's coming back. I can feel that, sooner or later the young people are gonna realize, they're gonna have to face it, they're gonna have to do it.

LORRAINE: All over the States Native culture is coming back, the traditions are coming back. Doing it the non-Native way just isn't working. Look at Easterville, it's almost like they've lost their Native soul, and there is nothing for the young people. If they'd go back to the elders and talk to them, listen to their stories, listen to their past, they could rebuild their souls. They're trying to do that in other places.

WILLIAM: We have to do that; but I'll tell you there's a lot of interference. Lots of interference. I work with the teachers last winter. Resource meetings we have, lots of interference in the school. The kids running around swearing, there's just no control. [pause] Everything that was blamed against the children, [pause] but I asked the teachers, [pause] if they -ah-, [pause] ever take a good look at themselves, who they are and see if they're perfect. [pause] Like, I know many times none of us are perfect, nobody in this world is perfect, so we all think we're perfect, [laughs] even we're wrong. So, not very long ago we finished what we did, we put everything together. But I never found out, see how it is, but I'm gonna try and found out before that teacher leaves here. Oh, I'll talk to him and -ah- see how it is. I wanna take this to the chief and council and maybe this group, it will be up to them to decide what they're gonna do. Everything will be there for them. If they wanna go this road or that way, everything will be there for them. But this is what they're gonna do and if they want somebody to help them, I'm willing to, okay. [pause] I'm willing to help them as much as I

can. I know there is some stuff I won't be able to do, [pause] but we can find somebody to give us a hand with it. Not one person can do everything, nobody knows. But when you -ah- pick up the pieces here and put them together then you make a good family. That's the way I see things. For example, like people with the Chief and council, they'll call up a meeting, people don't go.

LORRAINE: They don't?

WILLIAM: Maybe twenty, ten, maybe thirty, and the population of one thousand, it should be packed. So how can you make the good decision with just a handful, you can't make a very good decision. People should look at their community, this is what we need, this is what we're gonna do, we want you, Chief and council, to give us this and so forth. We could make it work if we stick together and if we work together. People will have to do that, but they don't do that.

LORRAINE: That's the way they used to do it.

WILLIAM: One at a time, "Hey chief, I want this." Maybe the Chief will give you what you want. The next person, "Okay Chief, I want this," he says no. Next one goes, he choose, people choose who they like, that's the one that gets the most, the rest are out there. The people should look, treat everybody equal.

LORRAINE: That's right and the community should be what's important, the good of the whole community, not the individual. So the way it is now the good is for the individual not the community?

WILLIAM: I guess, it's up to the councillors first. Every time there is a job opening a councillor has to work there, he gets the job, number one. If there's a fire let's say, two, three, councillors go there to make [extinguish] a fire and at the same time they get their salary and people walking around here doing nothing, the band members they don't have a chance. I see these things. Even they put up a poster to hire when they need someone. They put up a poster, you look at it, you think you can do the job, well you apply for it. When you apply for it they already have somebody in mind to hire. You just, your, drop your application, they invite you, then "No".

LORRAINE: They already knew who they were going to hire?

WILLIAM: Yup, but they ask anyway. I tried three different times here. A guy sick and fill-out [fill-in?] for him, and the doctor say he can't work anymore, so that's it. So they put up the poster. So I apply for the job, I was already working there, not worried about it. But I didn't get it so I didn't know what they trying to do. To me they are just trying to find members [council members or family members] here and there is nothing you can do, can't

move around. That's the way I see it anyway. [pause]

LORRAINE: You have a fairly large community now.

WILLIAM: Well, oh yeah it's over a thousand population now, it used to be four hundred, five hundred.

LORRAINE: It was small when I was here, when I was eighteen.

WILLIAM: Yup. The people are changing. It's a lot of work, I can see that, a lot of work to make people understand. Lots of problems, we have a lots of problems in this community, [pause] everyone of us I guess have a problem. When you go to see someone here,

"You got a problem"?

"No," he says, "no problem."

It won't kill you, because they don't know they got a problem. People don't know they have problems. For example, you talk to Maxine, "You got a problem"?

"No."

Those kind of people.

LORRAINE: They won't be honest.

WILLIAM: They won't come out in the open. It's better for people to come out in the open, feel much better, you feel good, you're healing yourself.

LORRAINE: If you keep it inside you're going to get sick and you're spirit will die.

WILLIAM: Well if they all die you die too, exactly, without a spirit how can you live. [laughs] Yup. [pause] It's no good.

LORRAINE: If the band would bring back, [pause] oh I don't know. Are there any pow-wow dances, do you have pow-wow dances here?

WILLIAM: Oh No.

LORRAINE: So there's nothing to show the young people how much pride there is in being Native and what they can do. There's nothing for them?

WILLIAM: No, nobody ever comes. We don't even have a camp. [pause] No, for us to go and put up a tee-pee so we can go there at night, you know make a place, put up a tee-pee, put up your sweat lodge.

LORRAINE: I noticed a tent on the other side for the Pentecostals.

WILLIAM: Yeah, Shakers. Yup.

LORRAINE: Well that doesn't seem right that they'll let that go up but not others. There should be a special area out in the bush.

WILLIAM: Yeah.

LORRAINE: Are there even people around who remember how to set up a tee-pee, with bark?

WILLIAM: I don't know, maybe with canvas. [laughs]

LORRAINE: There should be a place for young people to go.

WILLIAM: I have a small tee-pee here, I took it out to the camp across the lake, the retreat. They do sweat lodge there bout [pause] once a day and -ah- they talk about [pause] self healing, traditional healing. They talk about that. And they have these workshops and so forth. Various speakers.

LORRAINE: Where do these speakers come from?

WILLIAM: Well, like some of them come from The Pas, Nelson House, Moose Lake and here, Grand Rapids, I guess wherever they can get someone.

LORRAINE: Do you know anything about Indian Days in The Pas?

WILLIAM: Well that's when they have these competitions and stuff like that. Competition, all competition. People come from all over the place. They give people prizes like a thousand dollars, stuff like that eh.

LORRAINE: They'll have a lot of singers and a lot of dancers?

WILLIAM: Yeah.

LORRAINE: Pow-wows are one way to restore native values.

WILLIAM: If people could do that to restore the old ways, I think they're beginning to heal.

LORRAINE: Then they can be proud of who they are, of being Native.

WILLIAM: And then when they look back, a lot of times, "How the hell did we survive without that? How did I survive"? The creator was looking after you. [pause]

LORRAINE: He still is, maybe He wants something from his people. It's like you said, you got sick because you weren't using your gifts. Well if people would start using their gifts they would heal.

WILLIAM: Yup. There's a lot of healing to do here, lots of it, the whole community.

LORRAINE: It's very different here now, when I was a little girl it was beautiful. I could run free, I could do anything, there was no danger, nothing. Now Junior [Williams' son] doesn't want to let the girls run loose and play, it's not the same.

WILLIAM: No, not very long ago, here last spring [pause] there was a girl got lost here. I guess everybody was running around looking for a child. I don't know where they found her, they found her way back there in the bush somewhere, at night. There was still some snow. You see [pause] -ah- lot of [pause] commit suicide, people are so lost they don't know what to do. This is what people are start drinking, start -ah- smoking pot, stuff, whatever they call it. [pause] I try to tell my boys, especially the youngest, and the girl not to do that but they don't listen. There's too much interference out there and I can't ask them to stay here, "okay, you're grounded. You're not going anywhere, you can't talk to somebody." [laughs] And I don't want to do that, this is no good. If they want to do it the hard way, but they know they hear from me, they know which is right and which is wrong. They have to make that choice themselves. I tell them already. I told them to be careful when they're out, don't get hooked on these things, if you do who is gonna get hurt, not me, maybe you.

LORRAINE: There are a lot of suicides in Northern Ontario, in remote communities where you fly in. Is it because there is nothing for them to do?

WILLIAM: Well that's what everybody says, there's nothing for them. Like here in our community there's nothing here for them. People don't open their eyes and take a good look, there's a lot of things here.

LORRAINE: The old ways.

WILLIAM: Yeah.

LORRAINE: Do many of the young people go out hunting and trapping and fishing?

WILLIAM: No, you can't pretty well do that, if I go out, let's say I take two of my boys out to the camp. If I make my camp over there the next thing I know the C.O.s [conservation officers] will come after me. I have to pay, they take me to court. If I build this camp over there, cabin, not like the old ways, not like the old times. You have to pay, they take you to court and if you don't pay they burn your cabin down, they burn it down, right down to the ground. If they caught one of your boys with a gun you get charged, they take your gun away. I don't know what the government is trying to do. That's what happened, it happened

to me. I went down the road here with my boy, I had a twenty-two, we seen a coyote sitting. "Okay shoot it, you can kill it." Pulled the gun he shoot it but he missed. He ran after it as I call him, I said, "come back," he come back. The C.O. pulled in here he took the gun.

He says, "I'm gonna charge you for handling a firearm under age."

I says, "oh no, you don't do that, that's my boy, he has a right to learn. How can you teach your child if you gonna take him to court right away." So I said, "no." I said, "no, I am a treaty Indian and I can take my gun back," he put it on his truck there. I just went and took the gun, he looked at me and I put it in my truck. I said to my boy, "get in the truck, we don't have time to argue with this guy." We took off, he didn't come after me. [laughs]

LORRAINE: That's the problem, they'll say there's nothing to do on the reserve but they won't allow you to do what you know how to do, they won't allow it. So they don't have basketball or volleyball and fancy community centres and hockey arenas and everything else that they have in a non-Native world? They don't understand that the traditional things are very important here.

WILLIAM: Well, this is where people learn, like to get snake root, [seneca root] this time of the year, would be something to make a good living.

LORRAINE: This time of year?

WILLIAM: Yeah you can go out there starting picking snake root, it's nine bucks a pound dried. Ah, I had a paper here somewhere, *Opasquia Times*, it was right there on that paper. There was a phone number too, where you could call. Yeah, there's a lot of money on that.

LORRAINE: So young people, instead of sitting home watching T.V., should be out picking roots. It would make them feel better?

WILLIAM: Oh yeah, you go out there and do that, you stay out there one week, two weeks, ten days at a time out in the bush, that's all you do. You come out they have a whole bunch of it, let's say maybe three hundred pounds or four hundred pounds of it, sell it to get your money. Let's say it's one hundred pounds at nine dollars a pound, you get nine hundred bucks. You see, if you get two hundred pounds you get eighteen hundred bucks.

LORRAINE: I think I should go pick some. [laughter] Do they know what it looks like?

WILLIAM: Oh yeah, nobody goes and picks it. Some people go out picking berries.

LORRAINE: What is the hunting like here compared to what it was like before?

WILLIAM: No, no, no, nothing.

LORRAINE: And the fishing?

WILLIAM: No, those two have pretty well had it, fishing and hunting. Like when you hunt for moose you can't do that, you have to go long ways. Out of your area, you have to go past your area.

LORRAINE: I thought you couldn't go past your area.

WILLIAM: Ah, a treaty Indian can go anywhere.

LORRAINE: Can he?

WILLIAM: Yup, but as long as it's a Crown Land.

LORRAINE: I saw a deer yesterday, coming back from The Pas, we stopped, there was a deer by the side of the road.

WILLIAM: Yeah, the government doesn't let you shoot from the road, within 150 ft. off the road, that's when you can start shooting but not from the road. If you see your deer and get out by the time you get 150 ft. God knows where he is. [laughs]

LORRAINE: So fishing and hunting are not good anymore, what about trapping?

WILLIAM: Oh, I don't know about trapping, I don't know. I tried last spring. I went across with two of my boys, we spent three nights over there, we got one muskrat. We took two skidoos.

LORRAINE: So trapping isn't very good?

WILLIAM: The first day we got there we made camp. The next morning we took off early, we took off, by lunch time I had one muskrat, oh we were running around with the skidoos right to the evening. We tried to find a place suitable for a muskrat. All the houses were frozen. So we couldn't trap.

LORRAINE: Well, you know fewer and fewer people are going to eat that kind of food if you can't hunt and trap. They are going to eat only what can be bought at the store.

WILLIAM: Well this is why they are too much of a diabetic.

LORRAINE: Also they will lose all their skills in hunting and trapping.

WILLIAM: Because, yeah, they're eating off the store. They eat from the wild that's why people didn't get sick, and they pick up berries for their food. And today they go to the store to buy their sweets, at the store your food, stuff like that you get that from the store. But natural sugar, it's better than the one you buy in the store. [pause] This is why people didn't

get sugar diabetics and stuff like that.

LORRAINE: And they lived a long time.

WILLIAM: Yeah, [pause] I guess a person could make a living like the old way but they would have a hard time. Especially that with a big family, I don't think you should try it. [laughter] No person alone I guess, single person could go around the bush I guess, take a twenty-two make a living in the summer, You could survive. Maybe that's what I should do, take up my twenty-two run around in the bush, come back in the fall. [laughs]

LORRAINE: Isn't that what they did in the old days?

WILLIAM: They don't do that anymore, nobody goes out anymore. They go out, they only go out one night maybe not even one night he wants to come back right away, he can't leave this place. You can't leave Easterville. Especially if somebody is dragging you back here. [laughs] They'll go to the Pas. [laughs]

LORRAINE: What about marriage?

WILLIAM: Well, that's a good question.

LORRAINE: Marriage used to be important.

WILLIAM: They don't understand that today. Marriage is just a hobby. [laughs] Today, that's today. People don't know what love is today. [pause] Not like in the old days, when people get united they stay together the rest of their lives, until one dies. And when one dies you see the widow, widower, gets married again. I could see why when they're separated like that you must get on with your life. The life is too short. There's no time here for self-pity, you must get on with your life. No matter what. You have to take a good look at yourself. [pause] I don't know if people see it that way but that's the way I see it.

LORRAINE: My Uncle said they don't get married now, they just live together and get big welfare cheques. Not like before when they got married the man would go out into the bush and provide for his family.

WILLIAM: That's the way it should be but not, it should be but you can't do that anymore. You can't do that anymore like I said, maybe up north you can do that up there, but here, no way. You won't survive, not here. Okay the problem here with that; there's [undecipherable] and before it was -ah- [pause] anyway [pause] if they cut a trees down, no matter where you go no trees just miles. The animals moved away, there's no place for them to stay. They have to move. The birds they're gonna have to move.[pause] You go a long ways to find something like that and if you go west, farmers they own this land, you can't go onto their land to go and hunt. The world itself it's getting bald. Without anything in it the birds will

be totally gone and the -ah- [pause] you see that's what's happening. That's why can't make a living from the wild. [pause] And when you -ah- grow your own vegetables, your own meat, like you have bunch of cattle then your okay. But lots of vegetables everything, you leave these there outside, that's what the farmer does. And he use this fertilizer and so on his stuff. Puts it on his garden. He gives needles to his animals and he kills them, it's in their blood, they cook it and they eat it. Even vegetables they cook it and eat it with the stuff on.

LORRAINE: The chemicals?

WILLIAM: Yeah, how the hell you expect people to get well? [lots of laughter]

LORRAINE: You can't grow anything here?

WILLIAM: You can if you want, ah yeah.

LORRAINE: But there's a lot of rock here.

WILLIAM: Not here, over there, but not here. Here you can't.

LORRAINE: I see a lot of people are moving over to this side, it's not so rocky.

WILLIAM: That's why they have these houses here, but down there in Easterville there's lots of rocks there, yup.

LORRAINE: I want to use this quote in my thesis, when you said, "The world is getting bald." [he laughs] That's wonderful.

WILLIAM: It's true.

LORRAINE: It's a good description.

WILLIAM: Nobody will live on this [pause] the animals are going away. Wherever the trees are I guess that's where they'll go, that's where they find their feed. Same with fish, the waters polluted, they're not gonna live there they're gonna move they know they're gonna have to move. Some of them don't make it, that's the way it is with everything. [pause]

LORRAINE: Do you think the people would be better to leave here and go live in the cities?

WILLIAM: I don't know.

LORRAINE: No?

WILLIAM: I disagree totally! People would be better off to go and live in the wild, [pause] and start pulling themselves together, [pause] take a minute and think, "what am I doing to myself." "Why am I doing this." [pause] "I need a good life." If people start thinking about that then they will go and get help. "Where can I go to change me, what can I do to change me, who can I talk to?" [pause] "I need help." People don't realize when people get into trouble like if, if there's a fight and somebody gets stabbed and the R.C.M.P. come and get the guy they take him to court. Then this guy goes to court and send him back to -ah- [pause] Justice Committee and Justice Committee would look for a place where this person could get help. [pause] And then the person goes four nights [four months] let's say in Nelson House, that's a treatment centre, four months. That's where the person would go. Then try and straighten him out. As soon as he gets back, about a week later or two, three, days later he's back on some thing [drugs or alcohol]. [pause] That's the way it is. Myself last year, myself, I wonder if they should send me to Nelson House. I said to Rose, I live with Rose here, she's an ADAP worker [Alcohol and Drug Addiction Program].

"What for?" he [she] says.

"Well I wanna get out there and I wanna know how they help people, [pause] that's why I wanna go there. I wanna go and do these things. When I come back maybe I can help some people here in our community." [pause] Which I never did. I never went out. And just this, [pause] couple a days ago I asked again can I go for four months. Every time when we send somebody out there, he comes back and he goes to the same thing again. Every time, no matter where you send these people. Some of them three times, they come back they start all over again. So I said, why don't we get a treatment centre, lets build a treatment centre to the people. If your gonna build a treatment centre build it so you can take in families, the whole family has to learn, the whole family. If there's six in the house take the whole works there. [pause] While they're out there renovate their house, when they come back they'll have a nice place to stay to start over. Ten families at a time. Take up to ten families at a time to do something.

LORRAINE: And when they come back they'll have each other to support each other.

WILLIAM: Yeah, not only that but there'll be somebody there to keep these things going, these meeting places, sharing circles, things like that -ah- like -ah- A.A. [Alcoholics Anonymous] meetings. I -ah- sometimes I do that, I have healing circles sometimes Thursdays. And then [pause] if you take one person from here, lets say there's four or five people, this is the place where they drink and if I take this one the most wants to get healed, he doesn't want this kind of life anymore, he wants to change, take him out you're gonna place him for four months in a treatment centre somewhere. In the meantime everything is going the same, he gets back, he walks into this place again, starts over again right away. While he walks in maybe there's a party going on over there, just goes ahead has a bottle, back to square one.

LORRAINE: Then they send him to jail.

WILLIAM: Yeah.

LORRAINE: I know someone in jail.

WILLIAM: That's no place for Indian people.

LORRAINE: He is trying to learn traditional Native ways, but my niece, Sherri McKay said, "what good will it do? They can teach you there but when you come home there is nothing traditional," and she said, "you get more mixed up and they hurt more." She said, "it won't help."

And I said, "what if you have traditional ways going on. What if you came back home and you had a medicine man doing ceremonies like sweat lodges, shaking tent, pow-wows. Would they then be able to, you know, recover themselves"?

WILLIAM: It's up to each individual person. [pause] You can't change people.

LORRAINE: But if you have nothing to come back to but a party. [pause] I don't know, I just wondered if they had something traditional to come home to would that help?

WILLIAM: I guess they have to keep working on it, you can't just do it. To help you change you have to keep on doing it. [pause] Like -ah- like myself, I was a drunk too [pause] but -ah- [pause] I don't know, I decided to quit. [pause] I had a hard time to quit but I really wanted to quit I prayed for myself [pause] and that's how, that's how I quit. Few years ago.

LORRAINE: Maybe the ones that haven't quit don't really want to.

WILLIAM: They're not helping themselves, they're not, [pause] a person will have to help themselves, [pause] you can get, you can people, you can teach people how to quit drinking. You can teach them, help them, talk about their problems. But if they don't want to quit they wanna keep on doing it, they keep coming back. It's up to them to leave it where it is. They wanna leave it, leave it there just walk away, don't take it with you. For example, [pause] like -ah- [pause] like okay there's too much problem here I'm not gonna live here anymore, [pause] I'm gonna move to Winnipeg [pause] I go to Winnipeg. I stay there coupla days, couple of weeks and back at square one. Just because it's me, I am the problem. Wherever I go, no matter where I go the problem is there with me. [pause] Until I leave it behind and walk away from it. That's the way these are and people don't understand that, they don't understand that. [pause]

LORRAINE: Who were your teachers, your Father, your Grandfather?

WILLIAM: When?

LORRAINE: When you were growing up.

WILLIAM: Mostly my Father, that's the one I was with all the time hunting, trapping, fishing, [pause] building a house between the two of us, but I had five brothers. And -ah- [pause] two of them died and there's three of us now. [pause] So -ah- [pause] I never -ah- talk about [pause] like the way I talk eh, talk about these things not very much, very little. They teach, you have to make a living, to work, how to provide, those kind of stuff, [pause] and the behaviour I guess. They teach you from right or wrong, not to steal, [pause] that's somebody talking about your friend not to interfere, not to butt in here, to walk away from trouble, [pause] "it's no good to butt in there," he says. That's about it. The rest, there's a lot of things if you work the way that was given to you, you will learn lots, [pause] a lot of things that they will teach you, [pause] you got to, when you hear people talk you don't interfere. When people start talking you listen, [pause] and you learn lots from them too, [pause] but a lot of times, [pause] I know people don't listen. When you try to tell them something they're right there yapping and they know more than you do. They tell you everything right there in front of you. So there's nothing to talk about. [Pause] When you try to help somebody he tells you, he interrupts everything, [pause] so you can't help those people. You can help everybody but people will have to come forward and talk to you. [pause]

LORRAINE: Do many people come to you and ask you for help?

WILLIAM: Very little. [pause] The ones I help they don't come back. [pause] There was one guy, he came from Nelson House, he took his child all over the place, [pause] then he came here, he walked in here, he says, "I got a little girl in the van that's, I don't know how long, she's not sleeping, she's cry and cry. I took him [her] all over the place to see medicine people." He says, "but I can't, nobody seems, there's nothing there seems to help." Okay, -ah- okay, I'm gonna see what happened. [pause] So we went to Thirteen Mile Corner here. My brother's got a house there, he wasn't there. I happen to have that key. Before he left I asked for that key, maybe I'll use their house if somebody comes. Like something was telling me somebody was coming here. So I ask for that key, sure enough, so I took this guy and his woman and his friends. I went out there and I did the ceremony for them and I speak for the child to get well. I said, "Okay."

And he says, "how long I have to wait for her to get better"?

"Well give it four days," I says, "give it four days. In four days if he's [she's] not, [pause] if you don't find a change take her somewhere. You'll have to take her somewhere, but you should find out almost right away," I says. [pause] Okay he took off, I got here about twelve o'clock. I finished the ceremony for them. It was about nine o'clock the next day the phone rang. [pause] The guy called me.

"Oh," he says, "she wants to get up, she wants to jump down, she wants to run around and play."

"Yeah, alright, I guess she's gonna be okay." The next day he phoned again.

"Okay, yeah, she's running around now," he says, "just like nothing happened, not even a mark or anything on his [her] body." [pause] So the little girl was better. No medicine huh, just do a pipe ceremony for her, I speak for her. [pause]

LORRAINE: So you did have your things given to you? [objects used in ceremonies]

WILLIAM: An there's still some more I need but -ah- I supposed to get them ones myself. [laughs] I'm thinking about it, can't seem to get it.

LORRAINE: Well you will.

WILLIAM: One of these days.

LORRAINE: Well I should leave you.

WILLIAM: Yeah.

LORRAINE: Thankyou.

MACLEOD GEORGE

Macleod George consented to a taped discussion, in September, 1996, while travelling from Winnipeg to Easterville, on a Grey Goose bus. Macleod, now in his seventies, was born at the Old Post at Chemawawin. Macleod, recognized as a community Elder, is fluent in Cree as well as English.

LORRAINE: Can you tell me where you were born.

MACLEOD: Chemawawin, the old post.

LORRAINE: Could you tell me a little bit about what life was like there when you were growing up.

MACLEOD: Oh, it was okay. We had everything. [Undecipherable] We got everything.

LORRAINE: What was hunting and fishing like?

MACLEOD: Fishing and hunting, oh, all I got, but since we moved to Easterville we got nothing, you know they're all gone.

LORRAINE: Life is really different for the young people in Easterville.

MACLEOD: Oh yeah that's for sure. And we didn't do nothing, drinking or smoking, stuff like that, over here now that's what they're doing most of the time now.

LORRAINE: When you were a little boy there was a lot of respect for your elders.

MACLEOD: Yeah, yeah I know there is. Yeah you know when I was young I didn't do, there wasn't that kind of stuff. Now pretty, pretty dangerous now a days, that's what I'm saying. They're broken ah, drinking, fighting all the time. The young people don't, not even the young people even the grown up.

LORRAINE: Did that all start when they moved to Easterville?

MACLEOD: Oh, not right away, not right away and they started about a year after, a year after since we moved here. Reason why, there people coming from outside eh, young people and that's when they learn how to do it all. They come from the city eh, all different places. So they got to get the young people. I guess that's where we get all that you know.

LORRAINE: When you were a little boy how did you learn? Did you have to go to residential school?

MACLEOD: NO, day school, right in Chemawawin. Yeah, we didn't have no good teachers in there at all. [Laughs] No, not like today. You know good teachers are always in there teaching, pretty good so some people, young kids are learning lots you know. Now those days nothing, not very much lots of times we learn living how to make a living, trapping and all that.

LORRAINE: Who taught you how to trap?

MACLEOD: Eh?

LORRAINE: Who taught you how to trap?

MACLEOD: Me! I learned by my own. [Laughs] Well by my Dad and, and all that.

LORRAINE: By watching them?

MACLEOD: Yeh, oh yeah I watching what they doing, yeah. I guess I learn to do the same thing you know. [Laughs]

LORRAINE: When you lived at the old post there was a lot of sharing, people were good to each other.

MACLEOD: Oh yeah, that's right. Yeah we were sharing that [pause] if you have a, anything at all you know everybody share, all the food and meat and berries and all that. That's, a lot of sharing. Not only one family using, lots and lots of people they use that stuff. Yeh, sometimes I got two moose, I was out with the dogs in the winter time. I give them one load of meat bring it home and sometimes I only have two, three lbs left, I give it yeah, to all the people. Yes, I guess that's all I can say.

LORRAINE: Okay, that's good thank you very much.

MACLEOD: You're welcome.

LORRAINE: [We thought the tape recorder was turned off] Life sure was different.

MACLEOD: I was going to tell you something else.

MACLEOD: We got sixteen kids, eight boys and eight girls. We didn't have no welfare nothing eh. I had to make, I have to work to make a living eh.

LORRAINE: Did your kids work with you?

MACLEOD: Some of them, yuh, Jack the older ones eh. They're all grown up now.

LORRAINE: They learned their fishing and trapping with you?

MACLEOD: Oh yes, anything I do they had to do it to we had to make a living eh.

LORRAINE: Do you think the welfare is hurting the young people?

MACLEOD: Lot of people need it now. Two three guys, Its only ah, they waiting for their welfare every month. They don't want to work. Welfare they depend on the welfare.

LORRAINE: What about self government, will that help?

MACLEOD: [Laughs] I don't know, I don't know, I can't understand it me. Well, we'll see what's gonna happen.

LORRAINE: You have your school right in Easterville now and a lot of the teachers are starting to come from the reserve. Do you think that will help any?

MACLEOD: Well there's some coming in from ah, Grand Rapids. I think there's four or five.

LORRAINE: You know I noticed that there isn't much understanding about the traditional Native way of life. No one seemed to understand that when I was there. I talked to William Easter and Walter Mink and they seemed to be the only two that knew what I was talking about. None of the younger people knew.

MACLEOD: That's right, I don't know I guess that's all I can say.

LORRAINE: Okay, thanks.

SHEILA GEORGE

Sheila George, Easterville's Health Administrator, talked to me at her office on August 7th, 1996. Sheila, a Cree woman in her mid to late thirties, is, like many in her community, bilingual.

LORRAINE: You have a retreat here yearly for the people in Easterville, can you tell me why you've organized this retreat?

SHEILA: When the people from the Chemawawin moved to what we now call Easterville in 65, I was only four years old when they moved so I don't have any memories of ah, the Old Post. And I used to hear a lot of stories about how it was then, and how different it is now. So I know about the only small part of the Old Post left, and, um, I've always wanted to give the people of this town an opportunity to go back home, to the Old Post. And the first year that we went there was in 1994 and we were able to do it because of the, um, by the Futures funding that we do get. We do cover a lot of the, um, components of Brighter futures which is, um, mental health and there is also solvent abuse and child development, I think skills and all that. and we all try and combine all of those in a three day retreat. The first year, that first year we had over four hundred people attend. And I, there's this one particular person I'll never forget, and that was, that's Mrs. Easter. She was [undecipherable] of the chief that signed the papers moving everybody down to Easterville in 1964. And I noticed when she was out walking through the small island that she was touching the leaves and the bushes. Yeah, she was kind of ah, she was touching them and feeling them and, ah, there's a couple of other people that I noticed them, and one of them was Rose Daniels, she's our NADAP worker. I think she's about in her late forties or early fifties, so she was taking her Grandchildren around and she was making gestures with her arms pointing here and there, and I think she was telling the kids what was there at the time and what was, who lived where, and here I'm sitting with my two kids and I don't know a thing. I think that we did give that opportunity to the people that remembered, we gave them back their memories you know. I guess it saddened quite a few of them because its a very small island that's left now of the big reserve they had at that time.

LORRAINE: So you took them home.

SHEILA: Took them home.

LORRAINE: You said that ah, you heard stories from people about what it used to be like there, and what its like here. What kind of things did they say?

SHEILA: Stories like um, when they went hunting, when they did make a kill they would

bring it back and shared with everybody. And, ah, there was no hydro, there was no electricity so we, they didn't have any, ah, what we have now is refrigerators. So I can understand how and why they shared their meat. And before, kids they were about a half a mile away their Mom was calling them and they could hear her clearly and they had to go home, [laughs] now today you have to phone all over the place to track down your child. [laughs] And, um, they ah, a lot of them said they had a long way to walk to go to school, and here in this community you know, when the buses don't run they don't go to school.

LORRAINE: They don't know how to walk.

SHEILA: They don't know how to walk. And, ah, a lot of stories like that. And how they used to have to work. [laughs]

LORRAINE: My work is with Native values and I've read a lot of work by Clare Brant, he was a Mohawk psychiatrist. And Dr. Brant said that Native people have a value of non-interference. Have you ever heard that term? He said that to interfere in another Indian's life would be rude.

SHEILA: True. [laughs]

LORRAINE: So your understanding of non-interference is the same as Dr. Brant's? That its rude to interfere.

SHEILA: I think so, cause I think every person, every mother and child and mother and father try and raise their kids in the best way that they know how, and (undecipherable)

LORRAINE: The early missionaries, when they came here, they would send letters back to France talking about the little savages running wild and nobody controlled them, nobody disciplined, they were just allowed to do whatever they wanted. Do the kids do that?

SHEILA: No. They do a lot, but I think the parents do have to have some disciplinary action for their child. I don't mean beating them up but a stern talking to maybe. Cause that's how I discipline my children.

LORRAINE: Do you think Native people learn their values through stories?

SHEILA: I ah, (Undecipherable)

LORRAINE: Is there a story or experience you could share which would explain non-interference?

SHEILA: Um, I guess my, my parents is something I could use. If you lie to them you need to be disciplined, because your trust is in your parents. And I would take it as a personal

insult if someone told my kids this is how you're supposed to behave, and I try to teach them different. [laughs]

LORRAINE: So giving advice would be interference, if it was from some other family other than your own?

SHEILA: Yes, it if was, if it was, ah, well I'll make my son as an example. He's seventeen years old and I say well, I don't want you experimenting with drugs. A person comes around another person

and says, well, my son tried it once and that's all, he only tried it once so that's okay to try it once. And that's what I mean about another person trying to give advice.

LORRAINE: When you give advice to your children do you tell them what they have to do. Or do you give them options and let them decide.

SHEILA: Yes options. I always give them options and if they make their own decisions then I expect them to take responsibility for their, their actions. Um, [undecipherable] in Winnipegosis and [undecipherable] wants to go to Cranberry and I know that Cranberry has a very huge dropout rate and I don't want him to go. So we sat down and talked about the pros and cons of both schools, and then I said, "Well, we'll go with what you decide, you know the pros and cons of both schools, and we'll stick by your decision. One thing that we ask," Tom, we told him, "that you're gonna have to finish the semester." He decides to go there then he's gonna have to be responsible to finish that, at least that semester.

LORRAINE: Have you ever told him stories about other people, for example: I don't know, what happened to someone else for instance that used drugs, have you ever told him stories like that?

SHEILA: Um, actually to tell you the truth he was telling me stories. [laughs] Yeah, he ah, I'm the kind of Mother that has to know things first, like if somebody try to get him to use drugs. My son says, "Like he came up to me three times already and I always turn him away."

"What! Why didn't you tell me the first time?" And he says, "Well Mom, I can take care of myself." And he tries to talk to a couple of his friends which kind of drifted away I guess, because he isn't really into, to that so he's lost some friends. But there are others.

LORRAINE: I'm looking at when the missionaries first came here, what I believe is that the children were told legends by the Elders.

SHEILA: Um-hum.

LORRAINE: And in the legends they learned what they should do and what they shouldn't do without anybody telling them what they had to do. So, I wondered if there was a more

modern way of doing it now. Through real stories I guess, that's what I was looking at.

SHEILA: I, I have no idea [undecipherable] help him and other kids I guess [Undecipherable] six years old I've never heard stories.

LORRAINE: No legends?

SHEILA: No, no legends [pause] the, the only legends I heard about was Wesakayjac, but I don't know if any of them are true.[laughs]

LORRAINE: I've read many about him. A lot of stories were told for humour, like the one Sandy told. [laughs]

SHEILA: Yes, those are the ones I find very hard to believe.

