

the quint

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EDITORIAL

I still recall my first glimpse of life in northern Manitoba. Oddly enough, it was on a warm spring night in 1999 in a Toronto cafe, where three very different writers were reading from their latest works. One was Karen Connelly, who is probably best known for her sensual love poems, inspired by Greece and its people. Another was Christopher Dewdney, the surrealist from southwestern Ontario, whose poetry collapses time and space in wonderfully mind-bending ways. The third was the playwright and newly-minted novelist Tomson Highway, who was reading from his first work of prose fiction, *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. I remember that he read several passages, including one with the torch-song-singing diva in the guise of an arctic fox—or should I describe that trickster-figure as an arctic fox in the guise of a torch-song-singing diva? The title of Highway’s novel, of course, refers to an event in the annual Trappers’ Festival here in The Pas, in northern Manitoba, in which young ladies compete for the coveted Fur Queen crown. On that warm night in Toronto, each reading was an impressive journey; taken together, they were extraordinary.

Now that I’ve come to call The Pas home, as the place where I live and work, I often think back to that night. And reading over the various pieces for this edition of *the quint*, I’m reminded of that night because this issue seems to take the reader on a similarly extraordinary journey: while elements of northern Manitoba can be found throughout as you scroll from one page to the next, you will probably find yourself collapsing time and space in wonderfully mind-bending ways.

Samuel Veissière’s playful (meta)pastiche, “North and South in the Life of Pierre S. Weiss”, takes

you on an accelerated journey where cities, countries and geographic locations become questions rather than positions on the map. In “Ontology,” David Kattenburg wonders about his identity in a shape-shifting world. Then, in Alex Boyd’s “Uncertain, Texas”, we find “There’s a question,/ somewhere on the halcyon surface of Caddo Lake,/ where mooring was uncertain for steamboats,/ and apocryphal men shot down while swimming.” And in John R. Minnis’ article “Giving Voice to the Silent Student: Implications for Teachers of Aboriginal Students at the University College of the North,” we encounter another kind of uncertainty, one that many teachers will recognize—the uncertainty of silence. And yet, in silence, other responses, other journeys, can begin to take shape, for both the students, and for the teachers of those students.

As this is only our second issue here at the *quint*, we are happy to have you on the beginning of this journey. Who knows where it will lead?

Jacob Bachinger
Poetry/Fiction Editor

Ontology

by David Kattenburg

Fifty-five years into a life of self-assurance, it occurs to me – late in the game – that I’m not sure who I actually am. Am I the same one I used to be – just an older version? Who was I then? Who did I *think* I was? Who am I now? What am I becoming?

I am a product of my genome, plus all those things I was exposed to when I was a kid – emotional, chemical, physical, cultural, spiritual, societal, political; the food I ate, the TV I watched, the arguments I overheard, the crises that erupted around me; the absorbed residue of being born in America, its clinging myths and neuroses; the bouquet of car fumes and humidity on a Manhattan summer day; the endless list of pointless things I learned in school; the twinge in my back as I grabbed my head and ducked beneath my desk; the monotonous chant of the Pledge of Allegiance; the taunting words “It’s a free country!”; the idle command “Just be happy”; the act of leaving home.

I am a product of countless moments lived through or witnessed: crawling on a hard floor in Flushing; listening to my aunt's tar-and-nicotine croak; John Kennedy waving at me in the distance; my father smashing his twin-lens reflex camera at the New York World's Fair; girls jumping up and down and screaming at a Beatles movie; Jimmy Stewart stammering on a Broadway stage; Walter Cronkite on a black and white TV, describing defoliated jungle; kids boasting about Cream tickets in the locker room; Nixon rubbing sweat off his lip; someone going off to Woodstock; kissing a girl for the first time as she walked her dog; driving trucks into Poland; the crush of a Sandinista rally; standing on stage in a darkened room; falling in and out of love.

I am a product of the experiences of my parents – refugees from old to new, survivors of mass murder; abused, happiness beyond them. My father had escaped, left others behind. He found good work, in a succession of banks, but hated his job and new country. So did my mother. She suffered from thoughts, read Zola in French, painted pictures and ate things off the floor. My father talked to himself and hated the war.

From all these ingredients, bleak and extraordinary, something unique emerged: a

happy life; slowly changing, steadily uncoiling, unpredictable, but miraculously logical every step of the way. I grew older but was always youthful, likeable. I looked like Cat Stevens. Young people were always my age, more or less. I was a traveler, a bohemian, a *bon vivant*, answerable to no one but myself. New York, Hamilton, Geneva, Frankfurt, Strasbourg, Managua, Esteli, Brandon.

Then, as life's contrail drifted languidly behind, evaporating in the distance – turning thirty, turning forty – something began to change. It dawned on me that I was as old as my parents were when I was young. I began feeling as if I were they, or they were inside me, wisps of soul lodged in my tissues. I had inherited their memories and instincts. Their scars were my scars, just fainter.

It dawned on me that friends were vanishing one by one: a house fire, an asthma attack, a car accident, heart attack, cancer, AIDS, sucked out to sea, suicide. Someone vandalized the Manhattan skyline. Kids screamed and swore at me. Not everyone liked me.

Now it's completely clear. I grow old. I hate waiting in lines. I grow cranky and

obsessive. It's harder just to say what I think clearly and simply, just to spit it out. I can't have what I want all the time. Restless legs torment me. I don't fall asleep till late. A front tooth is loose. My pee dribbles. Sometimes I feel I'm in another time and place.

It's like stepping off a train, onto a platform. The train pulls out and I've neither a return fare nor a schedule. Maybe I should head off in another direction, just as I always have. Parents are gone. No kids. Where's home? Where does my dust belong? Where are my harmonics on the guitar neck of life? New York? France? Holland? What do I need to be happy? Money doesn't count. Love confounds.

But, squinting through the spray and foam, amazingly, I realize I continue to bounce on the crest of a wave. Everything that came before, all the genetic coding and life that have made me who I am, all the matter and energy I've channeled for the past half century, continue to vibrate beneath the surface of my skin and soul.

So I guess there's no cause for confusion, doubt or alarm. The damp chill of a mid-winter evening smells the same as it always has. Events around me are as momentous

and exhilarating as ever. People communicate with each other from opposite ends of the planet. News spreads like wildfire. Age-old habits become unacceptable. Unpopular ideas gain credence. Primitive tribes manage to survive. The Big Bang is re-enacted, in a huge hole inside the Earth. The genetic code is dissected. Humans inspect their own creation. The genes of a fish are inserted into a tomato. Men become women and women become men. Earth shivers and shakes. Great cracks shoot across ancient ice sheets, soon to slip into the oceans, drowning islands and cities.

In short, life evolves, expands and contracts, and I am a part. When the wave beneath me suddenly subsides, I will land on soft sand. I needn't ask who I once was or am today; I just need to listen, watch and be. Earth's agency is my own.

From “Bête de la Neige” by Patricia Kolb

Little Legend

The origin of such a creature remains
Uncertain. A woman who
Loved her children after a fashion.

Loved their shame: when
She caught them in the wrong.
And they became thin and hungry

While she grew fat. First there were
Three children, then two. One
Morning none. Fat she grew.

Tracks in the Snow

Follow the snow-shoe tracks
Across the field, over the frozen lake

And into the heart of the forest,
Where they halt, abrupt-like.

No sign of a struggle, no trace
Of blood. Still, you feel unnerved,

As if there had been such swift
Surprise. That he'd given up immediately,

Hopeless. What could he have done?
Her appetite, white in tooth and claw.

He dropped his hands. Gave in. And she
Swallowed him down, snow shoes and all.

There Comes a Night

Such a creature provides special punishment:
Like the vampire or the werewolf. As a warning.

You realize this, and so you promise yourself
To be good when you're in town. Not to drink (too much)

And to leave the girls alone, especially the bad ones,
And the ones you know have husbands. And not to fight either.

And to save some money. To be good, to be good.
But it's hard.

Then, one night, she finds you.

In behind the Legion. By the trapline.
In your tent. In your rented room, some dingy place.

And all the stars shine overhead, cold and bitter
As you cry like a gospel choir, like the born-again.

Winter Blues

All is hunger
In the winter.
The birds dart through
The woods for a
Small share of seeds.

The wolves nudge cold
Bones, well-chewed, and
The wind looks for
Leaves to rustle
Finding nothing.

Who grows fat on
Lack? Who bloats when
Others shrivel?
Look behind the rock,
Between the spindly

Trees, by the shore
Of the iced-lake:
You'll see her there
Waiting, watching.
Black lips, dead bird
In hand, in mouth.



Decolonizing Indigenous Restorative Justice is Possible

by John George Hansen

The colonial world is a world cut in two. The dividing line, the frontiers, are shown by barracks and police stations. In the colonies it is the policeman and the soldier who are the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesman of the settler and his rule of oppression. (Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*.)

This paper aims to discuss Indigenous restorative justice in relation to the concept of decolonization. The notion of decolonization has been an important factor in the renaissance of Indigenous justice traditions. This paper examines the idea that Indigenous people are moving toward decolonization of their inherent justice models in order to resolve conflicts and promote healing in the community. What Indigenous people found in the exploration of decolonization became the foundation for the renaissance of restorative justice. The major assumption of this work is that Indigenous communities can move toward healing by identifying and re-establishing justice processes based on ancient customs and ways of knowing. For Indigenous people, healing and restoring relationships are crucial to the justice process. Some of

the salient features of Indigenous restorative justice are repairing harm and healing rather than revenge and punishment; a process that includes rather than excludes the community; and the presence of a spiritual dimension in the justice process (Yazzie & Zion, 1996; CFNMP, 2004; Ross 1996).

Indigenous perceptions, such as Smith's (1999: 39) understanding of "decolonization as being about centering our concerns and worldviews and then coming to know and understand theory from our own perspectives and for our own purposes", reveal that it is imperative that Indigenous people have a voice in order for decolonization to unfold. Indigenous restorative justice systems are evident in our tribal narratives, and these widespread narratives are recognized in modern scholarship. Friedrichs (2006: 449), for example, has stated that "it is now commonly noted that restorative justice is rooted in the most ancient and enduring practices of indigenous peoples in what in the modern world has come to be defined as crime". As a rule, restorative justice offers an Indigenous methodology for healing victims, offenders, and communities. In Canada, for example, some First Nation communities have already begun to experience positive change as a result of recovering aspects of their justice traditions. A prime example of this is Hollow Water First Nation (Ross, 1996; Green 1998). Restorative justice involves returning to the First Nation teachings that

were overrun by colonial powers as State justice was brought in to mediate the conflicts in our communities.

Decolonization of tribal justice, therefore, involves countering the State's judicial ideas and practices. However, in order to do so, one must examine the structures and processes that promote restorative justice. Smith (1999: 155), a prominent Maori scholar of Indigenous decolonization methodologies, observes that “[r]estorative justice in Canada, for example, applies the concepts of the ‘healing circle’ and victim restoration which are based on indigenous processes ... and as such ... [r]estorative programs are based on a model of healing rather than punishing”.

During the latter twentieth century, Indigenous nations began challenging the State's justice system. The last few decades have seen Indigenous peoples the world over struggling to decolonize their societies, struggling for political autonomy, and struggling to recover the interpretation of their justice traditions. State-run retributive justice is not only inappropriate, but also detrimental to Indigenous peoples.

“Indigenous peoples across the world have disproportionately high rates of imprisonment, suicide and alcoholism,” wrote Smith (1999: 155), who maintains that “Western health has failed to benefit indigenous human beings”. Indigenous justice systems were overrun by colonial powers and the result was astonishing social disasters

in every subjugated land.

Since the rise of restorative justice, the Indigenous struggle to reclaim their justice traditions has been a topic that concerns criminal justice, social justice and Indigenous justice. For the colonized, a retributive model of justice has dominated for too long. Thus, it is understandable that Indigenous communities are increasingly moving toward re-establishing their own distinct justice systems based on their own cultural values and knowledge. In the context of restorative justice, there is a focus on countering the mainstream's punitive justice philosophy. Just how far that counter-justice extends, however, has been a matter of interest for those who want to retrieve Indigenous justice ideas and practices from a legacy of colonialism.

All over the world, current restorative justice initiatives are offering hope and promise for Indigenous communities and society at large. In New Zealand, for example, Considine (1995: 99) observes:

A new paradigm is operating in [New Zealand], which is very traditional in its philosophy, yet revolutionary in its effects. A restorative philosophy of justice has replaced a retributive one. Ironically, 150 years after the traditional Maori restorative praxis was abolished in Aotearoa, youth justice policy is once again operating from the same philosophy.