LORRAINE: And there were others, it was a subtle lesson, but the lesson was inside the story without being direct about it, if you heard it often enough. You know there's one legend about him, he's not supposed to eat certain berries because he'll get diarrhea, of course he goes and eats all these berries and then you know [Sheila starts laughing] he gets the diarrhea, and it starts building and building and it build like a mountain. So listening to that kids would learn not to eat those berries. That kind of thing, its the listening.

SHEILA: Yes.

LORRAINE: Okay, Dr. Brant said Native people have a value of sharing. Earlier you said, at the Old Post they would share their meat and you think that's because there was no refrigeration.

SHEILA: Well, I always thought that but [undecipherable] I still think that's the reason.

LORRAINE: But they didn't have to share, they could have smoked that meat couldn't they? And keep it for themselves.

SHEILA: Yes, they could have done that, maybe that's what they did when they got the meat, but I've always known that they don't bring in the meat until you take what you want. But now you just cut it up throw it in the freezer and if somebody comes around asking for meat you give it to them. [undecipherable, smoked, laughing] same thing with fish. Well my husband's a fisherman, and if some old people, not only old people but people from around, ask us for fish and he's sure to get them fish the next time he's out on the lake.

LORRAINE: So that value is still around. It was at precontact and is still important to people. I asked someone else in an interview whether they locked their door, because I noticed the doors here get locked, [Sheila interrupts to say, "Oh, yes"] at the Old Post they

didn't lock the doors.

SHEILA: No, I heard stories that um, if you went to see somebody, to visit them, and they don't answer their door, they just sat around outside and waited, eventually the person that they went to see comes around. But around here, somewhere along the way [undecipherable] Heard a very nice comment when we got back [From the Old Post] [talking about a boy who had gone to the young people's retreat at the Old Post] he used to take things and demanded things, and when he came back I guess he started asking for things instead of taking.

LORRAINE: Now, I have another question here. Dr. Brant said Native people have a different view of time. He said that time is cyclical for Native people. That when you make decisions you are making them for your future generations.

SHEILA: Um, I would agree.

LORRAINE: As opposed to linear time you know where there is a beginning and an end. [Sheila responds with um-hm] For Native people time just keeps going [Sheila responds "Yes, yup"] round and round.

SHEILA: Yes.

LORRAINE: And though you die physically.

SHEILA: You're still there.

LORRAINE: You're still there somewhere, and so you agree?

SHEILA: Yeah I agree, because, I don't know its, um, whatever you do now, whatever my husband does now, is always only something for our kids and there's very little that we would do for ourselves. And I don't think that, most Native people, all of them would do it, not just us.

LORRAINE: Anger must not be shown, what do you think of that one?

SHEILA: Anger is pretty hard to hide. I know the stories at the Old Post, I know that they, ah, ([ndecipherable] its pretty hard to.

LORRAINE: I'll give you an example; he said anger must not be shown, this would be precontact, because to demonstrate anger in a very small community, and if you're out trapping or fishing in this small community, so if you were to get angry at someone and actually display that anger, get mad at them or fight, its gonna disrupt the unity of the entire community and you could endanger each other.

SHEILA: I, I agree, I agree with that.

LORRAINE: I think he was talking about other emotions as well. Grief for instance; you couldn't allow yourself to grieve for a long time, today you have people that grieve forever, but it will immobilize them, they can't do anything. You couldn't have done that precontact, not if survival was an important thing for the community.

SHEILA: I think that [undecipherable] yeah, I guess I can use myself as an example. I lost my Mom when I had started my Health administration courses that first year. We start in September, after the funeral [undecipherable] back at school four days after. So again, again the grieving was only four days for me because I had to think of, ah, my kids. [undecipherable]

LORRAINE: What about gratitude? According to Dr. Brant gratitude is not something that is shown. For Native people you did what you were expected to do and you did the very best you could so why would you need gratitude or praise, because you're just doing what you're supposed to do. Did you get a lot of praise and gratitude when you were little?

SHEILA: Yeah I did, it felt good. I don't, I don't know what to say about that comment, because I show a lot of gratitude to my kids and to the staff that works with me. So maybe thirty or forty years ago maybe that was [undecipherable]

LORRAINE: Protocol; you don't have a lot of knowledge about traditional things therefore you don't know about proper protocol. [undecipherable]

SHEILA: The only thing I can say about that traditional, um, um, that first year we did bring in somebody to [undecipherable] even though I don't take part in that, ceremony, I guess I can call it, that we still should show that respect for the people that do. It doesn't necessarily mean that we have to also have a sweat lodge at that Chemawawin, it doesn't mean that I have to be.

LORRAINE: Do you know about giving tobacco?

SHEILA: Yes I do.

LORRAINE: Well that's part of proper protocol. [Sheila laughs]

SHEILA: But I've always wondered what they do with the tobacco, the ones that don't smoke, do they burn it?

LORRAINE: A lot of them will burn it, but not in a pipe, in like a dish.

SHEILA: Oh I know with sage and?

LORRAINE: With sage and cedar and sweet grass. [Sheila laughs, "Oh."]

LORRAINE: Which brings me to the next one, have you ever heard of sharing with the rest of creation? The animals the trees the environment?

SHEILA: The only sharing that I've heard about is with the environment, is [undecipherable] have you ever been to one? [Sweat Lodge Ceremony]

LORRAINE: No. [I was soon to participate in one]

SHEILA: I didn't think I was gonna make it. That heat was very very excruciating. Well I don't want to scare people away [laughs]. But they say that its like going back into a womb. Its hot in the womb and, ah, they say you have visions, but when I was there the only thing I was conscious of was the heat. And I kept pushing me down and pushing me down, but you know when you go down you'd think it was hotter there because of the red rocks but its not. Its the coolest.

LORRAINE: Did anyone tell you to pray or concentrate on one thing while you were in there?

SHEILA: Ah, no, they just told me to close my eyes and try an, ah, think of nice things.

LORRAINE: To keep your mind off the heat but you were concentrating too much on the heat. [Sheila laughs]

LORRAINE: Now what about teaching. According to Dr. Brant, Native children are taught through modelling, whereas non-Native children were taught through shaping. Now I know today in school all children are taught through shaping, but traditionally, or when they were young, did your children watch you do things? Did they learn in that way? Or did you have to take them by the hand and instruct them all the way?

SHEILA: Oh no, no, watching not instructing, but in a way I think they wanted to and I can safely say that they were good kids. Age zero right up to age four, but as soon as they started school I remember all my kids when [undecipherable] painted the grass pink. But as soon as they started school they couldn't colour unless I told them what colour to use. Yes, you know that program the child, the grass had to be green and the trees had to be brown. And, um, I didn't notice it until my second child. He couldn't do anything unless I told him what colour to use. And whereas before he started school he had pink grass and blue houses, any colour they liked.

LORRAINE: Do you remember how your kids learned to dress themselves?

SHEILA: Um, they just dressed themselves.

LORRAINE: They just did it themselves?

SHEILA: By watching.

LORRAINE: That's what we call modelling.

SHEILA: I think that still happens today. um, Not that I'm trying to put people down, when a, a child grows up in an alcoholic home, [undecipherable] in some families it does in some it don't. Well I have three brothers and they do drink quite a bit, and we did grow up in a home that had big parties but, I'm not an alcoholic I don't drink. So I don't know how it wouldn't affect me but it would affect my three brothers, because they drink. But my kids don't drink. And we never, we don't drink in front of our kids when they were small. I have a seventeen and fifteen year old. I do smoke but the seventeen year old hates smoking. [laughs] I'm contradicting myself in some areas but. [laughs]

LORRAINE: Well that's fantastic thank you very much.

SHEILA: Is that it?

LORRAINE: Yeah.

LEONA MASSAN

Leona Massan is a Cree woman, originally from Gillam, Manitoba, she now resides in Thompson, Manitoba. Leona is in her mid-thirties and is presently re-learning her native language. While I was visiting Thompson in September, 1996, Leona agreed to talk with me. Our meeting took place in a tiny office, in the back of a restaurant (Chicken Delight), that only had room for one chair, we laughed when I had to sit on the floor with my back against the door.

LORRAINE: Okay Leona, will you tell me about your life, when you were growing up in Gillam?

LEONA: Do you have enough tape?

LORRAINE: Um-Hm.

LEONA: [laughs] You have enough tape. [laughing]

LORRAINE: [laughing] I have a lot of tape.

LEONA: Hum, oh [pause] I guess I started living with my Grandparents when I was five. Five years old.

LORRAINE: Okay tell me about your life.

LEONA: Growing up with my Grandparents. Let's see, where should I start. [pause]

LORRAINE: How about with discipline; did you not live with your parents at all?

LEONA: No, no, well my Mother died when I was five so when she died I went to live with my Grandparents. [pause] And we couldn't get away with nothing, like with -ah- [pause] like my brother and me would get up at five in the morning, we'd chop wood. We never had electricity, or running water, we had the outhouse. [pause] ah [pause] Whenever my brother and I would get into a scrap, he would throw us outside, my Grandfather would throw us outside; he'd say, "You wanna fight, go for it". [laughs] You know, because he was tired of us trying to fight. [laughs] You know, parents now-a-days say, "now don't do this"; no, Grandpa would say, "you wanna fight, go for it".

LEONA: He didn't try to stop you?

LEONA: Oh no, he'd just say, "you wanna fight, go for it", then he'd throw us outside and he'd call my Dad and everyone to watch us eh. And then when we finished I'd always be the one left. I would be pissed off still, right, and I'd be really pissed off, and he'd say,

"You see that tree there?"

"Yeah,"

"Well go and kick it."

So he'd make me stand there and kick the tree till all of it left me. And sometimes my toe would be all bruised up [laughing] cause I'd be kicking that tree forever, like, you know. Yup, I'd be so mad, Grandpa'd be there at suppertime.

"You still mad?"

"yup."

"Well keep kicking then." [laughs]

LORRAINE: Did you have meals at regular times?

LEONA: Always, Granny always had food on the table, actually I never ate store bought meat till I was around thirteen. We always had beaver and we had moose meat, and we had duck and all the wild game.

LORRAINE: Your' Grandpa was a hunter and trapper?

LEONA: Yeah, he was the best.

LORRAINE: Yeah?

LEONA: Oh yeah.

LORRAINE: Did you ever go with him?

LEONA: Yeah, we used to go with him. But actually, girls usually didn't go with the men. They hardly ever went, unless we went and skinned it and dressed it up and cooked it up. But I don't know, there was something about me that my Grandfather liked in me; so I was the only girl that ever went out with him. Yup, I have very good memories about my Grandpa, my Grandmother on the other hand was [pause] too mean. [laughs] Oh yes, she was a mean old witch; she had long nails and they were hard as steel, and if she ever hit you with those I guarantee you'll feel it into the next year. [laughs] Oh, she was mean; but we all respected her, and never talked back to her even to this day. I'm thirty-three years old, my Dad tells me something, I will not talk back to him.

LORRAINE: Is that right?

LEONA: Yup, I never; even my Grandparents when they were yelling at me. I knew they were wrong, but I still wouldn't talk back. Because that's how much respect we had for them.

He [Grandfather] was, he was a really nice man; he was wise, and when he would tell stories it was like watching T.V., like that's how good he was.

He used to tell us stories about -ah- him going out walrus hunting, and this one trip he was on there was about ten of them on the boat, and he had said his friend got a little too close to one of them, and -ah- he fell in, and they were, they were spearing this one walrus, but then he came up and his tusk had got him in the gut. He said they were just hearing this guy screaming and yelling.

Just the way he put it, I could never put it like he did. It was just like you were right there; like that's how good he was.

Like a lot of things; like when we used to go to the trapline over at Cache Creek, we would go there for; we'd, would stay in school from September to June, then in the summer months we would be in the bush. And we'd have to hike, hike back and forth. [laughs] We went a long way and we finally got there, we'd have to set everything up. He was the type of person where you'd have to set everything up first, then you'd have some free time. But everything had to be done. [pause]

LORRAINE: So he told lots of stories, did he ever tell you legends?

LEONA: Not really, he told us stories about his childhood, like what he used to do. Or else when he would, we would do something wrong, he would tell us, he would -ah- turn it around, make a story of it and say this is what, he wouldn't tell us you're doing this well because you were wrong. You know, he'd make a story out of it and then he'd say, "ah see."

LORRAINE: It sounds like you learned your values through his stories.

LEONA: Yup, like that's what I'm doing with my kids now. Like, I was never afraid to go to my Grandfather with anything because I knew he was always there. And I could always count on him and I could tell him everything and not be scared. That's how I am with my kids now. Like, to this day now, when I speak they listen. But there Dad on the other hand, like Sean, [Leona's son] "oh, I'm scared, I'm shaking". [laughs] And Steve [Leona's husband] will go, Leona, help with these damn kids." I says, "Sean, what did your Dad say?" You know, and then he'd move, like, [laughs] it was so funny I'd laugh too.

LORRAINE: What about sharing? What was that like? Did that go on?

LEONA: Sharing?

LORRAINE: When he hunted and made a kill, did your Grandparents share their food with other people?

LEONA: Oh, they always did. Yup, he'd always go around, my brother does that to this very day. Yup, he works in, he lives in Shamattawa, he married a girl from Shamattawa reserve. And actually, I think he's the only who go out there, and when he kills game, like caribou or

stuff, he'll keep just enough for his family and he'll go around and give the rest away. That's how Grandpa was too. You know, he'll kill [keep?] just enough and then spread it out with everybody else. [pause]

Yeah, living in my Grandparents house, it was hard, but we learnt a lot. Like for instance one time, like getting up was a discipline for everybody. Like, now see kids like, ten o'clock they're just dragging their ass out of bed. But then we'd get up with the sun. If we slept in till ten o'clock half your day would be gone. But with Grandpa, like he says, "You get up with the sun and when the sun goes down you go to bed, and everything's done and you've lived a full day". And we'd have to get up and make a fire, and we'd uh, start the tea, cause Grandpa always wanted tea in the morning.

And we'd feed the dogs cause we had fourteen sleigh dogs. And there was a special food for them too huh; like Granny would make kind of like a big stew, like uh, with uh, suckers, you know those fish, she'd put those in there, she'd throw oats in there and uh what else she'd throw in there, -um-ah- a tiny bit of turpentine, in case they got heart-worms and stuff. So they wouldn't get sick. She'd throw a bunch of left-over stuff in there, like left-over meat, like she'd chunk up some meat, all kinds of stuff like that. But we used to like those dogs too. We used to go out there and go for rides. What was I going to tell you?

I think I was about ten, no I was younger, I was about eight. My Dad went out to get logs and he was sitting in front of the sleigh, he told us, and -uh- he fell off, he slipped and the sleigh ran right over his neck and it broke his neck. The dogs come home with all the logs. Then Grandpa says something's wrong, Albert would have been on that sleigh. So he followed them back. [pause] And he came home from the hospital, from Winnipeg, he looked like friggin Frankenstein. [laughs] His big neck brace and bolts in his head with rods coming down, and he was scary, well he's a big man too, my Dad.

My Grandmother used to do crazy things too. Like that time I was telling you when I ran away. [laughs] I come to Thompson for Nickel Days. All my friends were coming right, so I wanted to go. Granny and Grandpa said, "No you can't go, you're too young. I was about, jeepers, how old was I, oh, twelve I guess. But they said, "No," but I wanted to go real bad cause everyone else was doing it. I had to follow their footsteps right? I got home, my Dad met me at the train. I didn't want to get out of the train I was so scared. All he did was give me a big hug and take me home. Granny fed me, I go to bed and say, "geez, this is pretty good, I'm not getting any lickin's, I'm not getting any shit, no one's yelling at me". I was in for a surprise! It was, it was, the sun was just coming up, I remember cause Grandpa woke me up. "Come on, let's go for a walk". Okay, maybe he's gonna give me a big lecture, that kind of thing, right. Not thinking, he takes me out in the bush, we were out there for two days walking. Then there was just this area, he stops and says, "Okay, so you want to run away?"

I says, "No I don't wanna run away no more,"

And he says, "Well if you wanna run away so bad, I'm gonna leave you here and you find your way back home." I didn't think he was serious; I was looking at him, like, he was looking at me, "see you later," and he left.

And I says, "aw, he's just kidding around," I thought, you know, I thought I'll just sit here, he'll come back; you know he never came back. It's getting dark out. First night I spent

up in a tree. [laughs] That old buggar, that's all the did was make a big circle and follow me eh. [laughs] Yup, I found my way home.

My friends next day, "what happened to you?"

"Oh, my grandpa left me up in the bush."

"Well we got lickin's; we got grounded," and all this stuff. "You think that's bad? Why don't you go into the bush for two days with nothing on." [laughs]

Yeah, and they thought I got away easy. But it wasn't bad it was a learning, cause I knew better. What's at home is better than what's out there cause you don't know what's out there. I never did it again.

And we never learned to complain neither. Oh, no, cause Granny one time, well actually a lot of times, she would do things to us; like when we were complaining. Like when I was plucking geese one time, they had bugs. I said, "I don't want to clean these cause they have bugs," and we had this big garbage bag that we were putting all the feathers in, and she grabs this bag and she dumps it on my head! And my Aunt was sitting back and she laughs off her head, and my cousin Pauline there they're just laughing at me. And she [Grandmother] goes, "Well now you have bugs, now keep cleaning." You know we didn't complain after that, like you don't complain when Granny's around. You can kind of complain when Grandpa's around but not as much to Granny, cause she just, [pause] even with doing the pots and dishes and stuff. [pause] You complain there's too many pots she'd go outside and dirty all the pots. She would go outside and stick them in the mud, then, she'd bring 'em inside and say, "There now you have more pots, [laughs] don't complain."

When we'd -uh-, one thing we couldn't do was read at the table while we were eating. That was one thing Grandpa didn't like. And uh, one time my brother, Andy, was reading a comic book and Grandpa said, "it's supertime put that book away."

"No, I'm almost finished."

And my grandpa said, "what did you say?" My brother Andy, "Well I'm almost finished this comic book."

"Fine, eat the comic book."

So he never got no supper, and we were having a big meal eh, and Andy's sitting there drooling and he's watching us eat while he's got this comic book. And Grandpa says, "Well eat your comic book." So he [Andy] tore a little piece off and.

"There eat it." [laughs] And he's looking at him like a, are you serious kinda look. Grandpa put it in his mouth and said, "there eat it now." So he ate it, grandpa says, "So how did it taste? Now you gonna listen next time?" You know he did things like that to us. Yeah, it wasn't the smacking, the hitting, the screaming, and he would do things like, in that way. Like even getting up in the morning. You had to get up and if you didn't get up you paid for it. He'd throw a cold bucket of water on you [laughs] yeah, he would. You know that happened to my brother Andy, he didn't want to get up, he was so tired. I knew something was going to happen, you don't say no to Grandpa, you know. Oh, he got up screaming. "There now you're wide awake."

Oh yeah, he was just [pause] so many things, just thinking about it. He always did things to us in a way that we always learned; like with patience. I think that's where I, my patience, from him, from his examples and the way he'd teach us things. [pause] He wouldn't

just tell us, he'd teach, he'd um, oh I don't know how to put it. [long pause]

LORRAINE: I was going to ask you about teaching, how you were taught. Was teaching a matter of, um, verbal instruction? Or, did you kind of just follow the leader, watch what they did and do it?

LEONA: It was both, well with us younger ones it was both. Like even with, um, say if Grandpa killed a moose, ah Granny would tell us what to do but, at the same time, she would be doing it. And we'd be looking at her and she'd be telling us again, then we'd just follow along, like, a moose is a big thing to cut up. Especially when you're taking off the hide, you gotta make sure you don't, don't ah, break it, like stretch it too much. And she would be telling us and showing us at the same time. And even when she, she, I think right up until she died she was the only one that tanned her own moose hide. That was a long, hard job doing that. And then stretching that buggar, holy moly. [pause] My Grandfather wasn't too hard on me, where with Granny it was always hard. Like even when we used to go out in the bush for two months. I would always be the one taking off. I knew better, don't stay around granny, she would make you work. I used to take off on her all the time. She would always be, yakkity yak yak yak, "where's Leona?"

"Oh, she's gone out again."

You know, Grandpa knew I'd be okay, because he showed me what to do eh; make a trail, mark a trail, what I could eat, what I can't eat if I ever get lost. Even with the stars, you look at the stars you'll never lose your way. And granny, she was always there the yappy one.

LORRAINE: You know a lot about bush life.

LEONA: Oh yeah, I could live in the bush, I'd rather live in the bush. Yup. Like we still got the cabin up there in Cache Lake. I've often wondered, like sometimes I wanna go back. Just to go and live you know, take my kids out there. And Sean, he more, like, wants to go back in the bush. He's thirteen now and he's, and I tell him stories right, what Grandpa used to do and, oh, how I was taught things and he says, "oh, I'd like to go out there." So he, what was it, last year he was the one who was always going out there rabbit hunting, and he would bring it back and skin it and cook it up for himself. I says, "Whatever you kill you can't just waste it." I says, "You gotta eat it, that's why you're killing it." Like you know, you can't go and kill it and just leave it there for the fun of it. I says, "Whatever you kill you're gonna eat it." That's waste, it's like if you go to the store and get a pound of hamburger, you leave it out and it goes rotten. You know, are you gonna let it go rotten or eat it?

LORRAINE: Did your Grandfather teach you respect for animals?

LEONA: I don't remember that part too much. [pause] But I know for him he did have a lot of respect for the environment. Like he had a lot of respect for [pause] even people. He always told us, how you treat somebody is how they're gonna treat you. And if you have a problem with somebody and you let it go, you know, you're always gonna have, this person is gonna have a grudge against you. Or you're gonna have this grudge against that person; so what you gotta do is just go and talk to them and ask them what's bothering them or what's

bothering you. Sit down and talk to them and they say, well wait, and you tell them what's bothering you. This is on my head, and what's your problem? You know, he would do things like that. And he used to do that all the time with us. When we'd be mad, he'd go, "Well what's wrong?" Or Granny would kind of say, she was different, she had her ways of doing things with us. She was a really clean nut, like overly clean, you know, there's such people that's clean, but she was more or less take a toothbrush to everything. [long pause]

In school we had to excel in that too, yup, we had to do both. Like school time was school time and I used to be in trouble a lot, [laughs] I wonder why. [laughing] Like I would get into trouble for beating up kids. But I wouldn't, like. [laughs] [pause] Like Grandpa wouldn't come to my rescue. Oh no, he'd walk me to school, take me to the office and leave me there. He wouldn't sit there even though they wanted parents there. He'd say, "no, why should I go?" "I'm not the one that got in the fight." He says, "I'm just gonna take you there." He'd say it to the principal too. "I never got in a fight, I never beat no one up." "She's the one who did it, you talk to her." So I'm sitting alone with this principal. I go, "Oh my god he left me, he's abandoned me." Kind of thing. You know, he, "So how'd you like it?" I started learning you can't do that anymore. I don't like going in there all by myself.

Or things like, even the other kids in school. Like even if we had homework, we were never allowed to bring homework home. Because when we got home we had to chop wood, we had to get the water, we had to feed the dogs, [pause] stuff like that. So there was never time for two things. School, we had to do our school work at school. And when we got home we had our own chores. Like, I was responsible for doing the dishes and chopping the wood cause Andy was too small. He tried a couple of times [laughs]. And we would both feed the dogs. And, ah [pause] I was responsible for looking after Andy sometimes you know, [pause] didn't like it, I used to beat him up sometimes. Wouldn't try it now.

LORRAINE: What about religion? Spirituality?

LEONA: By the time I got to my Grandfather's he was into going into the church. Yeah. [pause]

LORRAINE: So they didn't talk to you about Native spirituality?

LEONA: No not really, not to me, maybe in Tommy's time it was different, by my time he [Grandfather] was getting more civilized you know. [laughs]

But we still go out in the bush a lot. Like, a lot of times we went to the bush. We'd go out with a big canvas tent and we'd set it up, and he'd still go hunting and boating, getting fish.

I remember the time when he'd get fish, he'd keep the white fish, like they're more like a junk fish for my Grandfather. So what he used to do was when he made a sleigh, he'd make a layer of fish straight across, wrap it up with ah [pause] moose hide then freeze it. Those were his runners. And I asked him why he did that; he goes, "Oh what happens if you get lost or stranded, what are you gonna eat?" "The dogs?"

And I says, "No I wouldn't eat the dogs."

He goes, "Why wouldn't you eat the dogs?"

I says, "I don't know. I tell you one thing, dogs don't taste very good." [laughs] I said, "I wouldn't eat the dogs."

He says, "Tell me why you wouldn't eat the dogs."

And I says, "I don't know."

He goes, "Because the dogs gonna help you get back." "Oh." He says, "So what you gonna do is keep the dogs with you and take the sleigh apart. You have your fish there. That's what you eat on. You melt snow." [pause]

So that was his emergency kind of food. You don't eat the dogs, there gonna back and help you. [laughs]

LORRAINE: So respect was very important.

LEONA: Oh yes!

LORRAINE: For the environment as well as people?

LEONA: Um-hum, that's one thing that we, I've learned right now is that it's how you treat people and that's how they come back at you. If you're going to be grouchy and bitchy how is that other person gonna see you as, you know. You see for yourself if you respect yourself, love yourself and you're one. Because without that you're lost. More or less. But even in that [pause] it's hard to explain, [pause] like I know what I'm thinking but it's hard to put in words for you. [pause] Cause everybody in this world deserves respect, it doesn't [matter?] where you came from or who you are, that's what he always said. [Grandfather?]. Like, he made a lot of friends in Churchill. Like with the ships and that and he used to take us there, and on a daily summer vacation kind of thing. He'd take us up there. He'd know the captains of the ship and he'd take us on there, like he knew people and he'd take us for a tour and these things were massive grain ships. Like some from Norway, from Russia there, and stuff like that. He'd go on there and he'd be talking up a storm. "Well what did you do this winter," you know. And one time he killed a polar bear up there [pause] that thing was humongous. And he sold it for two thousand dollars. Back then, I think I was ten years old, that was a lot of money. He sold it to some American. [pause] Yeah, Granny, she used to do a lot of beadwork, she used to do a lot of beadwork. And this one time she was sitting there doing beadwork and I thought I'd play a joke on her. I had this rubber snake and I threw it at her. Beads and everything went flying up in the air. And I was sitting there just laughing my head off. Just to look at her, the expression on her face, she was so scared, right. And I was laughing and laughing and then she got mad at me and said, "You think you got the last laugh?" she says, "I want you to pick up every bead." [laughs] And she said, "No! Not with a needle with your hand, one by one," you know. And my Dad comes, "What are you doing?"

"Picking up beads." [said in a sad voice, then laughs.]

"What did you do"?

Granny said, "she threw that snake at me."

He was laughing, "Oh well," and he just walked by. Right, he didn't stick up for me, he just walked by, cause he knew his business. Cause when he was twenty one, my Dad told me a story. He was twenty one, big man like six foot two, weighs about three hundred pounds right now, and he said, "I was sitting in the bar one night with all my friends, some C.N." [Canadian National Railway employees] He says, "And I'm a young stud kind of thing, you know. My wife's at home and all of a sudden Granny walks in." And Granny was about five foot four, five foot five. She walks in with a stick. And women weren't allowed in the bars then. But she walked in there and she beat him with a stick, told him to get his ass home. And he said, "You imagine how I felt." He said, "I'm sitting there with all my buddies and I'm the biggest man there." And his Mom walks in with a stick and chases me [him?] home. [laughs] She was just a tiny woman but she knew how to get her weight around. Oh yeah, that was [a] funny thing.

LORRAINE: Do you know anything about tobacco?

LEONA: [clears her throat] Tobacco is,-um- an offering. [pause]

LORRAINE: Did you learn that from your Grandfather?

LEONA: Not very much. He more or less passed on a lot of his stuff to Tommy and to Margarie, the older ones. But the younger ones, we were getting more educated. We were going to school and more or less learning the white man's ways.

LORRAINE: Where did you learn about tobacco then?

LEONA: From Tommy, he's trying to find somebody to pass his knowledge on to. Like it's more or less, he's got to find the right person. Like my cousin Horace, he's -ah- a pipe carrier and Tommy's more or less, Tommy's got a lot of knowledge. Like when there's a big ruckus in the family, like he's the one more or less that we go to. Like right now I'm in a big ruckus and Tommy says, "Ah, just leave it Leona, they'll come to you." You know, they're always squabbling with each other. "Just leave it alone." He says, "they'll come to you, don't go to them." He's saying that cause the big ruckus I'm in with, with his sisters. Just a minor thing to me but to them it's a big, big thing. It's like you killed somebody, kind of thing. And they're all squabbling with each other. And he says, "Just leave them, eventually they'll come back to you and find out what's wrong and talk to you." I said, "But I didn't do anything wrong."

"Yeah I know, but they think you did."
So I said okay and I just leave it alone.

LORRAINE: So he's your teacher now?

LEONA: Yup. He's the one that everybody goes to now. Barb, Barbara, she's the one that is the oldest of all of us and she's a nurse right now. She's the one that brought me up when

I was twelve and ah, she just stays out of everybody's business. [laughs] Yeah but Tommy's the big one, now that all our Grandparents are gone. Like my Grandfather, the ones that brought me up, they're both gone now, and Grandpa Moses, out of our line, is gone so Tommy more or less is the only one.

LORRAINE: And what is Tommy's relationship to you?

LEONA: He's my first cousin. But he was always somebody I looked up to though. He's always been there, he's always been a helping hand, for me he's always, if I needed something he'd always get it for me.

LORRAINE: Do you know anything about Native ways?

LEONA: A bit, like I'm just getting into myself because, I myself was [pause] wasn't concerned about that. But now that I got my own kids, I want to be able to tell them stuff, show them different ways. Like [there] is not only one way of doing things, there's a variety of things to do. A variety of ways of doing things.

LORRAINE: Do you think with the teacher, traditional way of life can be restored?

LEONA: Um-hm. I believe in it.

LORRAINE: What's your opinion of Native people moving to the city and completely losing their traditional way of life?

LEONA: I believe they're losing themselves, of who they are. It's like, that's what my Grandfather said long time ago. He told me that when I started kindergarten I never spoke a word of English, not one word. They took me to school because it was policy, you turn five, you go to kindergarten, you learn right. And they had to come get my Grandfather, to come and get me. My Dad was out working and I can't remember where my mom was, oh she was gone then. And uh, he asked why they're sending me home.

"Cause she can't speak English", they say.

"Well that's what the school's for isn't it, to teach kids"?

They said, "Yes, well we can't teach her anything unless she speaks English."

He said, "What's wrong with two languages." No but English is English, right, they had to send me home till I spoke English. And I didn't go back till I was grade one.

LORRAINE: Do you still speak Cree?

LEONA: A bit, not very much. Just enough to get by. Like Sean, [and] I will speak it to ourselves, you know, in the house. Him and I and -ah- Stacey. [Leona's daughter] Stacey's getting in there too. And now Steven, [Leona's second son] he's six, he's getting in there too.

"Oh wah," you know, and sometimes he goes, "'nepaw' Sean 'nepaw'," it means go to sleep. Sometimes Sean will -ah- he talks a lot in his sleep. And Steven is trying to sleep uh, and he doesn't realize his brother is talking in his sleep, right. And sometimes that kid is hilarious when he talks in his sleep. He was watching a movie one time. He was watching -ah- Geronimo, [laughs] it was funny. And we went to bed, all of a sudden Sean, he yells up in his sleep, "Mom, Mom."

I said, "What." And I went running in his bedroom and he had a blanket against the window. I said, "Sean what are you doing?" He looks over at me, he goes, "The white man the white man are coming."

I says, "Sean, what are you doing?"

He drops the blanket, "I don't know". [laughs] Like you know he's sleeping.

And he's asking me a lot of questions too; about how we used to do things and how we used to tan hides or how you killed the animals. Like he asks me a lot of things too and I says, "Well we better talk to Tommy." And Tommy goes [pause] well Tommy is so busy now right, and he's always out of town, he's doing this and doing that.

And Horace more or less took Sean under his wing. So he's, when we went to this big pow-wow in Winnipeg. I never saw the kids the whole time. Of course Tom, I mean Horace would take them off and he would showing Stacey how to do a fancy dance. You know, he was trying to teach, now Stacey wants to be a fancy dancer. But we don't have that up here in northern Manitoba. Down south you can find it everywhere. But up here, there was more or less a taboo. Like if you were caught doing something, my Grandfather said they'd drag you away. You were not allowed to speak Cree and you were not allowed to perform any kind of ceremony, do anything like that. It was, and if they did it was hush-hush. Way out in the bush where no one could see you. I guess, and sometimes I wonder if what the white men back there were thinking they were doing. Like, now there's all kinds of religions. What was wrong with the Indian religion.

You know, Native people were taught to respect the land, whatever you take out you put back. Not to dig it up and not to destroy it. I look around now and I see these Nuclear plant and see these miners digging this up and, and it's all gonna come back on us. And it's gonna be our kids paying for it or there kids. [pause] It's all gonna come back. Wherever we're doing it's gonna come back. And it's just like living too; whoever you hurt in life and how you hurt them, it's gonna come back on you, it's a circle and it's gonna come back even more than is dished out. [pause] It's the path you lead. Even if your life is on a rocky, rockiest, narrowest road and you don't have shoes, you have bare feet, is how you carry yourself. But if you're gonna go there foolishly and do this and hurt people along the way and jump on somebodies back to carry you, what are you gonna learn? So it's all how we treat each other and ourselves. Even with now, you look at how things are now, you don't have respect for yourself. I see a lot of girls now, [pause] for instance you go out to the bar you see a lot of Native girls sitting there getting drunk and guys pick them up. They don't have no respect for themselves and then they turn around, "Well why did I get this, why is this happening to me?" And we talked to a couple girls, "Well, just look how you're treating yourself." I says, "There's a lot of things out there that can harm you and you can't see it." It's like this Aids business, or you get V.D., there's all kinds of diseases just from having sex.

And she's jumping from partner to partner, totally no respect for herself or any values whatsoever. And that's how it's coming back on her. [pause] You know, whatever you do in life it's gonna come back on you. [pause] When Grandpa died there was [pause] he, [pause] used to be quite a good drinker at one time, and he was a rough man too. Like a long time ago I remember. I remember him drinking once and I think that was at my cousin Lois' wedding, that was the only time I saw him drink. But he tells you there was a little man there, it took five guys to hold him down, you know. But then he stopped drinking. [pause] There was [pause] oh there is so much, just how to put it all together. [pause] Even I remember this one time when Granny was into her drinking days. When I got into an accident when I went to summer camp at Guy Hill School. And -ah- we got into a big accident and I was in a hospital for three weeks. I was 'out' for three days straight and I woke up, I didn't know what time it was, or what day it was, right. But anyway when I got home, I was home for about a month and Grandpa calls me into his bedroom and I says, "what?"

He says, "I got this nice cheque for you."

"What for?" I says.

He goes, "From you getting hurt."

I says, "From getting hurt?"

"Yup, remember you got a bump on your head, or did you forget about it?" [laughs]

"Oh, okay. I'm gonna give you ten dollars every day," he says, "Until all your money's gone."

I said, "Okay,"

He goes, "Don't tell Granny." [laughs]

And I said, "Why?"

"Well you know Granny's into drinking right now."

"Yeah."

"Well she'll just drink it up."

I says, "okay fine". I never told a soul. Every day Grandpa gave me ten dollars and I remember it last the whole winter, all summer and in the winter again and then the next summer he told me, "This your last ten dollars."

"My last ten dollars what am I gonna do with my last ten dollars?" I bought a bunch of junk that's what I did. But he kept his word, every day I got the ten dollars, that was so funny. I never told a soul, that was our big secret until he died. And then I told Tommy. I says, he goes, "Yeah I wondered where you got money all the time." He goes, "You always had money, I could never figure that." And my dad was sitting there, 'no shit'. [laughs] "You guys had that big secret." And -ah- then they said, "That's where you got all that money." Like they always noticed I had money. Like I didn't think they noticed but they noticed because I was going out to the show, buying my friends this, or, you know, had something. I always came home with something. I always made the excuse to Granny, "oh Grandpa gave me a dollar". [laughs] She believed us. I know there was this one time Granny come home and she was half-cut, we were drinking tea and she's yacking. It made me laugh cause we'd never seen her so drunk before, right, and Grandpa comes home and goes, "What are you doing?"

"Oh it's my birthday, what's wrong with a coupla drinks on your birthday."

And grandpa goes, "Oh every weekend is your weekend eh?" [laughs]

So he goes and sits on the couch and starts reading eh, and then Granny got mad at him. And she, she used to get sometimes violent when she used to drink. So like she, she was a big woman, like she weighed, I don't know, about three hundred pounds. Grandpa was only maybe a hundred pounds and something. He was a skinny man. [laughs] And all of a sudden I heard somebody screaming, I went running into the living room. There's Grandpa, only his feet and hands, that's all you could see and Granny sitting on him just whooshing her butt into him. And he was just yelling, like, "I can't breath." So Granny after she finished moving her butt, jumping on him, she was just laughing. She goes to bed. Grandpa goes, "Holy smokes what a heavy woman that one was." [laughs] Yup, they were married for, jeepers, how long were they married before Granny died? I think it was sixty six years they were married. She says she was fourteen and he was four years older. Yeah, he was four years cause he born 1900 and Granny was born in 1904. That's weird though cause Grandpa was born 1900, January 9. My Dad's birthday was February 9th and he the oldest of the boys, and my brother Part's' oldest son, his oldest boy is March 9th. They always found that so weird you know. [pause] And he [Grandfather] would give names to us. [pause] I never got a traditional name, it was weird, like he'd, he would call me, out of everybody that I know he called me elephant brains. And I says, "What the hell kind of a name is that?" Like where do you get an elephant from, Africa, and I was in Manitoba. [laughs] Now when I think about it. But back then [laughs] he says, "Cause you're like an elephant." And I says, "What?" He says, "Cause there brain is small but they remember a lot." [laughs] You know, he goes, "You're like that you." He's not saying that I have a small brain, but I have a good memory.

LORRAINE: So he was complimenting you?

LEONA: Yeah, like with Jessie, her name is squirrel and -ah- Lucy is like a chipmunk cause she laughs like one too, you should hear. And then uh Sean he called him like -ah- how do you say that? 'chicapatus' like a fast runner. Cause when Sean was younger he would just zip through the house like that. And Stacey, he called her little white seal. Steven he never got to see Steven. Never got to see him. Oh but Stacey, she talks about that sometimes.

"I got a Cree name you know, Mom, how do you say it?"

"I'm sorry, I don't know how to say that, but you have one."

LORRAINE: But you don't have one, Cree name?

LEONA: No, well I probably do but I don't remember, probably Tommy would know.

LORRAINE: I asked Tommy about 'naming ceremonies', about what to do.

LEONA: Yeah but you'd have to go in a sweat lodge and things like that. I guess that's quite a process. Going through a sweat lodge. You have to get yourself prepared, you have to be a very strong person from what I hear. Because when I come up here I was going through a lot of stuff, like really major, like I was talking to Tommy there, I was really upset, what happened there in Brandon and I came up here to escape kind of thing. But it was

a good thing I came back home cause I know I can call up Tommy and talk to him. And -ah- I was asking him, I wanna go to Nelson House and do a sweat lodge to get, to get myself -ah- ready. And he says, "You don't realize what you have to go through when you go to that," he goes, "And I don't think you're strong enough Leona." I says, "Yes I'm strong." He says, "No you're not." See it's cause when you go in there you gotta purify yourself, you gotta go on a fast and you gotta go in there, you gotta have a strong spirit to go in there. Like I guess, from what I hear you reveal everything inside you. It takes a lot out of a person too. I guess it's like getting a caning, I don't know, that's what used to happen. [pause] My Grandmother, not my Grandmother my Aunt was a mean old hag, man. I lived with her for about two years. Yeah five, six, till I was eight years, she was a mean old bitch. [laughs] She was, and I confronted her too, this was last year. I asked her why she was so mean. [pause]

And she says, "Cause I never liked your mother."

I said, "What's that gotta do with me? Just because you didn't like her." And I guess that's, I found out that was why my Grandmother was so mean to [pause] my brothers and myself. It was because, back then it was arranged marriages. My Father stepped out of that line. And he married my Mother and meanwhile he was supposed to marry this woman -ah- named -ah- what's her first name. [name omitted at authors discretion] And he stepped out of that line, that fine line you're not supposed to step over and when he did all of us were more or less cursed. [pause] Black sheep of the family.

LORRAINE: Your Father was the black sheep?

LEONA: Yup, he's the one that stepped out of that line. [pause] It's a funny thing though, Grandpa accepted it after a while, but Granny never did even though she died with it, she died with that terrible anger. You know, she died with it. [pause] Even though my Dad is sick now, he looks around, he's more or less the elder, now that Grandpa's gone, being the oldest son. And he finds it's hard to, that most of us don't speak our own language and that we were all taken away from it. Even with the, [pause] like the reservation schools and that. He says, "Why would they do this?" Like what was so bad, what was so evil? Like being Indian and blame the 'ways'. And he says, "Tell you the truth, take a white man out of school and throw him on the land, how'd he like it without someone teaching him?" [pause]

LORRAINE: I read a book about Aborigines in Australia, one of the lines was about fear. A white man lives in fear.

LEONA: Well who wouldn't have fear? If you take the Native off, out of the bush put him in the city, he'll be full of anxiety and fear. You don't know how to survive. I asked an elder that and he said, Yup that's why.

LORRAINE: I get most of my teaching from university.

LEONA: They also treat you different down there. When I first moved to Brandon from here, um, well you know I got a big mouth, I just say straight forward how it is. Like,

[pause] that's another thing Grandpa told us, to say it straight forward but also say it truthfully. Don't beat around the bush, and don't lie about it. You know, so, I was walking down the hallway at A.C.C. [a community college] and there was these couple of white girls standing there in the hallway. One girl ahead of me, she was a Native girl and she, [white girl] says, "Jesus Christ, why do these people have to come here?"

And I said, "Excuse me," and I said, "What did you say?"

And she said, "What, I didn't say anything."

"Excuse me," I said, "These [pointing to her ears] aren't here for nothing. I heard what you said, you know that's pretty ignorant." I said, and I said, "We're all here for one thing," and I said, "Guess what that is."

And she said, "What."

I said, "See how stupid you are," I said, "You're ignorant."

And she said, "What are you talking about?"

I said, "We're all here as one people to get an education, so get off that high horse of yours." You know, and she shut-up. When I walk by and I'm satisfied with that. At A.C.C. we just got N.S.O., it's called Native Students' organization, and we had our elections. But our elections were after the College elections, and I says, "Why is it different? Why do we have to go after them? We're here governed by the body." I says, "You're suppressing us like the government has been suppressing Native people all these years." And when Phil Fontaine came there he did a big speech, and I said, "They have cameras, I'm gonna go there." And I says, "Don't you think that's wrong even in a College like this?" I says, "I'm part of the Native Student's Association," I said, "I'm the activities director." And I said, "Even though the government is still oppressing on the outside we're still being suppressed in the College."

And he goes, "How is that?"

So I says, "Can you explain to me how this college can get away having a -ah- a white body of students and a Native body. Where they have their elections first and we have to have ours after. And whenever we ask for something we have to go through them first?" I says, "Why is that?" And Roger, he stands up and he started saying all this. Well I says, "Why does it have to be this way? This is about students getting together. Why does everything have to be separated. Things have been separated for two many years. Our kids are gonna have to fight and they're kids gonna have to fight. When are we gonna stop fighting?" They keep trying to push us out the door. Actually it doesn't matter if they push, I find that, like myself, I gonna push harder. Like with Sean, like when he was younger, actually no it was just last year. He was asking me like, -ah- why he came out white. And -ah- he said the students were bothering him cause he has a Native mother and his dad is white, and his dad was a squaw f--er, and all that kind of stuff. I says, well Sean was very bothered by that, I said, "Well Sean, don't be too bothered by it because you know, those people that don't want to get to know you, they're losing out because you are a beautiful person." And I said, "They don't take the time to know you, well you don't have to break your back teasing them." I said, "Just be yourself, whatever makes you feel good, just keep on doing it."

LORRAINE: It's hard being a Metis.

LEONA: It's harder.

LORRAINE: Because we're rejected by two cultures?

LEONA: Yup, you're separated smack dab in the middle. [pause] You know, you get visitors in the house like from out of town, anyways visitors come to the house and, I remember Granny when she was, whenever we had relatives coming or just dropping by she'd make them something to eat. She'd make their tea and everything, she'd make sure, "Do you wanna sleep here tonight?" "Fine." And she'd [make?] them feel really at home. You know, like Granny's house even though she was so rough in a couple areas and Grandpa, he was always good to me, but it was home, you could feel it, it was in the air. Like a lot of times you could walk into somebody's home it was like, now, I go in I could feel the tension, and the stress, that kind of thing. But Granny's house was always, it was always warm. You know, it was always, like all our cousins used to go to her house. Like we always had to go their like, it was where everybody wanted to be. Like all my cousins they'd always come over to Granny and Grandpa's house all the time.

LORRAINE: That's what I experienced with my Aunty. When I was coming here to Thompson we stopped in Grand Rapids. I wanted to see my mom's youngest sister, Now, I haven't seen much of her in the last twenty years. I've lived in Ontario for a long time. I walk in the house and it's, Lorraine come over here! Look what I'm making. She was doing beadwork. She said, "I'll show you how to make moccasins the next time you visit." It was like I'd grown up being with her all the time. You go somewhere else you don't feel the same, the closeness isn't there.

LEONA: You know, it's funny, like Grandpa said, I still remember like it was yesterday and I say that to the kids quite a bit. Like I used to ask Grandpa, he would talk about things, he would look at things differently. And he says, "You know, there is gonna be a time when everything is gonna end." He goes, "Where people are ripping things apart, throwing things in the lake." He says, "They got no respect for nothing, they're just polluting everything, the air is going", he goes, "And pretty soon there's nothing gonna be left.

You know what you watch for when everything's gone?" He says, "What do you watch for?" And he says, "Watch the animals and watch the trees, watch nature. And when that's gone, you're gonna be gone." He says, "Because people don't have respect for nothing." And he says, "They're gonna take, and take, and take till there's nothing left." And he goes, "Maybe not in my time, maybe not in your time but maybe in your kids time." He goes, "Like even now, hunting license where you can only take so many geese, so many moose and so many bears. You know, it's already showing. Even though maybe man might not kill it, it's his things that's out there. All the toxics."

And that was so funny, like Sean was talking, watching States news, he was there looking at the T.V. he says, "Mom, why are those people in the States so crazy? Why are they killing themselves? You know, why can't people be happy? Why can't news ever be happy like showing somebody saving somebody or somebody being happy?" He goes, "It's

always about killing or this and that."

He was getting really upset. And I says, "Sean, why are you so upset?"

"I'm just sick of it, why can't people just be happy and be good to each other?" He says, "Why do we gotta be scared walking to school?" And he goes, "You know, in the States, they're crazy down there. And I think I know why."

I says, "Why?"

He says, "Because you look at those cities, Los Angeles, look at that smog. They got no fresh air, yup, that's why they're going crazy." He says, "At least in Canada we got lots of big fresh air. We don't have big cities like they do down there."

I said, "You got a pint there you know."

He says, "Even like that guy running around here now, why do people have to be like that?"

He goes, he goes. This is a thirteen year old talking.

"What is it that a man has in his head that makes him want to have sex with a little baby?"

And I looked at him, "What?"

"Well you always tell me to tell the truth and speak my mind."

I says, "Well speak it."

"Well why does a man have to do that?" He goes, "What if a woman does that? Why are they [men] like that?"

And I said, "Sean, it's a thing they got in their head. A fascination they have, where they think it's better to have a child."

"Jesus." He says. He was really mad. He goes. "Why can't they go to the T.I. [Thompson Inn] pick up a woman." [laughs] He says, "What! I gotta watch my sister all my life, make sure nobody kills her or make sure nobody molests her?" He says, "You know Mom, I walk to school but I walk behind Stacey."

"Why do you walk behind Stacey?"

"I keep an eye on her."

I said, "Sean, but that's so much responsibility."

"Yeah, but Mom I love my sister." He goes, "Even though we fight sometimes, I love her and I don't want nobody hurting her. If she ever gets married and a man beats her up," he says, "Boy I'm gonna be the first one there. I'm gonna beat him."

I said, "Sean, but you shouldn't be thinking about things like that."

He goes, "Well tell me how I should think."

You know he's not, he's a different, he's a thinking kind of kid. He's sitting around real quiet and all of a sudden he'll say,

"You know what?"

He's got an I.Q. of 122.

LORRAINE: I talked to an elder who said the world is getting bald. Forest fires, or cutting trees, the animals have no where to live. The fish have polluted water.

LEONA: That's what Grandpa said, Yup, and then what are we gonna do.

LORRAINE: Now they're looking for answers, some are even turning to Natives for an answer.

LEONA: Yeah, but why did you do it in the first place? [pause] Like Tommy and Horace are the only ones into the Native ways, and Horace told me, you gotta come home and teach everybody again. Like look at it this way, start with feeling good. He goes, "We need the languages. That means build back everything. No more hiding in the bush. No more shunning this and shunning that." He goes, "We shouldn't be scared of showing who we are."

LORRAINE: I know people say if the language is lost the culture is lost. Languages are being taught at university and other schools.

LEONA: Start from kindergarten, work your way up to graduation where we can carry on. I find that so [pause] I find myself so stupid sometimes, because I, like, some of the white friends I got, oh I got a lot of friends. I know about myself, and I'm well liked in this town so I have a lot of friends. And I know, like, a lot of people know me and they're curious, and they say,

"Can you tell me a little bit about this or that?"

"Like, I don't know really. I can remember a couple a things. Looking back but it's getting vaguer and vaguer."

"Well aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

" OH yeah, well it wasn't my fault, I was completely stripped of that, it wasn't my fault." And I said, "Well who we gonna blame." I said, "It's not about blaming it's about working, this is another bump on the road, it's about how we climb that mountain."

LORRAINE: It's good to see an interest in bringing the cultures back. Fighting to bring it back.

LEONA Even though I haven't learned too much, I have learnt [sic] to respect yourself. And especially with respect to your elders. Cause without that you don't have nothing. Like even, just to respect yourself. It's how you carry yourself.

Grandpa used to always say, "You got a big chip on that shoulder, let me knock it off."

Cause I had this big one, a humongous one, he said it was as big as a mountain one time. Because I was, I was a Native with freckles. I had freckles, I was covered in freckles. I said, "Where did these come from?"

He said, "I don't know, I guess some white man was sneaking around the woodpile."
[laughs] He always had something to say, that old man. He said it wasn't my fault.

"I think it was your great Grandmother that did that to us." He says. [laughs]

LORRAINE: Those are good memories, and you have a good teacher, Tommy _____ [last name omitted at discretion of author]

LEONA: When I went to this 'dry social,' like there's not many places where you can take kids. Like when I went to the Pow-wow in Winnipeg, It was, -ah- you could, I cried when I walked in there. I did, I cried and Steve looked over at me.

He goes, "Why you crying?"

I goes, "Don't you feel it?"

He goes, "What?"

I says, "Don't you feel it?" "All the energy and that, just going through you." I said, "Can't you feel it?"

He said, "No I can't feel it."

"Well you're not really into this." It's like somebody giving you one big warm hug, you're home you know. You're watching your people dance, celebrate and I was just crying. And then I saw Horace, he was all dressed up and -uh- he took the kids and he went and introduced them to this person, and he told them how this person dances, like I didn't know that. I kind of tagged along a little bit too eh. And the nice looking Native guys, I was going, and you know, they were so respectful. You know it was just. And Sean, he was just beaming. I never saw him beaming so much you know. It was just like a big Christmas tree.

LORRAINE: We have them at our university. [Native Pow-wow Dancing]

LEONA: When our elections were over in Brandon there, with the Native Students Association and uh, um we had a pow-wow eh for us and -ah- [pause] and -ah- I guess the student body a A.C.C. they got mad at us because we had a pow-wow. Some dancers came in from Sioux Valley and the Chief come in and they did a big pow-wow for us. We moved all the tables out of the student lounge. And I was thinking, -humph-, I got something to say. So when we got up to introduce ourselves I said, "I'm Leona Massan, I'm from up north; Thompson." I said, "If you're president is Ukrainian or he's Scottish or if he's Norwegian," I said, "So why don't you have a dance for him, why don't you bring in your Ukrainian dancers?" I says, "We only did this cause we wanted to." And I said, "It was nice of Souix Valley dancers to come and honour us like this." I says, "Now why are you so angry? Like if you're Ukrainian fine, bring Ukrainian dancers down, who's stopping you?"

LORRAINE: There are many non-native activities for students.

LEONA: We had to raise our own money, they wouldn't give us any, so whenever we wanted to, anything like selling tickets we had to go through them, like we had to, if we wanted to, like we had a volleyball tournament, we had to go through them.

"Oh no, you guys have to wait another week because we're having one first."

And we couldn't use the A.C.C. gym, we had to go to New Air to ask them permission to hold our tournament. Even though they're from A.C.C. students. Like -aw- they were just, it was just. A lot of people end up quitting, a lot of girls they all quit and came back home cause they couldn't stand the pressure down there. The stress and being called names. We still get that it's like elementary school. [pause] Brandon University, we'd get together, and what can we do, how can we do, we'd get together, like when we had the pow-wow. We

should get together with Brandon University, that's a good idea. All together you know. It's just like oppression you know. We have to answer to the government. Like okay, you can have this little piece of land. Can't have there cause we got this head of cattle, you know and they're the farmers. [laughs] We still have to answer and it shouldn't be that way you know. We're adults we don't have to answer to anybody. I think it's more or less they're scared of what we can accomplish. But same thing with the banishing thing too, that just happened in my family. We had actually, we're not supposed to speak about him but. My sister, I had a sister named Doris. She's alive but we're not supposed to speak about her because she had done this wicked, unspeak, oh it was so bad. [pause] Dad phoned home, he said, "I don't have a daughter named Doris Massan anymore. No more speaking of her, no more talking about her, she is dead in my eyes." And that was it. [pause] Until she comes to terms and really, really, kisses ass more or less and speaks and tells the truth. "So we don't," my Dad says, "I only have one daughter." Like it had to be something really bad and that's it. [Pause]

LORRAINE: But that's not `it' forever?

LEONA: No, if she comes back around like I said, it's, did you hear about that B.C. Native? Where these two guys had, I don't know what he did but they threw him off into an island for a year with nothing. It's just they do that, Native court, Native ways of doing things. Like if you did something so bad that you can't live in the community.

So what they do is in B.C. they put these two Natives on this island with no food, no clothes, no nothing. They had to live off the land for a year, and come back to the community and explain what they learnt, and what they're gonna do and what they're not gonna do, and they did community service for the people that they hurt. They more or less have to, oh, I can't remember what they had to do. They had to be extra good to them or something. You know I'm kinda lost too. I remember what Grandpa did to me and what I learned from him.

I can't really tell you much about the shaking tent.

LORRAINE: I talked to an elder who believed, to heal you need to go to the bush.

LEONA: That's how I got mine. [laughs] Yep, I never ran away again. [laughs] [pause] I told Sean that one time you know. I says, "You know what happened to me when I was younger?" He couldn't believe it. Not even a blanket, not even matches, not even an axe. Nope.

He says, "You were out there with the bears and the wolves."

And I said, "Yeah." I says, "I didn't have nothing Sean, the only thing I had was the clothes on my back." I said, "I never had, Grandpa never left me no food either." You know. I says, "If you ever decide to run away you think about it, cause that's what will happen to you. I'll take you in the bush and leave you there."

He said, "But I know you'll be behind me."

I says, "I don't know, maybe I will be there and maybe I won't." [laughs]

LORRAINE: Well, thank you very much.

LEONA: You're welcome.

ETHEL McKAY

Ethel McKay consented to discuss Native values with me, in her home at Easterville, Manitoba, on August 4th., 1996. Ethel, in her early fifties, is a community Health Worker at her reserve. She is fluent in Cree as well as English. It was at Ethel's home that I spent the greater part of the summer while conducting my field research.

LORRAINE: Dr. Brant, a Mohawk psychiatrist, said Native people have a value of non-interference. He said to interfere in another Indian's life is to be rude. Can you tell me what you're understanding of non-interference is, and is it the same as Dr. Brant has said? [A long pause] Do you know what I mean by non-interference?

ETHEL: No.

LORRAINE: To interfere in another Indian's life is to be rude.

ETHEL: That's true, you don't interfere.

LORRAINE: What if they were doing something really bad?

ETHEL: Like what are you saying, what do you mean, anybody?

LORRAINE: Anybody, like somebody on the other side of the reserve, for instance, was cheating on their wife, would you go and tell him?

ETHEL: Oh no.

LORRAINE: What about the wife, would you go tell her?

ETHEL: No. [pause] It has nothing to do with me and I can't really go and say he's doing that because, I don't know how to explain it, but ah you don't do those kind of things. Like you're gonna be hurting those people by doing that, and you know its up to them if they're doing something wrong, its up to them to deal with it.

LORRAINE: I've been told that Native people learn their values through stories. Is there an experience or story that you could share to explain about non-interference? Have you ever, with your children, told a story or are you very direct "You are not doing this right, I don't want you doing this" or do you try to talk in story form?

ETHEL: Umm, I can't really say that I talk to them in story form but I would tell them that its not right. But I can't say "You can't do this because its not right", cause I can't say that to them, but I can say this is not right. Like I could say, "You shouldn't be doing this because this is not right", and it would be up to that person, like say, it would be up to my children, if they wanted to, like if they wanted to take the advice that I'm giving them. But if they don't take it, like, what can I do.

LORRAINE: I've been told that Native people do not give advice directly [Ethel laughs] but in an indirect way so as not to insult someone. Now you just said you would give advice.

ETHER: To my children yes.

LORRAINE: Do you think giving advice is interfering in their life?

ETHEL: Umm [pause] ah, yes its interfering in their life but also its, if I feel they are not doing the right thing you know, like they're my children, and I would have to give them that advice. Like you know I wouldn't.

LORRAINE: Do you know about other people on the reserve. Do you think there are people who act without interfering in their children's lives?

ETHEL: I think a lot of people don't. Maybe I, maybe, maybe I would have done things different myself if I didn't go out and get all these different kinds of training. Parenting skills and stuff like that you know, and, but I think I would want, I would tell my children what to do, you know, cause if [pause] cause if, I was just to leave them let them grow up [pause].

LORRAINE: Okay, I'll give you an example. If your child needed to go to the dentist but he didn't want to, would you make him go?

ETHEL: No. Because he's the one that's gonna be suffering [laughs] and if he doesn't wanna go, you know, like, but I wouldn't make them go.

LORRAINE: What about bedtime? If it was bedtime and he had to go to school the next day, but he wasn't tired, would you let him choose when he wants to go to sleep?

ETHEL: Ah,

LORRAINE: Or would you make him?

ETHEL: No. As a matter of fact I, I had that problem with my children, they sort of learned that their own. Like we were up later and they wanted to stay up later, like it was their choice if they wanted to stay up later. But they could pay for it the next day cause they'd be tired when they go to school, so they'd know enough to go to bed early.

LORRAINE: What about eating, would you make them eat because its five o'clock, supper time now, or do they eat when they're hungry?

ETHEL: Ah, if we're eating at five o'clock and if they're here, yes, I would tell them that its time to eat. But if they don't want to eat I wouldn't force them to eat.

LORRAINE: Would you let them eat later?

ETHEL: Yes.

LORRAINE: Clare Brant says Native people have a value of sharing. And I believe this extends to all creation. I mean sharing the land with the animals, and the trees as well. Do you have an experience or story that relates the importance of sharing? Is sharing important in this community? Or was important once?

ETHEL: Ah, I think its very important, sharing, and I know of some people that don't do that. Like I guess they don't believe in sharing.

LORRAINE: Have you ever heard people talk about sharing with the rest of creation?

ETHEL: No, well just lately I've heard stories about ah, by talking to people. Like when I first heard about um what could I use now; as a matter of fact I think there's, it was Wally that told me about that. Like when you take something from the ground you put something back in return. [pause] My son told me that. [laughs]

LORRAINE: There's not a lot of traditional practices going on here at all.

ETHEL: No.

LORRAINE: Do you think there are any people on the reserve that remember that kind of thing? Like giving tobacco, you know if you're going to pick berries, or when you kill an animal, you give a gift back to that animal for giving its life to you?

ETHEL: I think there are a few left. As a matter of fact I know of one that would like that to come back.

LORRAINE: So because, 'to come back', then that means that you believe that that is the way people lived before.

ETHEL: Yes.

LORRAINE: They did live with creation? Sharing with the environment and with

everybody else?

ETHEL: Like I knew about the sharing, the sharing part that when you have something you share it with other people, but I did not know about the other stuff until later on, that that was done before, long time ago and ah, I think its coming back because these are our younger people today that are here saying that, you take something from the ground and you have to put it back.

LORRAINE: When you lived in Cedar Lake did people leave their homes open or were all the doors locked?

ETHEL: No there were no doors locked over there.

LORRAINE: If somebody needed something would they be able to come into your home and take it.

ETHEL: Ah, [pause] I don't know about that part. I wouldn't know how to answer that, because usually if somebody needed something and came to the door it was always given to them. I think that, I think the people respected the houses. You know, if there was nobody in the house, like you know, I don't think they went into the house.

LORRAINE: So you don't think they would go in the house. Imagine if they were starving.

ETHEL: Then they would, yes. I'm sure if they were, but like I said everybody shared, all they would have to do was go to somebody's home and they would come out with a lot of food, or your children, there was enough people on the reserve for nobody to go hungry out there.

LORRAINE: Wesaykajac, you heard stories about him when you were little. Did any of them involve sharing, giving things to others, or?

ETHEL: You know I used to hear stories like that when I was young, long time ago, but ah, I sort of, like I forgot, I forgot all about it. Till the other day when ah, when uncle Charlie was talking about a certain legend that he heard about Wesaykajac, and I remembered that but I didn't remember [mom interrupts with the story], "yeah that's the one, the one where he burnt himself and ah, was eating the scabs. I heard that one a long time ago."

LORRAINE: But you do remember stories, legends?

ETHEL: Yeah, there was a lot of legends told, but when I was growing up I heard that, I just completely forgot about them because the old people that used to tell me those legends they passed away long time ago, and ah, then after that it seems like nobody else told them. I guess that's why I didn't ah, about sharing with the animals, and all that stuff like that, cause

we had lost it.

LORRAINE: Dr. Brant said that Native people have a different view of time. He said time is cyclical for Native people, whereas for non-Native people time is linear. Do you know anything about that? Linear time for white people, for instance, there is a beginning and an end. But for Native people time keeps going around and round, cyclical. It never ends?

ETHEL: Like ah, [pause] what do you mean?

LORRAINE: I guess, when you die what happens to you?

ETHEL: Oh when you die [pause] you mean is there an ending?

LORRAINE: Yes.

ETHEL: No. I was always told that when you die that's the beginning of a new life for you. Something you have to look forward to. A better life.

[Interruption by Mom not included]

LORRAINE: You hear the joke about Indian time, what does that mean to you?

ETHEL: Indian time? Oh [laughs] ah, I was always joke about that when I go to conferences or meetings, whenever they set a time when that meeting is supposed to start, then you get there at that hour and then you wait around, and wait around, and then people start saying, "Where are these people that are supposed to be here"? I always joke when I hear about that Indian time cause that's where I kind of picked that up from. To me Indian time meant, like these people weren't ready for this meeting yet and they, they came to the meeting when they were ready.

LORRAINE: I read about Indian time like that, where you don't do anything until you are spiritually, physically and emotionally ready, and then you do it. Indian time in the non-Native world means that Indians are lazy. To Indian people you are just saying that you aren't ready yet.

ETHEL: Yes.

LORRAINE: Indian people are starting to get educated at the university level, and they are earning degrees in different disciplines called helping professions, and there are others like myself who are interested in preserving the traditional life and helping Native people; is there anything you would like to tell them that would help students like myself.

LORRAINE: There's something else. Gratitude; Dr. Brant talks about gratitude. Dr. Brant

says that traditionally, precontact, Native people do not show gratitude. Doing your best was expected. Do you remember any of that when you were growing up? Not being praised constantly for doing things?

ETHEL: Ah, I was never praised for anything. I don't know how to answer that. [Interrupted by mom again] I think as long as you did your best in whatever it is that you have to do, chores or whatever, like it was expected, but you weren't told, "oh you didn't do it right," nobody said that to you, but also nobody told you "Oh you did a good job" like, you know, nothing like that.

LORRAINE: Thank you, I just have one more. According to Dr. Brant, anger was not something that was supposed to be shown. If you got angry you kept it inside. You didn't display that kind of emotion. Do you ever remember anything like that?

ETHEL: [laughs] I know I was told never to fight. [laughs].

LORRAINE: Okay, thank you.

WALTER MINK

Walter Mink consented to meet with me, August 11th, 1996, in his home at Easterville, Manitoba. Walter, in his seventies or eighties, is recognized as a community Elder. Although he speaks English, Walter is more comfortable in speaking his Native Cree. Knowing I do not speak Cree he chose to speak in English and at times I had difficulty understanding him.

LORRAINE: When I talked to you before you told me the treaty was signed when?

WALTER: Oh, that was uh, that was in, I believe it was September 7th, 1871.

LORRAINE: For as long as you can remember your family lived in Cedar Lake, before you moved to Easterville?

WALTER: The treaty was in The Pas at that time.

LORRAINE: When did the people move to Cedar Lake?

WALTER: I don't know about that. I heard there was people used to live in Moose Lake and then they moved to Easterville I guess. I didn't hear about that till later. My -ah- [pause] Grandfather used to tell me that they were living in Moose Lake there all the time I guess and they moved to Chemawawin at that time.

LORRAINE: I've been reading a lot of work by Dr. Clare Brant, a Mohawk psychiatrist, and he wrote a set of values that he said were Native values. Probably the way Native people treated each other prior to contact, before the white-man came. And those are some of the questions that I wanted to ask you.

Dr. Brant said, Native people have a value of non-interference; that for an Indian person to interfere in another Indian's life would appear rude. What do you think of that?

WALTER: I believe it.

LORRAINE: He said, Native people learned about their values through stories.

WALTER: They what?

LORRAINE: Just different stories. I've read stories about Wesaycayjek, stories like that. When you were a little boy did people do that? Did the Elders tell stories?

WALTER: Those old people they used to tell lotta stories. But I can't remember all those stories that they would tell us. They used to tell us all kinds of old stories at that time. But I can't remember those stories that they were telling us.

LORRAINE: Did people interfere in each other's lives? Did they tell everybody what they should be doing? And how to do it, or did they just let people behave the way they wanted to?

WALTER: Oh [pause] I couldn't say. Because in the old days people used to work together. Everybody like each other. Supposing somebody goes out and hunt. And she comes back with a load of meat or something like that and they distribute that with the people. And the people were get along all the time. Because people were helping each other. And now it's very different now. People doesn't do that these days. Younger people they don't do that anymore. Instead they want to sell what they got. Like [pause] meat or water fowl, everything like that. They want to sell it now, but in the old days nobody ever sells anything like that.