This passage demonstrates that the Maori are in the process of rescuing their inherent justice methods from a history of colonization. However, bringing Indigenous

restorative justice systems back into the justice system is not an easy task; the Western world is pervaded with Eurocentric philosophies, which do not approve of Indigenous thought, and therefore undermine the validity of Indigenous justice. There are Western scholars, espousing colonial philosophies and writing from a Eurocentric interpretation, who discredit Indigenous restorative justice ideas and practices. For example, Daly (2004: 62) argues that Indigenous restorative justice is a “myth”. To elaborate, Daly composes a conflicting account of conferencing between the Maori and State justice officials in New Zealand in which her interpretation is Eurocentric:

A common, albeit erroneous, claim is that the modern idea of conferencing ‘has its direct roots in Maori culture...’. The real story is that conferencing emerged in the 1980’s in the context of Maori political challenges to white New Zealanders and to their welfare and criminal justice systems. Investing decision-making practices with Maori cultural values meant that family groups (whanau) should have a greater say in what happens, that venues should be culturally appropriate, and that processes should accommodate a mix of culturally appropriate practices. New Zealand’s minority group population includes not only the Maori but also Pacific Island Polynesians. Therefore with the introduction of conferencing, came awareness of the need to incorporate different elements of ‘cultural appropriateness’ into the conference process. But the devising of a (white, bureaucratic) justice practice that is flexible and accommodating does not mean that conferencing is an Indigenous practice” (Daly, 2004: 63).

Here, Daly suggests that conferencing is not based in Maori culture and therefore that the Maori people are not to be credited for the resultant conference process that emerged out of their struggles to bring about a culturally appropriate restorative justice

initiative. This despite the substantial evidence that restorative justice conferencing was indeed used by the traditional Maori long before the 1980's. Hadley (2006: 19) acknowledges that the Maori have always had their own system of justice:

Maori Justice, for example, is completely integrated into the communal life and does not constitute a separate authority which intrudes when needed for public order. It has always been a way of doing justice built on the belief that socially harmful behavior (*hara*), whether of a criminal or civil nature in Western terms, had been caused by imbalance to the social equilibrium.

Hadley supports the idea that the Maori people have always had a restorative justice system that included the community. He also points out that a separate authority, that is, the state, was not part of the original Maori justice system.

Consistent with the colonizers' mandate to dominate Indigenous people is the Eurocentric presumption of saving the people from themselves. For example, Daly (2004: 102) goes on to argue that Indigenous restorative justice initiatives are detrimental to the colonized in the sense that restorative justice historicity "rewrites the history of justice practices by celebrating a return to premodern forms, and it recolonizes indigenous practices by identifying them as exemplars of restorative justice". However, in reality, this statement by Daly serves to sustain and promote the colonization of Indigenous people, in this case the Maori. Such discounting of Indigenous ideas is typical of colonial philosophies that relegate any positive aspects of

Indigenous culture, traditional knowledge and intellectual thought to the realm of ‘myth’ or fiction. After all, Eurocentrism serves to inferiorize the colonized.

Indigenous people should question Western philosophies that discredit Indigenous ideas and practices and thereby disregard the power of Indigenous knowledge. To put it plainly, Smith (1999: 1) is appalled by the appropriation of Indigenous knowledge in the dissemination of Western claims on Indigenous issues:

It angers us when practices linked to the last century, and the centuries before that, are still employed to deny the validity of indigenous people’s claim to existence, to land and territories, to the right to self determination, to the survival of our languages and forms of cultural knowledge, to our natural resources and systems of living within our environments.

Although many Indigenous people maintain that restorative justice is an important aspect of traditional culture, Eurocentric thought does not allow for alternatives and thereby does not recognize the validity of Indigenous philosophies.

However, it is well documented that restorative justice was widespread among many Indigenous societies prior to colonialism. In an example of pre-colonial restorative justice in Canada, Green (1998: 30-1) documented that:

Ojibwa and Cree decision making involved the participation and consent of the community at large. Behavior was regulated by ostracism, shame and compensation for the victim’s loss, even if only symbolic compensation were possible. Elders undertook the regular teaching of community values and warned offenders on behalf of the community. They publicly banished individuals who persisted in disturbing the peace. Elders might undertake to mediate dangerous

disputes and to reconcile offenders with victims. In cases of grave threats or such serious offences as murder, physical punishment and even execution of the offender might be undertaken either by the community or by those who had been wronged. In all instances the sanctions of tribal elders was necessary.

This passage illustrates that the restorative justice approach was being used in traditional Ojibwa and Cree societies. Although Western scholars usually interpret sanctions such as ‘banishment’ or ‘execution’ to be methods of punishment, in reality these sanctions do not serve to punish but rather function to ensure the survival of the Aboriginal community and this is reflected in our tribal narratives. For example, *The Report of the Commission on First Nations’ and Métis People* (2004) cites an unidentified Aboriginal speaker who commented on the traditional ways of doing justice:

Justice for Aboriginal people has always been the preservation, the restoration of the primary imbalance within the lives of people. Justice has not been individualistic; justice has been for the collective whole. Sanctions have been used within Aboriginal communities, that is true, but that has been used to maintain balance, to bring it back. Sanctions are used in the Euro-Canadian system to punish, to get even. As an educator I have never known of an instance where I was able to teach anyone anything by punishing him (as cited in CFNMP, vol 1, p 4-1).

This statement reveals the nature and purpose of tribal sanctions used by Aboriginal people. It also indicates that the interpretation of justice sanctions between Aboriginal and the mainstream Euro-Canadian perspectives are of two different and distinct understandings; the Aboriginal emphasizes healing and the other punishment. Yazzie

& Zion, (1996: 160) agree that the purpose of Indigenous Navajo law is “not to punish or penalize people, but to teach them how to live a better life. It is a healing process that either restores good relationships among people or, if they do not have good relations to begin with, fosters and nourishes a healthy environment.”

One way contemporary Aboriginal communities are moving toward decolonization of justice is by conducting healing circles that emphasize a critical analysis of Aboriginal life experiences and traditional knowledge. According to Stuart and Pranis (2006: 121), peacemaking circles go back to a time when survival depended on resolving conflicts in ways that strengthened relationships in human communities; they observe that “peacemaking circles are profoundly indebted to First Nation teachings”. Stuart and Pranis (2006: 122) maintain that “the circle process has evolved a long way and continues to evolve. It belongs to no one. It belongs to everyone”. Although there is no single “right way“ to conduct a peacemaking circle, Stuart and Pranis (2006: 126-7) identify the following unique characteristics common to circle processes:

They:

- are a safe and respectful place for dialogue;
- build relationship before discussion of the core issue;
- constitute an invitation to express oneself emotionally and spiritually as well as mentally and physically;

- use a talking peace to create safety and freedom;
- intentionally use ceremony to create a protected space for truth telling;
- are usefulness [sic] as prevention as well as intervention;
- have the capacity for dealing with muddy, confusing situations that may not have a clear victim and offender;
- give attention to underlying causes;
- have the facilitator as a member of the group, not as an outsider who will dictate the final solution.

Peacemaking circles are rooted in First Nation traditional teachings and culture.

The circles are a reflection of the culture of the Aboriginal people who have a restorative understanding of justice. Within the context of the medicine wheel philosophy, the circle needs to be balanced, and therefore the participants create the process for consensus. The peacemaking circles demonstrate the restorative justice ideology of a people who have a restorative consciousness of justice.

Peacemaking circles are widely recognized to be the culturally relevant approach to handling wrongdoing, particularly for Aboriginal people (Monture-Angus, 1994; Turpel, 1993; Ross, 1996; Green, 1998). Peacemaking circles are also known as healing circles or sentencing circles, and generally function by having the offender face the victim. This face-to-face interaction encourages the offender to understand the impact of the harm on the victim. The circle encourages the victim to tell the offender and the community of participants how they are affected by the offence. What is more, the participants can give recommendations concerning how the offender and victim might

be directed toward a healing journey (Green, 1998; Johnstone, 2002; Ross, 1996). The power of the healing circles lies in bringing together victims, offenders and their supporters to discuss the nature of the conflict. These concerned community members try to get to the bottom of the problem by dialoguing on what went wrong, in the hope of preventing further incidents from happening (Green, 1998, Ross, 1996).

John Martin, a Cree Elder from Mosakahiken Cree Nation (Moose Lake), explains that the traditional Cree justice system privileged healing over punishment. The rationale for this becomes clear when one understands that the formation of Aboriginal communities emerged out of family groups who ensured their protection and survival by staying together; and this development is reflected in our oral histories. When a member of the community committed a wrong, and was endangering the community, the people came together to deal with the wrongdoer. In order to restore harmony with the wrongdoer and his or her community, it was necessary, in Martin's words, "to get to the bottom of the situation" (personal communication, January 19, 2007). To the Cree people, justice can be described with the word *opintowin*. This Cree concept translates as a process that "involves the principles of repairing harm, healing, restoring relationships, accountability, community involvement and community ownership". It means, in other words, "lifting each other up" (CFNMP,

2004: 4-1). With this Cree concept, restorative justice becomes possible. As with many other Indigenous people, the Cree peacemakers explored and analyzed the realm of justice as healing.

Generally, community involvement and healing are crucial characteristics in an Aboriginal justice process. One facet of Aboriginal restorative justice is the sentencing circle with its emphasis on restoration and healing rather than revenge and punishment. It is a peace-making process with a spiritual dimension that leads to inclusion of, rather than exclusion from, the community (CFNMP, 2004; Ross, 1996; Yazzie & Zion, 1996).

Some Aboriginal communities that are moving toward decolonization are demonstrating that healing is more effective and appropriate than punishment. For example, in an influential book, *Returning to the Teachings: Exploring Aboriginal Justice* (1996), Ross documents the development of the Hollow Water sentencing circle program. It emerged not from the “devising of a white bureaucratic justice process” as Daly suggested in the Maori context, but rather from the traditional knowledge of Aboriginal people who recovered their inherent healing practices to address wrongdoing in their community. The community of Hollow Water, Manitoba initiated the healing circles and then presented the process to the courts, which took an interest

in them. In short, the circles are initiated when the offender is charged and continue to the day of his or her court hearing. During that time the Hollow team documents and presents information to the court as to the nature of an offender's behavior, in terms of expressing remorse, making reparations and staying out of trouble, which eventually become part of the official justice process. Today, the Hollow Water community, victim, and offender continue to influence the final judgment of the courts (Ross, 1996: 192-193). Ross continues:

Hollow Water never held itself out as a 'model' of some sort to be copied across the country, and I don't mean to present it in that light. What it has taught me however is that a group of people determined to create a healing response in their own way can fundamentally change how justice is done in their community.... (211-212)

This suggests that each Aboriginal community must determine its own justice model based on its own needs and values. In other words, Hollow Water does not claim to be the prototype that every Aboriginal community must follow. In Aboriginal justice, no community dictates the process for all other communities. However, the Hollow Water initiative demonstrates that Aboriginal people know what they are doing when they channel their energy toward healing rather than punishment; and the criminal justice system ought to respect and learn from that approach. Hollow Water also demonstrates that the largely ineffective criminal justice system established by the

colonizers improves only when Aboriginal people have a voice and are included in the justice process.

The Challenge of Decolonizing Restorative Justice

One of the challenges in decolonizing restorative justice initiatives is that it is routinely perceived as being soft on crime and lets offenders “off the hook”; that is, it allows them to escape jail or punishment (Cuthand, 2005; Cooley, 1999; Coker 2000). There are also Indigenous justice initiatives that have resulted in an absolute failure to repair harm or restore balance. For example, Coker (2000 a) examined Navajo peacemaking models that address domestic violence and compared these to the mainstream justice system. Coker (2000 a: 4) claims that her study “is the first attempt to gather empirical data regarding the use of Peacemaking in domestic violence cases”. She gathered data on peacemaking records in Arizona and New Mexico; she also observed a Navajo Peacemaking session and conducted interviews with Navajo Peacemakers, anti-violence workers and conventional justice system staff . What she found was that Navajo Peacemaking models that address domestic violence do have the potential to help abused women.

Peacemaking may benefit some battered women through the use of traditional Navajo Stories...stories with gender anti-subordination themes may change the

way in which the batterer and his family understand battering, and thus have the potential to restructure familial relations that support battering(Coker 2000 a: 13).

However, Coker (2000 a: 82) also observed that some abused women (victims) have been physically assaulted after participating in Peacemaking sessions they were coerced into attending. Coker (2000a: 111) concludes that:

There is a danger that readers will fasten on these potentials and support Peacemaking in domestic violence cases without regard to the cautionary warnings of battered women's advocates or without regard to whether the practices would further women's autonomy in a particular setting.

This passage is clear indication that there is much work to be done in the Navajo peacemaking context.