LORRAINE: People shared everything?

WALTER: Yeah. It was -ah- it was like that all the time when I used to live in Chemawawin. People were helping each other. Like somebody was making something somebody will go there and help. Help his neighbour build a house. They weren't the kind of houses you have now-a-days, they were log houses they used to build. Some of them were no flooring in them. They were less used that time. But they used to have houses of wood at the Old Post. And -ah- when I was a little boy I used to -ah- my Dad and my Mother send me to boarding school in McKay school. And there was a boarding school there, about seven miles from The Pas. They used to call it McKay school. There's an island there [pause] that's where the school was. That's where I went to school. I don't know how many years I went to school -ah- it burnt down around March 1930 [pause] 36 or 37. It burnt down that school right down to the ground. So they sent [pause] they sent people to Elk Horn and mostly to Elk Horn. They sent people over there. They had to go to school in Elk Horn. And me, they didn't take me that time, I was, I was over ten years old that time when that school burnt down. So I came home with my Dad. Walking all the way from The Pas to Chemawawin. He was trapping at that time, up north and -ah- it was in the spring, March. I forget the date, March anyway, 1937 when the school burnt down. Oh, at that time my Dad came home and I came home to Chemawawin we camped twice on the way. We camped at Wooden Tent then Pine Bluff. And then we made it to Chemawawin at that time. And then I went back to school, day school. Half a day. So when I was fourteen years old I quit school, then I went with my Dad after that. And then I learned hunting, trapping all these kind of things. And -ah- [pause] about a year after I guess, I'd been going with my Dad hunting, trapping, I started working. I was fifteen years old. When I got money I go to the Post myself and I got everything I wanted. I only went to grade six. So that's why I'm having a hard time to talk, but mostly I pick up a little bit when I work with people outside, White people, I had to

start and try and talk English but that's all. It's very different now. I said that lot of times. Life is different now because the world is moving and we come up with the world and therefore people are changing too. The world is moving and the people are moving too. Everything is moving, they change everything. Now-a-days the laws, they make new laws, the old laws what we used to make our living out in the days, you can't do that, everything is gone. Now all those things that we used to do are gone. Got to [pause] have something to live on now. But this is what the younger people are trying to -ah- trying to know, that's why they go to school cause everything will be changing.

LORRAINE: So the old ways are gone?

WALTER: Yuh, I don't know how the young people are gonna live now. There's no work and I heard this government, their gonna cut back down on welfare. Cut that down, what the White people are trying to do they wanted us to say good-bye to welfare. Ah- no more welfare but every year they're gonna cut that down. Like last year they cut it down, same thing again and every year they're gonna cut it down. I think what they wanna do, they wanted everybody to work for himself. Like in the old days, everybody was working for themselves and a lot of people was saying there and there was no welfare in the old days. And -ah- even there was no welfare in the old days. But there was welfare in the old days, all these moose, water-fowl everything, all those things were welfare to the people. But you have to get it for yourself to work for it, in order to get something. All that was welfare at the old camp, everything was free them days. It was nothing to go kill a moose or things like that that we live on. Don't pay nothing for it though. Everybody give something to somebody. Everybody had a little bit. When somebody goes out and get a moose, before he takes his meat out to take home everybody went down there. Everybody had a piece. Then you would go home to eat it.

LORRAINE: I heard stories that people gave tobacco and prayed.

WALTER: Ah- I heard little bit out of it. My Grandfather used to tell me that they were using dreams at that time. Well, some people had bad dreams about other people there. If somebody goes out and hunts moose over there then maybe that old man will, well then he won't get nothing. Out of their dreams they can do that, by their dreams, so when somebody goes out there in the bush -ah- the wilderness, they're hunting moose or whatever he's doing, camping. And you can't get something because of that dream because that old man is, I don't know what they did, they used their dreams anyway somehow. I don't know how they used their dreams, and the dreams they come true. But whatever they want it happens to somebody. He won't get nothing at all. So -ah- [pause] this is what my Grandfather used to tell me.

LORRAINE: What about time, did you Grandfather ever talk about time? No beginning, no end, a cycle, time just keeps going around and around.

WALTER: I can't remember it. Anyway, I guess, there was lot of things my Grandfather used to tell me. He was telling me lot of things. In the days to come you're gonna see this, you're gonna see this, lot of things gonna happen. So that's right too when he said that we seen lot a things happening now which the old people used to say to us. And there's more coming. We don't see all of it yet but there's more coming. What the old people used to tell us.

LORRAINE: Did you ever hear anything about old curses? Different things, bad things were gonna happen because they let the White man have the land? And it would take so many generations before that curse would end?

WALTER: My Father used to talk about a lot of things like that. The White man is I guess [undecipherable] Indian people are just, before the White man came they didn't have no land until the White people came here, that's when they owned the land. When I hear the story about this land what's underneath it, that's still yours. [a lot of the interview became undecipherable because Walter was playing with the microphone].....We're supposed to get ten percent but we don't get nothing.

LORRAINE: There isn't a lot of traditional life here. Giving tobacco to Elders. Do people in Easterville know about that?

WALTER: I don't think too many people know that. Because when you ask something from an Elder or anybody that knows something about it [pause] before you ask him you gotta give him something like that package of tobacco there. Well that works cause he's gonna tell you everything what he knows. And that's what the old people used to do in the old days, because there was no doctors, there was no hospital in the old days. All these things that you see in this world, the trees, plants, everything, they used these things for medicine in them days. But when they get something -ah- an herb or something to use for medicine they put tobacco, a little bit they bury there. And that thing works. It works when you put tobacco in there. And same with Elders, it's gonna work cause he's gonna tell you everything he knows. That's what they used to do.

LORRAINE: At university I'm learning about traditional ways from my friends. I don't see that here. I was concerned because the younger people aren't learning what they need to know.

WALTER: Yuh, they don't have much of that here in Easterville cause the younger people they weren't born in Chemawawin. They were born right here. These -ah- younger people and whenever we tell something to them they don't understand, they don't believe it. They didn't have it, so they don't want to listen to it, about life in the old days. They don't know what was going on. They don't believe.

LORRAINE: They need to learn about respect.

WALTER: Yuh, [pause] I wrote -ah- I wrote my words there, where is it now. I wrote down lot a words. And -ah- also my daughter. [long pause while Walter tries to find what he has written down]

LORRAINE: 1876 Treaty #5. [author reading from Walter's notebook]

WALTER: You can read this on your -ah- [points to recorder] there are some things which might be good.

LORRAINE: [reading from Walter's notes] I want to tell you that I was living in Chemawawin all my life because that is where I was born and raised up as any other. I have been going to school for quite a while at the Old Post. And my parents sent me to McKay school, a residential school in The Pas, which was burned down in March 1937, so I came home. Went back to day school after that. And shortly after I left school. I started trapping. I went with my Dad which I didn't know how but he showed me how. Not only trapping but everything like fishing and hunting and everything else. How to survive in the future. We had everything that we can live on because everything was there in that land where we lived, in them days. Now when I sit down and think about Chimawawin how good it was. I believe it was one of the best hunting places in North America. Because I have seen people come to trap there. As spring trapping, people came from four corners of Manitoba but not for trapping alone. Also people were coming to hunt in the fall for moose and water-fowl because again this was the fly-way for water-fowl. Like I said awhile ago everything was there to live on. As the years were rolling on everything that we used to live on were taken away from us. First of all I will be talking about the muskrat. A muskrat was the lord in this land of ours. It was taken away from us by the government. Our land was taken for a muskrat ranch. And the next thing that was taken away was our livelihood. Where we used to make our living. The land was again taken away from us. The land that our ancestors left for us, for our children, grandchildren and their children. Nobody knows how many thousands upon thousands of acres of land they left us with are under water right up to this day. The animals, fur bearing animals, water-fowl are gone, their not here anymore because the land where they used to have their feeding grounds are gone down under the water. Some maybe drowned and some moved away to higher ground. This land again. We had a reservation in Chemawawin 5,813 acres. And the reserve land that was taken 5,784 acres. And the remaining reserve land, we still have 29 acres at the Old Post. I want to ask why this reserve land was taken away from us. Perhaps Manitoba Hydro would answer this. How did he get this land to be flooded? Not from us. We did not want this to be flooded. Because of our loved ones, because they were buried in the low land, that's where the cemetery was. I am coming back to the reservation again and again. I mentioned about treaty the year of September 7th, 1876. What were the promises made at that time? They are too numerous to tell. We were given a reserve where to live and raise our family. That reserve land was taken away from us. It was understood by those who signed the treaty on behalf of our people that these agreements would last as long as the sun shines, the river flows and the grass grows. And also we were to receive a full continuous education services, medical

services, agricultural equipment and housing. And also we were to be free from, free from taxation on our reserve land. This was signed for the good of our people forever. This reserve, that I just talked about, our livelihood was there surrounding this land. We did not sell it, rent it and we didn't give it away. No one knows how much we lose, our livelihood, the land and everything in it. If we were to add up the total value of this land that we lose, the figure would be millions and millions of dollars. When this reserve was made that no man can move it under the sun except the Chief and Council but only if there is nothing to live on anymore. They can move it along the lake where we can fish, trap and hunt.

LORRAINE: None of that has happened?

WALTER: I wrote it down, sometime ago but I, -ah- wanna get somebody to -ah- get the proper words on that. I talked to the manager at Hydro cause I think we're gonna go again. Manitoba Hydro because they took our land, we didn't take anything out of our land Chemawawin eh. We had money here, I believe it was 1990, thirteen million, something. thirteen point seven, thirteen point eight. And we left [pause] -ah- ten million dollars in Wabema [Hobema] in -ah- Alberta where there's a bank there. That's where we left that ten million dollars. And that money stays there, just -ah- they're using that interest money to go back and forth. They're just using that. I don't know what they do with that money now, we don't know. What goes in that money now, maybe they use it all up now. That money is supposed to be there all the time, ten million.

LORRAINE: It's not being used at all to improve the reserve?

WALTER: I don't know what we're gonna do. We're supposed to use that money to go against Manitoba Hydro, our land that we lose there.

LORRAINE: I saw the cemetery under water.

WALTER: It's all under water now. All [pause] those old people [undecipherable] and feed our children. In the years to come huh. That's all under water,, that's what they do for the people. So that they can -ah- [pause] feed their children from there, to trap, hunt an -ah- do everything in -ah- this land they left for people eh. And all that [pause] all that land they used to live on is all under water now. No more, there's nothing there now. No place that you can trap now. No place that you can do anything.

LORRAINE: Trapping is no good?

WALTER: Trapping is no good.

LORRAINE: And they just shut down the fishing shed again on Friday.

WALTER: What happened was, before we moved to the new site here in Easterville they

select, I don't know how many places they want, they went to [undecipherable]] Lake and they went to Clear Bay, north of Cedar Lake, it's all rock place eh, all rocky place. It was all burned out before. So they didn't -ah- select that. So I don't know when they select this place. So they select this place here, what they did, it was all rocks here. But there is a good place out in the bush, that's where they're building now. There's no rocks there at all. And -ah- these people are putting basements in there. But we, we can't have no basements here because it's [pause] pretty hard to make a basement here, there's lots of rocks here. Pretty hard to make a hole to make a basement, so we can't do that.

LORRAINE: It doesn't seem to make sense, why build your houses over here where it's all rocky ground?

WALTER: And what we heard now, they were people here three, four years they been drilling all around this reserve here. And they say they found something here they gonna, I think they want to put an open mine here, anyway, so I don't know after that, I don't know what they're gonna do. They been here three four years, they been drilling. They leave holes here.

LORRAINE: Did they find nickel?

WALTER: They found something, they didn't tell us what they found. So -ah- [pause]

LORRAINE: Do you suppose if they found something valuable they'll make everybody move?

WALTER: Oh, I don't know -ah- we gotta think about that. Because that place Chemawawin, we had before and we made our living before, we moved from there and we don't get anything out of it and they say they're gonna pay that land that they flooded. Of course we only have twenty-nine acres to land, all that place is flooded. It's all flooded. So they told us that they're gonna give us the land here wherever we select the land to be our reserve to be our land and -ah- what happened was they took this place here, they give us this place here and this place belongs to Grand Rapids [reserve]. Then we have a reserve here, seven hundred acres of land that they give us first. For I don't know how long. How many years [pause] pretty close to twenty years before they give us another land. They offered us a land and -ah- whenever somebody goes out on the road, on the highway they start trapping and -ah- Grand Rapids would know these people are trapping there and this is not our land and they come over here and pick up all the traps, we can't do anything, that was their land eh. Can't do anything about it. Far as that goes it's their land. We only had seven hundred acres of land here. That's the reserve and outside the reserve we can't do anything, can't do anything, can't do any trapping that's why they turn to the battle, can't do any trapping. They can't do anything to live. Well after that they promised us, they offered us more land. One to two at first. For every acre of land they flooded they gonna give us two. Two acres of that one acre they flooded. They gonna give us two. And then six to, six to one. Six acres

to one. It was just an offer. They didn't give us that land yet. Because we're north so whether they give it or not cause they didn't make it any reserves here. A, a, land, they didn't cut a land yet. To make sure that's a reserve, that's a reserve there. There's nothing we can do because there's no land here. If somebody comes along starts talking about, there's no land there, we can't do anything about it because we don't have no land. There's a piece of land here, a piece of land up north there, all over. Oh we had about 23,000 acres of land, out of that 783 acres that we had. And we didn't get that land yet.

LORRAINE: So that deal hasn't been made yet?

WALTER: So I don't know what's gonna happen. They give us land that's [undecipherable] about 2,500 acres. And -ah- a piece of land that's Oscar's Point, fifty acres I think. And then #10 highway 58 [acres], all over little bit of land, that's what they offered us. And that wasn't what we want, we just want one reserve. And this was gonna be [undecipherable] all that 23,000 acres. And we want that land to be here just on one reserve. And I didn't want it that way so I told them, we need a little bit land like Chemawawin and across the lake over there and -ah- [undecipherable] Island, we need it 23,000 acres here for the people if they wanna go trap they can go trap [undecipherable] this is what I wanted but then in the years to come if they can't stop us from hunting. Everywhere we go it's "go back to Easterville we have one reserve here go back to Easterville" [undecipherable] on your own reserve but not outside, this is what they're gonna tell you. That's why I wanted a piece of land here and not all over the place. So we have to move around if we want to start up something, go hunting or that. This is what I wanted. And -ah- these people they agree with me on that and this is what they wanted. So they never started it yet. Making a land yet, for a reserve. Yup there's quite a bit of land offered but we didn't see it yet. It was promised to us but they never brought it yet. So I don't know what's gonna happen.

LORRAINE: If they don't do it soon the young people will lose all the skills.

WALTER: Yeah.

LORRAINE: They won't have anyone to learn from.

WALTER: Yeah. [pause] This is what they are talking about this community. And -ah- they want to have a [pause] dry reserve here. But they're amongst these -ah- non-treaties uh. Metis people like that blue house there the next house across the road there is a Metis house, Garfield's place.

LORRAINE: That's the Metis side?

WALTER: Yeah and that blue house there that's Indian reserve, a reserve house. Well what they were talking bout was is a dry reserve they're gonna have. They're gonna let these Metis people bring their own beer, things like that. That's not gonna work, it's not gonna work. If

-ah- treaty Indian goes with a Metis to town eh, he'll bring lots of beer. But the Metis people will say, "it's my beer," he only lives across the road here. Well at night he can go and get his beer. The treaty Indian will go and get his beer. That's not gonna work. Why not make this community into one community. I was telling them last week, make it one community, make it one reserve make everybody to be treaty Indians including those Metis people. Because when we were flooded there. Metis and the treaty Indians and when we came aboard too we come with the Metis people and the treaty Indian. Two of them just like two families. And there were only about two hundred people, less than three hundred people. Treaty Indians were living at Chemawawin that time when we were flooded. And there's about over a thousand people here that's all young people. See the reason why I'm saying this, those people are making, they're not a bit different the way they lose their land, that's how much we lose our land. They lose their land and we lose ours. We lose our livelihood too. Because we were living together over there. They used to live on the island over there. And this was one family community Chemawawin at the old days. Because somebody wants to get married. They married a Metis girl and -ah- he wants to get married he marries an Indian. This is why, it was only one family community. Just one family community. We were all related to each other. Of course we never went anywhere, we only stayed in one place. If somebody wants to get married they marry a girl from there. And they were related to all those people there. That's what happened in the old days. **LORRAINE:** And now it's a different community?

WALTER: And now people are getting married here they're starting to marry White people, people from outside. And all those people come to Easterville here and they start having houses here and everything. What the old people have. These older people they were given houses in 1950 it was just like different from before and the toilet came here in 1964. And that toilet is still standing there it's still good. That's the only one toilet that's standing now. It was given to me in 1964. And I stay in this house all that time. And it's nothing wrong with it. Look at those other houses there. They only stayed there a couple a years. And then they move. They want new houses, they give them new houses. They keep on moving around. And they left those houses and they break those houses down. They spoil those houses. Good houses somebody could make a living in there. But all this time they want new houses. And there's lot a houses they gonna build this summer. Oh, I believe about twenty to thirty houses they're gonna build this summer. And I heard again people they're getting new houses again. Look at all these houses here they're very good, four or five years ago. They were closed in the winter time, they don't wanna live in them they wanna move out. That's the way it goes. There's lot a houses that's built here. [pause] I never wanted to have a new house. This is good for me. I think I was working here, it was all rough outside. Now there's all green grass there. I don't know how many years it took me to, but I bought some top soil from The Pas whenever I got the chance, whenever I use the truck I brought home some topsoil and I plant seeds here. And there's grass outside. Now it's good and I built a fence. It took me almost three years to build that fence. It's not a very good fence but that's how long it take me to build that fence. There was a lot of work here. It's getting better all the time. And I'm not quite settled down yet, that's about thirty one, thirty two years since we

moved in here.

LORRAINE: What about the values of marriage, they're changing, how people looked at marriage a long time ago and the young people today?

WALTER: Well -ah- [undecipherable] now they can't make a living.

LORRAINE: You said people don't want to get married they just want to live together.

WALTER: That's another one I was looking at. People are getting married. They don't want to do it the young people have a lot of children eh, but lot of girls wanted to get married just for a bigger welfare. That's no life to get married to get a bigger welfare. But they don't know that welfare's gonna be cutting down every year. So, I don't know what those people are gonna do. Because they're not marrying these woman that they're living with. They wanna leave them well, they can leave them anytime. [undecipherable] Women, I don't know what woman they do. They live with this man. The only way to get [undecipherable] But I don't know. [undecipherable]

LORRAINE: Do many people here still go see a medicine man?

WALTER: Yes lot of people are staying with woman here. Not getting married. [undecipherable]

LORRAINE: Do you think self-government will help the people?

WALTER: I don't know. Yeah, I don't know what's gonna happen to them. [pause] And -ah- this thing they're gonna rise up self-government, it's gonna rise up. I don't know, pretty soon I guess 1999 or after 1999 that's when that self-government is gonna rise up. And -ah- [pause] lot of people don't believe that, there won't be no self-government they say. But it will rise up. After 1999 I guess. Not before 1999 but after 1990 [1999] that's when this self-government is gonna rise up. And there's lot a work to be done. These -ah- leaders here, the Band Council. But they never do anything here. They're not getting ready for that self-government. And there's lot a meetings going on in The Pas but we don't know, they never tell us where there is a meeting on self government. And the Elders here are supposed to go and listen to the people, [pause] so we went there last month. I don't know when the others were but we went in July. And they were talking about self-government there. And we had to, the people have to make laws. [pause] And nobody will come from outside to tell them this is the way you're gonna make that law you know. It's entirely up to the people. The people what they want, how they want to run the reserve. That's how they gonna make the law. This is the way we make this law and this is the way we gonna run this community. Nobody will come and say that to the people. Tell it to the people. They have to make their own laws. [pause] I believe first time when they made laws for twenty, for ten years I think. And after ten years they're gonna have another meeting. Or another five years. If they wanna

change those laws they can change them. For five years they're gonna have another meeting. If they wanna change those laws they can change them. But they gotta wait for five years. And then again ten years again. Eight to ten years again. And if they don't want to run this community that's the way they gonna make those laws. They can change them. But they gotta wait for them eight to ten years.

LORRAINE: Is that the way they did it a long time ago?

WALTER: No, they never make laws back then. [undecipherable] [pause] But if everybody agrees then that's how we will go, [pause] teachers, parents, Band Council.

LORRAINE: And does the whole community have to get involved?

WALTER: Yes, the whole community.

LORRAINE: Thank you very much.

WALLY UMPHERVILLE

Wally Umpherville agreed to meet me at his Mother's house on August 11th, 1996. Although quite shy, he consented to my taping our discussion. Wally is in his early thirties and makes his living as a fisherman. He is fluent in both Cree and English.

LORRAINE: Wally I want you to start by telling me how old you are?

WALLY: I'm thirty-two.

LORRAINE: I'm going to do this a little differently. Instead of asking you about the values I'm studying, I'm going to ask you about specific instances in your life, that way I can determine whether these values are still operating. When you were little, can you remember whether your mother interfered in your life?

WALLY: No.

LORRAINE: Did your parents allow you to do whatever you wanted.

WALLY: No.

LORRAINE: Did your Mother make you go to bed at a certain time?

WALLY: Yes.

LORRAINE: What about going to the doctor or dentist, did she tell you that you had to go?

WALLY: No.

LORRAINE: Talk about hunting. Tell me how you learned to hunt.

WALLY: Um, let's see, I started going out with Garfield and Walter. [Stepfather and Uncle]

LORRAINE: How did you learn to shoot?

WALLY: I had to teach myself how to shoot.

LORRAINE: You had to teach yourself?

WALLY: I had to learn by myself.

LORRAINE: How to shoot a shot gun? Okay! [Everyone laughs] What about fishing? Who taught you how to fish?

WALLY: Um. (pause) I like watching them, I liked following them when they were fishing, gradually I started dressing the fish.

LORRAINE: So you learned slowly?

WALLY: Yuh.

LORRAINE: I noticed that both you and your brother are very quiet and you speak softly, what do you do when you get mad? How do you handle that?

WALLY: [Laughs] I guess I raise my voice.

LORRAINE: Do you raise your voice? Do you yell at your children?

WALLY: A little bit.

LORRAINE: I've never seen you do that. I've seen them do things that in a non-Native community they would be punished for but yet you don't do anything, you'll laugh.

WALLY: Um-hm, but I don't usually yell.

LORRAINE: You don't usually yell at them.

WALLY: Only if they get carried away.

LORRAINE: Do you punish them? Do you ever punish them. [Laughs]

WALLY: [Laughs] I guess so.

LORRAINE: Yeah?

WALLY: Yuh.

LORRAINE: Turning to his daughter I asked, "Does your daddy spank you? [Everyone starts laughing and she replies, "No"!] We'll talk about when you went to Pritchard House, but before we get to that, what made you go there? Did Someone tell you that you had to go there? [Pritchard House is a Native Treatment centre]

WALLY: Um, I was given a choice and Rose told me that there was a Native treatment place.

LORRAINE: Before going to Pritchard House did you know anything about traditional Native life?

WALLY: No.

LORRAINE: Okay, can you tell me some of the things you learned while you were there.

WALLY: The first time I saw sweet grass was over there. Smudging (pause) and I saw (pause) a sweat lodge, first time too.

LORRAINE: Was that the first time you heard of a sweat lodge?

WALLY: Yuh.

LORRAINE: Is the focus of Pritchard House, you called it a Native treatment centre, do they focus on the same kind of abstinence program as A.A.? Or is it different?

WALLY: Different, the Native one teaches Native ways.

LORRAINE: It teaches traditional Native life?

WALLY: Yuh. Um-hum.

LORRAINE: What are some of the things they taught you?

WALLY: Um,

LORRAINE: What about that old man you just told me about, telling people things?

WALLY: Usually once a week and he told us about the past and what we did to people and we, we're all (pause) given gifts so, uh, we have to watch what we say because we may have a gift, and that, and things, cause we say something to someone and it might happen to them if we're mad.

LORRAINE: Do you have any stories about that?

WALLY: Yeah, yuh, I remembered that old man when we were visiting at my (pause) father-in-law and I told my wife that one of these days one of these kids were gonna be run over, over there and my boy was run over, over there. He had a broken leg and I remembered anyway about that old man and what he said.

LORRAINE: So that's kind of learning through stories.

WALLY: Yuh.

LORRAINE: Did they tell you many stories when you were there?

WALLY: Um, yuh, and I, that old man came there once a week, he was an Elder.

LORRAINE: Was he a traditional Indian?

WALLY: I don't know. I guess so. [Laughs]

LORRAINE: Traditional Native life anyway. Did he tell any legends?

WALLY: Um, legends, I can't remember. It's possible, um (pause) [undecipherable] from the pipe. And there were some that we're supposed to keep the pipe or I don't know what it's.

LORRAINE: Pipe keeper?

WALLY: Yuh, pipe keeper it's called. But ah, some of them (pause)

LORRAINE: Did he tell you how to find out what these gifts are?

WALLY: Um, no.

LORRAINE: Did he suggest you go into a sweat lodge?

WALLY: Ah, I think he mentioned about, there were those kind of, sweats, sweat lodges. [undecipherable]

LORRAINE: What about creation? Did he teach you anything about your role here on Mother Earth with the rest of the plants and animals?

WALLY: Yeah, and he said something about there's a purpose for everybody, like there's a purpose [Undecipherable]

LORRAINE: You mentioned a vision quest.

WALLY: Um, [long pause] I can't remember.

LORRAINE: Okay, a vision quest is for a young male usually about 12 years old. They go

on a fast and then go out into the bush and they stay there for about four days and nights and they pray the whole time. Did he say anything about that? And usually when you were on your vision quest that's when you would meet your spirit protector and that's where you find out what your gifts are and what you're supposed to do. He didn't talk about that?

WALLY: Um, [long pause] I don't remember.

LORRAINE: Okay. What did he tell you about alcohol in a Native person's life?

WALLY: Um, [pause] in a Native person's life.

LORRAINE: Did he ever talk about harmony within yourself, keeping yourself in a balance?

WALLY: Um-hum.

LORRAINE: Does the alcohol upset the balance?

WALLY: Yep, Um-hm, It's only an excuse.

LORRAINE: How did they tell you to stay away from alcohol? What could you do to stay away from it?

WALLY: Um, like ah, (pause) if you have problems you could use the sweet grass, use the language.

LORRAINE: Pray?

WALLY: Yuh, yep.

LORRAINE: Did you do smudging?

WALLY: Yup, every morning.

LORRAINE: And is that the first time you saw smudging?

WALLY: Yuh, um-hum.

LORRAINE: What did they say smudging was for?

WALLY: Its for cleaning.

LORRAINE: Cleaning.

WALLY: Yuh.

LORRAINE: So you would be able to get ready for every day by cleansing yourself? Did he suggest burning sweet grass? Or did he suggest smoking tobacco, like when you said if you have problems to go burn sweet grass. What were you to do with it? Like just burn it, or burn it and pray?

WALLY: Burn it and smudge.

LORRAINE: If you were having bad thoughts?

WALLY: Um-hum, if you were having a hard time. They were teaching us once you quit for awhile and if you think you're gonna start over again like before, and you get started, like you're gonna be straight back down.

LORRAINE: That's right. Yeah, in fact you will be right where you were when you quit. What other kind of things, did they talk about Medicine men?

WALLY: Um, we only saw a medicine man at a sweat lodge, but ah, I didn't go in cause the [undecipherable] was in the sweat for a long time, it was midnight so I didn't get a chance to go in. That's why I didn't go in. [Undecipherable] I noticed that that guy was bringing berries and tobacco to that sweat lodge.

LORRAINE: Do you know why? Did they explain why?

WALLY: Uh, yeah, I don't know [undecipherable] [laughs].

LORRAINE: Okay, what is the role of tobacco? What did they tell you about tobacco, the use of tobacco?

WALLY: That it was ah, how did they put it, that it was ah, that lady was saying some people say its bad for you, for you health and we say its a good thing.

LORRAINE: Did they talk about tobacco and animals, or plants? What to do with tobacco?

WALLY: Um, [pause] I don't know, no.

LORRAINE: What if you want to seek counsel with an Elder? Did they tell you what you should do?

WALLY: Yuh. You give tobacco. You always give tobacco to the Elder.

LORRAINE: When you left Pritchard House, when you came back to Easterville, there is

nothing traditional here, how did you cope with that? Did you try to maintain that life?

WALLY: Yeah, some, but there was hardly anybody to talk to.

LORRAINE: Did people understand what you were trying to talk about?

WALLY: [Laughs] Um, no, not even my wife. No, she didn't even want to take that sweet grass.

LORRAINE: No, she didn't trust you?

WALLY: No.

LORRAINE: I understand your wife is at Pritchard House now. Do you think that will make it easier for the two of you to practice a traditional lifestyle when she comes back?

WALLY: Yuh. She even laughed at me cause I saw that guy at Pritchard House he was smudging his van so when we were coming back I wanted to do that to my truck but she laughed at me. [We both laugh] I never did it again.

LORRAINE: So you believe in that stuff though?

WALLY: Yuh. I told Walter what that old man said and he just listened. I think he was kind of interested.

LORRAINE: But he didn't say whether the old man was right or wrong? Not a word? That's interesting.

WALLY: Maybe he wasn't, maybe his dad didn't talk about it when he was young.

LORRAINE: It may have been the first time he heard this kind of stuff. Have you not heard about Mother Earth before Pritchard House?

WALLY: Nope. Only in the movies.

LORRAINE: Only in the movies? No one had ever told you that this is, you're living on Mother Earth and your role as a Native person and how you should take care of Mother Earth?

WALLY: No.

LORRAINE: What do you know about it today?

WALLY: Treat it with respect, with respect, and to give back everything you take out from it.

LORRAINE: What about when you're hunting? What should you do with the animals? Should you kill everything that you want?

WALLY: No.

LORRAINE: No? Do you present them tobacco?

WALLY: Um, I haven't heard that. Ah, I might.

LORRAINE: Did they tell you how to treat the animals bones?

WALLY: Um, somebody was talking about ah, eagles. [undecipherable] trees [undecipherable] you're supposed to feast it. [undecipherable] or something you're supposed to have a feast for that eagle. I think that old man was talking about that.

LORRAINE: How about giving a gift when you want to go hunt?

WALLY: I don't know about that. They weren't talking about that.

LORRAINE: So they didn't tell you that the animal gives his life for you so you should give something back to the animal?

[Wally's grandmother interjects with, "That's how you find it."]

WALLY: He said something about that. An animal gives his life for you.

LORRAINE: And that we should treat the animal respectfully.

WALLY: See that wolf [undecipherable] and they say it kills everything.

LORRAINE: And it doesn't. People aren't treating the wolf with respect.

WALLY: Yuh.

LORRAINE: So he was teaching you how to treat the animals. What about plants? What if you were going out to pick some plants for medicine?

WALLY: You bury tobacco.

LORRAINE: Do you think when you go out hunting or fishing you might go and pray and

put tobacco somewhere?

WALLY: Yuh. Um-hum, and they say you're supposed to throw tobacco in the river if you want to fish.

LORRAINE: And are you?

WALLY: Yuh, [pause] and that medicine man he was saying whenever they have a sweat that an eagle goes by and we looking at this eagle going by, and they said here it comes again.

LORRAINE: So you saw it.

WALLY: And while they were having a break he said, "Here come three eagles, these false eagles," he says, and we looked up and they were laughing so I [undecipherable] [laughs].

NORA WASACASE

Nora Wasacase consented to a taped discussion on Native values while she was visiting The Pas, Man. for the annual Cree Gathering. I met with her on July 9th, 1996 at the home of her niece. Nora lives in Regina, Sask. but is originally from Cedar Lake/Easterville. Nora, a professional nurse, is fluent in Cree as well as English.

LORRAINE: What was life like at the Old Post?

NORA: I can remember life at the old reserve, before we were flooded, how we lived. Everybody just was so involved with each other. The whole reserve was involved with -ah- events like weddings, funerals, and even if somebody gets sick, everybody would be over there helping out. My Mother used to really help a lot my biological Mother, I have a Step-Mother, but my Mother used to go and help the sick people. They would come and get her in the middle of the night, to go and sit with somebody in labour, or a child sick or an old person sick, they would go and sit with them, these sick people.

And my Grandmother was a traditional medicine woman. They used to come and get her to make some medicine, Indian medicine, so my whole family was involved with-with anything like that with sick people, and my Grand Dad was a lay reader, he was the minister.

The -ah- place itself was really nice, really nice with flowers growing and the river flowing wide. And in the evening the young people go sit by the lake, and that's how they would interact with each other, walking around, sitting by the lake and watching the boats go by, or else if somebody was able to get a boat from their parents then they would give us a ride and, um older people, middle age people would be out hunting, fishing. In the summertime it was fishing so everybody worked, nobody was ever on welfare.

My Dad will be out on a fish camp, and sometime if we were lucky, we would go stay with him in the camp. The whole family, it was just like a vacation, for months some times. My Mom would go for the whole summer with the smaller kids, and in the spring everybody disappeared for about three months at a time to go trapping, and the older kids that are in school would stay back with Grandparents, so they could go to school, and they would be gone, we wouldn't see them for three months cause it's, you know, spring time and it's starting to thaw out, so they'll stay till open water. They would be so happy to see everybody coming back after the water opens, and they have furs to sell, and we'll have lots of money after the furs sold. Sometimes I used to go to The Pas to go shopping with their fur.

Winter time was what fishing, and I guess mostly fishing in the winter time and there'd be fun too. We use to have, us children would have fun with the horses. We'd go, we'd hitch up the horses and we'd play with them in the late afternoon or early evening. And dog teams, if we're gonna have anything to do with the dogs, go for dog sleigh team, we'd have to look after the dogs. They were a lot of work. We had to tie them up, hitch them up, feed them, all

that kind of thing. It was a whole family thing eh. My little brother would go set up two nets in the river, and that's how we fed the dogs. Like that was his job. These two nets were for dog feed so he used to make us girls, I only had two brothers, so he was the older brother, and that was his job to look after these dogs. So in the morning he would go and have to go pick up these fish from the nets, and then he would take two girls with him, he will just stand there and then he'll say, "well if you girls do all that work, I'll give you a quarter so you can go to the show tonight". So we used to have to work hard to get a quarter, so we can go to the show. And he'll be just standing there, delegating all this work to us and he'll do nothing, he'll just -- we'll -- the girls have to do all the work for him. But Dad didn't know this, you know, but we did all that work and, um, that was our way of life. That time kids have to work hard, well the parents worked but then, the kids had to do a lot of work, but it was kind of a fun thing for us cause we, ah, long as we worked and learning at the same time. That's where, um, weddings, everybody went, you didn't have to be invited, everybody knew they were invited so they just go and have fun. From the church, right from the church then the wedding party go to a house, and eat and everybody drawn in to eat, there'll be a big dance, they dance the whole day the whole evening, everybody will be having fun, old and young. The whole reserve was there celebrating this wedding, right into the wee hours of the night and there was no liquor involved. Everybody had fun. And the same with sick, everyone took care of them, and when someone passed away everybody then looked after that, that, the family, they would cook for them, and people would collect money from each house, and see how much they could donate for them, and they would have a big meal for everybody that came to visit. And they have a wake for two nights; and everybody would be fed, and they sit up all night, you could get real tired. Sometimes for three nights they would sit up, or a wake, and-um- this is, I guess this is a way of supervising people in mourning. And they would mourn for about a year. They wouldn't join in any fun, they won't go to dances; not because they don't want to, but because they were in mourning. And clothes, they wore dark clothes and women would wear dark clothes; oh, I remember I used to wonder why women looked so sad and dress like this; I guess in mourning clothes.

LORRAINE: Do you remember anything about stories; anybody telling stories to kids; like legends?

NORA: Legends, I think we had that; I remember that we used to sit around, mostly when we were in camps, because that's the time we met; we spent a lot of time with the family cause we'd all be out, the whole family, in camps in--in fish camps or trappers camps; this is the time where the people would talk, when we were sitting around in evenings. And -ah- I used to like these camps like that. I remember going with my Grandpa, and he come and pick us up and we go in a dog team, and he would drive and it was such a long ride and slow; and he would be talking to us as we go along and we'll be sitting in the sleigh; and he'll be telling us stories. And along the way we would stop and check his traps and-um-see what he caught, and then we would keep on going. This you know, it was just so quiet; our dogs would be going and slow, or he'd be walking beside the sleigh and we'd be sitting in the sleigh, and he'll be telling us. Oh, I remember this now; when I was a little guy and I fell in this ice hole

one time, and I almost drowned you know; things like that, and my Grandpa got a big beaver from this pond here, you know, things like that. Even a boat, the motors weren't fast, so it will be just slow pace going down the river, and we would just sit there, you know, because it wasn't a loud motor we could hear each other still. So at the trappers camp and the fish camp he would spend time with us. We just spent a lot of time with our Grandparents. I remember I had seven Uncles, and they were really rough, they were always doing something, and they [undecipherable] there was this big hill where they had their trapline; and they made these big snow toboggans and sleigh, and they put my Grandmother in this sleigh and they make her slide down, and they'll bring her up again and so she'll make her go down again, with this big box of kids in this big long sleigh and we had so much fun. And they'll have these coal-oil lanterns, these old fashioned lanterns, and they'll hang them up on a trees, and it'd be all lit up, it was so nice. I remember that. And one thing I remember is my Grandmother making a baseball out of hide; It was a hard little ball, but we played with it all summer and it didn't fall apart. It was made out of hide and canvas, and-um-they would, we would play a game called 'make a line', some kind of a ball game, and they'll make my Grandmother hit the ball or they'll keep throwing it -um- till he hit the ball; and a little kid will go running around for her. She used to have fun with the kids even though she couldn't run; she was using a crutch at that time, she had bone cancer. But I guess that why she always, I remember one crutch for support. I guess she had bone cancer. She used to spend a lot of times with the kids. She'd cook for us in a big pot; she had something like thirty grandchildren. And another thing about the old reserve, we used to have gardens there. My Grandmother had a big, big garden and the kids used to have to go and work hard. She had potatoes, turnips, onions. We do all the work. We didn't look at it as work even though we did all the work, but we were playing at the same time filling big tubs, fish tubs, she had about four of them we filled them with vegetables, then we hauled them to the cook shack. She had a little cook shack by itself. During the summer time she'll cook in this cook shack. She'll make bannock, she'll make lots of soup, and then she'll put all this vegetable and then a meat into another pot, and then we'll have a feast, you know, just from boiled meat and vegetables, carrots, tomatoes, onions and turnips. And she'll make bannock, even though it's hot she'll cook outside in her separate little cook shack. And this cook, no not a cook house a smoke house, she had a smoke house where she hung up all these piece, strips of meat and fish; and then we'll have to keep putting in logs during the day. So she'll smoke this meat all day, moose and moose tanning hide we used to do all that. I never remember men doing work; except us children. A lot of my Aunts were young when she was teaching them how to do all this stuff. So-ah-I remember we used to have to put that hide, it was a really mucky job. Moose hide have to dissolve in salt water. It would be all furry and there'll be flies over it and we'll have to put it on a frame and it has to dry, and then when it dries you'll have to scrape all that fur off. And then after that it dries again. Then she'll put it in a container; I think it was salty water or something like that, and then I remember going around, but that's to wring it from-ah-wring it dry, go round and round, try to wring it dry, and then we put it on a frame again. Then it dries again. It's a lot of work. We used to have to do that. I remember the steps, I probably know how to do that stuff. If I could just have somebody revive my memory I probably know how to do it, cause I did it so many times. All [pause] even that smoking you used to have to cook-ah- [pause]

that meat we used to have to cut it into strips and then we used to have to watch that it doesn't burn up right away, -ah-it has to be slow burning. We hauled this log to the, to the oven so we could chop it up and it will last for a long time, cause it's slow burning.

And maple collecting; syrupy maple syrup. We had a tree like that. We used to have go and hang little pails all over. And then you; bout two days later, we'd go and collect them again. And then she'll make maple syrup, maple candy, [pause] it was a lot of problem, but I remember having more fun than doing the work, you know; cause there'd be a whole pile of kids and we'd be playing and fighting, just having fun while we were doing this, these jobs.

And I remember the first time we had bologna and bread and pop. The boat used to come, and if you had a quarter you could buy both chips and a pop. Both camps, everybody would rush over there and it would be gone in no time. If you weren't there first thing in the morning you won't get your treat. If your not there first thing in the morning it will be gone. And I remember my Dad bringing this big long bologna like this [uses hands to show size] and five breads [laughs] and we will be just pigging out on this stuff and bacon and eggs. I remember the first time I tasted bologna. It was just like putting salt in my mouth. It was so salty and I thought; I don't even like this thing it was full of, they put too much salt in it. [laughter] And that bread, I liked the bread; and the bologna was too salty. But we -ah- we used to buy it and then pretty soon we are making potatoes, corn and bologna, bread. You know, that became our -ah- introduction too white-man's food. But even in the winter time we used to live on just moose meat and potatoes. That was our staple food; meat, smoked or boiled. A lot of it was boiled it was never fried, hardly fried. All we had was maybe tea, sugar and lard, baking powder and flour. That was the main things we stored. And tobacco cause they liked their tobacco too. But then they started sellin' us this kind of food.

LORRAINE: Would you say there was a lot of sharing in your community?

NORA: Oh yeah!

LORRAINE: And a lot of respect?

NORA: Oh yeah! Everybody; the old people were so respected even the young married people didn't talk I don't know why, I used to wonder about this. Young married woman is not supposed to talk to -ah- her new father-in-law; or young men when he's around his new in-laws he takes off his hat.

LORRAINE: Highly respectful.

NORA: I guess that is what it was.

LORRAINE: What about interference? Do you remember as a child being able to do whatever you wanted? I mean aside from work.

NORA: Working, I don't know maybe we were just too tired to play out late at night. But

I never remember playing out too late. Maybe early evening. And I remember a few times [pause] it's time to come in and we never argued about it maybe we were too tired.

LORRAINE: What about interfering in someone else's life. Like Dr. Brant mentioned; he said to interfere in another Indian's life was considered to be rude. Would people interfere in each other's lives? Tell them what to do or how to do it? Did you see that kind of thing?

NORA: I just more remember about my family. Like my Grandpa says, well you do this and you go and do this, and I don't remember ever having a big fight about it. It's just, he told his sons what to do and they did it. They'll just go and do it.

LORRAINE: When the missionaries first came to Canada they sent letters back to France and one of the letters I read said, "The little savages can do anything they want; the parents don't punish them, they don't beat them or anything."

NORA: Well I guess there was no reason to do that. I don't ever remember anything like that. You know, there was no,—everybody worked together. I don't know maybe in another tribe it was different. Like in my husband's side, they had horses, cows and all that stuff like that. I don't know if they had cows in the early years but I know they had horses. But I, maybe they would fight over a dog or something. I remember, I do remember one time a fight over dogs.

LORRAINE: Do you remember stories as a way of disciplining or teaching you things? Do you remember them telling you stories?

NORA: I remember stories, but-um-not like you're gonna [undecipherable] stories are told like what happened in the olden times.

LORRAINE: What about disciplining for example; if they didn't want their children to steal what would they tell them?

NORA: We weren't told not to do this, and do this and-ah-this will happen to you if you steal, and this what [undecipherable] I can't remember anything like told not to steal cause of this happening. But I remember being told a story about-ah-somebody that stole something, and-ah-did this then the night before, and then the next day he couldn't use his arm. They didn't say you would be punished because you stole. They would tell us stories like that, that this happened to this person; because he stole he would never be able to use his arms again, or never able to walk again, or lost his vision. These are the kind of things I remember.

LORRAINE: So in an indirect way they could tell you what to do without ever actually telling you.

NORA: Yeah, I guess that's what it was.

LORRAINE: Gratitude; Dr. Brant said Native people did not show gratitude, that you just expected people to do their very best. So we didn't live in a society that was always giving praise all the time, like; "Oh, you did such a good job, that was wonderful". You said something about that before, could you repeat that for me?

NORA: Oh yeah, we, us children, we had to do all the work. Coming from a large family, one of my sisters was good with the kids, she was the children's work. Then I was good with-um-cooking and cleaning, more or less cleaning, so I guess my job was cleaning. My sister was good at bannock making and cooking, so she was the cook. So we more or less had a specific job that were good at. So when it was time to cook that was her work, but then she'll have the other kids who will help her. So that's her teaching and I'm teaching the younger kids the cleaning and -ah-cause I came from such a large family we all had a specific thing we were good at. And -ah- if I made bannock and it was really good, then when it came time to sit down my parents would say something; "oh this really good bannock, who made this bannock, who did all this cooking?" You know they really make a big deal about this good tasting bannock, or the good soup on the stove. Even though they knew who made it they would never; "oh this soup is so good, this bannock is so good, you did a good job". They wouldn't say it, they more or less go about it in a round way. That they praise and everybody would know that they did it. And they wouldn't say it. We all knew and -ah- so it was, I guess we get praise that way. Yeah, we didn't get, nobody got a specific praise. And, oh I never remember getting a spanking.

LORRAINE: Your' Grandmother and the toboggans, you were telling me about that.

NORA: Oh yeah; playing with the kids. We used to have lots of fun with my Grandmother. My Uncles, they were all older people, they; I have seven Uncles and they were all growing up together. They used to make things and -ah- they'll make homemade things like a toboggan. And my Grandmother, they'll push her down, you know, and then we'll all go tearing down, and at the bottom they'll help her up again. She wasn't able to walk too good so they'll help her up again, they'll pull her up again and put her down again. It was more work coming up than sliding her down, but we had lots of fun.

They used to hang oil, old fashioned oil lamps and we used to sit in the evening with the older people and kids and everybody. We would sit around and watch, everybody would be right there playing baseball. This baseball game we used to play they called 'make a line', and -ah- we hit the ball and then we run around the bases. My Grandmother used to make a baseball out of canvas and moose hide, and it was a hard ball and we'll used it all summer and it wouldn't fall apart. And my Uncle used to make him throw, and throw maybe ten or twenty times till she hit it, and then when she hit it a little kid would have to run around for her. That's how they used to play. Or, they'll make swings for us on the tree. They'll make everything for us so we can play.

LORRAINE: The children were very important weren't they?

NORA: Yeah; we even had a big place where we could build a fire; made out of an old stove, you know, where it wouldn't burn, you know, they had it on a rock pile, and they made a stove on it. Then we'll sit around this. The adults will be right there too.

LORRAINE: We talked about your Grandmother and a traditional way of life. I asked if you had heard of a vision quest and you said nobody had done that. I asked if you ever heard of giving tobacco to elders, and you were telling me about your Grandmother and what she would do before she would do any activity.

NORA: I don't remember having tobacco or giving tobacco, or anything like that to a medicine man. I do remember my Mother buying a sweater and some material for an old lady that she wanted some um medicine from. Gifts like that.

LORRAINE: What about when she went berry picking?

NORA: Yeah, I remember going seneca picking, and there'll be three boat full of kids, all kids, and we're gonna be the one that picks the seneca root. We only had one Uncle, my Grandma and my Grandpa, and then as soon as we land, before we step a foot out, I remember, my Grandma saying, "I'll just sit here in the boat, and -ah- pray and -ah- smoke", or she'll do that and we'll just go tearing away and playing. Or when we're gonna go berry picking, we'll go across the lake. All the kids will go and then we'll pick strawberries, raspberries, and she has to have a smoke and have a prayer. I remember she used to do that all the time. She has to sit there and pray, and pretty soon she'll be over there praying and having a cigarette, but I don't know what she did, I never really watched her.

LORRAINE: Do you understand now what she was doing?

NORA: Yes, what I learned now and reading books, that's what the old people did. They used to pray before they took from the ground [undecipherable] cause they respected Mother Earth; and I guess that is what my Grandmother used to do.

LORRAINE: Jamie was telling me about raspberry picking and she said that her Aunt had taught her to put tobacco down.

NORA: Yeah, I told her that, she was my Niece. I tell her that not necessarily smoke, but they have to put a cigarette on the ground before they start. Or if you kill an animal on the road you stop and put tobacco, because you are taking its life and you didn't mean to. You're sorry that you did this.

LORRAINE: What do you think of sharing with the environment? With the animals and the plants?

NORA: Um -ah- how, what do you mean, if I take something from the environment I have

to put something back?

LORRAINE: Do you think, do you believe you have to put something back?

NORA: I, yeah! Cause you [pause] have to respect what you take and give back something; same with your values and -ah- with people; if you go and spend the night in somebody's house you don't just go and help yourself until you are offered. Like and -um- that's what I try to teach my family you know, to respect animals, and when you go to the land or go to enjoy the lake and leave a mess, you leave it like the way you found it. But it doesn't happen like that anymore, because you have all the people leaving a big mess.

LORRAINE: I saw a lady throw a bag of chicken bones out on the highway, then she laughed and said "You should have taken a picture of that", and I said, "I should have", and she quietly said, "Oh".

LORRAINE: alright, that's probably good; thank you.

OJIBWA ELDER

The following discussion was taped with an Ojibwa Elder from Thunder Bay, Ont. The Elder wished to remain anonymous, however, I was allowed to tape our discussion on Native values. I met with this Elder January 29th, 1997. We spoke in English though this Elder's mother tongue is Ojibwa.

LORRAINE: Good morning.

ELDER: Good morning.

LORRAINE: Okay, I just want to ask you a few questions about Native values. I'm exploring what I call Native values through the work of Clare Brant. So the questions that I have to ask you are relating to behaviours that I believe Native people demonstrated before the Europeans came here. It's my belief that they still behave in that fashion. So I'm trying to prove that pre-contact values have not changed because of European influence.

The first one is a value of non-interference. Now Dr. Brant said that to interfere in another Indian's life is to be rude. Could you tell me what you're understanding of that is and is it the same as Dr. Brant's?

ELDER: To interfere in another's life is to be rude? I agree because um, the way I was brought up, from my Grandmother, was they didn't say "do that" she gave me choices. And what she based it on was quality. That's what I believe.

LORRAINE: I've been told that Native people learn their values through stories.

ELDER: That's true, true, very true. I will speak about my great Grandmother she was the one, not my Grandmother, who informed me so she was very old. Then told us some legends, some stories, for us to learn the values of life. [undecipherable] and you never interrupted the Elder while she told stories. And you had to pay attention cause at any moment during the story she would stop and they would question you, see if you were paying attention. And if you were disrespectful and weren't listening they'd leave.

LORRAINE: I've been told that Native people do not give advice directly but in an indirect way so as not to insult someone.

ELDER: I think we've covered that [we both laugh].

LORRAINE: That's right, and I remember last week you said to me, "I can't tell you what

to do.”

ELDER: Yeah, That's right.

LORRAINE: Native people have a value of sharing, and I believe it extends to all creation. Do believe that Native people still share in the same way?

ELDER: In certain ways they do. In the old traditional way what I remember is ah, if we hunted for game when the game was brought in it was first given to the Elders. They had to check the meat, see if it was good for us. And they were offered the first, the choice meat, whatever they want. And after they blessed the food by saying a small prayer then everybody could or the hunters could eat and then everybody could go help themselves because they distributed it out. Of course we didn't have freezers [we both laugh]. And we didn't hoard. We knew we needed each other for survival, we kept a balance I guess it was community oriented.

LORRAINE: What about sharing with creation?

ELDER: Sharing with creation. I don't know how to answer that but sharing with the rest of creation to me means being selective on your needs, taking what you need and not what your needs aren't. [undecipherable] an animals, bear, [muskrat?] or that doesn't work. Or if you take from the ground you would put back something. [undecipherable]

LORRAINE: I know you would put tobacco, and it still is that way?

ELDER: Yes.

LORRAINE: Another value is anger. Dr. Brant said that anger must not be shown. Now I know that that relates to the past when Native people lived together, or keeping a balance on your emotions, I guess that is what he is referring to.

ELDER: I can't truthfully answer that one. I know cause I never did see my Grandmother argue or say a cross word to Grandpa or my Mother or her own children. [undecipherable.....] My Grandmother was really gentle, she was , what's the proper word I don't know. What her spirit projected, her spirit, she was so strong yet so fragile. [Undecipherable]

LORRAINE: And then your emotions get to out of hand, you get too angry, or overwhelmed with grief so you can't do anything, that would be sort of bad. Is it important to try and keep a balance?

ELDER: Oh yes very important. [Undecipherable] it wasn't bad. It wasn't said in words but in action. Always remember children are, what's that word ?

LORRAINE: Observant.

ELDER: Yeah. And they would learn. Parents are role models. [undecipherable] I guess frustrations in physical ways. And the more, the harder they worked the more they laughed. [undecipherable]

LORRAINE: What about time? Dr. Brant talked about time being cyclical. There's no beginning and end. And you were responsible to future generations as well as past ancestors. Decisions are made today with those people in mind.

ELDER: Time. [pause] My teachings on time is not one o'clock or two o'clock. We watch the sun when the sun went down it was night time [laughs]. And in spring time we watch for the geese. When they are flying in from the south then we know its here. Its here spring time. We know time from watching nature. And we could predict the weather from the environment. [undecipherable] and we come from the earth and we have to go back to the earth.

LORRAINE: There is a lady here, she is Apache and she says everything is sacred. We all give to each other. The animals, trees, everything is sacred.

ELDER: Um hm. There was a young lady she taught me a very good lesson. We were in a healing ceremony and I don't know if anybody else picked up on it. We were having lunch and she said to me " My religion is in my yard." [undecipherable] what is it? She said, "look at the grass, and the weeds, all these things growing together, and when you look at the grass some is dying, shrivelling up and you know not one blade of grass tells the next blade of grass you don't belong here." That was a lesson for me [undecipherable].

LORRAINE: Which leads to my next question. Dr. Brant said there is no such thing as gratitude.

ELDER: Gratitude. [laughs]

LORRAINE: Um, I disagree with him but I don't think we're looking at it the same way. He said that there's no gratitude because Native people expect to do their best, so why would you reward them or praise them for doing what they are supposed to. So there is no such thing as gratitude. Whereas I believe that gratitude may be just like all the others, an indirect way. I know that there are people that, if I've done something nice for them they, may not say thank you, but will come back and do something nice for me. I have students say that we don't directly say thank you.

ELDER: Gratitude, to me as an Elder, I realize today gratitude, it means what the Creator has given me and my grandchildren will learn what I've experienced about life. My gratitude

now is to be a role model for young people so the seeds, you don't voice it you just throw them out there and people will pick them up to help them. [undecipherable]

LORRAINE: Okay, another one Dr. Brant talks about is protocol. For each Nation there is a proper set of protocol, set of rules that they're not given to us, no one tells us this is how you have to behave, you learn them through watching. One of them is giving tobacco. I was taught that if I wanted something from an Elder I should give him tobacco. I'm offering it, not paying them, but offering a gift to them. That there's a proper way to behave and the same thing with different ceremonies, there is a way to do things. Do Native people still have a strong set of rules?

ELDER: Oh yes. I think here is um, just as nature is. We were taught to watch the animal life, birds, all animal life. And follow the rules of the land. And from my understanding that is our set of rules that keeps us in line with the environment. We ah, the animals, plants, mother earth, these are teachers. If you watch, the animals will show you that they're the best parents, they don't abandon their children.

LORRAINE: What about giving tobacco?

ELDER: Its very important historically [Undecipherable] it was the Natives that had the tobacco [undecipherable] ceremonies but of course That's changed. They took tobacco back to the old country ah, Europe and began to smoke it then they brought it back to Canada [laughs] our own country and sold it back to us. [We both laugh]. So ah, I know that the tobacco is very very important and it was always used. But the way that I remember it [was used for ceremonies]. The Elders smoked, a woman couldn't smoke until she's changed because when you become an Elder your status becomes the same as the male because you [undecipherable] [I interject with the word menopause], yeah, menopause. Um you've lost your life-giving so ah, and because you were on the same level not life-giving creating, you could smoke. That's the way it was. [undecipherable] I smoke today [laughs]. Was there anything else?

LORRAINE: Protocol is so important its hard to know what the right thing to do is. Some people will say when you speak to an Elder you should never make direct eye contact. Others will say, "oh, where I come from you must make direct eye contact or you're not being honest." So its hard to know what you're supposed to do.

ELDER: Okay protocol, what's protocol?

LORRAINE: Proper ways of behaving.

ELDER: Oh, from what I remember we had our Elders on the reserve and whenever my Mother became -ah- stressed I guess you call it today and she would [undecipherable] She would call [name omitted] to come over. Then she would send us children to go and get her

to come to the house. I don't know, she didn't tell us what to do, she just sat there in the house [undecipherable part about this lady] but she loved us all. She would pat us children on the head and that was enough. And we wouldn't like to see her go home. And whenever she left sometimes it would be, she would be presented with a gift. [Undecipherable part about kids I think giving the gift] And when she left she always had a bundle that was her show of gratitude.

LORRAINE: Yes That's what I mean by protocol. The other um area of protocol in terms of animals. I don't know what the proper procedure today is when people hunt but in the past there were things you must not do with animal bones. Like beaver bones, you never would throw them in a dump, they had to be put back in the water. Some it was necessary to burn, others you didn't burn.

ELDER: No, in our area ah, and I can only speak for our area here. There were ways of observing that protocol. In our area we were taught that everything must be used of the animal. If there's any waste or the insides, viscera or whatever you want to call it, had to be burnt as an offering for the life that was taken. And we burned it cause we were up on the Manitoba prairies, as they call it, and there wasn't that many trees left after the (??) cut them down, and we burned them in the earth so other animals couldn't get them.

LORRAINE: Yeah, I think that was probably the reason for that kind of proper protocol. One of the, I guess the Huron or Iroquois, in the past, said if they didn't treat the remains respectfully they wouldn't be successful in hunting. The animals would not give themselves to the hunters.

ELDER: Yeah in that sense yes. When you go out hunting we make an offering [undecipherable] ah, if we abuse, and we didn't take care of what was provided. We believe the animals give their life knowingly, because ah, they look at you and they cry. (long pause) Ah, our [undecipherable] is so [undecipherable] in theirs it couldn't be anything else but respect. And, and see one time my Dad said he was out ah, fishing and there was this little loon floundering in the water and he noticed that the wing, something was wrong with the wing so he put a splint on it and he left it there, he didn't take it home like they do today and they put the animals in the zoo in captivity. And so he fixed the bird and left him fish, left it by the water. The next season he was out there and there was a loon again around him [laughs] and he had that feeling that it was the same loon coming to tell him he was [??] See how [undecipherable] for me it is sad [undecipherable].

LORRAINE: My last question I need to ask is about teaching.

ELDER: Teaching. I don't know everything and I'm the first to admit it. And I'm not a judge of anything so all I can share is [undecipherable] I don't believe teaching is [undecipherable] I believe teaching is to respect one another [undecipherable] and I hope I'm [undecipherable] [we laugh]. I'm just a learner too. It takes a lifetime to learn and you can

still be working [???] [Something about anger and making people sick, you had anger]

LORRAINE: What about our young children do you think that, well Dr. Clare Brant talks about shaping and modelling. In the non-native world they take the children and they make them, they teach them how to do certain things one step at a time, each step is rewarded, whereas he said Native children aren't taught like that. They are just there and they watch and then one day they just start doing.

ELDER: Okay, a lot of people asked me about that when I was working at Old Fort William. And there is the best place to teach traditional [undecipherable] My mind is warped and I have to reach deeper and deeper and my mind wandered what did you ask?

LORRAINE: Did children learn through watching?

ELDER: Oh yes okay. Um, historically I looked at them and [undecipherable] and I began to realize that watching your parents, they were role models. You watch them whatever they do you will do. [undecipherable] and I almost died when they took me away [undecipherable, I think its about residential school] and That's force and where the other is gentle.

LORRAINE: Yes That's exactly the way. And Dr. Brant believes its that kind of forced teaching that causes so many to quit school.

ELDER: Oh yes, yes it puts [undecipherable] we were [undecipherable] we were programmed and I had to break that programming. [undecipherable] we had no choice, they took the power of the family away [undecipherable] so we're caught between our [undecipherable] and the law. [undecipherable] and discovery of our land was written one sided so, and then the priest came and the missionaries [undecipherable] and then the government [undecipherable] we have to be educated [undecipherable] wrongful history. And it just goes round and round. [undecipherable] how many churches are there on reserves. Yeah, each church then teaches their beliefs to different members of the family. What happens?

LORRAINE: Separation from family and friends.

ELDER: Right, yahoo, separations from family. And that goes round and round and round. I observed those things. I could give you a paper, a card I have [undecipherable]

LORRAINE: Somebody told me to ask you about that because I didn't know that there was such a card.

ELDER: [Produces a small government card and reads from it] Not deemed to be an Indian, [undecipherable] and then they throw me out of the reserve [undecipherable] and back [laughs]

LORRAINE: Do you have anything you would like to tell students like myself? There are students in helping professions, nurses, social workers and myself, want to preserve traditional life, I don't want to believe when they say pretty soon there won't be any Indians. Is there something you could tell us students that could help us?

ELDER: Okay, I think the Creator, when he put man on earth he, intended it that we should be Anishinaubaeg. No matter what they've done to us they can't change it. This is who we are. We are who we are. I think what people should do is remember that. I think we are here for a purpose. Maybe even if its only to be the conscience of the European people who come from other countries [undecipherable] always be that conscience of those people because they're so uncomfortable here. They are not recognizing [undecipherable] Native people. They have that guilt feeling. And they know it was wrong.

LORRAINE: Well we're here and they can see us

ELDER: I think maybe [undecipherable] there's justice in there. [long pause] When you abuse something it looks ugly to you [laughs] cause you know you done wrong, you can't deal with it and until you deal with it [undecipherable] five hundred years ago when it began and generation after generation have lived through it. Maybe some of our people didn't realize what would happen. [Undecipherable] think what you do, think, think what you do cause it could affect [someone else] later.

LORRAINE: That the teaching to tell. I want to thank you even though I said we don't thank [we laugh]. I want to say thank you for your time and especially for your words.

ELDER: I don't know if I gave you anything.

LORRAINE: You did!

RITA KING

Rita King agreed to meet with me to have a philosophical discussion on Native values on December 5th., 1996. Rita is from Kiashe-saging, Ont. also known as Gull Bay. She is in her early thirties and is a student at Lakehead University. We met in the philosophy graduate's office where, with her permission, I taped the following dialogue.

LORRAINE: As you know I'm doing my thesis on Native values and I'm trying to demonstrate that they were precontact values that have not been affected by European contact. What I've been doing is following along the work of Dr. Clare Brant. Have you heard of him?

RITA: Right.

LORRAINE: His values are the ones I'm interested in learning about. Now, Dr. Brant said that Native people have a value of non-interference. He said that to interfere in another Native's life is to be rude. Could you tell me what you're understanding is of non-interference and is it the same as Dr. Brant's?

RITA: [pause] I would say so -um- [pause] that that interference rule is being less and less utilized. As more Aboriginal people been [pause] have been forced to use non-Native policies, -um- such as the Child Welfare Act. -um- Welfare, C.W.A. [Child Welfare Act] whatever. But the rule of non-interference does exist and I know it is especially in my community. Yet, in the sense that people will not talk directly to a person, -ah- the person has been doing something out of the ordinary. But they will confront the behaviour by using such thing as actualization, telling gossip. It's called town gossip today but it's not. It's a form of -ah- people talking about the behaviour in a more general sense but not about the person. But now people are starting to more personalize the comments. The person is taking them on them whereas before it used to be [pause] -um- just information that was shared among the community. Behaviour.

LORRAINE: Do you have any stories or a story you remember that relate to an experience of a child, for example discipline?

RITA: [pause] For discipline -um- [pause] lets see [pause] -um- [pause] -um- [pause] I guess maybe in a sense maybe my Grandmother when she used to discipline us she would take away our privileges. Rather than um giving us a lickin' or spanking. Instead of us going out she would just take our shoes or our gloves or things that we wanted to play with, she'd just take it from us. And instead of telling us that we wrong, or whatever, she would just take

that thing away.

LORRAINE: That's an important part that I keep trying to stress, that there is interference but it's done in an indirect way.

RITA: Right.

LORRAINE: So as not to insult anyone.

RITA: Yes I would say that's true.

LORRAINE: You already said that, or something about, not giving advice directly. [prior to the taped interview] I've been told Native people do not give advice directly, but in an indirect way so as not to insult someone. Do you think that giving advice is interfering in another person's life?

RITA: [pause] um [pause] I don't think it would be if it was given in a good way. That the delivery and the thought and the intention is there to protect the person or save them from hardships down the road.

LORRAINE: I've heard that anger must not be shown.

RITA: [pause] hum [pause] I don't know, I have some um [pause] um [pause] I'm not sure if anger is wrong. In relation to Dr. Brant's work I know maybe he's a little more Western in his thinking. Anger to frame it as anger, whatever, could be, um [pause] termed the [pause] um, what do you say [pause] a feeling word. Using it as a feeling, whereas before anger used to be, um, that you don't talk back to Elders, um, that you, um [pause] just take it in, especially if it's an Elder that's talking to you or somebody that's older than you, direct to you then you're not to talk back. I, I know that that rule still exists in our community. And I hear people in the community talk about it now that the kids get too much power which, which I could relate or equate it to, some as, some [pause] the adults in the community can't correct, other people's children or their own children, Nieces and Nephews because, um, of the new rules that exist that there is too much power given to the kids. There's too many laws that you can't correct them without having consent all the time. You can't do anything. So in terms which mean for me that, ah, that [pause] children when they're being told something about what to do that, um, that it's done in a good way. um [pause]

LORRAINE: I have an interview where the Grandfather says that as far as showing anger you just didn't do that. If you have a problem with somebody you go to them, talk about it, the talking is the primary way of getting rid of the anger. You don't let the anger sit inside and fester. You would go talk to the person, rationally in fact.

Dr. Brant also claims that there was no such thing as gratitude.

RITA: [pause] um.

LORRAINE: That people expect you to do the best. It was just an expected thing that you would do your best in whatever you were trying to do.

RITA: Right, so in terms of gratitude I'm just trying to figure out where he was coming from, because I know he's got clinical background as well, so he seen gratitude as something you, um, cherish, belonging as something that's owned. Then [pause] I can't see it as part of value that related to the Native tradition. But if he's talking about gratitude in a non-Native fashion then gratitude does exist; by the fact that he's done work in a scholarly fashion that, you know, give him the credentials that needs to be used in a non-Native world. But if he's talking about gratitude in a Native sense then I would say that, um, gratitude, um, does exist by people showing good gestures to somebody. um, Say if I was thanking my Uncle, and instead of saying directly to him, *thank you*, then I would do something good for him so then he would know that first of all it's been appreciated. Um, um, so gratitude that way is doing things in a good way, always try to do something polite or help somebody or try to be a good person in your way of life I guess.

LORRAINE: Do you think that that relates back to an indirectness instead of directly saying *thank you*, you're so wonderful and go on and on with praises, indirectly you're thanking the person, very respectfully?