Coker is not alone here: there is an array of similar studies conducted on Aboriginal justice initiatives in Canada that have the same basic finding that enduring power imbalances between victims and offenders are a concern with the use of Aboriginal sentencing circles (Laprairie, 1998; Green, 1998). It has been suggested that survivors of domestic violence in Aboriginal communities may be coerced into participating in sentencing circles because of perceived benefits sought after by Aboriginal organizations (Laprairie, 1998; Goel, 2000). Furthermore, victims of domestic violence take the risk of being despised and abused even further in communities where domestic violence has become normal (Goel, 2000; Laprairie,

1998). These kinds of brutalities demonstrate that there are major concerns that make Aboriginal restorative justice a complex and controversial topic.

We can sum up the challenges of restorative justice with an image that will clarify the idea of this paper. This is the idea that Indigenous social structures and restorative justice systems have been suppressed and distorted through colonization. The failure of some Indigenous restorative justice programs thus have been, basically, the way people have misinterpreted and misrepresented the original justice systems. The arguments against the decolonization of restorative justice are premised on how our original justice systems do not work. Indeed, it is true that there are many examples that show how Indigenous justice fails, but that is beside the point of this paper, which is to show how decolonization of Indigenous restorative justice is possible.

While there seems to be no perfect justice system, Indigenous people must persist in the search for a decolonized justice process that is relevant for Indigenous societies. However, in order to do this one must understand that the relationship between Indigenous people and the justice system has become an instrument of oppression. As Henderson (2000: 271) puts it: “To Aboriginal people, a state is a group of strangers who demand obedience through coercive and restrictive measures”.

Henderson explains:

Most Aboriginal orders do not impose order on relationships by establishing rules that govern general categories of acts and persons and then using these rules to decide particular disputes. Instead they determine that harmony; trust, sharing, and kindness are the shared ends of the circle and then make choices that contribute to these goals...Aboriginal laws are more about respect for every process in an ecosystem than about power over them. Aboriginal law is the law of speaking softly, walking humbly and acting compassionately. (2000: 273).

Henderson portrays Aboriginal law as a system that does not impose order and rule over the people in the community. 'Acting compassionately' is consistent with restorative justice that emphasizes healing.

An old Aboriginal once told me that many of our problems today are a result of losing control of our lives and our traditional justice systems. Chartrand (1995: 878) probably had this in mind when he said:

Aboriginal communities must begin a process of restoration to heal themselves. That restoration process begins with respect. To gain respect, members of Aboriginal communities must have control over their lives including control over their social order systems. Circle sentencing can be seen as an important building block in the process of restoring Aboriginal community respect and healing. In the circle sentencing process, this restoration can be achieved by allowing the community to have final control over the decision-making that determines the appropriate disposition for an offender.

Clearly Chartrand believes that the site of justice needs to be returned to the Aboriginal community. For Chartrand, Aboriginal communities must take back control of their justice systems.

However, the arguments against bringing an Aboriginal justice process back into

the Aboriginal community are illustrated in the *status quo*, which reflects the idea that Aboriginals cannot resolve their own conflicts. For the most part, the State ensures its dominance by preventing the community, particularly the Aboriginal community, from gaining widespread control over justice in their own communities. In his book *Aboriginal Communities: Sentencing Alternatives*, Green (1998) analyses the criminal justice system and composes a typical description of the subjugated status of Cree peacemaking. He states:

In court a Cree has to answer only very indirectly to his own society; he is more answerable to a little known world, to a society foreign to his habits and traditions. And what is more, the society that bears the social costs of the transgression by that individual has neither the control over that individual nor any say in the judicial process” (Green, 1998: 37).

The political structure of the Canadian criminal justice system puts all power within the State’s control. In other words, the Western State’s justice systemically obstructs and subjugates the Cree peacemaking pathway, and for the most part relies on incarceration as a sanction for crime. This, despite the fact that reliance on imprisonment is challenged with empirical evidence that shows longer and tougher prison sentencing does not deter crime.

Restorative Justice Opposes Societies Overreliance on Prisons

The Report of the Commission on First Nations and Métis Peoples (2004) found that “empirical evidence in the U.S., Canada, and Europe over the last 30 years shows longer sentences do not reduce recidivism” and “longer sentences may increase recidivism” (CFMNP, 2004: 9-41). The Commission goes on to say that "Canada is a world leader in incarcerating 118 per 100,000 general population" (9-41). It is hard to understand why a prison system that is not very effective at deterring crime -- that is, whose methods are not supported by evidence and are sometimes contraindicated by evidence -- is able to survive as the conventional response to crime.

Because Aboriginals are overrepresented in the prisons, it is important to note that studies have shown longer prison sentences increase recidivism rather than decrease it. For example, Smith, Goggin, & Gendreau, (2002) conducted a study, comprising 442,000 offenders, that demonstrated conclusively that harsher sanctions not only had no deterrent effect on recidivism, but actually increased recidivism. This failure is reflected in the McGuigan (1977) subcommittee *Report* to Parliament on the penitentiary, which reached the conclusion that “society has spent millions of dollars over the years to create and maintain the proven failure of prisons . . . failure to correct offenders and protect society clear in recidivism rates as high as eighty percent” (Cited in CFNMP, 2004: 9-14). Professor Jackson (1992: 915) agreed, noting the failure of

prisons in his findings that the “Aboriginal prison population was growing and will continue to grow at a disturbing rate without radical change”. In other words, simply locking up Aboriginal offenders is not the solution, but there is a system that offers hope. The means to this declaration is through the Aboriginal justice system that emphasizes healing.

Aboriginals have to reject the pervasive punitive-justice ideology and counter the systemic discriminatory mentality that oppresses us. This means that above all we must not mimic the existing justice system and build our own prisons. Instead, we must turn to our past traditions that focus on healing. This must occur before we can restore an Aboriginal justice system, which demands a holistic analysis that stresses Aboriginal consciousness, life experiences and traditional practices. The Navajo judge Yazzie (2000: 47) concurs that Aboriginal people must examine our past traditions:

I have a law degree from the University of New Mexico School of Law. When I returned home to assume a position of authority in my own community, I thought that I had superior knowledge. I thought that I could make positive changes, armed with the power that knowledge of Western law gave me. I was wrong. I had to relearn my language and traditions and go back to a spiritual power base before I could begin to change. I say that I have been to hell and back.

This passage illustrates the need for Aboriginal people to relearn and restore our original justice systems.

Aboriginal people are suffering from overrepresentation in the jails for various reasons, and much of the reason is systemic discrimination. For example, *The Canadian Criminal Justice Association* (2000) reports that Aboriginal people “especially in the north spend less time with their lawyers...are less likely to have legal representation in court proceedings... and they often plead guilty because they feel intimidated by court proceedings and want them over with” (CFNMP, 2004: 9-38). These facts demonstrate the oppression that Aboriginal people routinely experience in the criminal justice system.

As noted, Aboriginal people wind up in prison for a variety of reasons, many alcohol- and drug-related. A lot of our social problems can be traced back to the historical wrongs committed in the residential schools, which impacted our families and communities (Jaine, 1993; RCAP, 1996). As well, many of our people are poor and cannot afford to pay fines, so we are subjected to what become caricatures of justice.

At this point, I want to draw a parallel between being poor and being punished, and the need to research Aboriginal justice. According to Statistics Canada, 47% of female prisoners in Saskatchewan were jailed for non-payment of fines in 1989-90. In other words, offenders who lack the means to pay fines are habitually being put in jail.

This was the fate of Ms. Kortje, a single mother of two and a commissioned saleswoman in Saskatoon, who was recently incarcerated in Prince Albert Maximum Security Institution for the non-payment of 60 parking tickets (Hurlbert, 2007: 14). This may not be a shocking discovery about the judicial system, but it does suggest the nature of the establishment and how it exploits the poor. I wonder who is going to look after Ms. Kortje's two children now that society is being protected from a parking ticket violator?

A justice philosophy that is driven by State-sanctioned punitive ideology is largely unsuccessful in the Aboriginal community because it routinely excludes the community, the victim, and the offender from the justice process. Considering that community involvement and healing are essentially what Aboriginal justice is about, State punitive justice is not only a poor model to use in the Aboriginal community, but it is not an appropriate model for Aboriginal societies. In essence, dependency is the key. When the State took over mediation of conflicts from our communities, it destroyed our ability to resolve our own conflicts, which we had always done prior to colonization. In other words, we have become much too dependent on the State. Our dependency is the manifestation of the idea of State control over Aboriginal people.

Perhaps one of the most apparent issues about the justice system, to me as an

Aboriginal person, is the negative views and attitudes that persist and continue to denigrate Aboriginal people in various aspects of their daily lives. For example, the *Report of the Commission on First Nations and Métis peoples* (2004, vol 1: 9-38) observes that “Aboriginal accused are more likely to be denied bail” and “Aboriginal offenders are more than twice as likely to be incarcerated than non-Aboriginal offenders”. To account for these phenomena, I would suggest that, because Aboriginal people do not share the same history, language and culture as the dominant group, we tend to be treated unjustly. As already noted, the literature and statistics show that the existing criminal justice system is failing Aboriginal people; it is not meeting the needs of Aboriginal victims, offenders and communities. Thus, there is a need to advance our understanding for traditional Indigenous justice ideas and practices and I hope this work will contribute to a decolonized justice process which is the due of Indigenous people.

The concepts of retribution and punishment that have dominated Western justice for centuries are now recognized by many as ineffective and this awareness is reflected in the Quebec youth justice system. While all systems change and it is too much for this paper to examine all the changes that are currently happening in worldwide justice, the Quebec youth justice system is interesting in the sense that it is

demonstrating a clear focus on rehabilitation, restitution and restorative justice and is not simply incarcerating young people for wrongful behavior. According to Green & Healy (2003: 183), when it comes to dealing with young offenders “a large percentage of cases are dealt with outside the Quebec youth court system. . . . [o]nly the more serious cases going to court . . . but far fewer of the less serious cases see[ing] the inside of the courtroom.” This movement helps to explain a decrease in the incarceration rates of Quebec’s young offenders in comparison to the rest of Canada. Green & Healy (2003: 183) cite the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Youth Court Survey, 2000-2001, which reported that Quebec:

had a young offender court case rate of 18 cases per thousand youth. This compares to a national rate of 41/1,000, and rates as high as 124/1,000 in the Yukon, 94/1,000 in Saskatchewan, 82/1,000 in the Northwest Territories, 71/1,000 in Nunavut, and 68/1,000 in Manitoba...Quebec had a rate of 4 youths per thousand sentenced to custody, in contrast to the national rate of 8/1,000 and provincial rates including 37/1,000 in the Northwest Territories, 28/1,000 in Saskatchewan.

These statistics illustrate the results of Quebec’s approach, which differs from that of the rest of Canada in the sense that rehabilitation is seen as more important than punishment.

In Quebec rehabilitation constitutes the prevailing criterion to determine the response to young offenders. Justice officials working within Quebec’s judicial system

apparently do not support punitive justice but rather hold more constructive rehabilitative views in dealing with young offenders. This approach is reflected in the comments of Member of Parliament Claude Bachand who, in a House of Commons debate, stated:

The youth crime rate in Quebec is lower than in Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia. The reason is that Quebecers consider the youth justice system more as a rehabilitative process. We have to get young offenders back in society. The bill before the House of Commons does just the opposite. It would throw these young people in jail. And as everyone knows prison is a school for crime. ...Statistics show that Quebec has a higher rehabilitation rate among young offenders because we have come to realize that these young people need support and supervision, not jail time. [translated from French] (Cited in Green & Healy (2003: 184).

People holding influential positions within the Quebec political structure clearly support a rehabilitative model and are opposed to a punitive one. In other words, Quebec's youth justice system emphasizes a rehabilitative model in terms of dealing with young offender. This model harmonizes with the ideology of restorative justice.

The greater challenges to decolonizing Indigenous restorative justice systems are the underlying principles of retribution and punishment that drive the quest for justice in the Western world. For the most part, the State-sanctioned criminal justice system responds to wrongdoing by punishing those who do wrong, often by incarceration, particularly those offenders who are racial minorities or from the lower classes. The

State's justice system often disregards the principles of healing, reparation, reconciliation and restoration that give real meaning to justice and forms the ideological basis for restorative justice.

We all know the scenarios in which a person commits a crime and is apprehended by the police, charged, convicted and punished. If the offender happens to be poor, the punishment tends to be a jail sentence. When the punitive jail sentence is over, the victim of the crime is usually left uncompensated, but is told that justice has been served, that the culprit has been punished. However, an uncompensated victim is an injustice in itself. The conventional judicial discourse defines crime as 'an offence against the state' rather than an offence against another human being. Restorative justice challenges that notion.