RITA: Um, [pause] Yeah, I would say that is, that is true. um, So by showing gifts or, um, showing extension of helping them do something that they're doing, taking part in their, in their interest then it's showing gratitude, but that's not, again it's indirect but it's direct in a sense because the person would already know that that value is already inherent in our system.

LORRAINE: When you were really young how did you learn to do different things? Like you're a female so I can't ask you how did you learn to hunt or trap or fish, or maybe I can.

RITA: Right, um, I think a lot of the teachings that I got, um, were from, um, my Mother and, um, my Grandmother. uh, You know about the rules of conduct or, um, things to do or not to do. I guess that one, um, I wouldn't say directly but in, in terms of what our role is. um [pause] You know how to [pause] just cook different things, um, my Grandmother was quite active with me, on my Dads side. How to be, um, a good trapper, what, how to cut the snares, how to walk in the forest, different steps you know, things like that. I did those things and as a kid, um, we were taken on the lake with my Dad and my Uncle and my Mom and Aunties. I guess we're shown just by example by them doing things, um, that this is how it's to be done, and um, they didn't say this is it's done in words but they just said `well if you're gonna do it, do it like this, or you know, just shown [pause] by them doing it we would just watch around and kind of witness things as they came along. Experience them I guess.

LORRAINE: In my paper I talk about modelling as opposed to shaping. And in the non-Native world, the method of teaching is to shape them to do certain things and my claim and Dr. Brant's is that children are taught to model, and you just described that, by watching and learning. Time, Indian time, what does that mean to you?

RITA: Um-hm, Lets see [pause] well I guess it means a lot of different things I guess. Indian time for me is, um, in my own personal experience has meant do things as [pause] as the circumstances prevail, I guess. um, You know, say if you had to go fishing and your time is measured by, um, the weather, um, the people that are, if they are ready or not, or if they, um, having always a chance of, um, whether the people are mentally prepared or physically prepared to go out if, if your circumstances that way. But Indian time also means that things happen as they're supposed to happen. There's no sense of, um, good or bad about it. It's just when there's enough people to do the thing it will happen, if not then it's not time to do it. You just wait and learn the patience of it.

LORRAINE: I heard one explanation, is that when you are physically, spiritually and emotionally ready, then you would do whatever it is you need to do.

RITA: Right, I think that's a good way.

LORRAINE: Okay, I want to ask you a philosophical question. I haven't asked anyone else this. For philosophers, when they study time they, um, believe that causation is the result of time and space being continuous. Like one follows after the other. And I want to know; do you think it is discontinuous in the Native world, for example; do you think what someone's done in an earlier life or early childhood could cause something to happen to you today?

RITA: [pause] Yes, I believe that; um, because, um, as you know I left the reserve when I was ten years old and I grew up in an Italian home, whatever, and, um, I learned a lot about the value system of a non-Native, on time, being on time, going to school, um, being mentally prepared, um, um, you know, just teaching me the skills to survive in a non-Native world. I guess competition, being the best, um, succeeding, try to succeed all the time, stuff like that, and, um, I guess getting locked in that system and also knowing my own system. My own identity I guess, um, [pause] pushed me to a new place where you have to re-evaluate, or try to get the teachings again from the Elders. In my late adult life, my late twenties I guess, and one of the Elders was talking about, um, watching, doing things as a kid and people watching that. You know watching what you do as a kid and deciding at some point that, based on what they observed at some point when grew up, that's what you would be doing. Something along that field or line of work or that you got some kind of personality that you, uh, already show as a kid that you're gonna be doing. um [pause]

LORRAINE: So lets say you want to become a school teacher. You don't think your experience here at university caused you to want to become a school teacher? What you did as a child caused you to become a school teacher years later?

RITA: Yes, I would say that's true, because there a lot of Elders talk about that in our healing circles. They talk about, um, say if you've done harm to maybe an animal or plants, then that thing comes back to you some way. You know, maybe not to you directly but to someone related to you. um, And I believe that that's true because, um, um [pause] you know I've heard stories about that. Um I know the stories exist and that they're true, [pause] they're true for us and how we understand our 'ways' in the world.

LORRAINE: You know that in the non-Native world the concept of time is linear, there's a beginning and an end and they say that in the Native world there's no such concept of time, it's cyclical.

RITA: Right.

LORRAINE: Like it just keeps going back around on itself. Do you believe that?

RITA: Yeah I do, um, I do now [laughs] uh [pause] where I only knew it first as an intellectual way. Like I, I tell you that you had to experience it, um, I guess I'm saying that now in the sense because you know you have different cycles. And I guess with all we've experienced, a lot of deaths in the last year or two years where you really learn to, um, see life being so short. And the people that you [pause] and that you, um [pause] that leave and yet as an adult, whatever, you feel that infantile state again. So that there's a new cycle that starts and I think, um, [pause] experiencing it myself and you knowing the feelings, trying to touch base with what I was going through. I know that there is, some kind of, I don't know I can't say for sure, um, I know there's something where you become cyclical. I don't know how to explain it.

LORRAINE: But do you believe they are still with you? [Dead relatives or loved ones.]

RITA: Oh yes.

LORRAINE: They aren't physically here but they are still here, their presence is here and it's part of your present and your future.

RITA: Uh, yes, because I think the teachings, um, that they've left behind have, um, prepared me to a like a higher level of [pause] being or preparation whatever. um [pause] I'm trying to think that people have a, um, predestined [pause] um [pause] path that the Creator has given us. You know it's up to us to fulfil that path in our lifetime. And, uh, I've heard stories that if we don't fulfil them in this lifetime then you'll repeat them in the next life cycle, whatever that is. We'll repeat the same types of um, um, like we'll need to experience those things over again until we've learned a lesson.

Um, and I know that it's true because in some of the teachings that I've heard, um, they say that our life cycle is every seven years. And if we've learned something from the first seven then we get ready for the next seven, and if we don't we're gonna get stuck, we have

to go back and pick up those pieces somewhere along the line. So I think if that's true then there are some kind of teaching that says there is some kind of cycle. You know, you go back to it.

LORRAINE: Do you believe that we are responsible for future generations?

RITA: Yes, um, definitely so.

LORRAINE: Protocol. [pause] I know that you understand protocol, different ways that we need to behave when we're approaching an Elder or people like that. There are things that we have to do. Do you have any understanding of the environment?

RITA: Protocol within the environment?

LORRAINE: Yes.

RITA: um [pause] um, I would, of my own experience or people having protocol with the environment. I'd say so because in our teaching right, um, there are, um, different rituals or ceremonies that are performed prior to taking certain things from the earth. Or, um, in certain ceremonies that I've experienced myself where I've had to prepare, um, through, um [pause] give back to the earth what I've taken from the earth. And, uh, there's been, um, I guess protocol that way because, the, everything we use has it's own life force and I believe that because I've experienced it in my own life, and I seen it, um, you know, in ceremonies that, that quite visible that you see a thing happening, um, so that, yeah, I would say that, um, the way people call it protocol but I guess maybe we would say we call it *way of life*, a way of doing things. Rituals or ceremonies are done in a certain way, um, help and in our life here on earth. And I think, um, ceremonies and rituals, whatever you want to call them, is a tool that we need to use to help us, um, better our lives. I just don't know how else to explain it.

LORRAINE: Do you think that in terms of interaction with Elders people are using proper protocol? Do you think that we are still using the way of life, the same protocol that we would have used at contact?

RITA: um

LORRAINE: I don't mean changing articles, for instance, we are wearing cloth instead of hides.

RITA: Right.

LORRAINE: I'm not talking about that kind of thing. But the actual procedures.

RITA: I think that it still exists today because it's still quite evident in [pause] you know in,

in, you look at the big major Ministers meetings, or any kind of big meeting, of big meeting that's held with politicians, with leaders or community group, that the, that people are seen, um, as people first and that their job as something that, a job is second as a secondary source. But you know they run into conflicts but they only see that as part of the job part of the territory.

My Dad always says, um, that there's, that have been done, um, prior to any kind of exchange, whether that exchange be with, um, paper or written words, um, exchange of gifts or, whatever, there is some kind of acknowledgement. I guess basically of, um, the peoples' ways.

LORRAINE: Now, Dr. Brant says that the Native people have a value of sharing. And I believe that this extends to all of creation. Do you have an experience or story which relates to the importance of sharing? Is sharing still important? Is it still practiced?

RITA: um I, I think it is. Like, I think the principal of sharing still exists today, um, but the pressures of non-sharing have become more, um, more.

[Interrupted by telephone call]

LORRAINE: We were talking about sharing experience.

RITA: Okay, as I was saying the principle of sharing does exist, um, but with more external pressures of Western thinking. In, in our system, um, we have to have people conscious reminder of to ourselves that we must continue that principle of sharing. [pause] Whereas it used to be just sharing up staples and stuff before, now we're sharing information and knowledge. But I think it's critical to, um [pause] to us to re-empower, empower ourselves to a new place, especially with this new system. Two collisions of systems I guess, um, [pause] um.

LORRAINE: Natives are getting educated at the university level. Many people like myself are interested in preserving the traditional life and to help other Native people. Is there anything you would like to tell me that could help students?

RITA: um [pause] um, Okay as I was saying before we got [laughs] nervous distracted. I was talking about, um, the education system is, um [pause] attending university and struggling with myself being at that university, which teaches us a whole new system. um, um, Always be conscious a reminder of where we come from, our identity, the ancestry, our background, whatever, um, and to be conscious of that as we go through school, um, um, because [pause] you know the education system, institution setting has a way of creeping up, um, I don't know, has a way of changing, um, providing us with a lot of information that allow you to change your mind about where you came from. Because, um, [pause] it continues to teach things in a western way. um, So if I would say give someone advice, the idea is not forget who I am as an Aboriginal person. I would [tell a] Native person, not to forget my language, um, my value system, um [pause] and to, um [pause] try not to get caught up in the [pause]

in the potential of getting a degree only on the basis to get your self-esteem, um, because, um, Aboriginal believe, um, obviously that is an external thing. um, You know that your self-esteem should come first, then your, your degrees as a Outside of that circle, if you're looking at it a circle way. um [pause]

LORRAINE: Thank you. So would you agree with me that all the principles, all the values, all lead to one major ethic of total respect?

RITA: um, Yes, because you know I believe that the, um [pause] universe has a way of taking care of its' own. um [pause] And if, um, you know that, that values didn't come in a teaching it came by experience, um, you know. I was really young, um, you know, but the experience that I've encountered from my lifetime has all been, um, things where I had to learn some aspect of, um [pause] some teaching. And now that all this, I guess all the teachings that I have received has prepared me to another level. um, As that, um, like you know I have all that knowledge up here in my mind, now I just have to be able to, um, incorporate those in my daily life as an activity now. That can really balance those to, those to, you know, the teachings are really good in the head but they also have to be good and materialize. um, So I think total respect will become evident anyway in just, you know, I think it will show itself regardless, um, of whether we try to force it, um, because the universe does have its way of taking care of its own. But also um, if we, um, try to push it, um, then it may backfire, um, hurt us in the long run. [pause]

LORRAINE: Thank you.

ANDREW NAWAGESIC

Andrew Nawagesic is an Ojibwa, in his late forties, attending Lakehead University as a graduate student. Andrew spent most of his early life, away from the reserve, in a residential school. Our discussion was taped in English (he does not speak Ojibwa) on December, 4th., 1996, in the graduate student's office at Lakehead University.

LORRAINE: Where are you from Andrew?

ANDREW: Gull Bay.

LORRAINE: Can you tell me what your nationality is?

ANDREW: Probably three quarters Indian. My dad was half so, three quarters Ojibwa, one quarter Scots.

LORRAINE: What could you tell me about your childhood?

ANDREW: Wow, what could I tell you. Well, I grew up in an isolated community, reserve community. I don't remember too much about my early childhood. I just remember bits and pieces. One of them would be picking blueberries. Every summer that was a traditional thing for us to do, make money to live on for the summer. Other than that ah, we lived in tents, boats, my Dad owned a boat I remember that being on the water quite young. And then ah, the major thing would be going to residential school. More vivid for me to remember going to school all those years prior to that I don't have much memory as a childhood.

LORRAINE: What was residential school like?

ANDREW: Oh, that was ah, kind of sad, lonely. I have one picture of myself that comes up all the time looking out this window staring. Must, I can remember probably thinking it wasn't, about my sad times, staring out the window wishing, wish I was back home [chuckles]. Other than that I was there with a lot of my family. I had a couple a brothers, they were older than me, there with me, so that made life probably bearable. Being there with family. Had a couple sisters on the other side so I wasn't alone. So that probably made the residential school experience tolerable I guess being with family.

LORRAINE: Can you speak Ojibwa?

ANDREW: Ah, as I was growing up. I lost it all along cause I was never, I didn't spend

much time at home on the reserve, just going for the summer holidays then back to residential school which we didn't really speak there. And I just never used it and I just kept losing, losing, then after while I just got to more understanding, I'm even losing a lot of my understanding of ah, the language cause I don't use it at all.

LORRAINE: Did you speak it before.

ANDREW: Oh, I'm sure I spoke it as a first language, yup.

LORRAINE: You know my work is in Native values. Have you read anything by Dr. Clare Brant?

ANDREW: I don't think I read anything about ah, I might have heard that he was connected to some kind of, with, with something on values.

LORRAINE: Okay, Dr. Brant was a Mohawk psychiatrist. He said that Native people have a value of non-interference. See he came up with a list of what he calls traditional Native values and one of them is non-interference. He said to interfere in another Indian's life is to be rude.

ANDREW: I see that, I see that non-interference, now that its pointed out to me I can look back at how Natives communicated and that stands out yeah. That's a good way to describe communication and ah, how people get along. Knowing a little bit about my, Native people as well, thought that was essential. The way they have to live and survive you don't anger, maintain some kind of communication ongoing so if you interfere you couldn't survive as a community. I think it was essential to the community that did that.

LORRAINE: So your understanding of non-interference would be the same as Dr. Brant's?

ANDREW: I don't know [about] what Dr. Brant [says], but [I guess] if he termed it, I just know generally ah, that [it] is that the values I wouldn't have termed it that [way] as [non-interference] but now that he's mentioned it I can see why its a good way to describe a value like that.

LORRAINE: He claims that Native people do not give advice directly but in an indirect way so as not to insult someone and that includes children. Do you think giving advice is interfering?

ANDREW: [pause] I, ah, maybe in those times it might have been a real strong value. Whether I still think that's the situation now myself, I look for advice [laughs]. So ah, and I think they're ready for they're getting away from that and they tend to ah, they tend to give it. More so now but traditionally if you're living on a reserve the older people would probably, that would be still strong with them and they probably would give it in other ways.

Not to give it but they probably say it in so many ways that the person could take it as 'oh yeah' this person has said something that I could ah, take some understanding from that and use it. But myself now, its, um, I seek advice, we give advice now, its getting away from how he saw it then.

LORRAINE: What he says is not directly, so that you don't insult someone. ["Right" interjects Andrew] Let me give you an example: with little children, they don't want to go to the dentist so you don't make them go. If they decide they don't want to go you just don't force them. Did you ever see people on the reserve just letting kids do whatever they want?

ANDREW: I've seen that, I looked at it as permissiveness and all that. That's how a lot of people describe it, non-Natives would probably describe that as just let loose, free, but ah, I guess its that non-interference type of value.

LORRAINE: It has been seen as child neglect ["Yeah its seen that way." interjects Andrew] a lot of kids were taken away, taken out of their homes. But if you look at what Dr. Brant is claiming here it definitely isn't child neglect. There is more to this non-interference. I've been told that Native people learn their values through stories.

ANDREW: Um-hum, uh, I don't remember so much stories being told. My Mom, if anyone would have been telling stories, it would have been my Mom. She did tell some stories at different times and I'm sure they were not just any old story. I'm sure there was some meaning behind them. Yeah, I see that as a way of telling, giving messages, and some values and points and all that. But not just for the sake of story telling but meaning behind the stories.

LORRAINE: Dr. Brant said that Native people have a value of sharing. And I believe he would extend that to sharing with all creation.

ANDREW: Um-hum, sharing yeah I understand that its, um, its a real important Native value. At one time I said, uh, I thought it was, "Wow, you got a whole moose here, its gonna go bad on you on a real hot summer day, you gotta get rid of it before it spoils," I thought that was maybe the reason for sharing, but no, and then with the fridge, why I don't know, fridges now [Laughs] so I guess there still might be a lot of sharing. Because of, but times have changed I think, I find at the time it was very important for sharing for as a community to survive and that. But I'm one to think that, well as times change, and all that its ah, its not survival now. You got money, food, store, all that stuff, its not central anymore to survival, of the community as a group people can get along, can survive without the sharing as they did once. Sharing was very important for survival for the group in those times. But I find as times changed I think values tend to change.

LORRAINE: Do you think that if there was somebody on the reserve that was hungry would anyone help them?

ANDREW: Um, oh yeah, I think there's some good people [laughs] that still share yeah. And there's some people that are pretty much messed up, got a lot of anger, all this kind of stuff that interferes with, ah, those types of values. Because they're not strong anymore, they're bitter, resentful and they may not, ah, sharing may not, it may be out the window for some of them.

LORRAINE: Okay, Dr. Brant said Native people have a different view of time. He said time is cyclical, that we must think of future generations when making decisions.

ANDREW: Time, I've heard of Indian time [laughs]. People use that, I use that [chuckles]. Ah, I'm not sure I understand the question, future generations.

LORRAINE: In a non-Native world when we make decisions the decision is based on what we need right now quite often and its a linear kind of thinking, there's a beginning and an end to everything. And if I'm about to make a serious decision I'm not about to worry about my great great Grandchildren or how it might affect them. Now according to Dr. Brant time is cyclical for Native people and when making decisions you would consider your great great Grandchildren and what kind of an effect this would have on them. That was in the past, today I look at it more like being spiritually, emotionally and physically ready. That's a hard one to answer.

ANDREW: Yeah, I think it is ah, even after your explanation I don't know what I would say about that other than yeah, that's how Native view things and how they made their decisions at that time, but again I'm thinking now, for me that's, that's, that's a concept I probably don't go by.

LORRAINE: I'm going to contradict you right now.[laughs]

ANDREW: Okay, alright.

LORRAINE: Because I said that when you're spiritually physically and emotionally ready then you would engage in something. Why were you late for your appointment today?

ANDREW: Um-hum, Indian time I understood. [laughs]

LORRAINE: Ah, no but what did you say to me, where were you? You said you had to go have your sauna. ["Yup, un-huh." interjects Andrew] That's right, so you didn't come to this interview till you were ready. So you don't consciously know that's what you're doing. But unconsciously you went and had your sauna, you did what you had to do for you, then when you were ready you came to the interview.

ANDREW: I look at, I guess I look at that, you well, don't know if I'm thinking less, but the situation if it was a doctor's appointment I would, I wouldn't have been that late I probably

would have been right on time. Some of these appointments I hold to be, I would have probably spent less time in there, but I'm thinking well, she'll wait, she understands [laughs].

LORRAINE: See you can justify it, ["Yuh." interjects Andrew] any which way you want you can justify it, but if you really look at it, what you were doing was important to you, so therefore yeah, I could wait. And That's Indian time sort of. And I know that you've missed other appointments, you told me that, so [Andrew laughs]. It isn't a matter of being lazy and it isn't a matter of disrespect. Just a matter of getting there when the time is right. That's not something you read about, "Oh, I'm going to be late because I'm getting spiritually ready."

ANDREW: Well that's it too, cause after my sweat, the sauna I'm more apt to have a better feeling, a better interview than, this is part of the interview. [laughs]

LORRAINE: That's right, so even though you say, "No I don't agree with that," your behaviour just showed me that you do.

ANDREW: Um-hum, yeah, I got caught once. [We start laughing]

LORRAINE: Anger, Dr. Brant said that anger must not be shown, now we know today there is a lot of anger but he says this was in the past. Do you know anything about that?

ANDREW: Well. I guess again I see the survival of the community, there are certain values. I think anger, in order for a community to survive you couldn't have anger, people just being really angry at each other so they would probable show, tend to control and not be, not to create friction in a community, so yeah, they would maintain control of their anger. Again the situation is different now, there's a lot of anger [laughs] on the reserve, there's no control at all, people let you know. That's cause times have changed.

LORRAINE: I had another interview with a friend of mine, Leona, she said that her Grandfather talks about having conflict with other people and he does not believe that you should let it go. You hear that a lot now, "oh, just let it go, forget about it, don't let it bother you," you can't do that, this man says it is important that you go to the person right away. " You have a problem with me you know, what is it"? Or, "I have a problem with you, this is what I think," but not in a hostile negative way in a way that they can resolve the problem. So that would be one method of dealing with anger.

ANDREW: Um-hum, well they say that now you don't hold anger, you store it, it just builds up, builds up, you get sick, everything about it, then it explodes, somebody else gets hit with it. Yeah, you should deal with anger and ah, in a good positive way so it doesn't affect you negatively but ah, as far as the Native community goes ah, you don't, well you do control it and if this is, ah, does this Leona person say Native people in those days they dealt with it, but they didn't let it get out of hand, they did it in a civil way, yeah, okay.

LORRAINE: Yeah you would not let it blow up the way a lot of people do today. And if we think about it, reserves are big, are relatively big, there are a lot of people to get angry. But if you were living in a really isolated tiny community and you let anger you know, or got really angry, people get angry, there's just no denying that. But how you react to that anger could threaten your survival. I mean what would happen if you were in a small community and there were only three hunters and they all got mad at each other. See its the same thing as far as grief or showing extreme emotion. There is an important element in keeping a balance on all your emotions.

What about gratitude? This ones controversial. Dr. Brant said there was no such thing as gratitude. I have modern day Native people say that's not true of course we show gratitude. But I have had interviews with many people who say this is true, no gratitude.

ANDREW: Some say, argue we have gratitude and some say we don't have gratitude. Um, can you give me an example?

LORRAINE: Yeah, it was expected that a person do their very best, so when you did your best nobody was gonna heap on the praise and gratitude and say what a wonderful job you did, because that's what they knew you were going to do. It was expected that you do that. So in the past and possibly for a lot of people it still goes on in the present. Thanking or heaping on the praise or being grateful for something you did. If I was very hungry and you went out and killed a moose, and knew that I had very little food and you brought me some moose meat, I wouldn't have to show gratitude to you because you would know I was grateful, you would know that just because you knew I was hungry. Making me express gratitude would be placing you in a superior position to me.

LORRAINE: Oh, I never really thought about it, just going by your example, its like now, no I don't think gratitude is a real ,real value or a real something that's, um, that's big I guess. I know in the West Coast where there are a lot of resources there and all this giving, giving and whoever can give the most is kind of looked at, is held up there, and I think a lot of this is done here, even though, I know Ojibway, we don't have a lot of the resources that they had out there. A lot of that was given for the same reason, to give to a person is held in esteem. The more they gave, this person is looked at, "oh, this person gave, is better than this person." I don't know anything about it but I heard that that was kind of an Ojibwa kind of thing. I actually, the whole area I don't, even I never thought about it before.

LORRAINE: Different people that I have talked to, Viola Cordova being one, they did not do that where she came from. She said it is out of respect, because you need to keep each other on an equal ["Right" interjects Andrew] social level ["I see that, Andrew interjected] and by saying thank you, you are minimizing what they have done.

ANDREW: Right, yeah it makes sense. I was wondering about Clare Brant, maybe he's ah, his concentration was with his own Mohawk group sort of thing. It differs from ah, someone from up in this part of the country.

LORRAINE: I yeah, That's why I'm doing so much work. Dr. Brant basically took his work from his psychiatric practise I think. So he based a lot of this on what he was seeing. So if you have individuals that you know have psychiatric problems in fact you hear an awful lot today about how your parents didn't love you, didn't show this, they didn't that, so you could come to that from there. I thought as much, except when I was interviewing Cree people from Manitoba, they all understood that, that there was no gratitude. Yet they knew their parents were grateful for what they did. Parents had an indirect way of giving praise.

ANDREW: Well I see that when you talk about Northern Manitoba. The more isolated the community is the more these values they're gonna be still retained and all. But talking about myself [chuckles] someone that grew up in a non-Native, pretty much a non-Native community.

LORRAINE: Yeah, if you come into the city you're gonna find an entirely different set of values. ("Um-hum." Andrew interjects)

How about protocol? Dr. Brant said Native people have proper protocol, ways of approaching Elders, Medicine men. There are certain procedures you need to take. He calls that one of the value principles.

ANDREW: Hum, well I think that was true. There's a lot of respect for the Elders, its something my, um, younger brothers and sisters heard from my parents. I didn't hear it so much from them but I hear a lot of stuff that they got from my parents that I didn't hear cause I was away most of the time. But she did teach them a lot of things and a lot of them was really to respect the Elders, help the Elders. That way, so different people different ah, Elders have a position that different protocol.

LORRAINE: You know earlier you talked about blueberry picking when you were young. Was there any kind of procedure involved with that?

ANDREW: Oh, no I don't recall, as I said I was pretty much a three-four-five-six maybe, those were the ages I was in that. As a matter of fact I was born in the blueberry patch. [chuckles] Actually a lot of us were born in Beardmore, that's where we went picking for berries so my mom was there before I was born. A couple of my siblings were born not in the hospital, but in the blueberry area in a camp. But as far as, do you pray when you sit down or any kind of ritual with it before you pick the berry, I don't recall any of that.

LORRAINE: Do you have any, other than what we're learning at university, do you have any experience with what they call traditional practices?

ANDREW: Okay um, I only heard one incident where my, as I said my younger brothers and sisters were learning from my Mom but I didn't even know about it but they tell me now so I know my Mom was giving them some of the traditional stuff that she knew, she held, one of them was when my brother died. She would for a while, I don't know how long, but she

would gather stuff from the food and then wrap it up and put it in the stove and that's because he was no longer here. She was kind of feeding him kind of thing. So that's the kind of stuff you're talking about, protocol practice, stuff like that. So there was some of that, I don't really recall a lot but I heard my sister talking about that. It sounds interesting, they were learning stuff I never learned from her.

LORRAINE: Would you go back now and ask her?

ANDREW: Oh, she's not around now. Oh, I wish she was I would have a lot to talk about, say to her, learn from her.

LORRAINE: Are there many older people at the reserve?

ANDREW: No, I just always saw myself seeing them going rapidly. All the old people are just going away, dying. Taking all that knowledge on that, didn't.

LORRAINE: What about sweat lodges? Did they do anything like that?

ANDREW: I think there's been a come back. See ah, I don't go to the reserve anymore ah, there's not a home there for me. If I go there I'd be stuck for a place to stay. Most of my relatives, my immediate family are here, so when we go there, there is not a place. So we don't, and it's only an hour and a half away so we'd ah, we just went, there's nothing to bring us there anymore. I've heard since, there's people that quit drinking, people going traditional, going back, trying to maintain ways that there had been, sweat lodges, shaking tents. A lot of these practices are coming back now, so, but I haven't participated in anything so.

LORRAINE: So if these practices are coming back is it safe to assume they never went away? You just didn't know about them?

ANDREW: No, I think they're coming back. I think they were gone for a long time. And there's a revival now with the people not drinking. A.A. has come in, people quit drinking have a lot of time on their hands now and thinking of, um, their Native heritage, what it was, and maybe they seen it in other communities, and tend to talk and see that, so, they see it happening, so ah, started back in our community.

LORRAINE: I'm just wondering because you said shaking tent, I know that that is an incredible procedure and I'm just wondering if it had been lost how would they know how to conduct one?

ANDREW: Ah, I don't think they know how, probably got some expert from another area to come in and perform them. I don't think anybody from there knows about it.

LORRAINE: Thank you very much Andrew.

EVELYNE SUSIN

Evelyne Susin is an Ojibwa woman attending Lakehead University as a fourth year student. She lost her Native language as a result of residential schooling, however she is in the process of re-learning it. When asked her approximate age Evelyne replied, "I'm twenty nine and have been married thirty one years." We met on February 13th., 1997 and the following discussion resulted.

LORRAINE: Good afternoon. You know I'm doing work with Native values so I'd like to ask you a few questions. What is your understanding of non-interference?

EVELYNE: My understanding of non-interference is that, ah, one of the ways we learn our sacred ways, um, starts at the moment of birth, like since the sacred is part of everyday life and our traditional teachings are taught to us by our Aunts, Uncles, Grandfathers. Usually the Uncles or their Sisters. The reason for that is because it leaves more time, more free time for the parents to enjoy and love their children. I guess you know that relatives, extended members of families also, ah, teach the younger children, as a community thing, ah, because everybody in the community all have skills and experiences and the different skills and ideas. Whatever the Grandfathers taught the Grandmothers did not interfere. For instance if, ah, a child asked you, ah, "Could you help me remember what Grandfather taught?", then the Grandmother would say, "You know you would have to ask the Grandfather, because I didn't teach you that you would have to ask him." So that was a way of non-interference. The other thing about non-interference is, ah, because its in the Native culture its seen as coercion or persuading the, another's behaviour. Its considered rude or bad manners to tell another person what to do. And the reason for that is because Native people expected cooperation. That was I believe the whole idea behind the non-interference. But because of, ah, of what happened in the past to Native people, alcoholism, drug abuse and other forms of abuse like, ah, residential school, the separation of families, the Christianity, Government policies that banned spiritualism and also the language that rendered Native people's culture helpless, that sacred tradition and ceremonies went underground, ah, the teachings were lost except for the few that kept it here in our hearts. Parents lost control so there was no role modelling, so what you see today are, ah, when you see children running around today all over the place, ah, at the pow-wows or, young people when they are taking their culture back, we see culture making a comeback today. Because of all that's happened in the past, ah, young people and even people like me my age, ah, we're sort of jumping back into our culture, um, without really understanding, um, the ethics and the principles that was ingrained in us prior to all these things that have happened. So without the teachings to guide us, um, you know we, ah, our children are seen as running around because there is no one there for to model, a role model. But non-interference is taken way out of context. You can't wait and watch for a

child to burn before you act. Non-interference means, ah, to me just the way I think, if I want my son to be a priest I should not force him to just because I want him to be one. You know he'd rather be a janitor and a good one. You know in White society young people are often forced to follow in Dad's footsteps. And in the matter of, ah, aberrant behaviour, um, if an individual persists in bad behaviour the, ah, what Native culture used to do was to control that bad behaviour was to ridicule or shame the individual. And in another way that bad behaviour was allowed because it helped that person learn from that experience whether it was good or whether it was bad. And it also, like from that individual's experience it helped the whole community as well. The other way, the other thing that I'm thinking about too is, ah, ah, non-interference how did they, they didn't need to interfere because as I said values were ingrained from the moment of birth, um, people in the past taught their children through storytelling and, um, myths and legends, whatever you want to call them. Through stories taught them about Windigos or the May-may-qua-si-uk, they're the little people and the children were told that these people are in the bush and if you're bad or if you go off alone they will steal you. So this kept the children in line so that was, you know, there was hardly any need for, ah, that kind of interference.

LORRAINE: Yeah, that's what I thought. Okay, what about sharing?

EVELYNE: Sharing is, um, well in the past the concept of sharing was a logical response to the Indian's early environment. Because the land appeared to be a limitless, um, the game was plentiful there was no need to divide it. But in cases of, ah, like supposing there were calamities, like environmental calamities or something, ah, things of nature like, that they were unpredictable, there was no way to prepare for them except to share what one had. But sharing was on the premise that when you didn't have something somebody else would share with you what they had. Its a give to receive kind of thing and, ah, back on my reserve when I was growing up I remember that no one ever locked their doors. People just came in and, ah, if they wanted to borrow something it was there if you had it and they could take it. And it was always because someone else's need was greater so, and the feeling that you got from sharing is, ah, you know when you give something you get that nice feeling, you know you helped someone. Serving or giving is part of the circle that includes receiving. Its like a circle, it goes round, what you give you get back. And what you don't give, well everything what you give including bad behaviour or, um, being bad to someone, being cruel to somebody, that is like a circle, it comes back to you. So sharing, you know, it comes back.

LORRAINE: Do you believe sharing is still important today?

EVELYNE: Oh yes, it's very important. It's, um, I think without sharing how else would we, ah, sharing our knowledge. If we didn't share what we know I guess we would be a lost society, lost culture.

LORRAINE: How about anger, what could you tell me about anger. Dr Brant said anger must not be shown.

EVELYNE: Anger, ah, originally it was, ah, the way I was taught, it was to practice humility, patience, kindness. Usually anger was released by talking to Elders, finding a special spot, a tree and you know, just talking about your anger. Because when you're aware of your environment, the trees, flowers, birds, you become connected. So when you become connected even in our concrete world you know, you'll see a little flower here or there, the birds, you become spiritually stronger, this um, connection to Mother Earth exists this connection exist in all of us, this being wanted to be connected to Mother Earth is there and when you are connected to Mother Earth there is nothing you and Mother Earth, try it, you know, um, when you find it you use it, there's no need for anger.

LORRAINE: I think that anger was, or not showing anger would be a way of keeping an emotional balance in yourself.

EVELYNE: I guess in Native culture, Native societies, they always practiced balance and so, ah, by not showing anger or not being angry helps to maintain that cohesiveness in the community.

LORRAINE: Dr. Brant said that gratitude is not shown. He was talking about perfection is expected therefore why would you say thank you. Reggie just told me that for Mohawks the tradition is such that you do not say thank you, because you don't undermine or elevate what someone has done for you. But that gratitude is definitely there and I have many Ojibwa and Cree people saying the same thing. It's there but done in other ways.

EVELYNE: In more subtle ways. I think, ah, gratitude when you see a person, ah, when you show or share something with a person and they show you just from by looking at them, their aura, their very, that you've made them happy or you've done something to lighten their load or whatever it was and that was the thanks.

LORRAINE: What about protocol? Dr. Brant talks about the proper way to do things. Now I know that there is no list of do's or don'ts, right or wrong in the Native life but he said that there are very demanding sets of behaviours. How we approach Elders, what we do before hunting. Okay, if you were to go out blueberry picking for example or taking something from the ground or your medicines how would you behave? Is there something you need to do to be able to take from the ground like your medicine?

EVELYNE: Definitely, um, especially when you're taking something from Mother Earth, you always put back something in return for taking something from her. In the morning or before you go out what I usually do is I smudge and I pray to the Creator because I'm gonna go out there and take, like if I wanted to go out and get sage. There's a certain time of the year that you pick sage and, um, that would be in mid-summer or early fall. So when you, ah, I always place tobacco first on the, usually on the east side because it's where life starts on the East side. And you then, well, you bend when you're breaking it off, you bend it towards the West. You don't pull it out by the roots you break it off. You know above the

roots, so that that sage will grow again. That is one of the things, ah, I was taught. Now again I know that some people pull them all out and, ah, because in the fall, because the seeds are there and they will fall back in the earth, but I was taught to break it off and you know, not to pull the roots off. So there is a protocol when you go and take stuff, and its the same even if I wanted to make a canoe. There is a certain time of the year that you do that. If I want, like I need birch-bark, um, you collect, well first of all you offer the tobacco and then this is done in mid-June, ah, because in, ah, there is different birch-bark, how do you say that different, um, like I don't know if texture is the right word or, ah, there's different types of, there's different grades of bark. So you pick it in mid-June because the sap separates the layers of bark. Like in the spring the sap goes up the trees and in the fall it goes down into the roots, so if you pick it in the fall or winter you take away that force for the tree to survive. It's the same when you, ah, tan hides. You usually do that in the spring and winter. Its not done in the summer because the heat. Insects can get on the hide and make stains, ah, stain the hide. Plus, ah, the hide in the summer is thinner. So you have to know all these things before you, you just don't go ahead and start doing all these things.

LORRAINE: What about with Elders, is there a proper way to approach Elders or do you just go talk to them whenever you feel like it? Ask whatever you want? I was taught that if I wanted something from an Elder I needed to take tobacco and offer it, not that I'm paying an Elder but that I'm making an offering in exchange for something they can give me.

EVELYNE: Sometimes, ah, that would depend. Usually yes, if you want to approach the Elder yourself that is the proper thing to do is to offer them, ah, tobacco. But on the other hand sometimes the Elder will come to you and sometimes there is just that feeling, you know, between you and the Elder. The protocol is to give an Elder tobacco if you want to talk to them.

LORRAINE: What about teaching our children? We teach according to a modelling method whereas non-Native people use a shaping method. Earlier when we were talking about non-interference you mentioned role models. So is that your belief? That that is how Native children are taught, through modelling?

EVELYNE: Oh yes. I mean like if I started watching pornos how do I expect my children to grow up, and, or if I did a lot of things like swearing and then I'm going to expect my children to grow up and not swear. Role modelling is very important in the Native culture.

LORRAINE: What about teaching your daughter to make bannock or your son to hunt? I've done interviews where men especially said to me "no one taught me."

EVELYNE: That's right. You don't, ah, teach them, you show them through role modelling. I could make bannock three or four times and my daughter-in-law, or whoever the young person is watching me, and then the next step is, you tell her its your turn to make bannock and they just do it. That's how it is.

LORRAINE: That's how I learned too. Don't you think that because we do this modelling procedure, and it takes time, we allow our children time to observe before they do things, that it would be difficult for them once they go to non-Native schools?

EVELYNE: Yeah because everything is, ah, limited to time. There are deadlines to meet, whereas in the Native culture, you know, you don't have to rush through something. As I've mentioned you could show somebody three, four times, and I think, ah, for me that's how I learned, by watching, it wasn't because somebody shaped me [laughs].

LORRAINE: Okay, that brings us to time. Dr. Brant said time is cyclical for Native people, there is no beginning and end. Time just keeps going back around on itself.

EVELYNE: Time is endless to me. It's not to be counted. Time might be measured only as required to, like, ah, okay like maybe if I wanted to take a trip from Thunder Bay back to my reserve you know, um, how long its gonna take for me to get there when I get there. It's, um, its not like what White society says or its not like when you hear somebody say, "I'll do it whenever I feel like it". It's not like that at all. It means picking, harvesting, you know, roots, berries, medicines, when the time is right. There are certain times to harvest. You're not gonna go pick blueberries in the winter. You pick rice at a certain time so, like, ah.

LORRAINE: Do you believe Native people would be prepared for when the opportunity presents itself? To be able to engage in an activity. I ask you that because we always hear about Indian time, how they do things whenever they feel like it. I don't believe that.

EVELYNE: In White society there is not enough time. There is a lot of information that has to be taken in, things to be met. Like I said, deadlines. The result of that is stress, and stress leads to illness like depression, heart attacks and all that. But then the question that comes to mind, they talk about Indian time, Indians take their time to do this, to do that. What about the White government, like the Royal Commission. How many years is this going to take? Are they on Indian time? [Laughs]

LORRAINE: Good question. [laughs] How about responsibility in terms of time. I've heard that the past, the future, the present, are all together, so we are equally responsible for our future generations as we are for our past ancestors. [Pause] Okay, so you're just not ready to answer this question on time. Okay, so I just wanted to clarify about Indian time. It is not doing things whenever you feel like it. That it is very disrespectful.

EVELYNE: No, it doesn't mean that I'm going to wait until my child burns. I think if I see my child crawling toward a fire I'm not going to wait until my child burns, or I'm not going to wait to make fire you know, go collect wood, till its freezing out you know. That's not what its about. Time is when things are the right time to do, but not to rush either and do things haphazardly. This is why they say take your time. Like supposing I'm driving down the highway or city streets here and my class is at nine o'clock and I've only got ten minutes

to get to class, that doesn't mean that I'm gonna be there at nine o'clock, because I'm not gonna get into a car accident just to get here at nine o'clock. There were other important things I had to do at my home, you know, that were more important.

LORRAINE: A lot of people seem to think that time is something that needs to be used every minute of the day. I believe that Native people take time as something that should be enjoyed.

EVELYNE: Yes it is very much. You take the time to enjoy, ah, Native culture teaches you to be aware of all your surroundings. To listen even in silence, because when things are silent you can hear a lot of other things that you can't hear when you're busy like other people, with other things. It's a time to reflect on your inner self, and ah, when the Creator [undecipherable] You know I always used to be running before. Running to go shopping, running around my house you know, ah, getting my house work done. Granted I got a lot of things done, but ah, what did it do to my body to my physical. But now that I'm taking time for myself, time to know my beautiful self, the spiritual needs, the connectedness, ah, my connection with Mother Earth, those are some of the things that I'm finding right now, the most beautiful thing -time.

LORRAINE: Now I need to say Meegwetch for your time.

EVELYNE: You know, you're not supposed to say meegwetch, you just broke one of the rules. [laughs]

LORRAINE: [laughs] Yes I can cause I just found out it means more than thank you. It also means, I honour your words.

WILLIAM WILSON

William Wilson is recognized as an Elder by the Ojibwa community at Gull Bay, Ont. On February 5th., 1997 we met in the Native Student's Lounge at Lakehead University where he allowed me to tape the following dialogue.

LORRAINE: Good afternoon William.

WILLIAM: Boozhoo [laughs]

LORRAINE: We'll start with questions about non-interference. Dr. Brant claims that Native people have a value of non-interference, and by that he means it is rude to interfere in another Indian's life. And he believed that this is the way Native people have lived and still do. They [Natives] don't believe we should interfere. Would you agree with that?

WILLIAM: Ah, yeah because long time ago they moved a place, just like a family, okay, that's why they're all over the place eh. If another family comes in or a different tribe it interferes with that family. That's why they moved the family. Which is why sometimes a different tribe comes in. That's why they had wars long time ago, especially in Minnesota or Manitoba, close to Manitoba border where they had a lot of problems with the other tribes uh. They interfered with the people in the, -ah- but it doesn't happen that much over here around this area over here. But the other families I guess that's why they had wars, something like that so.

LORRAINE: Okay, he [Dr. Brant] also said that in terms of families, you would not interfere with your own children. Your children do their own thing, [William nods his head up and down] make their own decisions, decide what they want to do.

WILLIAM: Yeah, when, when you finish teaching them, okay, so I just like, look at the wolf, if you brought up the wolf in a cage, when you let him go he's not gonna like it. That's the same thing as a child, just like you use a computer, put everything inside there like when you began to, when you start talking [pause] and began till he's a man. Some people let them go twenty one [years of age] uh, but now today they let them go soon as they're thirteen eh, and they think they're on their own already but they still, [pause] because this is where they look after them. Person grows up you teach him lot of things.

LORRAINE: Dr. Brant, -ah- I have down here that Native people learned their values through stories.

WILLIAM: Um-hum, through stories, yeah. There is many stories, I had some because I was brought up, this is what I said, when, when you were small [pause] teach you how to do things, they show you things so [pause] so that's, I guess that's today, but start teaching from, but still it's up to the parents what kind of, what kind, I mean problems they using. It's the same way as a child but you gotta start building them. Just like when you teach a dog things eh, he'll do those and it's the same thing. [pause] Because if you don't teach him this little boy, they'll just go their own way. On their own I guess, they won't know anything, [pause] to respect people [pause] for the things they say today.

LORRAINE: Do you think that giving advice to somebody, giving direct advice would be interfering?

WILLIAM: Ah, or I can't understand it. Direct, like to another person or another family. [Lorraine interjects, Yes] Yeah, if this person's willing to [pause] but it's hard to say just like in a treatment to tell this is what you gotta do, he's got his own mind. [pause] See that's what, today, a hard time cause I work [pause] with young people eh. The only thing, there's one little guy over there he was three years old, I put him in a sweat lodge. But after while again [pause] what's gonna happen when he's bout thirteen, fourteen? Gonna try to find out the world today. She might go out to drug or alcohol then he'll find out then he will stop. See that [pause] cause they lot of times to say, "way back this is how I thought." It was different the way I was brought up cause they didn't let us play with the other children, that was the main thing. Cause the other children will teach you many things, but they gotta know that [pause] it's like my Grandfather will gotta know the persons which I can play with. He's gotta know the family, the background eh.

LORRAINE: How about sharing? ["Sharing like? interjects William] The importance of sharing.

WILLIAM: It's very important that's why [pause] sometime you have a chance to talk, you share whatever you learn. But some people they keep it in, but this is why [pause] I guess when you teach the young children, what you teach them, then, they go tell other children, "this is what I learned," sharing what they passed on eh. Yup and the knowledge.

LORRAINE: What about sharing meat, food, in the old days?

WILLIAM: Yuh, in the old days this is why same as long time ago they had a ceremony on that reserve. A family to go, they have a ceremony first. And is what they do today and they go hunting they're supposed to offer something before or tobacco or [pause] so when you kill it now what they do, they put it in the fridge uh. They keep it from themselves. So next time they don't get, [any game] cause they're supposed to share that animal, whoever is in that reserve. Some people that's what they do today.

LORRAINE: They still do?

WILLIAM: Yeah, when you give you get more. That's what they say.

LORRAINE: I want to ask you about time. There are a lot of jokes about Indian time. [um-hum interjects William] I believe Indian people would be prepared and ready if an opportunity came up. I don't believe they sat back, lazy, sitting around doing nothing.

WILLIAM: Yeah, the Indian time it could be right away, it could be later. See it's, it's up to the people how they, like if they start pow-wow they're on Indian time. So when they're ready and then that's when they, that's how patience I guess this is where. Cause that's how I was brought up. I remember, I was about seventeen years old, coming down, we spent a month and a half in the bush, okay. We come down and then it got dark about mile and a half from our house. So my Grandfather said, "we're gonna sleep here." They just test me out. Patience uh. Some young kid would just go home uh but I wasn't, I stayed. This is how they teach me uh. Cause many times I see the places eh, not even a mile and a half [laughs] I can make it over there uh but I stayed.

LORRAINE: Non-Native people believe that um there is a beginning and an end to time, when the world began and when the world will end. But Dr. Brant says there is no beginning and end for Native people. It's like a circle. [um-hum, yup, William interjects] The past, the future, the present are all really here now.

WILLIAM: Um-hum yeah. Okay [pause] like they used to say, [pause] like the ripples eh, it's like a cliff or something but it's still going on. Cause that's why the [undecipherable] I mean Indian people live in a circle. What you see it's just like a tee-pee, a circle eh. The sun's in a circle. The moon's in a circle eh, that's why they never end. When you, before you were born that's where it began and the day you were born and you became a man, an old man, and then an Elder, so it's on and on and then it goes on and on and that's why it never ends. [William used his hand and fingers to demonstrate visually what he meant] Cause when, today we just live what we see, but the life began after, but then you got to finish all those hundred years.

LORRAINE: Gratitude: Dr. Brant said there is no such thing as gratitude in the Native life. I disagree with that as well because I know that it is very important that we show gratitude for everything everyday. But what I think Dr. Brant was talking about was when, for instance, when a hunter goes out hunting, you wouldn't praise him for being a good hunter, but there are other ways of thanking and praising him. Would you agree with that? I'll tell you about Rita. Rita told me that if somebody does something nice for her rather than thank them or give them a lot of praise, she'll go do something for them. ["um-hum, yeah." William interjects] and that's her way of saying thankyou, not directly.

WILLIAM: Yeah, there is many ways. It depends how that person is huh. [pause] But when you say thanks or you give them something in return that's the only way I guess. Cause like if you do something for me, I'll do something else different huh.

LORRAINE: That's the way I see gratitude. I see it all the time. I do it and a lot of others.

WILLIAM: But some people they don't see it but, it's alright. But some people don't see like others. I do many ceremonies, whatever they give me, some of them they just give tobacco and I do lot of things eh. But I don't expect anything for return. So whatever they have that how [pause] because some people they feel bad eh, they want this much to do a thing eh. So I guess everybody's different. [laughs]

LORRAINE: Okay, another one I wanted to talk about was Protocol. Historically when Native people went hunting there was a certain way, like giving gifts to the animals in exchange for the life they were giving back [um-hum, William interjects] so they would give gifts of tobacco. And when you killed the animal there were proper ways of treating the body, the bones, and he [Dr. Brant] calls that protocol. It just means proper way of behaving in different nations.

WILLIAM: Yeah, they, they were different. Some of them that killed the animal they eat the flesh eh, some of them they eat the liver eh, you gotta get it out from there and whoever is there they eat it. But back here they use the, you know, the moose the front thing, [beard] they used to hang it on a tree huh. [pause] Maybe some people they use it huh. But -ah- they usually eat em. When we do a ceremony -ah- the thing here they usually bring `im in and we usually make a feast, an offering to the animal huh. What we killed all year. We do that every spring. Because it's there for the people not for the sports huh. So we got, they used to eat everything. The head, everything what they never threw it away. The hide, the hair used for blanket on a ground. But they used everything they didn't throw away.

LORRAINE: Another way to look at protocol and um, I'm just learning this now, if you approach an Elder and you would like something from him, it is respectful behaviour to offer him tobacco.

WILLIAM: Um-hum, yeah. This is what you do, you talk to an Elder. This is what, offer tobacco.

LORRAINE: And it's not payment [William interjects "No it's not."] it's a gift.

WILLIAM: Okay, what he does after you finish talking. That tobacco he doesn't use it himself. Okay, cause the Elder's just a messenger. If I gave just like this, do you know where I'm gonna put it? I'm gonna go offer it to the Mother Earth eh, this who I'm working for, or the higher. See if you just keep this [points to his heart] whatever you ask me that's where that'll be. You got to go, just like I'm just a messenger I guess or spiritual advisor or something like that. So this is what I'm doing and then you go put it over there. The offering, but the other ones towel or something these things they could use eh. Okay but tobacco that just, sometimes it tell you the spirits tells you if you do a big ceremony every summer just about yeah, that just to start uh because you're gonna return this but yourself

you're not getting anything so this is why sometimes it doesn't go through eh. They gotta be happy what they got and also I get but I won't say anything eh. I won't say anything about it cause it's up to the person how they think eh. So some people they give you lots eh, some of them eh. So sometimes I feel like if they give me lot of things eh, just like I don't want to take it, it's too much uh. [laughs] But you gotta take it. ["Because it's the heart that's giving." Lorraine interjects] Yeah, um-hum.

LORRAINE: Another thing is eye contact, now this one I have a hard time with ["um-hum," William interjects] because I was told that when you speak to an Elder it's rude to look right in his eyes ["Yeah." interjects William] you should look off to the side, ["Yup." says William] and other people say where their home is it's rude not to look.

WILLIAM: Yeah, they think you're shy eh. But then there's all kind of ways uh. Because the only time you, if you're sick or something how they gonna know how you feel uh? But just the other way when you talk it's different again eh. [pause] Yup, because if he's gonna look at you, if you're gonna, if you start talking you might say different or you lie, he'll know right away. So this is why you gotta check. Yeah, some of them to eh, when he's teaching you, you gotta look at him eh, this is different way. Um hum yeah, but they just talking asking questions it's different again eh. Cause they not gonna, some of them not gonna answer you right away, but wait to see how much patience you got. They will call you a month later or sometime like that. [laughs] Cause I used to watch my Grandfather, he was a Medicine Man uh. So one of these old ladies come uh, he sit there almost twenty minutes before he answered, see that's how they, how they.

LORRAINE: Learn patience ["Yuh," William says] and respect. ["Yuh, agrees William] Okay another one. Dr. Brant said Native people did not show anger. ["hum," William thoughtfully interjects] That was actually an important value for Native people in the past.

WILLIAM: Yuh, okay, because that's how I see that with my Mom and Dad. I never see them argue, maybe they went and did it some other place. But this is how, if you see that fighting when you're a child eh, that's the way you gonna be because you're gonna learn that eh.

LORRAINE: So it's very important to keep your emotions in balance?

WILLIAM: Um-hum, yeah. Because if you look at the things today what's happening, if you get mad at something, you don't see. But sometimes we follow like that. Because there must be a reason why it's happened like that. Cause that's the way I usually look at it. Not to get mad for nothing. So anger's inside, because we got to do it right away because it's not supposed to be in, we got to balance everything. Cause that's why they teach you lot, respect, all those things uh.

LORRAINE: Yeah, one of the things he [Brant] said was that, um, [pause] it was necessary

in a small community, you know when people go out hunting and trapping and there are only a few of them, if you got angry and you were two hunters and you started fighting, you could starve, ["un-huh, yeah." William interjects] because you won't work together. He thinks that that's why Native people didn't show anger. And another reason is you didn't know [pause] who was listening, so the way it was explained is it could be Shamans. If you get that person mad you'd be sorry because they could hurt you. ["Un-huh, un-huh." William agrees] But another one, and I took this out of one of the legends I was reading, was that spirits are everywhere. ["Un-huh, yeah." William nods his head] So if you're really mad at somebody and you're talking about them, the spirits are learning that and ["un-huh." says William] they won't like that. Could that be?

WILLIAM: Okay, go back about a hundred years ago, maybe two hundred. Because they already know where they go eh, There's no other family's gonna come there eh, they might come and visit, not to go hunt the same place eh. They respect that eh, but ever since the alcohol come in, this is where the anger come in too uh. Because they used their medicine against people, but that's not the Indian way. This is what happening. So anyone after that person, whoever used the medicine, they gotta pay sooner or later. That's what happen today, lot of people, and another thing, that time the young children ten years old go to a vision quest, ten days uh. So they respect that knowledge they gonna get, yeah they suffered for that. But what happened is; bout fifty, sixty, seventy years ago they give "the power" to children eh. They ask those spirits so that's why they couldn't [undecipherable] they use it all and they get mad because that's where they use, the only time they use it was if your family member got murdered or some crime, because there is a law of spirits, "it's gotta be done." Even if the person is really good, the spirits will keep telling him he's gotta be respect. If something, a rape or something happened this is where they told, this is where gotta pay, this person, and they usually put him on the island, so many days and they come back. There is no anger there, that's all. [pause] So then many things, uh sometimes it's kind of explained, cause I don't think any, any of those -ah- professors know about, about Indian religion eh. It's more than that.

LORRAINE: Yeah, and when they do look at it they talk about superstition, ["Yeah." William agrees] evil and I get upset because that's not the truth.

WILLIAM: Yeah, now some of those Catholic priests began to see; it's the same way as we do here, like, Jesus went to vision quest too, it's the same way when they light the sage in church, what they use, ["incense." Lorraine prompts] um, yeah, so it's the same way.

LORRAINE: Okay, teaching is, um, when we look at the non-native world and the Native world, the Native world, your children learn through watching. ["Un-huh, yeah." William interjects] Dr. Brant called this modelling. And I asked a young thirty two year old Native man, "how did you learn to hunt?"

"Watching."

"How did you learn to fish"?

"I don't know, I hung around and I watched ["Yeah." William agrees] and then one day I was dressing fish."
and then little bit by little bit he learned. Nobody took him by the hand and showed him how to do it.

WILLIAM: Yeah, that's the same way, cause first time I got a rifle I eleven years old, uh, cause I was already big eh. I was working and then my Grandfather gotta use that in the same day when I buy that, so I didn't go to work. One of my Uncles took me to the lake and we seen a moose over there, I was just shaking. [we both laugh] First shot went right through the trees, second one got him. [we laugh] I thought he [Uncle] was gonna help me cut the moose up but he didn't. "Go ahead." I had to do it myself. And then another thing what happened, it fell in the water uh, and then after while, next day I guess, he must have tell my Grandfather and they my Grandfather he came up to me, he told me, "the next time you want to shoot up shoot him way in the bush so he won't fall in the water." Cause I was nervous this time, I want to kill the moose right away. [we laugh] So and then he tell me how to cut it up, after I did. You got to do things, just like first time I make snow-shoes eh, those laces eh, shows me how. I watched how it, and that's how I learned lot of things eh. But some people now today, they ask you to do this and they don't do anything try to show them, they ain't gonna hang on to anything.

LORRAINE: Yeah, yeah they aren't given the time to watch, take inside what you're doing. That's real important and we think a lot of times, the young children when they have to come into the school system, it's really hard on them ["yeah." agrees William] cause they're used to taking a long time. They watch and learn to do something really well, ["yeah." interjects William] but in classrooms they're told to do it "right now". So we thought that would cause problems.

WILLIAM: Yeah, that's the same way you were saying, yeah, they, everything they do like cleaning rabbits, muskrat, beaver, everything. Also the, I watch when they make that moose hide, the hardest part is soften, they use their teeth uh. [we laugh as he demonstrates how] I watch lot of things, I learned lot of things. Many things I know.

LORRAINE: Are there many young people today interested in learning?

WILLIAM: Yeah, when they're this big uh, [shows me with his hand a height of about three feet] when they're small, and after awhile and they go, but it's still there cause many of them they went to school but they go back to, I mean drinking, but they stop eh. They just wanna know, I guess, what the alcohol is. So they learn fast, just like I went there one time, school, I went back after I start asking, what is, they still remember, yeah, but they were just small, kindergarten eh.

LORRAINE: Yeah, there are people saying that Indian culture is dying.

WILLIAM: No! No! It's going up. It died 1960, it went down. It goes up, it's gonna go stronger. Because right here not too many people but there's lot of them wanna learn. Cause I been all over the place like Colorado, Minnesota, all those places, South Dakota, um, New Mexico, -ah- lot of places, yeah.

LORRAINE: So it's coming back?

WILLIAM: Yeah, everywhere!

LORRAINE: If somebody wanted to learn but didn't know, like, I wasn't raised in a traditional way I was raised in a city, I was born in The Pas, Manitoba and -ah- so I didn't get any teachings. I talk to students all the time and they're forever telling me how to do things. What would you tell students, how would they go about finding a teacher?

WILLIAM: To learn uh; yeah, there's many of them [teachers] but you gotta know which is the right one uh. Then you gotta keep after them, some of them they're gonna mislead you eh, that's another thing eh. Yeah, usually teach them then after awhile, cause you're not gonna teach somebody everything. They gotta watch once they get started, or put em on the mountain beginning eh. That's when they learn, then after while they gonna learn from there. Cause you could learn all your life. There's all different people eh, some of them they don't do this, some of them they do this, that's why the people get mixed up, too many teachers eh.

LORRAINE: I used to have a friend who moved out east. He told me it was okay to talk to one, two or three but no more.

WILLIAM: Um-hum, yeah. Cause you get mixed up after, well which one you gonna believe, which one you gonna do? One might tell you different. It depends what tribe. But they're the same eh.

LORRAINE: Yeah, I'm Cree and I noticed that what I heard back home in Manitoba is the same I'm hearing here.

WILLIAM: My Grandmother was a Cree eh.

LORRAINE: I don't speak Cree but my Mother does.

WILLIAM: Un-huh, you could learn too, it's already in there [points to his heart] all you gotta do is work on it.

LORRAINE: It's a Masters' thesis that I'm writing so is there anything you would like to tell me that could help students? Students that are interested in knowing their own way of life, and there are a lot of struggles for Native students at university.

WILLIAM: Because some of those people they use their religion right? Just like if you build -ah- a house in a swamp eh, and what will happen that house is not gonna be standing on a hard spot eh, cause when you use religion as a foundation it's pretty hard eh. Because then that's where, that's where the students they have a hard time eh, so if [pause] they take, whatever you feel I guess what you're gonna tell them. But you know, when you read a book compared when you teach from a book, it's not gonna work eh, even because you gotta do [pause] what you're teaching uh. Just like if you start [undecipherable] start reading the book you want over what you know. What you know that's how much you're gonna teach. When you know many times lot of time many people'll be the messenger, then you, there's some people that's what they try to do and then they fall off, after they'll be on the streets again. See I guess some of them, I don't know its kind of hard to say. [pause] How would you, when they ask you things eh, but -ah- it takes a long time to teach a person eh. Not just one, a couple a things you teach. And then they, how they gonna work out for some people it may not work some way eh. So they usually ask you what about their life or they're sick or something, see that's what they're asking you, or do you talk to students much.

LORRAINE: The struggle, I heard one student say it was more important that she be spiritual and that if continuing school was going to drain her, she would rather quit school. And there's a lot of conflict between what we're taught and what we feel. And the problem I run into constantly is "prove it": That's the way we are why do I have to prove it. It's hard, and sometimes I want to quit.

WILLIAM: Yeah, and when you use that spiritual way that's how. Just like right now, if I have a chance to talk to people, a bunch of people eh, right now I don't even know what I'm gonna say, because the spirit will guide you eh, will show you, will put things in your mind what you're gonna say eh. Because that's the way. The knowledge they have. Right now I don't even know what I would say. But once you start talking eh, cause I'm not gonna look at the book because it's not in there eh.

LORRAINE: So it's important for us students to be strong inside.

WILLIAM: Un-huh, yeah.

LORRAINE: Well I've really enjoyed this interview. Thankyou.

OWEN SEAN ZOCCOLE

Owen Zoccole is an Ojibwa man, in his mid twenties, who is currently attending Lakehead University. The following discussion was taped in the Native Student's Lounge at Lakehead University on February 13th., 1997.

LORRAINE: Good afternoon Owen. Could you tell me what your understanding of non-interference is and does that apply in Native life today.

OWEN: Could you explain what you mean.

LORRAINE: Okay, are children allowed to run loose, do whatever they want, make their own decisions or are those decisions enforced on them by their parents?

OWEN: Not necessarily enforced but they are there, they must be shown, not by, I guess beating, abusing a child, but those ideals or beliefs are there.

LORRAINE: Do you believe its rude to give advice?

OWEN: All depends on what you mean by advice.

LORRAINE: Do you believe that Elders would give advice in an indirect way? Like telling a story and you have to find out what it is they are really telling you.

OWEN: For me, my belief is that in today's world they give advice and they expect you to go with whatever they say. I guess its judgemental and they take away a person's ability to make their own decisions and read their own directions. Ah, more or less people nowadays are of the belief that if I don't listen to the Elder and do as they say things will happen to me, or something like that. It's, it doesn't really make sense that they believe and do what the Elder tells them. Initially, from my belief is that Elders gave you stories from the time you were born till a certain age, whether 16 or whatever its really insignificant. Whenever its your time I guess, but when you have the ability to make your own decisions you should be able to accept the responsibility for yourself.

LORRAINE: Okay, lets talk about sharing. Do you believe sharing is an important concept in Native life?

OWEN: Oh yes. Its my belief that uh, well actually it was my parents belief that we share time, or I guess quality time [laughs], ideals, thoughts and its the way to be sharing I guess.

Even the knowledge as well as objects food or something. I think that sharing is ah, at least should be today.

LORRAINE: Okay, what about anger? Do you believe that anger is an emotion that Native people should not show? In the past anger was not shown. I know today there is a lot of anger, but what I'm asking is showing anger wrong?

OWEN: I don't really think that its wrong, there's something judgemental about it being wrong to an extreme extent. Most people have faults. Most people have a wide range of feelings. Anger is one extreme, maybe different levels of anger, sort of like showing angry facial expressions, or actually abusing people whether its physically or verbally or mentally actually. And ah, actually its my belief anger was shown but not to the extent that it is today. Seems like people are angry for whatever reasons. But it was just one emotion in a wide range of people's emotions. Like I don't believe in, its not my belief that Indians were stoic, Kalija the wooden Indian, he just stood there and didn't show his feelings. People get angry, not just Native people.

LORRAINE: What could you tell me about time from a Native perspective? You know that non-Natives have linear time and Native people have cyclic time.

OWEN: Actually I can tell you from my own experience; when I was sixteen years old my father and my mother took myself and my sister out into the middle of the bush, to be, to try to, ah, build a reserve from scratch. We went to live out there and we really didn't follow a calendar. We got up in the morning, we worked to try to build log cabins, we fished, hunted, picked berries, cleared brush and actually we, I spent about two months out in the bush and had no use for time. Time, like even night and day, since you couldn't see too much only from the fire, even nighttime had no meaning. Once you're tired you go to sleep. Its more simplistic. Here in civilization I guess you have to follow a clock on a twenty-four hour basis. Its more etiquette than anything else. You're scheduled, timetable, an agenda, some a guideline that you have to follow which really does make sense. But out in nature, nature doesn't suppress you to keep up this time schedule. Whereas if you have time to do it you do it. Its not saying that you can be lazy in the bush, its a lot different.

LORRAINE: So what do you think about the joke Indian time?

OWEN: There is no such thing. Native people were the most precise, they didn't follow a calendar, minutes, seconds even days, they just, Native people didn't hum and haw, there's a certain time and they inherently knew when to do and when not to do things. By that account Native people were the most precise about following the linear time.

LORRAINE: Okay, what about gratitude? You've heard me say there is no such thing as gratitude in Native life, no that's wrong, there is no such thing as giving gratitude. I've heard that when a person does something they are expected to do the best. If you want to be a

doctor I'm not gonna praise you for being a good doctor because I would expect you to be a good doctor, you didn't set out to be a bad doctor. See Dr. Brant said perfection was expected. I believe gratitude is very predominant but it is done in an indirect way. If you did something for me rather than saying thankyou I would do something for you later.

OWEN: Well there's really two ways you can look at that. My mother, she's ah, a perfectionist beyond most perfectionists, and well, I myself find I'm good in all things that I do and ah, that has more to do with being slapped around by Mother Superior at residential school. Like my mother used to tell me stories about being in residential schools. She said that they were forced, made to be perfectionists. But on the other hand its, iike most Native people are naturally talented at a lot of things ah, residential school or whatever you use that time was used, Native people generally expected praise or good marks or whatever or medals or winning when they played a game between another set of Natives, so they played off against one another but it wasn't really praise. It was ah, more of abuse than anything else. So I guess that's what's happened since the late 1800's when the Indians were by mandate sent to boarding schools, through the Indian Act.

LORRAINE: Do you think gratitude is shown indirectly? I've had it explained that if I do something for you, you do something for me.

OWEN: Not really, its a, it should be a given, just because your talents and my talents differ so its more of a survival. I don't help you out expecting praise. I help you out because you need help. And hopefully someday you can return the favour, but I don't hold that against you or ask for that kind of, the help.

LORRAINE: I was wondering when you were going to say that. What about protocol? You know from school, we're taught that Native people had no structure, they needed the Europeans, they had no laws, they just sat around doing nothing a lot of the time. So what I'm asking you is; do you believe the Natives had a highly structured life? That there was and still is a proper way to behave in certain situations?

OWEN: Oh yeah, most definitely. If Native people just sat around the campfire telling stories, making up riddles, whatever, trying to build their self-esteem, they'd still be sitting at boarding school, residential schools.

LORRAINE: Do you believe in proper protocol in terms of hunting, picking medicine? Are there certain rules that you must observe? For instance; if you were going to pick a medicine or something from the earth?

OWEN: Well of course, first thing that you always use when you take something from Mother Earth is, you put out tobacco to thank the earth itself for letting you use whatever you use. That's just being appreciative of being able to take something from the earth. You're not really replacing it, but you don't waste it. You only take what you need you don't make

surplus. You don't, you're appreciated for it being there but you're not wasteful.

LORRAINE: What about hunting?

OWEN: Ah, for hunting, of course the same thing happens. If you have maybe thirty people or something you don't pull down fifty buffalo or moose. You don't waste resources on one time. Its ah, I can't find the words for it. Its not quite environmentally conservation, well I guess it would be conservation. Its not as scientific as that, more common sense than anything else. But the one thing that really ruined that is the fur trade of course. Or the Native people got this belief the more moose the more beaver or whatever, it was the fad at the time. If they hunted enough of that then they had enough money to buy some beads or trinkets or something. So capitalism, the ideal capitalism changed that ideal.