Generally, restorative justice encourages the offender and victim to discuss and resolve the conflict. By having the offender face the victim, it is hoped that the offender will take responsibility and thus make reparations. In this way, the victim becomes compensated and promotes the capacity for healing. The rest of the community is involved in the process if they want to be; this is restorative justice. Therefore, restorative justice is not fixated on punishment but rather focuses on teaching the wrongdoer what impact their wrongdoing has had on the victim and the

community. This process actually helps offenders live with themselves and allows them to heal.

Concluding Comments

In this paper, I have discussed the notion of decolonization in relation to Indigenous restorative justice. To conclude this discussion, I will reiterate the key points of a restorative perception of justice. The concept of justice being a circle is the manifestation of the idea that our justice process focused on healing and community inclusion, which also suggests that the political structure of pre-colonial Aboriginal societies was designed to position all power collectively in the hands of the people.

Sunbear and Wabun (1980: 4) state:

The Native people knew about this magic circle When they want to purify their bodies and their minds, they did so in the circle of the sweat bath, a cleansing lodge which represents the womb of mother earth, who sustained them throughout their lives. When they came together in council, they sit in a circle, so that everyone was included as an equal with equal voice.

This passage suggests the methods of community inclusion and equality used in the judicial system of the Aboriginal. It is the duty of contemporary Aboriginal education to research and advance the pedagogical and judicial structures of colonized societies.

In terms of justice, the circle reveals the egalitarian philosophy of tribal justice.

Sentencing circles are the manifestation of restorative justice in the Aboriginal world;

and are thus recognized as a culturally appropriate approach to handling wrongdoing in present day Aboriginal communities (Monture-Angus, 1994; Turpel, 1993; Ross, 1996; Green, 1998).

While there is no single justice solution or method for responding to crime, it would do us good to re-examine our Indigenous past. Our conflict-resolution methods reveal a highly rationalized justice process that can only come from earlier insights into natural law. The healing circles and restorative rituals still practiced in Indigenous communities inspire us to develop and expand our justice traditions. Indigenous restorative justice systems move toward healing, where real justice lies. Restorative justice is what our ancestors did, and it is imperative that such Indigenous knowledge persist.

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Three Poems by Jay White

for ray davies (relying on "Waterloo Sunset")

*"millions of people swarming like flies round
waterloo underground"*

& when ray davies sings, "*but i don't
feel afraid,*" you know
why pete townshend said he ought to be made poet laureate

so tenderly, fear denied

*"as long as i gaze on Waterloo sunset
i am in paradise"*

so tenderly, the sadness
denied

a 2nd class, working man's paradise but a 1st rate
working man's poet

open letter to Robert Smith

if you're still wearing makeup stop
you're old enough to be a grandfather, practically
& grandfathers wearing makeup should also
stop for the sake of the (grand)children
you know

 confession: i still feel sad
when I listen to *Disintegration*
"Plainsong" "Pictures of You" i'm 20 years old again
& it's autumn, my 2nd year of university
her name: Michelle she facebooked me the other day
& yet i thought i'd lost her forever

that october evening
that night out behind the residence when she found me smoking pot
it's just pot, i said
just pot, she said

 i thought she'd never forgive me, even though
i really didn't think it was that bad & all i had were those "pictures of you"
for 15 or 20 years, how long now? but, like i said, just the other day

 a new friend request *hey!*

nothing stays the same
but you did
if you're still wearing makeup don't stop
it's a bit of a joke now
like boy george just not funny but it's something
to hold onto, like a broken heart

 but a real broken heart
not the kind that facebookes you years later
the kind that hurts a little all the way
to "Untitled"

mr cohen, may I call you

dear Leonard

you're practically 80 yet
you've taken to doing this
fidgety little dance when performing

i know i saw you on tv last night
yes you do hear a different drummer

i hope someday when i'm old too old
to care too old to be sad
too old to say goodbye too old for
laments i'll too execute a fidgety jig

to some similar different drummer
& wear a nice

chapeau

North and South in the Life of Pierre S. Weiss.

by Samuel P.L. Veissière

Abstract

Told in the voice of Pierre S. Weiss, one of the author's semi-fictional alter egos in the tradition of Fernando Pessoa's heteronyms¹, these five connected stories explore the complex relationships between place, narrative, and identity as they play out in the author's experience, imaginations, and implications in different Ideas of North and South. The stories are presented in a series of playful pastiches and meta-pastiches of a variety of genres, from meta-fiction and travel-writing to confessional ethnography, historical fiction, and ficto-criticism.

NORTH:

Latitude 55° 48' North, longitude 097° 52' West (Thompson, MB, Turtle Island/Canada)

I thought about writing a short story set during the events of the Great Red Aurora Borealis of January 25-26, 1938, which was seen as far South as the island of Madeira (33° 00' N., 17° 00' W.) and California, and was said to have been linked, in some kind of journalistically-construed popular imagination, to such varied phenomena as the Fatima Prophecies (in Portugal, mostly); or, in Vienna (48° 15' N., 16° 22' W.), as a good omen for the impending birth of Princess Juliana's baby; or, in Vienna again, as

¹ The most important are Alberto Caeiro, Álvaro de Campos, Ricardo Reis and Bernardo Soares. See *Pessoa & Zenith*, 2002.

part of an intricate set of colour-coded numerological signs pointing to the imminence of extraordinary returns in the weekly lottery.

I would quote such headlines as “*Northern lights disrupt radios in Maine, frighten Europeans*” (Maine Press Herald, Jan. 26, 1938), and would make passing references to the folk-propheying of Balkan peasants and cod-fishermen from the Newfoundland banks. I’d mention something about the Western European War Paranoia. The Aurora would provide the décor for my story: some kind of phenomenological (but ultimately naturalistic and universalizeable), non-narrative, multi-voiced exploration of the beauty-and-suffering-of-everyday-life in one particular context, maybe more.

In an effort to solidify the décor and strengthen the literariness of the piece, but also to ground the phenomenology-of-everyday-life stuff in something more than a two-dimensional landscape, I’d make clever detours through historical references to previous Southern-latitude occurrences of the Aurora in medieval and pre-medieval Europe; I’d cite early written accounts of the Aurora in Tacitus’ *Germania* (*De origine et situ Germanorum*, A.D. 98), and would add something about Strabo’s *Geographica* (7 B.C.), and Herodotus’ *Histories* (c.440 BC), just for the erudition effect

(because neither of the last two scholars, as far as I know, mentions the Aurora). I'd also have to mention the early Geographies of Ptolemy (A.D.83-c.168) and Eratosthenes (285 B.C. - 194 B.C.), and momentarily dwell on early attempts to calculate latitudes and longitudes without the possibility of simultaneous time measurements in different places. For once, I would refrain from presenting a clever critique of the totalizing and colonizing effect of European cartography and cosmology.² I would simply, for the sheer beauty of the concept, quote Galileo's effort, in 1616, to devise a "celestial timepiece", after "painstakingly composing tables charting the orbits of [Jupiter's] four moons [Io, Europa, Ganymede, Callisto], which would rhythmically disappear on one side of the planet and reappear on the other"³. I would explain how this celestial timepiece, before the advent of reliable pendulums, enabled the first exact calculations of degrees of longitude, and would continue my Brief Side-History of the Problem of Longitude with a discussion of the Enlightenment debate between Newtonians and Cartesians about the shape of the earth: was the earth, as the latter held, a "prolate spheroid", elongated at the pole, and flattened at the equator; or was it rather, as Newton had posited in Book III, Proposition 18, Theorem 16 of his *Principia* ("the axes of the planets are less than the

² But for excellent critiques, see Pratt (2007) and Scott (1998).

³ Whitaker, 2004, p15.

diameters drawn perpendicular to the axes⁴”), bulging at the equator and flattened at the poles? In concluding my clever historical detour with something about the monumental 1735 expedition of the French *Academie des Sciences* to the Vice-royalty of Peru led by Charles-Marie de la Condamine to measure a degree of longitude at the Equator (that had settled the debate in favour of Newton), I would not, as others had done, indulge in tasteless romantic re-imagining of the Penelopean torn marriage between one Jean Godin, a cartographer from the expedition, and the (then very young) Peruvian noblewoman Isabel Gramesón who, or so the story goes, had, after waiting 18 years for travel documents that would never materialize, embarked on a mad journey across the Amazon from Peru to Cayenne (4° 56' N., 52° 27' W.), where her husband had unsuccessfully laboured to send for her for nearly two decades.

And that would be more than enough for my clever historical tangent.

I would endeavour to return to the *Aurora*. But first, I would consider the dilemma of how to convey a *Rashômon*-type multi-perspectival picture (the object, sort of, of my story). I'd worry about the *Aurora* and how I wouldn't want it to be seen as some kind

⁴ Cited in Whitaker, 2004, p25.

of divine, or fantastic, or phantasmagoric connecting thread, or (heavens forbid) *deus ex machina*. I'd worry about my ability to convey *the absolute randomness* of the Aurora. I'd be reminded of a 1980s or 1990s dubbed American film I once saw on late-night French TV with the usual multiple-narratives-that-somehow-intersect-in-the-end, this time set against the background of the Eagle, landing in 1969. I'd think more about *Short Cuts*-type film narratives, and I'd remember that *Short Cuts* itself culminates and intersects characters and narratives around that L.A. earthquake, like *Amores Perros* and the car-crash in D.F. If the many stories in the films were human and compelling in-and-of-themselves, were the televised moon landing, earthquake, and car-crash really necessary? Aren't there other, less artificial, ways of conveying complex and ultimately random interrelationships? Because part of the point about my multiple narratives and randomness would be a general comment about things being indeed somewhat connected, but never really fitting together in any kind of coherent way. So, I'd think really hard about the question of randomness, multiplicity, and realism; because what I'd ultimately want to achieve would be a *deep phenomenological realism*; an *absolute human realism*; an *absolutely faithful rendition* of the randomness, multiplicity, incommensurability and universality of the human condition; something that could never be strangled and dumbed-down into the pseudo-dialectical logic of realist plot regimes with their

complications, and resolutions, and middles, and ends: because things don't always get resolved; they most often don't end or fit together in any finite sort of way. And they don't fully make sense. Not human things. In the end, I would decide that, ultimately, the Great Red Aurora could be compelling in-and-of-itself, and might even work as an interesting excuse to juxtapose my stories; but I'd finally be discouraged by the terrifying thought of having to resort to such clichés as "lighting up the sky", "dancing across the sky" (horrifying), or "flickering" (no, no). I'd scrap the Aurora idea, and would look for another décor which, for the purpose of my multistory, could span different scapes and scopes, hopefully in a pan-latitude sort of way. Round-the-world, or at the very least transoceanic or transcontinental voyages would come to mind. I would ponder ways to situate my stories within a global circumnavigation along a North-South axis (which hasn't been done or talked about enough, I think), and would toy with the idea of placing the stories in one of those transatlantic ships, making a mental note about never, absolutely, in no way, resorting to the phrase "bygone era" when setting the scene with the dinners and waltzes. Ultimately fearing clichés and *Titanics*, however, I would consider the merits of setting my stories aboard a great Zeppelin. One of those Giant Dirigible Airships, it would now seem to me, would provide an ideal vessel, narrative and otherwise. Cautiously avoiding possible allegories

of the *Titanic* (post pre-and-post Di Caprio), I would stay well clear of the *Hindenberg*, and, after momentarily dwelling on the mental image of a B&W photograph of the *Graff* Zeppelin landing in Franz Josef Land (80° 37' N., 58° 03' E.; a rather compelling kind of North) in 1931, I would settle on *the Voyage of the Graf* as the décor for my stories. The Idea of North associated with Franz Josef Land, in turn, would bring to mind another, earlier photograph taken in that area, this time of the Norwegian explorer Dr. Fridtjof Nansen and his broody companion Hjalmar Johansen (but they had both written that about the other, subsequently) with sooty faces and mud-thick beards, clad in several layers of seal-fur, grown fat and idle from having spent 1895 to 1897 surviving on walrus blubber and polar bear steak after a failed attempt to reach the pole and two winters on the pack-ice. After one or two thorough side-stories through which I would casually assert my encyclopedic knowledge of early polar expeditions, I would return to giant airship and transatlantic routes, and would offer a detailed description of an Art-Deco Third Reich poster depicting sharp, phallic, and oblong dirigibles on the South-America route, adorned with little swastikas on their winglets. This would make me think of the Brazilian modernist composer Heitor Villa-Lobos, boarding the Berlin-to-Buenos-Aires airship in Berlin and alighting in Rio de Janeiro (22° 55' S., 43° 12' W.) in 1936, on his return from the German trip that had

inspired the *Bachianas Brasileiras* (another powerful sort of North-South thing). This would compel me to discuss Villa-Lobos' Rousseauian, bucolic, and tropicalizing peregrinations in the Brazilian interior in search of sound and culture, and his self-fashioning, Bartók-style, as an ethnomusicologist and engineer of modernist nationalism. I would want to continue saying clever things about bourgeois imaginations and obsessive collections of fantasized folklore and nationalism, but I would be anxious to return to the Voyage of the Graf. Still, I wouldn't resist the pedant's temptation to expand a little further on early 20th-century modernism in architecture, art and music, with at least three references to serialism, which would also provide the opportunity to use such synonyms as "twelve-tone-system", and "dodecaphonic". This discussion would ultimately be led back to a nostalgized account of the Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons I used to spend alone at the Ilac Centre (the Dublin Public Library off of O'Connell street, 53° 20' N., 06° 25' W.) in Ireland, where, as a somewhat feverish undergraduate, I had been determined to acquire a sophisticated grasp of 20th-century contemporary and atonal music, and had embarked upon the task of listening to everything from Shönberg to Arvo Pärt—the decidedly Northern, Estonian (59° 26' N., 24° 45' W.) architect of the icy, steely tintinnabular style), which would, as a side-narrative, incidentally provide a judicious platform for

more indulgences with non-English diacritics. I wouldn't venture far into my cerebral voyages at the Dublin Public Library and wouldn't even touch on the books, or the writing, but would still feel compelled to mention that I had, in fact, embarked upon a journey to listen to everything from Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625) to Arvo Pärt (born 1935) (with, however, a brush over the 19th Century and the Romantics); and had even painstakingly begun to compose what I had intended to be a faithfully Bachian fugue and a thoroughly modernist "*étude mécanique*" for piano, which I would rehearse in my head with tiresome echolalia on the long bus journeys home to the (idea of a) country cottage in which I decided that a writer-artist-in-the-making should live. I'd also mention, finally, my secret burning jealousy of the young composer working on his D.Phil in Music at Trinity College who had taken master-classes with Stockhausen, and whose infinitely clever latest opus—an interactive piece for full orchestra where selected groups of musicians were invited to chose the order in which they would play different parts—which had premiered at a prestigious festival dedicated to the works of Luciano Berio, had been named after J. L. Borges' *The Garden of Forking Paths*. I would confess my secret comfort at the fact that he hadn't attempted a musical rendition of *the Aleph* (that would have been much, much too ambitious), and my terrible bitterness about the title of his previous work: *Room Full of Mirrors*. But I'd

move on, and wouldn't mention the many, many other long hours I used to spend walking alone in Dublin, and in the countrysides of Dublin and Meath counties. I would resist the temptation of one further tangent into an idealization of the idea of the flâneur, and would not recount all my lone, intensely cerebral and yet secretly libidinous street meandering through such cities as London (51° 32' N., 00° 05' W.), Montreal (45° 30' N., 73° 35' W.), Hong Kong and Macau (22° 17' N., 114° 08' E.), Cuzco (13° 32' S., 71° 57' W.) São Paulo (23° 34' S., 46° 38' W.), or Amsterdam (52° 21' N., 04° 52' E.). I would stay away from clichés about the relationship between lone walking and genius, J. S. Bach's customary 200-km hikes through the German countryside (to pay visits to his sweetheart, or, in different versions of the story, to hear Buxtehude at the organ in Lübeck). I would also stay away from Werner Herzog's Minneapolis Declaration⁵, or Bruce Chatwin on the spirituality and eroticism of the Walk⁶. I would not mention Stephen Dedalus.

I would finally return to the *Graf*, and would begin work on a series of erudite, witty,

⁵ "tourism is sin walking is virtue", See http://www.wernerherzog.com/main/de/html/news/Minnesota_Declaration.htm

⁶ It is a well-known piece of Travel-Literature trivia that Bruce Chatwin and Werner Herzog, during a chance meeting in the Australian Outback, had discussed what they called the "sacramental aspect of walking"; walking being in their view not only a therapeutic activity for oneself, but an intensely poetic activity that can cure the world of its ills. (See Chatwin, 1990). A less well-known piece of Travel trivia is the following quote, taken from one of Chatwin's letters to his wife Elizabeth: "I wandered along the Brown Mountain trail STARK NAKED for 15 miles without coming across a soul but deer and birds and that made me very happy." (See Shakespeare, 2001).

somewhat confessional, and ultimately sex-charged dialogues—set against shifting altitudes, latitudes and ports of call—between the author, Pierre S. Weiss (conveniently inserted into the story as a tweed-coated passenger on the *Graf* among such figures as the U.S. Navy Commander Charles Emery Rosendahl, German correspondent Heinz Von Eschwege-Lichbert, and Australian explorer Sir George Hubert Wilkins) and 33-year-old Lady Grace Marguerite Hay-Drummond-Hay, chronicler of the voyage for English-speaking audiences. In recounting Lady Grace’s short-lived marriage to Sir Robert Hay Drummond-Hay (1846-1845), who had been 50 years her senior, I would indulge in one of my trademark bifurcating exposés, this time on the creative use of hyphenated surnames in British neo-aristocratic self-fashioning. I would have to mention such noted British anthropologists as Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955), Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard (1902-1973), David Henry Peter Maybury-Lewis (1929-2007), or, my favourite, the London-born Israel Ehrenberg (1905-1999), who, upon entering Oxford, had changed his name to Ashley Francis Montague Ashley-Montagu. But I would be quick to return to my imagined affair with Lady Grace Marguerite Hay-Drummond-Hay, and would soon start toying with a very serious idea; one leading to what, to this date, would become (if perhaps not remain) my *Magnum Opus*: As the décor for my stories, I would embark on the first exhaustively-researched

experimental biography of Lady Grace Marguerite Hay-Drummond-Hay. For this, I would rely on rather old-fashioned and painstaking archival methods, such as those mastered by my late Great Paternal Uncle, the renaissance scholar and clergyman Monseigneur Michel A. M. V. who was granted a doctorate in French History for his meticulous transcription and annotation of the mystical and quasi-reformist correspondence (1521-1524) between Bishop Guillaume de Briçonnet (1472-1534) and Marguerite d'Angoulême, Duchess of Alençon, Queen of Navarre (1492-1549). My biography would be supplemented with an experimental travelling ethnography of places and peoples connected to Lady G. In addition, remembering my mother's comment about Monseigneur my Great Uncle(who, or so the family story goes, died untainted by the sin of flesh)'s secret platonic love with Marguerite de Navarre -- or was it really with Guillaume de Briçonnet; or, god forbid, with the heretical teachings of the reformers -- I would unashamedly write into the story my own admiration and occasional lust for Lady G., the adventurous and peripatetic (*peripateticienne?*) opportunist. This would become, then, if perhaps not remain, my *Magnum Opus*.

SOUTH

Latitude 36° 55' South, longitude 174° 45' East (Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand)

I had it all planned out, beginning with the carefully pondered assumption that I would run into you at Auckland Airport. I'd buy you a glass of passable North Island merlot in the departure lounge, a half-hour or so before our flights to our respective Norths; yours westbound (with a final destination East of Greenwich), mine eastbound (with a final destination West of Greenwich). We'd talk about our respective Ideas of South, and I would tell you about being a child with world maps and ideas about the antipodes. I'd tell you about reading the South Africans, and reading about the frost-covered drylands of the Karoo, and the Veld, and I'd tell you about my first time in my Antipodes, as a boy of 18, landing in Johannesburg in April, and having a cigarette in the fog when it was 0 degrees at daybreak. That would set the scene nicely for a very potent antipodal Idea of South, and I'd say it very casually: "Let's elope, you and I, right now". I'd have something clever rehearsed about the "South Seas" idea of the South Pacific, and how the castaway-thing's been overdone, and how it's overrated. I'd remind you of the ending of the Gauguin-story, and also of Jack London's deep ankle

sores from scratching Samoan mosquito bites during his *Cruise of the Snark*-voyage, and how his hands had swollen to the size of boxing gloves in the Solomon Islands. So I would (again, casually) propose that we board a transpacific flight to Santiago de Chile [because Buenos Aires has been overdone too], and I'd add something clever and casually poetic about flowers and late-spring in Patagonia (I would picture something mauve and pointillist, like the tundra in June), and I'd make a case for South America as a much more compelling kind of South. I would speak at great length of Patagonia, of course, and how we'd spend the summer in Ushuaia (54° 47' S., 68° 20' W.), or rather no, Chiloë (42° 40' S., 73° 55' W.), and maybe Puerto Williams (54° 56' S., 57° 37' W.), and how maybe we'd spend the winter in Bolivia or lower Peru, or cross into western Brazil and spend some time at a neo-Shamanic Ayahuasca retreat with New Age gringos, and how we'd get a clever co-publication out of it, citing Michael Taussig, and saying something new about Carlos Castaneda. Then, I'd tell you how I wouldn't want to speculate on the rest, because, as the other cliché goes, I don't know we would survive the Amazon.

Latitude 02° 33' *South*, *longitude* 103° 10' *East* (Kota Kinabalu,
Borneo/Sabah/Malaysia)

Tomas, who was wearing size 8 Havaianas I'd bought in São Paulo (23° 34' S., 46° 38' W.) for my sister, supposedly kicked a rat by accident with his semi-bare foot after we had that fight at the L.A. Club and scrambled off in two directions in the night streets of Kota Kinabalu, after I'd let the pockmarked waitress kiss me and drag me into the semiprivate backroom with the big Chinese guys on the couches and their bottles of whisky and their cigarettes and the women, and Tomas had said "I'm leaving now", and I'd told him to fuck off, but followed him nonetheless. But there had been more than that, and Tomas had said something about my sneaking off to private medical clinics at every stop, and my insistence that I couldn't breathe, and yet, my ridiculous effort to be the first one on the top of the mountain [Mount Kinabalu, 4105m], and my collapse later at base-camp, and my living things through such a pastiche of the idea of the Victorian *voyage en orient*, with the decadence, and the Spartan Purism, that I could never know or live anything outside pseudo-literary clichés.

Latitude 22ish South, shifting longitudes, between 50° and 46° West (on a bus in the interior of São Paulo State, Brazil)

I don't know about the world, in its unfathomable totality, but maybe I can say a few things about the generalizeable totality of humanity, quite small in perspective, and how it is a lot easier to see humanity in its overwhelming horror and infinite sadness when you are covering up your tears behind a clenched smile behind a bus window when your bare-chested five-year-old son is jumping up and down and waving goodbye and blowing kisses and mumbling things you can't make out and maybe screaming a little bit and walking off in jumpy zigzags on the concrete sidewalk by the bus about 200 miles north of the Tropic of Capricorn, and 700km inland in the southern Brazilian interior, and it is 10:20 p.m. and, just the night before, you've arrived from two stopovers in the Northern and Southern Andes with the peaks, the snow, the deserts and the high cheekbones, three flights from New York, Toronto, and Winnipeg, and a bus crossing from the auroral to the boreal to the interlake to the prairies zone in the middle of Turtle Island.

Latitude 33° 26' South, longitude 070° 40' West (Santiago de Chile, Tawantinsuyu)

The closest I'd ever gotten to Santiago de Chile was Curitiba, in Southern Brazil (24°

24' S., 49° 16' W.). I don't mean that in a literal spatial sense. Santa Cruz de la Sierra, in Bolivia (17° 45' S., 63° 14' W.), where I once had a stopover and a cigarette, is about the same distance, and a shorter series of flights away. No, I mean this in the most serious sense: that of having almost boarded a bus to Santiago.

Ana and I were about halfway through our six-and-a-half-year marriage. We lived in Ireland, in a fully empty new condominium lot in an empty ghost-town on the beach, 60km north of Dublin. Ana's rich evangelical uncle from Curitiba had rented a house on the beach for a family gathering in Bombinhas, Santa Catarina (27° 07' S., 48° 31' W.), a part of Brazil associated with a particularly Germanizing and antipodal Idea of South. We'd taken leave from Ana's family, and had met a group of her friends from her Humanities days at the University of São Paulo. They'd borrowed or rented a wooden family house in a fishing village in one of those islands in Paranaguá Bay. One of Ana's friends had had a child with a local sculptor, a man who claimed to be a full-blooded Guarani but looked Afro-Brazilian to me, and who would regale me with improbable stories about sharks and human torsos, and a six-month canoe journey he'd once undertaken through the islands to collect folk tales. That had been before Ana's friend had taken her deaf daughter back to São Paulo and commenced a new life

with an architect. I'd decided to return to Curitiba before Ana under the pretext that, there being no phones on the island, our plane tickets back to Ireland had to be reconfirmed. In truth, I desperately longed for what promised to be a day or so of solitude and freedom. There being no scheduled boats to the mainland, I had, with another student couple encountered on the beach, chartered a local fisherman's small motorboat for the two-hour journey through the mangrove. On the boat, I had begun fantasizing that a secret chemistry had established itself between the young woman and me. She was Black and, her companion had been a little too eager to point out, from a less privileged background than he, being in fact related to a family that had long been in the service of his father's. While the young man had soon fallen silent, she had done me the honour of asking many questions. She had noticed me the day before, she'd explained, on the boat hired by two groups of students to visit an indigenous village, a rather intrusive and zoologizing experience I had not enjoyed, and which had precipitated my departure. She had been curious to confirm, she had confessed, whether, as she suspected, I was really a gringo, or, as her boyfriend had argued, a Brazilian of German descent.