LORRAINE: What about in terms of Elders? Is there a proper way to approach an Elder? What if I wanted to talk to an Elder?

OWEN: You usually give tobacco but more often than not the Elder will find you. If they know what's troubling you or if you're seeking advice or something, usually the Elder would find you. My English name is Owen Sean Zoccole, but my Native name, which was given by an Elder because he had dreamed about my sister, myself and two male cousins. He had this dream where we were given a Native name. My sister is Woman of the Northern Lights, I can't pronounce it, [in Ojibwa] and my two male cousins are Men of the Northern Lights, and my Native name is, Watigamiash which is Prince of the Northern Lights. But yet he had a dream and asked us to come.

LORRAINE: Now what about teaching? Your parents took you out and you learned to hunt and trap, I take it you know how to trap? Did they instruct you on how to do it? Or did you learn through watching?

OWEN: Actually when ah, my first experience going out in the wilderness, which is for the Ojibwas, northern Ontario I guess, below the Arctic watershed, before, I guess was in the late, actually the mid 70's. It was a natural progression, we'd go with our father during August early September, this was our, myself and my sister's summer vacation so we'd bring our rubber boots and go play around the campsite while my father and uncles went rice picking. Same with blueberry picking. So you learn all these chores from first playing while the others picked or harvested, I guess, and its as you got a little bit older you'd be interested in what they were actually doing. So you'd watch, observe then maybe a year after you'd be able to do it yourself and finally they would take you out, not, without telling you but you gave your own interest on your own you know, rather than someone telling you, just by being there. Yourself, gaining your own interest and either harvesting or whatever, just by being there you will be able to naturally progress it yourself. Just by, well not being interested at first cause dad's taking a long time, I wonder what he's doing, to, hey! that's kind of neat what they're doing, to actually participating in doing it yourself.

LORRAINE: Dr. Brant calls it modelling. You model the behaviour as opposed to being shaped.

OWEN: Oh, I'm not too much for scientific but its not forcing someone to do it. Its just having them around the general place where you're doing it, which is a practise that is still done today. The, well the parents are paddling around in the canoe or out picking berries or whatever or hunting. Kids are around there not being unobserved because they leave the adults around where the children are playing, but the children themselves spark their own interest. Eventually its a natural progression in which we're there performing the tasks ourselves.

LORRAINE: Now those were the exact questions I wanted to ask you, but is there anything else, a story or anything else about your life that you would want to relate. I know the experience you had of building when you went out to the bush because I read your paper, but is there anything you would like to tell students.

OWEN: Well, as my story just went, its being there observing, you can't really tell because if you're being told its not as intriguing if you don't spark a personal interest. Rather than doing it for yourself you're doing it for somebody else, and ah, I don't know I guess my fellow Native students themselves have to go and observe themselves and spark their own interests rather than needing to be told what to do. They really realistically don't become their own person. They're basing their lifestyles and practises on somebody else's beliefs, traditions and customs, but for Ojibwa people, more specifically my mother and father, this is the way I observe them do things so this is the way I do things.

LORRAINE: Do you think the line 'there are no more Indians' or there won't be any Indians soon, do you think that's true? Do you think Native people can bring back their culture?

OWEN: I don't think it ever really left. Its still there, its just a self-fulfilling prophecy more or less that Indians got wiped out, whether its mentally or whether its physically its still out there. Its something that you can't find in a book, ah, I know from where my community is, which is Eagle Lake but we're not fixed, well from what my father told me, what he used to tell us was a piece of paper doesn't tell you where you belong your heart does. So from what I know and from the resources that I borrow from the earth I belong where the rice is, where the moose go, where rabbits, where the blueberries are. Which is generally, its about a two hundred kilometre around Upsala which goes up as far as Lac Soul to maybe Shebandowan to half way to Gull Bay, around that area which is generally the same physical character, land characteristic in that same region. And the way my mother and father speak Ojibwa it doesn't transpond to any other physical region but only to that specific area.

LORRAINE: Do you speak Ojibwa?

OWEN: No. My mother and father got, my ah, mother was slapped too much at residential

school. My father he never became an Indian, or an official Indian till 86, [Laughter] but he was stigmatized on the same account from the time he was born. He was in cultural no-man's land. He wasn't quite Italian I guess, and he wasn't quite Native.

LORRAINE: Alright, meegwetch.

The Last Harvest

Introduction

Harvesting wild rice played a significant role for the Ojibwe in the past. It held several significant meanings and roles for the survival of the Ojibwe. Rather than doing an essay, that will regurgitate someone else's life experience, I decided to express my argument that wild rice picking or harvesting still plays a significant role within the Ojibwe people by writing a factual short story based upon my own life experience.

The Last Harvest

Prologue

The rain came down in a fast and furious squall. The winds blew the grains of wild rice from its husk and into murky water. With the combination of the wind and the rain on his face like a baptism, washing the "sleep from his eyes", the man sat atop his beached canoe with the tobacco in his hand, and thought that he should not be here. It did not feel right. As his father told him in the years gone by, "the rice decides if you should pick."

Looking back towards his eager fellow rice pickers, he simply said, "We can't pick, today..."

Epilogue

From the earliest time in my childhood, I remember my father leaving towards the end of the summer to work in the bush. I was not at all sure of what he did, or where he went, but what I did know was that he would be gone a long time. Ususallu, he would return mid-September with lots of gifts or money.

As I grew older, I began to realize that he had gone "wild rice picking" or wild rice harvesting with my uncles. The areas in which he harvested the wild rice is in the areas located in a wide territory around Wabigoon, Ontario, and other lakes where wild rice grows. In my early adolescent years, I failed to recognize the significance of picking wild rice, or the importance of the rituals involved at the various stages of harvest. Wild rice is an indigenous water-growing grain to North America that grows from Manitoba to Florida. Wild rice grows in abundance around the Great Lakes region. The most suitable areas for the wild rice to grow in is shallow quiet, muddy bottomed lakes. (***)Vollum, Judith L., Vollum Thomas M., *Ojibwemowin*, Second Edition, Ojibwe Language Publishing, 1994, pp.25.

Wild rice is a grain. It forms throughout the summer and eventually matures from a milky substance, into a somewhat hardened grain of rice. It has several growth stages. Wild rice can be seen during the early parts of July. At this initial stage, the wild rice takes the form of a ling green weed that lies atop the water. From this stage the stem begins to stand up. The stem rapidly grows approximately 10 centimetres within 24 hours. The stem finally grows to approximately one metre in length. There are hulls with flowers on the bottom of

the stem when the stock is fully grown. At this early stage, insects, mainly bees, pollinate the flowers so that the grain will grow.

The following stage is where the rice continues to develop. At this milky stage, the sun ripens the milky grain. The wild rice is a milky substance within the interior of a protective husk, at this stage the sun ripens the milky grain into a hardened grain within the husk. Yet, once the grain of rice has hardened, it is not ready for harvesting. The rice may fall into the water and reseed itself. It is often desirable to let the stock replenish itself or let more grains of wild rice to grow upon the stock prior to harvesting. Even if the wild rice is ready for harvesting, the harvester must make an offering of tobacco to "the Creator". This offering is to give thanks for letting the rice pickers take the wild rice. It is usually ready to harvest in late August or early September. (**Op cit Ojibwemowin, pp.33-36)

The first time that I had ever went with my father to go rice picking was when I was about six years old. It was suppose to be a family vacation, for the most part, all I remember was having to wear my rubber boots the whole time because it was so muddy. It was late August. My sister and I have to endure the hardship of having to play in the mud for the remainder of our summer vacation. As for my mother, she waited for my father and uncles to return from harvesting the wild rice, and would have warm food ready to eat, or prepared food so they could take [it] with them to eat in the canoe. She would have went with my father, but as she would usually say when picking rice with him, "He bitches too much."

As for myself, I never knew what she met by that, and never asked. My mother would play and watch over my sister and me. At this early age, I could not grasp the significance of rice picking. At the very least, I knew that having to wait for my dad and uncles to get back to the camp was very nerving and seemed to take forever. Most often they would come paddling in just before dawn. The first symbolic meaning that I learned from harvesting wild rice was that it required the utmost patience.

The long boring days of playing in the mud lasted about two weeks, and just after Labour Day, my sister and I would be back at school wishing we were still playing in the mud. This yearly event went on until I was nine years old.

Through the course of time, my father needed back surgery, and my Uncle Carl (also my father's life long rice picking partner) had died from cancer. My father had stopped picking wild rice for a considerable amount of time due to his recovery from back surgery, and due to my uncle's illness from cancer. My uncle died when I was 11 years old.

Later that year my father asked me if I wanted to go rice picking with him. I was honoured to go with him. It will be the first time my father and I would be doing a father and son outing. Also, it would signify some much needed father and son bonding. My father was not able to do this due to the fact that his career as a transport driver kept him away from home for a considerable amount of time, and injuring himself at work he was in hospital recovering from back surgery. Not until years later did I realize that it was a right of passage from my youth to manhood. It represented a significant changing in my life, partly due to being in the stage of puberty, the changing of my physical shape, and the last year of my pre-teen years. Looking back upon my father's actions, most of the things that I have learnt about life from him were not said, they were merely expressed by his deeds and methods. From his point of view, some things were better left unsaid, and it would mean more to me to learn the

peaks and pitfalls of life myself, simply because I would be learning it on my own. Each meaning that concerned wild rice harvesting had its own significant life's teaching that was symbolic of the method and task that needed to be done in a specific and certain ways.

My father knew that from growing up predominantly in the city, that I would be, as he would call it, a "greenhorn". Therefore, he taught me how to paddle a canoe. I had to first learn how to paddle correctly. I had to learn how to do this from the front, and later from the back of the canoe. Steering the canoe from the front of the canoe is extremely important due to the fact that the rice picker sits in the back, and harvests the rice from there. Since the rice picker is preoccupied with harvesting the wild rice, they simply cannot be in control of the canoe. Therefore the paddler controls where the picker will harvest the wild rice. The area between the paddler and the rice picker is where the rice picker places the rice when they harvest it. My father made me the paddler, so he could pick the rice. It must have been a sight to see because of the weight of my father which was about 250 lbs). and the lack of weight of myself (which was 100 lbs), the front end of the canoe levitated above the water.

After practising paddling around in the canoe, my father suggested that we try to pick the rice. He said a prayer, told me to say my Indian name, and placed tobacco in the water. I steered the canoe towards the rice. I paddled for a while, and thought that this was no problem. I thought that I was doing a really good job until my father said, "It's pretty hard to pick rice in all of this open space."

Then he pointed his thrashing sticks towards the bulrushes and really high stalks of wild rice, and told me to "go over there." As I got closer, my arms began to strain with agony. In the high stalks of wild rice, the canoe really does not float on the water, and does not glide with ease. The canoe has to pulled amongst the stalks of rice in about 10 centimetres of water. I pulled and pulled with all my might.

The symbolism of this was the fact that life offers no rewards unless you choose a path of determination and perseverance that guides you to success.

From the back I heard, "It's pretty hard to pick rice when you're not going anywhere." Not wanting to disappoint him, I pulled the canoe even harder, and then it began to move. With ferocity I pulled that canoe amongst the high stalks of rice.

The symbolism of this was not remaining in a pattern of [that] its detrimental.

Again, from the back of the canoe, I heard, "It's pretty hard to pick rice when it's already knocked down." My father explained how to paddle in the rice correctly, he simply explained to me that after moving the canoe to lift the paddle in a high and wide arc over your head, and angle the paddle parallel with the rice when you bring it back down to the water. This is done so the paddler does not knock down the wild rice before the rice picker can harvest it.

This is symbolic of part-taking in a task, and doing it correctly.

Afterwards, I began to become fatigued, and needed to rest. So, I stopped. From the back of the canoe, I heard, "It's pretty hard to pick rice, when you're stopped."

This is symbolic of drive and resilience.

"I need to rest." was all I said. So, I rested and once again began to paddle. I began paddling the canoe in the same area where we had started. I found the paddling to be extremely easy for a change.

From the back of the canoe, I heard, "It's pretty hard to pick rice from where you already picked from." I looked at the stalks of rice, and noticed that there was no rice on the stalks. I changed the path of the canoe towards stalks of rice with rice on them.

This is symbolic of remembering and using what you have already learned.

I asked my father, "How do you know when you're doing a good job at picking rice?" He replied, "You know you are doing a good job when you hear the rice sing." Confused, I inquired, "What is that supposed to mean?" "It means you know you are doing a good job when the rice makes a constant cha-ching" sound on the bottom of the canoe. It sounds like the rice is singing."

After a while, my father told me to stop, he said we have to go back to the shore, because the canoe was full. All I could think of was that it was finally over, and that I could go and rest. I was excited to be finished. We took the easy way back to shore. Once there, we jumped out of the canoe and stood on shore. My father pulled the canoe on shore, took a 40 lbs rice bag, and started packing the wild rice into it. He packed four bags of wild rice. He inquired, "You ready to go again?" Hesitantly, I replied in a soft and less excited tone, "Yep."

From that point on I asked no more questions, and I heard no complains from the back of the canoe. It finally dawned on me, this is probably why my mother said, "He bitches too much." The light from the sun was fading, and twilight was quickly approaching. Finally, my father said, "Let's go back in."

We pulled the canoe on shore and packed the rice into the bags. It was one of the longest days that I had ever spent. We continued to harvest the wild rice for the next two weeks, and I seldom heard complaining from the back of the canoe. For the most part, we would pick rice on a certain lake, and then go pick rice on another lake, so the rice could replenish itself. After a few days we would take the "green" wild rice to the Processing plant at Wabigoon First Nation Reserve, where they would buy the rice and process it. The reserve has the only Native owned and operated wild rice processing plant in Canada. They place the wild rice into large revolving kilns until it is cooked. After being cooked in the revolving kilns, the protective shell of the wild rice falls off. After this, the rice is ready to be eaten. (**Mennonite Central Committee, News Service, October 26, 1994, "Canadian Wild Rice Well Received in Europe", pp.1-2)

When we came back home, the first thing my sister said was, "Are you ever black." I assumed that she meant that I had a dark tan from sitting in a canoe all day. I began my final year of grade school wishing I could hear the griping, and the singing of the wild rice from behind me.

The following year the rice had ripened more quickly because of the constant heat and sun during the summer, and it was ready to be harvest in early August. Therefore, my father and I would harvest the wild rice for most of the month. My father asked me if I wanted to be the rice picker, because he had had back surgery and found it difficult to be the rice picker because of all the movement needed to do it. I agreed.

This was symbolic of my father placing more responsibility on me, growth from my youth to manhood, and a gesture that he no longer needed to be behind me and support me.

He said, "Go out into the bush, find a cedar tree, put tobacco under the tree, say your Indian name and a prayer to the Creator, so you can take some cedar branches to carve some thrashing sticks. Cut them about one metre." The use of cedar hods two significant purposes. The first being cedar is a sacred herb that is used in ceremonies, healing, cleansing and other rituals that are significant to Ojibwe people. (**Op cit., *Ojibwemowin*, pp.95.) The second purpose of cedar is that it is light wood, thus making the task of trashing the rice easier.

I quickly set out on my task, and walked into the bush. Once there, I thought to myself, "What does cedar look like?" Swallowing my pride, I went back to my father and asked what it looked like. This was symbolic of not being afraid or unsure of not asking questions if you are unable to do things. He smiled and shook his head, muttering "greenhorn". He quickly gave a brief description of a cedar tree's appearance, and off again I went. I did what he told me to do and came back with the cedar sticks. He gave me a knife and told me to start carving the cedar sticks so it would be two centimetres thick on one end and one centimetre thick at the other. My father said that it had to be cut in that fashion so when you are harvesting the wild rice on thin stalks you are supposed to use the thin end, and when the rice is in thick bunches you are suppose to use the thick end. After I finished carving the cedar sticks, the thrashing sticks still looked rough. I asked my father if that was "OK". He told me that if I dipped the thrashing sticks into the water, and began harvesting the rice that the thrashing sticks will smoothen after hitting the stalks of rice.

Before we began to harvest the wild rice, my father gave me some tobacco, and told me to say a prayer to the Creator, and give thanks for letting us take the rice. He made me practise in sparsely located areas of the wild rice. He told me to hold the thrashing sticks firmly in both hands leaving a comfortable amount at the bottoms for balance. He told me to make a wide arc with one arm around the stalks of wild rice and ben it towards the canoe, and with the other hand knock the rice into the canoe with thrashing sticks without breaking the stalks, and to do a mirror image of what was done on the other side. Repeating the process from side to side of the canoe. I understood why he wanted me to do it because of his sore back. The rice picker does most of the work, and has to depend more upon their body than does the paddler. I practised for a few minutes in the thin areas of rice.

We were ready to start harvesting the rice for real. My father took the canoe towards the high stalks of wild rice, and said, "I want to hear the rice sing." For the longest time, all that could be heard was the constant "Cha-chinging" of the rice falling into the boat. A short time later I told my father to stop.

Still looking forward, he asked, "What the hell for?"

Confidently, I said, "Because the canoe is full."

He turned around and looked in the canoe, all he said was "Holy shit."

We bagged the wild rice in the canoe. While doing this, he said that he had never seen anyone, except my uncle Carl, harvest the rice so quickly. He told me that I was a natural rice picker. This was the first time that my father openly expressed his pride in me. We continued to harvest the wild rice and finished before dusk.

The weather was relatively favourable during the next few weeks, and we spent most of our time on the lake. From the front of the canoe, my father would tell stories of how his

father and brothers would pick rice in the old days. He would also criticize the use of rice picking machines and explain how the use of them destroyed the wild rice. Also that the use of them kept the prices at a minimum.

During the month, we were harvesting the rice and a few other rice pickers were out on the lake with us. Unfortunately, they were smoking marijuana, or what my father thought smelled like it, while they were picking the rice. Suddenly enormous rain clouds appeared, and I knew it would start raining soon. My father said watch this, and he said something in Ojibwe and placed tobacco in the water. To my astonishment, the clouds began to break up as it approached us. In the area where we were harvesting the wild rice, it remained clear, and in the area where the other rice pickers were suppose to be picking rice it was raining hard.

"How come that happened?" I asked my father. "Because you have to be respectful [of] Mother Nature and the Creator when you're doing things like this." was his response.

For the remainder of the summer, we continued to harvest the wild rice, and then selling it [at] the processing plant. After Labour Day, I would be starting High School and wished that I could stay and pick rice rather than going to school. We went back home, I went to school.

The following year we again went out to harvest the wild rice. Unfortunately, due to the wide use of rice picking machines, the price of the wild rice was fairly low. My father said that if we wanted to be competitive with the rice picking machines, we would have to pick really fast. Due to having to harvest the rice extremely fast, we never got to talk as much as we did in the past. WE remained competitive with the rice picking machines, and sold our rice. Before I knew it the summer was over, and I was back at school.

Unknowingly to both of us the following year would be the last time we went rice picking. During this year, my father would let me drive the car down bush roads, and do other tasks that would seem important to a fourteen year old.

On one particular night we had been harvesting rice, my father and I were walking along an old bush road. He suddenly grabbed my arm and stopped me. I looked at him, and he pointed upwards to the north. I looked up. In darkness of the clear summer sky, I could see strange things occurring. The "northern lights" began to spontaneously shine across the entire sky. They shone in fierce purples and greens, and other vibrant colour, that are not normally associated with the northern lights. Then, they quickly faded. Almost immediately afterwards, "shooting stars" were racing across the sky. I must have counted at least a hundred of them. The odd thing about it was that they converged to a certain point in the sky. While the "shooting stars" converged, clouds began to appear and also seemed to be drawn towards the same area in the sky. Once the clouds reached the same spot in the sky, it began to take the shape of a mortal being. The figure again changed shape, and seemed to take the shape of a demonic figure with outstretched arms that intimidated and frightened me. The clouds opened up behind the ghastly figure's area where eyes would be, the illumination made it seem like the eye's were glowing. Almost as quickly as it appeared it was over.

My father asked, "Did you see that?" Flabbergasted, all I could mutter was a single, "Uh-hum." "Do you know who that was?" he questioned. "Yep." was all my response. "Something bad is going to happen...", was all that he said, and trailed off.

Not until after we had come back home did we find out that my mother and sister had seen something strange in the sky on the same evening in town. They said the initials of each of us were spelled by the northern lights in the sky. Not until a year later did we find out the significance of what we had all seen.

The next few days we would go about doing our task of harvesting the wild rice, and picking large quantities of it. WE would go to the rice processing plant to sell our rice. For some time, we did this, until finally one day the rice processing plant notified that they had too much rice to process, and were not willing to purchase any more for a considerable amount of time. My father and I, as well as other rice pickers, were stuck with large quantities of wild rice. My father and I had about eight full 40 lbs bags.

A few elders and my father decided to process the wild rice themselves the old fashion way. To prepare the wild rice in the traditional way, we initially had to have a feast. The feast was held before we were allowed to harvest the wild rice. This is done to appease the Creator by giving thanks for letting us take the wild rice. The area where we feasted was prepared by placing blankets on the ground, and the wild rice was placed in the middle. A fire was built to the south of the feasting area. We sat in a circle around the food. We began the feast by letting the elders say a few words to the Creator in Ojibwe. Tobacco and tobacco rolling paper was handed out to all the rice pickers, and it was smoked. We each took a turn and individually give thanks to the Creator while smoking our tobacco. The significance of smoking tobacco is that our prayers and thanks rises up to the Creator with the smoke. (**Op cit. *Ojibwemowin*, pp.94.)

After giving thanks, we placed aside some food for the Creator, and food to honour the deceased. We then placed the food onto the fire so it could burn and be taken to the Creator and the honoured dead. We were then allowed to eat.

After we ate, we were ready to prepare the wild rice. First, a small fire was built. The fire would be used to parch the wild rice. At this stage of preparing the wild rice, the protective shell of the wild rice is loosened by cooking it in a large pot. The wild rice must be stirred while it is in the pot. The wild rice "pops" twice during this time (similar to corn). After the wild rice is parched, it has to be danced upon. (**Op cit. *Ojibwemowin*, pp.25.)

We had to dig a hole. The hole had to be dug until clay was reached. After digging a hole approximately one metre deep, the dry clay had to be moistened until it was pasty, and could be spread around the remainder of the hole. A small fire was built in the hole so the clay would dry along the sides of the hole. The hole would be used as a receptacle to place the parched wild rice into, and would then be danced upon. The task of the dancing would rest upon the person of the least weight. The dancer would wear knee-high moccasins while dancing. The dancing on the wild rice would further loosen the husks from the rice. Dancing upon the wild rice would consist of standing upon it and moving one's feet in a twisting motion. (**Op cit. *Ojibwemowin*, pp.25)

After the wild rice would be danced upon, the final stage of preparing wild rice was winnowing. The wild rice would be placed in a large tray that would be made of birch bark. The rice would then be tossed into the air several times until the remainder of the husks would fall away. (**Op cit. *Ojibwemowin*, pp.25) After this, the wild rice would be ready for regular cooking so it can be consumed. In this final stage, the wild rice is preserved and could

stay fresh for years.

Our eight 40 pound bags consisting of "green" wild rice was reduced to two 40 pound bags of "clean" wild rice. With our "ready to eat" wild rice, we went home. I then began school. My father, who changed his occupation from truck driver to social worker, had become disgruntled with his band and sought change. He ran in the band elections during the fall of 1987, and became one of the band councillors of Lac Des Milles Lacs First Nations. During the summer of 1988, we moved onto the northern reserve lands. (**Lac Des Milles Lacs First Nation was wiped out from typhoid fever around the turn of the century with the exception of a few people who were fasting. The descendants of the surviving inhabitants are spread across Canada. No-one from the 500 plus band list resides on the reservation. The lands set aside for the reservation are located near Upsala, Ontario. The southern lands are located on Lac Des Milles Lacs about 20 kilometres south of Upsala, and the northern lands are located 20 kilometres northwest of Upsala.) We fully supported my father in his plans to re-establish the vacant reservation by building log cabins to signify a return of the inhabitants, and to make the Department of Indian Affairs take notice of the reserve. During the course of the summer my father became "acting" Chief of the band, and more people moved onto the reserve to help build log cabins. In mid-August, the reserve was flooded when Boise-Cascade released water from a dam. Up until this time, no-one knew that this happened to the reserve on a yearly basis. We were rescued.

A week later it was rice picking season, and while at the annual Wabigoon First Nations Pow-Wow which is usually on Labour Day, my father told me that the wild rice was really good this year. Feeling as fatigued as I was after the month that we had endured, he jokingly asked if I wanted to go rice picking.

"You're nuts." was all I said.

My sister and I went back to school, and boarded out. My parents returned to the reserve and continued to build log cabins. Shortly afterwards my father died from a sudden heart attack brought on by the pneumonia that he had caught during the flood. The flood occurred one year after my family had all seen that premonition in the sky.

For years I never went out and picked the wild rice. I initially never accepted my father's death, and in customary fashion of living in denial, honestly felt that my father never really taught me anything.

For a few years, mostly during the month of August, I found myself reminiscing about my father and the things that I had learned about life from him during those times that we harvested the wild rice. He always spoke of the similarities of life and picking wild rice. The goals and values of life can symbolically expressed through the lessons that I learned while harvesting wild rice with my father. Furthermore, depending on the circumstances, the maturity and self awareness of the individual, the same symbolic gesture can be used to represent other things in life or hold more than one significance to life in general.

Prior to Prologue

Knowing that it was the only significant bond with his long since departed father, and not wanting to invade upon the bond that they had shared. Unsure, he needed some sort of

symbolic gesture or interaction that would guide his decision of whether or not to intrude upon the past, or to venture into the future. He wanted to know if he should make money with his new partner, his brother-in-law, and the sons of his uncles, or wait until he could teach his own son. He needed to know. He pondered these questions before he slept reminding himself of the last harvest...

Conclusion

In retrospect, when looking back upon the events of my adolescence, and prior to my finally realizing the utter importance of the things that I had learned in my early 20's, I can say this of wild rice harvesting, and not cloud it with sentimental value of sharing time with my father, it definitely holds a significant role and should remain a fixture within the Ojibwe people.

It initially played the role of survival in the Ojibwe culture as a means of physical survival. Now, the same role of survival could be said for the spiritual survival of the Ojibwe people and for the generations to come. This essay/story has dealt with the significance of harvesting wild rice, and the significance that it holds in the Ojibwe society today.

—Story by Owen Zoccole. See previous interview.

APPENDIX II: Form Letter for Consent**April 1996****385 E. Brock Street
Thunder Bay, Ontario
1-807-625-6347****Hello!**

My name is Lorraine Brundige, I am a Cree Metis woman from The Pas, Manitoba. At this time I am working on a Master's Degree in Native Philosophy at Lakehead University. The area of study is Native values. The purpose of this research is to document traditional Native values in a manner that will identify what these values are and their significance to traditional Native life. It is the goal of this research to demonstrate in a respectful manner the importance of Native values in order to promote an understanding and respect for the Native way of life. I understand and respect the importance of the sacred knowledge and have designed the research to ensure that this knowledge will be protected to the utmost.

I am requesting to meet with you and listen to what you may share on Native values. This would be a part of my learning as I am searching to understand what the values are for Native people and how this relates to my future work in Native philosophy. Although I have a few questions in mind, I am open to just listening and learning.

I would ask permission to use a recorder as I would want to listen again and again to what is being shared, however, at any time upon your request, I would turn off the recorder. In addition, I would not print your name or give your identity unless you would want it to be included in the final thesis. Also you may withdraw from this study at any time.

I am requesting your help to ensure this study has meaning. In doing so, certain risks may be involved. I may be breaking the oral tradition of our people or I may misinterpret the teachings. The greatest risk is that what is contained as sacred in thousands of years of history may not be selected in a written document.

The benefits of this research will be to promote respect and understanding for traditional Native values in the non-native community. Another benefit will be to inform Native students raised in non-traditional environments. These students will have access to information on their culture that stems from the experiences of traditional Natives and Elders.

The confidentiality of all participants will be insured. The participant's name unless otherwise authorized will not be printed in the thesis nor will their identity be revealed. All information will be stored in a secured area. In accordance with regulation 3.2.2 of the Research Integrity

Policy, this data will be securely stored for seven years. Due to the cultural sensitivity of this study, I will store the data in a safety deposit box where access is limited to myself.

The completed thesis will be made available at the University library or the Department of Philosophy. If you would like to have a copy of our discussions I would be able to mail it to you. Thank you for your help and kindness.

Lorraine Brundige

CONSENT LETTER

I _____ am an Elder from _____
 I have read the letter which explains the work Lorraine is doing on Native values and have agreed to spend time with her. She has asked to use a tape recorder which I have agreed to but may ask to have it turned off at any time.

I understand that my time will be given voluntarily and that confidentiality is ensured and my name may be included only on consent. I have also been told that the information will be available at the University through the Department of Philosophy or the University library.

I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from participating in this study. I also understand the risks and benefits involved. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at anytime, even after signing this form.

Signature of Elder

 Date

I would like my name added to the thesis

Yes _____ No _____

I would like to have a copy of the interview

Yes _____ No _____

Note:

The confidentiality of all participants will be insured. The participant's name unless otherwise authorized will not be printed in the thesis nor will their identity be revealed. All information will be stored in a secured area. In accordance with regulation 3.2.2 of the Research Integrity Policy, the data will be securely stored for seven years. Due to the cultural sensitivity of this study, I will store the data in a safety deposit box where access is limited to myself.

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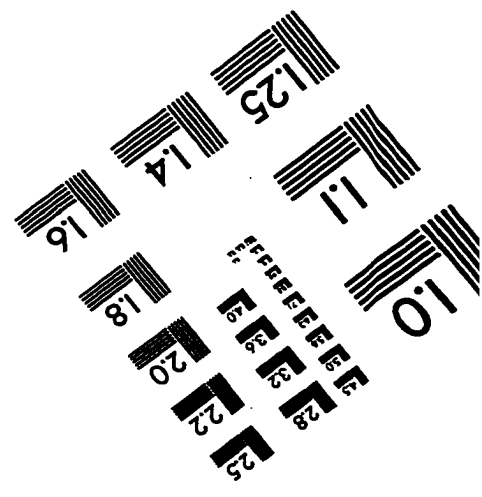
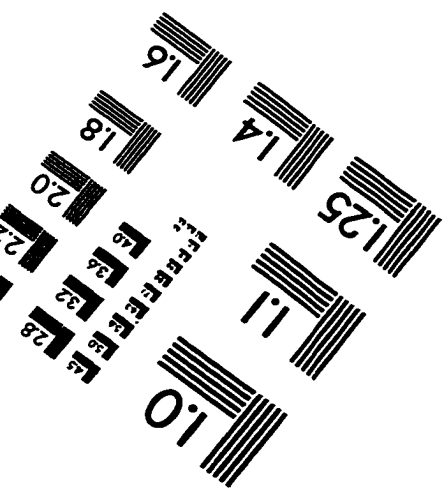
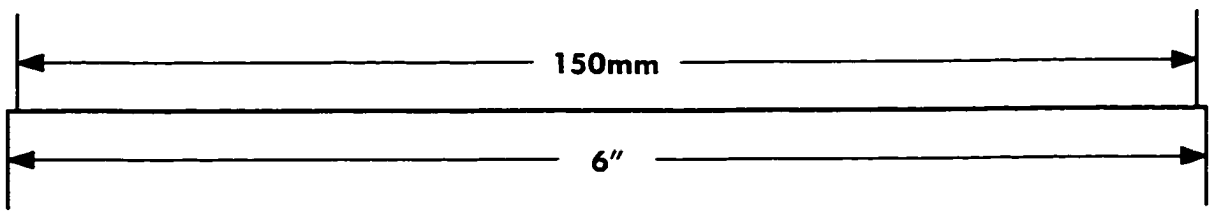
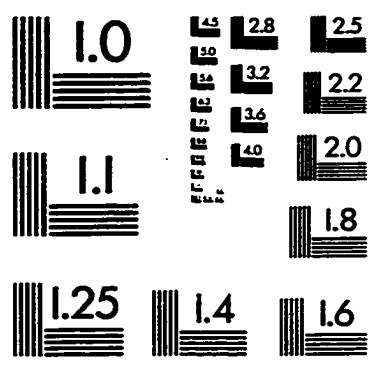
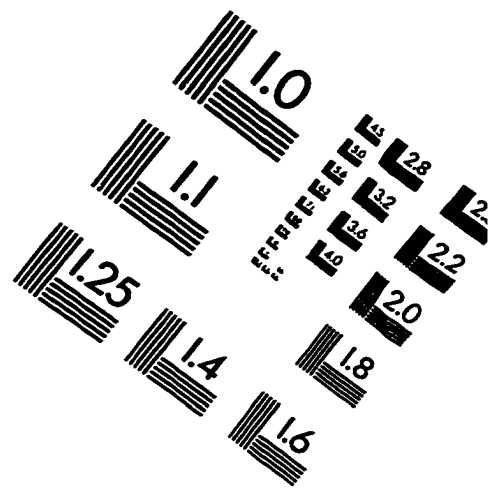
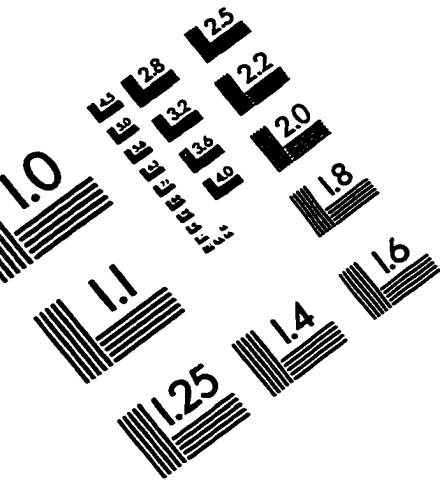
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