I'd wished the couple a happy life in the old slaving port of Paranaguá, and boarded

the train for a short climb through the rainforest to Curitiba and the dry plateaus of the interior. In Curitiba, I hadn't gone directly to Ana's family's gated evangelical community in the suburbs. Instead I had, as the cliché goes, walked for a very long time in no particular direction until I'd ended up in sad streets full of old whores. At the central bus station, I had stood still and spent a very long time staring at the International Departure board, fully immersed in the pull of such ideas as Asuncion, Montevideo, or Buenos Aires. But it was the Idea of Santiago, on the other side of the pampas and Andes, a gateway to the mountains, Patagonia, and the Pacific, that had exerted the strongest pull on me. I had just been paid. I could comfortably, I had reasoned, purchase a ticket and pull out enough money to live for a month or more. Whatever held me in Ireland, I had reckoned, was perhaps not as strong, in the greater scheme of things, as the pull of the South. That had been a very serious moment. Like the long moment in Beziers in Southern France (43° 41' N., 03° 16' E.) when, as a boy of 13 who had just run away from boarding school, I had hidden behind a parked freighted train at the railway station, smoking and smoking and thinking so seriously about hiding on the train North to Paris; an idea which, then, carried the promise of the farthest and most anonymous place in which I could get lost. But in Curitiba, that had been the closest I'd gotten to Santiago and to what would become, seven years

later, the possibility of making the following casual impressions: standing still in front of the ticket counter at Santiago Central Bus Station with a departure sign for Punta Arenas (53° 00' S., 70° 51' W.); freely happy on the streets and metro at the sight of (i) all the fathers carrying, kissing, and playing with their babies, toddlers, and children, (ii) beautiful women, (iii) people wearing sunglasses indoors, and (iv) red graffiti demanding liberation of Mapuche Political Prisoners; the taxi driver telling me about Black immigrants from Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Brazil; the man at the bar asking me what I was writing; the other man at the bar telling me about *el sur*, and the Call of the South, but *el norte*, too, and how he wanted to go on a long journey with his twelve-year-old son, who lived in the North, in the desert; the young gypsy woman with the bony arms and the long hair who gave me a good-luck kiss when I gave her 1000 pesos but told her I didn't want to know; her long limbs and dress, and the three warts on her right hand; the Peruvian man on the plane who had worked at the Canal in Panama, sold ceramics in Brazil, been influenced (like Ernesto Guevara de la Serna), by his reading of Mariátegui in University, and seen his only daughter married off to a New Zealander, very far to the South.

But in Beziars, in 1992, I had taken the train South.

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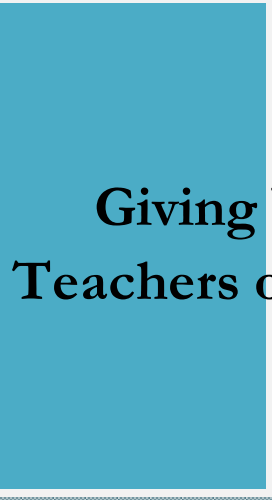
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Giving Voice to the Silent Student: Implications for Teachers of Aboriginal Students at the University College of the North

by John R. Minnis

Abstract

The paper focuses on the instructional and communication challenges facing teachers at the University College of the North, a post-secondary institution in northern Manitoba comprised mainly of Aboriginal students. An overview of the pertinent literature in teaching-learning, philosophy and linguistics, elementary/secondary education, post-secondary education, and teacher education is synthesized to facilitate teachers' understanding of the complexities of silence and how to cope with the silent student. The paper is intended to encourage teachers to reflect on their teaching philosophy and practices, and to explore ways to facilitate positive use of silence in the classroom.

Perhaps at no other time in their history have the Aboriginal people of Canada been in such dire need of quality university education – education that respects their epistemologies and understanding of the world while at the same time providing them with new knowledge and skills to shape their own identities on their own terms. The University College of the North (UCN) located in northern Manitoba has been

established in part to address this need. Of the many challenges facing teachers of Aboriginal students at UCN, it is important to note that in Canadian universities historically, some forms of knowledge and behaviours are rewarded while others are marginalized. What has occurred too often is that some world views are given voice, or legitimized, while others are ignored or silenced.

The silencing process is insidious and operates at two levels. First, it exists when particular issues are excluded from classroom discourse. Second, silencing occurs when the lives, interests, and experiences of students are made irrelevant to the educational process. A local example could be the case of an Aboriginal student from an isolated reserve in northern Manitoba attending UCN for the first time. He or she may possess considerable knowledge about complex social activities encountered on a daily basis, whereas in the UCN classroom the meanings attached to these activities and the world views in which they are embedded may not be acknowledged, let alone integrated into the learning experience. This could conceivably lead to alienation and, ultimately, to dropping out.

Bourdieu (1977) refers to the above as “self-silencing” – when students who cannot meet the demands that arise from educational standards and expectations are more than likely to undermine their own capabilities and personalities if they cannot

change to achieve conformity. Because they do not ask questions, they may internalize educational failure while reinforcing existing power relations in the classroom.

The paper attempts to unpack the complexities of silence and the challenges facing teachers when confronted with the silent student. First, I present data on the educational attainment level of the Canadian Aboriginal population and that of Manitoba, which highlights the problem of educational underachievement and underscores the need for a concerted effort on the part of UCN teachers to engage productively with students— including the silent student.

In order to explicate the multiple dimensions of silence, the second section provides an overview of the pertinent research in five areas -- teaching and learning, philosophy and linguistics, elementary/secondary education, post-secondary education, and teacher education. The third section consists of a discussion wherein I attempt to synthesize some of the insights gained from the literature applicable to teachers at UCN. In the final section, I close with “some final thoughts”.

Aboriginal Educational Attainment

There are approximately 1,172,790 Aboriginal (Indian, Metis, Inuit) people in Canada representing about 3% of the Canadian population. They are among the most disadvantaged in terms of educational attainment, employment circumstances, poverty and social conditions, health status, and many other indicators. Of the total Aboriginal population, roughly 790,000 people are First Nations (status or registered Indians), 390,000 Metis (mixed race), and 51,000 Inuit.

Fewer than 17 out of 20 registered Indians aged 6 to 16 living on-reserve are enrolled full-time in K-12 (84% in 2000-1) compared with more than 19 out of 20 persons of comparable ages in the general population. About 50% of the Aboriginal population has less than a high school diploma, compared to 30% for the general population. The Aboriginal population has a median age of 25 compared to 38 for Canada as a whole. The birth rate is 1.5 times higher than the non-Aboriginal birth rate; about 35% of Aboriginal youth is under age 14 compared to 20% for the country as a whole. Between now and 2016, the Aboriginal population aged 15 to 24 is expected to grow rapidly. During the same period some 315,000 Aboriginal children

will be born who will proceed through the K-12 system and potentially into post-secondary studies (Wotherspoon, 2004; Holmes, 2006).

Disparities in educational participation are quite pronounced at the post-secondary level. In the late 1990s, for example, only 6.5% of registered Indians aged 17 to 34, compared to 11% of the general population in the same age cohort, had enrolled in full-time university studies. Educational attainment is lowest among the Inuit and among registered Indians living on-reserve (close to two-thirds have not completed high school and only 3% to 4% have a university degree). More than half of registered Indians living off-reserve have grade 12 or less and about 7% of Metis and off-reserve Indians have university degrees (Wotherspoon, 2004, p. 217).

Manitoba has a population of about 1.1 million; about 130,000, roughly 12% of the provincial population, are Aboriginal. Of the 130,000 Aboriginals, approximately 80,000 or 63% are status Indians. Northern Manitoba, the vast geographical area that UCN is mandated to serve, is the home of about 45,000, or 84%, of the provincial status Indian population. Most Aboriginal students at UCN are drawn from this group; many come from reserves that are relatively isolated and distant from the two UCN main campuses at The Pas and Thompson.

Manitoba has the lowest rate of school attendance among Aboriginal youth in Canada, by a considerable margin. Only 44% of Aboriginal youth aged 15-24 were attending school either full or part-time, at the time of the 1996 Census, compared to 50% for Aboriginals as a whole (“Aboriginal People in Manitoba”, 2002). The province also has one of the widest gaps in school attendance between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth: Aboriginal youth were 74% as likely as non-Aboriginal youth to be attending school. Because of the close relationship between educational attainment and socio-economic outcomes (employment, income, health), the gap in educational attainment outcomes will continue to disadvantage the Aboriginal population socially and economically unless steps are taken to reduce the gap. Aboriginal youth were 51% as likely as non-Aboriginal youth to have completed high school certificates and/or undertaken post-secondary education.

The data clearly indicate that large numbers of Aboriginal people in Canada and Manitoba have not acquired basic academic skills and the necessary post-secondary credentials required to participate meaningfully in the economy. In northern Manitoba, the inability strategically to attack this problem is compounded by a dearth of data on Aboriginal education and performance outcomes. Despite the preponderance of

Aboriginals, there have been very few empirical studies examining root causes, implications, and possible solutions to the underachievement problem.

The UCN attrition rate of 47% estimated in 2001 (“Enhancing Student Success”, 2001) is reflective of trends found in other post-secondary institutions. However, given UCN’s mandate and geographical location, higher priority must be placed on enhancing academic performance if the institution is to live up to its long-term goals and objectives (“Bringing Together the Past”, 2004).

Overview of the Pertinent Literature

Teaching-Learning

For many teachers nothing is more frustrating than having to confront the silent student who refuses to participate in classroom discussions or activities. Silence, particularly if it is persistent and intensely guarded by the student, can be very inhibiting. Moreover, teachers trained in the Western tradition in Faculties of Education in North America have been taught to believe that student reticence, withdrawal, or fear of interacting not only keeps students from sharing what they

know, but also deprives them and their fellow-students of the benefit of what they have to offer (Petress, 2001). In general, whether in elementary school or university, the silent student is often the teachers' worst enemy – the student who “sits there and says nothing”. It is not difficult, therefore, to label such students as “uninterested”, “indifferent”, or just “plain dumb”. Johannesen (cited in Petress, 2001) suggests that the silent student is usually perceived by teachers as an impediment to effective teaching and a hindrance to the academic progress of the whole class. Silence is interpreted as inimical to the development of the young student's self-esteem, maturity, and self-confidence.

Within a general teaching-learning context, studies have focused on cultural differences between ‘eastern’ and ‘southern’ educational experiences. Nakane (2002; 2006) examined the silence of Japanese students in Australian university classroom. The silences observed were not due to difficulties in adapting to Australian norms or classroom interaction, but directed by an ethical position of showing deference and respect. Zhou (2005), studying Chinese students in Canadian universities, suggests that the supposed passivity and reticence of East Asian students was a myth; instead, silence was used strategically in avoiding awkwardness associated with disagreement, and maintaining harmonious relationships. Sifianou (1997) investigated the ‘complex

nature of silence' and its 'inherent ambiguity' from which a similar focus on strategic value of politeness emerged, confirming the view of Brown and Levinson (1987) that silence is the 'ultimate expression of politeness'. Sifianou argues that, when researching silence cross-culturally, it is important to understand the predominant cultural values toward silence itself, and its cultural construction.

What emerges from the above studies is that the salience of silence is very dependent on underlying cultural beliefs in the classroom. The cultural differences around interpretations of silence as politeness and respect towards the teacher also redound, on occasion, to fellow students. Achino-Loeb (2006) argues that silence can be power. Do students have a right *not* to talk? Petress (2001) recognizes a range of reasons: low self-esteem, fear of being ridiculed, fear of success, avoidance of conflict.

There is also an argument for the intentional use of silence as a political act. Knight (2002) developed pedagogy for teaching about homophobia through 'silent discussion'. The whole of a one-hour class was given over to silence. A sheet was handed out at the start of class to explain the purpose:

The Day of Silence is to draw attention to those who have been silenced by hatred and oppression. Think about the voices you are not hearing. What can you do to end the silence? (p. 44).

Students met at the next class and, when asked to reflect/discuss their thoughts, replied that they had been provoked and stimulated to think anew what they were asked to do. The strategy of using silence to provoke reflection heightened students' awareness, empathizing with those voices not heard.

Philosophy and Linguistics

Some scholars have emphasized that silence before speech is indicative of preparing to tell a lie (Walker, 1985). Trained to look at silence this way, the teacher may view silence as inimical to teaching and subservient to speech. This attitude can be easily reinforced at the post-secondary level, since one of the measures of the relative success or failure of one's teaching methods is the quantity of students' verbal interaction with the teacher. Consider that most of what we do as teachers in regard to assessment is skewed towards run-of-the-mill, tried and true assessment techniques that provide a quick and efficient means by which to judge student performance. The

“cult of efficiency”, evident in the modern Canadian academy, demands accountability, effectiveness, standardization, and uniformity in virtually all things

What do the philosophers and linguists have to say about silence? Van Manen (1990) claims that there are various categories of silence. The first category is *literal silence*, as in the absence of speaking. Van Manen suggests that sometimes it is better to remain silent than speak or write; wiser to reflect than act. The second category is *epistemological silence* – the kind of silence we experience when confronting the unspeakable. Polyani (1969) refers to such silence as tacit knowledge. Beyond our ordinary spoken or written words, there is a rich repository of the unspeakable that beckons us. An example of this is would be an innocent bystander who witnesses a mass murder. In a state of shock, he or she is unable to describe the slaughter in detail because the experience is so overwhelmingly emotional. And yet he or she is able to help others construct an image of what transpired. Polyani suggests that while the witness may possess the knowledge, it is not always immediately accessible linguistically. It is important to realize, therefore, that it is not only the spoken language we use to express our experiences, but also the language of, for example, poetry, music, or painting. While Polyani does not take the discussion much further, he

nonetheless reaffirms the power of silence as a healing agent. Sometimes, there is simply nothing to say, but the air is charged nonetheless with thoughts and emotions.

Van Manen's third category is *ontological silence*, wherein life itself is characterized by contemplation and reflection after sustained periods of mental activity. An example might be the return to silence after an evening of lively conversation, or of being intellectually challenged by a speech or presentation. It is possible to make sense of what happened in a productive and emotionally satisfactory manner only if one is silent. The inference here is that only through silence can the beauty, salience, and multiple meanings of an experience fully unfold. Presumably, ontological silence would be the kind of silence that results from watching a beautiful sunset; one responds to the glory of it all by remaining mute.

Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty have emphasized that silence is anything but the mere absence of speech. Heidegger (1992) claimed that silence is part and parcel of discourse, and Merleau-Ponty (1996) argued that something exists beyond what is said and is in effect a silent and implicit language *sui generis*. Both emphasized that, in order to be silent, one must have something to say. As Max Picard (1952) wrote more than a half century ago, “when language ceases, silence begins” (p. 15). But it does not begin because language ceases. The absence of language simply makes the presence of silence

more apparent. Picard argued that silence is not an independent force but associated with other forces, infusing almost every dimension of life. Picard encourages us to understand silence as a positive force. It carries ontological meaning even by virtue of its being absent; it can “speak” merely by leaving something unsaid. Bateson (1987) concurs, arguing that a non-message is also a message. Silence tells us something if we are “willing to listen”.

The philosophical and linguistic fascination with silence reinforces the view that silence in the classroom can serve as a mechanism by which students engage with “what is not there” and hence are brought within the aesthetic construct as participants in learning. The philosophical literature also stresses that, even though a student does not speak, it does not mean that the student’s mind is not working and thinking. In the academy, it could be of benefit to the silent student if their silence is interpreted as a kind of personal reflection rather than a sign of disinterest. Teachers, many of whom spend hours silently reading or writing, would do well to value student silence as a part of the student’s pedagogic practice. Silence, therefore, displays different contours and shapes; and it is how instructors respond to silence that will determine their capacity to cope with it constructively.

Elementary and Secondary Education

In a number of studies carried out in the United States, there is consensus that Native American school children utilize silence more regularly than non-Aboriginal students. Silence is usually interpreted as a cultural attribute (Basso, 1970, Butterfield and Pepper, 1991; Hirst and Slavik, 1989; Luftig, 1983, Philips, 1976; Plank, 1993; 1994).

In early studies, Basso (1970) and Mowrer (1970) found distinct silence patterns with Western Apaches and Navajos. Silence is described in a variety of social contexts for the Apache: when meeting strangers, when dating, when children come home from school after an extended absence, when being verbally chastised, when in the presence of someone who is grieving, and when in the presence of one undergoing a ceremony. Navajo children use silence in much the same manner as Apache children and in similar ways. Wieder and Pratt (1990) report that American Indian students will refuse to answer a question in the classroom if the question requires a response which they think places themselves "above other students". When confronted with uncertainty or confusion, the Indian child's response is typically to remain silent. Clearly, in these

particular studies, silence appears to have been a learned attribute that is part and parcel of the larger Apache and Navajo culture (John, 1972).

The early literature on Indian school children in the United States indicates that silence is more of a cultural attribute than an individual trait. Consequently, researchers did not hesitate to recommend strategies to cope with silence in constructive ways. The message here is that silence is not to be considered something to overcome *because* it is necessarily a detriment to learning. It was not until the early 1990s that Plank (1994), in his study of Navajo children, found that while teachers acknowledged children's silence as a classroom problem, teachers' responses were anything but uniform. Most teachers did not find silence inherently negative; in fact, most were able to adjust to the lack of verbal communication in ways that did not raise students' anxiety.

Of greater concern for Plank was that silence was interpreted by many teachers as a cultural attribute, which was then further assumed to be immutable to change *via* instruction. Teachers who interpreted silence as a cultural trait reacted to silence by largely ignoring the silent student, and then, in response, chose to interact more with verbally active students. Interestingly, the response of the non-Navajo teachers differed markedly from that of the Navajo teachers. Navajo teachers did little or nothing to

actively engage the silent student in the classroom; they accepted silence as normative not only within the Navajo culture *per se* but as acceptable in the classroom as well. Neither did Navajo teachers interpret silence as an obstacle to student learning. Plank also found that the longer non-Navajo teachers interacted with Navajo students, the more verbal the Navajo child became. Plank concluded that it took some time to develop a sufficient level of trust between teacher and student to break the silence.

Post-Secondary Education

The importance of developing trust between the non-Aboriginal teacher and the Aboriginal student at the elementary level is reflected in Hampton and Roy's study (2001) of university students at the University of Regina. Their findings suggest the following: 1. a teacher-student relationship based on trust tends to facilitate success for Aboriginal students; 2. including Aboriginal content in curricula is an effective tool for facilitating student success; 3. a variety of teaching methods enhances student involvement; and 4. an open and flexible teaching style facilitates Aboriginal student involvement in class activities.

Many Aboriginal scholars stress the point that, for Aboriginal students to succeed academically, a positive student-professor relationship is an essential first step. Another facilitating factor is curriculum that incorporates Aboriginal content (Battiste, 2000, Castellano, et al. 2000; Couture, 1996; Kanu, 2005; 2006). Studies of silence in other cultures reveal the gap in our own investigations of classroom interaction in terms of the relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication (Nwoye, 1985). Silence is of particular interest to cross-cultural researchers interested in enhancing communication across cultures. Their research is more likely to appear in cross-cultural or international journals focusing on communication theory. This pattern may be linked to the cultural bias of the educational researcher in western societies, a bias that prohibits the researcher from investigating the value of silence in post-secondary settings. Despite this, the need for student talk remains at the forefront of analytical considerations for improving learning (Chaudron, Loschy and Cook, 1994). The message from these studies reiterates the view that to be silent is to act consciously; silence can be polite or defiant, interpreted or ignored, inferred as consent, condemnation, or resistance. Above all, silence is contextual (Dening, 1996).

Teacher Education

Another strand of research which touches on silence, but does not directly engage with its epistemological properties, is that of reflective practice, a central dimension of teacher training in most North American universities. Over the past few decades, reflective practice has been one of the most widely-researched professional development strategies applicable to both novice and experienced teachers.

The literature suggests that reflection is a cognitive process in which silent contemplation and critical thinking combine to play a part in the larger process of evaluating one's teaching. In order to reflect upon one's work, the teacher obviously has to value the process and be prepared to change his or her philosophy and/or teaching methods accordingly. A main premise is that reflection is critical to clearly thinking through problems in a way that allays distraction and excessive emotionality (Minnis, 1997).

The notion of reflection has its philosophical roots in the work of John Dewey, but it was David Schon, whose book *The Reflective Practitioner* (1987) became the "Bible" of reflective practice during the 1980s. Grimmett (1998) suggests that reflection is "a specialized form of thinking that is stimulated by surprises and puzzles" (p.6). Much of this thinking involves the silent contemplation of one's teaching practices, strategies

and assumptions. Reflection is essentially a solitary activity, at least initially; but once ideas are formulated and concretized, ideas and solutions to problems need to be discussed with fellow teachers (Zeichner and Tabachnick, 1991). Other writers focus on the cognitive process of reflection, defining it as that which propels people along the journey from novice to expert, as an evaluative dialogue that enriches the self and enhances professional practice (Butler, 1996).

A widely-quoted definition in the literature is provided by Zeichner and Liston (1987). They write, “Reflection seeks to help teachers become more aware of themselves and their environment in a way that changes their perception of what is possible” (p. 25). The authors identify three levels of reflection. The first is “technical reflection”, which basically confines practitioners to choosing among few alternatives to accomplish pre-determined ends (appropriate for novice teachers). Hill (1997, p. 194) refers to this initial level as “unproblematic technical proficiency”. The second, more complex, level is called “situational or contextual reflection”. Here the choice of a specific course of action is informed by knowledge of the expected outcomes associated with each alternative course of action (appropriate for experienced, autonomous teachers). At this level, the teacher juxtaposes the theoretical versus the institutional assumptions underlying notions of, for example, curriculum and

pedagogy, and does not hesitate to question critically or assess the effects of teaching actions, goals and structures. The third and deepest level identified by Zeichner and Liston is referred to as “critical reflection”, which depicts a decision-making approach. Teachers’ choices are informed by knowledge of both the expected outcomes and the ethical and moral consequences (ends) associated with alternatives (means). At this most advanced level, expected outcomes and alternatives, as well as organizational context and societal and global concerns, are taken as problematic (open to discussion). Presumably, it is at this level that teachers may decide to take political action to achieve ethical/moral ends.

Discussion

At UCN, most teachers are non-Aboriginal. Given that no research has been carried out on the subject, teachers may be unaware of how to react personally and professionally to the silent student. Some teachers may think that silence is an attribute of Aboriginal interpersonal and communicative patterns, a manifestation of home and family life, or an aspect of Aboriginal lifestyle. Non-Aboriginal teachers, particularly those with no familiarity with Cree culture, may be unsure of the meaning of silence and consequently may react in a variety of negative ways --including not reacting at all.

The implication is that, if UCN teachers believe that silence is a cultural attribute, some may conclude that the silent student is simply engaging in culturally acceptable behavior, even though this behavior may seem at odds with classroom norms and expectations. Teachers, especially neophytes, may be loath to request that the student become more vocally active because of their uncertainty about how the student might respond. To do so might risk being labeled as “culturally insensitive”. Hence, the sensible, low-risk strategy is to make few instructional demands of the silent student.

Within this hypothetical scenario, how might the silent student react? There are multiple possibilities. First, if the student feels that he or she is being ignored, s/he might misinterpret this as a form of racism (however benign), personal dislike, or gender bias. If teachers do in fact judge silence according to their own professional standards, who can blame them? As Saville-Troike (1985) points out, individuals socialized in post-industrial societies often look suspiciously upon persons who are silent, especially if they are silent for a long time in the presence of others. Whether as a result of teacher education programs or as a consequence of several years’ teaching, teachers are likely to internalize the value of interpersonal and verbal communication as essential ingredients in their own learning and that of their students.

In our multi-cultural society, teachers, like many other professionals, are under pressure not only to be sensitive to the cultural backgrounds of their clients but to adopt a more egalitarian and transparent posture in their relationships. This means that teachers are expected to ensure that students are vocally active, since this is a sure sign of learning (Wotherspoon, 2004). Many teachers with a Humanities or Social Science orientation have been educated to believe that knowledge is socially constructed. The so-called constructivist perspective underlies most university-based teacher education programs. Born out of the philosophical pragmatism of John Dewey and the insights of cognitive psychologist and educator Jerome Bruner, this view holds that learning is a social and cultural activity. The search for knowledge, therefore, is essentially a collectivistic pursuit, and learners construct meaning through interaction with others (Tobin, 1992).

Constructivism in education assumes that effective learning is contingent on students' being vocally engaged in classroom activities. When learning is perceived as socially constructed, the teaching emphasis is on discussion, collaboration, negotiation, and the development of shared meanings. Accordingly, "good" teaching is thought to be contingent on the cultural capital and the prior knowledge of the learners. This view

suggests that the school must respond to the experience and “world view” that students bring to it (Barakett and Cleghorn, 2008, p. 77).

Given our discussion so far, there are many interpretations a UCN teacher can apply to the silent Aboriginal student: that silence is normative for Aboriginals, a cultural attribute; that silence is an expression of the student’s personality, or maybe a manifestation of illiteracy; perhaps that silence is an irrational fear of authority, or a fear of failure; or maybe that it is an intellectual deficit, a sign of laziness or incompetence. It could also be a manifestation of class or ethnic resistance to the school culture. The problem is that, if teachers at UCN do not attempt to determine why silence persists, they may wrongly conclude that they are helpless to counteract it. The danger is that silence becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Because the student is a product of his or her culture, the teacher concludes that silence in the classroom is a natural and inevitable response. It is then quite rational for the teacher to blame poor academic performance on "the culture". If left unchecked, such attitudes would likely inhibit teachers from experimenting with new teaching methods that acknowledge the silent student and attempt to cope with him/her in a meaningful way.

Another perspective is that, if teachers make a causal connection between “culture” and “silence”, it may be that teachers underestimate the ingenuity of students

to use their silence as a form of impression management. Silence can be strategically used by the student as a coping strategy, or a ruse, or an outward sign of resistance used to disguise a serious learning problem or some other deficiency. Silence may also be rooted in an abiding hatred of institutions (the residential school legacy comes to mind), or a defense against natural shyness; or it may simply disguise deep feelings of personal insecurity.

Another factor that may encourage teachers to ignore the silent student is the bureaucratic nature of teaching that tends to reward quantity at the expense of quality. An example of this is how students are assessed. A favorite assessment technique (found in just about everyone's course outline at UCN) is to award students marks for "class participation", which often includes verbal presentations, group reports, etc. But are students being assessed on the quality of their participation, or just because they say something? When it comes to verbal reports and presentations, students are bound to be judged somewhat by the *amount* of their talk -- not necessarily by its *quality*. In other words, "talk" can be linked positively, albeit uncritically, to "learning". While it could be argued that "talk" is better than "no talk" at all, most teachers appreciate and encourage students to talk and, understandably, may think that the talkative student is learning more than the silent student. In this context, it is possible that teachers may

have internalized the questionable proposition that the more a student talks the more he or she is actually learning something.

The stress on quantity is also reflected in the penchant to reward students for attending class. Poor attendance becomes associated with low academic performance, while the inverse is assumed for regular or high attendance. While there is a clear link between attending class and academic performance, this does not tell us what the student has actually learned or what they can do as a result. And there is little evidence showing that verbally active students academically outperform silent students.

As a result of our penchant to quantify educational processes and outcomes, the silent student is likely to be viewed with suspicion compared to the verbally active student. Any yet, it is obviously nonsensical for the teacher to assume that just because the student is silent he or she is not learning.

Some Final Thoughts

The literature speaks to the different appearances and interpretations of silence, and how silence can be represented through the lenses of different cultures serving different purposes. Silence is clearly one of those characteristics over which there will

be some ambiguity as to whether or not it is an individual or cultural product. It may be acknowledged by some teachers as a problem, and they may try to cope with it imaginatively. Others will likely ignore silence and devote their energies to the vocal students.

Whichever stance the teacher takes, it is important to stress that, even though a student does not speak, remaining silent does not mean the mind is not functioning, or that the teacher does not have a responsibility to engage with that student. This leads to the inevitable question, “How do I get the silent student to communicate?”

Dialogue is the first step; this can only happen when all students are encouraged to participate actively by speaking and listening to others, in a context that allows them to share insights and ideas. Students do not have to participate equally, but they should have equal opportunity to do so.

Can teachers be expected to take this any further? I believe they must. Alerby and Elidottir (2003) provide helpful insights in this regard. They encourage teachers to think of silence in two ways: as a form of *internal silence* and as a form of *oppressed silence*. The former, a personal and private act, refers to one’s own thoughts and reflections. While it is normal for students to want to preserve their privacy through silence, teachers have the right to explain to them that, when in the classroom, they are not in a

private space, and they along with others have a responsibility to share their knowledge and experiences with the whole class when appropriate.

Oppressed silence exists when the student feels coerced into being silent for different reasons (abuse, ignorance, exercise of power, racism) and where he or she believes that s/he has no voice at all. Teachers must avoid practices that deliberately silence students. To avoid this possibility, teachers should take time to reflect on their classroom practices, and share their insights and questions with colleagues. Finally, in the classroom, teachers need to do more than just open up channels of communication; we also need to set standards so that students can work toward reaching achievable goals. In this way, they may gain the confidence they need to let their inner voices be heard not only in but outside the classroom.

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Five Poems by ALEX BOYD

NOTES ON A SMALL WORLD

No part of either army mourns, refuses to move for political reasons. Field clear and level, each pawn moves straight. Forward, armed with a spade, that's all. The bishop is cruelest. Nobody knows why he asks to be served those he slays with chutney. Nobody knows he dreams of being handed his own severed head. The knight has an odd but loyal compass, puts up with the rook, his raucous affairs in the off-hours, so frequently heard by the king, part dragon but shifty and slow out of need to feel his aromatic movement in silk. It's all about breeding, instinct. There's no difference in resources between armies. Reincarnation is a fact, but they get only one try at this before beginning again. It is the queen who works hardest, pregnant only with celestial concerns, lands with both feet on an opponent, thinks ahead to a summer of peace and freedom: a straw hat, yellow dress. Little does she know, it's game over.

THE LAST COPY OF THIS BOOK

The last copy of this book will be thrown into a fire. No one will even make note of it. Times will be tough, the streets empty but for patrols, when unbelievably enough, more people are alone than ever, cherishing dreams, because in sleep even those alone can be held.

Or the last copy of this will be filed away in a cabinet with a click, when such things are of interest only to a select few, centuries after you and I stand on a corner debating and deciding the trivial, at a time something pterodactyl sized cleans the air with man-made talons, blissfully unaware it too will be extinct, the men and women below well read, compassionate calcium boned.

Or the last copy of this book will be found in a library by a man stopping to try and catch the echo of himself pounding up marble steps, finding no other sound right before the sun expands into a red giant phase, and earth is destroyed, or at least every building levelled as she is gambled on a tidal wave of energy, and that's if they still have marble or steps or for that matter, feet.

Or the last copy isn't written, or published, today, in a world where we step outside for newspapers and say *good morning*, or at least some do, whistle brave, thin ribbons of colour to drape over every shifting thing, the ground moving in a heartbeat steady rhythm of lurching, yesterday a passing floe of ice, so please remember this if you don't mind, and try to stay alive.

UNCERTAIN, TEXAS

There's a particular virtue, hidden in one level
of the dry wind, the idea that no one is sure
in this town of 151, or 154. There's a question,
somewhere on the halcyon surface of Caddo Lake,
where mooring was uncertain for steamboats,
and apocryphal men shot down while swimming.

Nobody at the Uncertain flea market knows
why a loose cockatiel sits on a branch, steps out
from behind a curtain of Spanish moss with the idea
of doing more than dander, steps back. Not flightless,
but it looks down to appear alarmed, wants the best
ephemeral stories, the lies with the most truth.

A boy runs back, up the concrete, filled-in footprints
of Socrates, says he saw horseshoe crabs hustle slowly
up the beach, an invading pile of German helmets.
It's always something new with this boy. He's given
a lemonade, asked to relax. Before, he removed a bolt
that holds the universe together, said sorry about that.

I JUST HAVE TO GET THROUGH THIS

Summer stayed no longer than a sparrow.
Medication is passed over a trembling lip.
The postcard arrives just one day too late.
A man notes he'll get a hooker if he's dying.
One beggar spits in the air at another.
The field of sunflowers holds on as long
as it can, but dies before the old lady
passes on the train, gentle eyes watching.
A good man is murdered in his house.
They leave his body, pass his son on the lawn
reach out to ruffle his hair, and he stands,
his eyes narrowing after them as they walk.

For some reason we all wait for something.

PLATFORM

These are people, they don't know they flash –
frozen as photos, arriving at a subway station,
our window sailing boldly in, collecting them
like a child's hand scooping up toy soldiers
(a woman holds back a newspaper, slides
away into a man pressing on the earth
with a cane, but most simply stand, staring...)

Notice the eyes, wider than usual, they
come forward first – beating around for a path,
stretching back to the uncertain, train beginning
to slow, deciding they count and they
step forward slowly, expecting the future,
or as if someone were going to give a speech.
the eyes blink, are painted alive. Asking.

An Interview with Sharain Jones, Sam Waller Museum



A resident of Nova Scotia prior to moving North, Sharain Jones earned her Masters in Art and Museum Studies at the University of Leicester in 2003. She became interested in museology during her university studies. While majoring in Anthropology as an undergraduate, Sharain worked on a number of projects concerned with Black Loyalist history in museums in Nova Scotia. In 2006, she arrived in The Pas, Manitoba, and took up the position of Curator at the Sam Waller Museum. A beautifully-

appointed and professionally-managed community museum, The Sam Waller preserves artifacts from The Pas and its area. In its collection of natural and cultural history, one finds the significant and the strange— for example, a bronze sundial donated to the Devon Mission at The Pas by Sir John Franklin and a stuffed, two-headed calf.

Sharain Jones spoke with *Quint* interviewer, Anne Jevne, about Sam Waller, the Museum, its holdings, and its projects.

The Quint: I suppose we should begin by talking about Sam Waller, who founded this museum.

Jones: Sam Waller was from the Norwich, England area. He was born in the late

1800s and was, I believe, the oldest child in his family; but shortly after he came along, his mother passed away and his father remarried, so he has a number of younger step-siblings. But from some of

the material we have and from information from some of the previous staff, I guess that Sam and his stepmother didn't get along very well, so as a teenager he actually came to Canada . . .

The Quint: He came to Canada to get away from his mum?

Jones: (nods) It was around 1910 that he went to Ontario and worked on various farms as a labourer. When the First World War broke out, he returned overseas to fight and, from what we understand, that was when he started his collecting. One of the stories is that his commanding officer sort of gave him heck because he had all the stuff in the trenches with him: “You’re fighting a war. Where are you collecting all of this stuff?”

The Quint: What happened after the war?

Jones: When the war finished, he returned to Canada. He began training to become a minister, but he became ill and couldn’t finish his studies. So instead of continuing on in the ministry, he became a teacher, and taught in various reserve communities in northern Ontario and northern Manitoba. He still continued his collecting. He was an amateur ornithologist, so he quite

liked his birds. I believe that today he may still have the third largest collection of ornithological material, because we not only have bird mounts but drawers of study skins, nests, and eggs. It’s quite a collection, and primarily birds of this region.

The Quint: Sam really liked birds. What other things did he like to collect?

Jones: He continued collecting other items—some mammal species, some of the area, some from elsewhere. He has quite a variety of human history items, and sometimes you wonder, Well why was he collecting this? One of his collections contains quite a number of china cups. There’s also quite a number of bottles for various beverages, which is quite interesting because apparently he didn’t drink; but there are all sorts of bottles in the collection.

The Quint: What’s with the barbed wire collection?

Jones: I honestly don’t know about the barbed wire, but again I guess it’s getting a sampling of the social

history of the area. People had barbed wire of different styles. He also collected stamps, so there’s quite a bit of that in our collection, as well as various currencies.



The Quint: Why are there all sorts of things sitting out there pickled in jars?

Jones: From what I understand, there are two ways to preserve natural history specimens. You can dry them out with chemicals and take out the innards and these are the mounted specimens. But with the wet specimens, pickling is another way to preserve them. From what I’ve seen they are smaller specimens; in some cases embryos, as you’ve seen. I’m not sure why Sam did that. I guess

,again, it was for study purposes in the classroom. I'm not sure how he was able to obtain all those preservatives and to have just the right balance so they didn't evaporate right away, so the specimen would stay well-preserved.

The Quint: In the library here there's almost a ceiling-to-floor collection of bibles.

Jones: He collected everything...anything. These books you see here: most of these are from his collection. We've collected some books, of course, but it's his material that fills these walls.



The Quint: Given all this material, it's as if you live with Sam every day. It's almost as if you're walking around in Sam's brain...so who was Sam Waller, really?

Jones: I can only go by what people I've met in town have told me: that he was very nice, kind of reserved, always interested in learning and collecting; and that he liked to present his collection to friends, local visitors, visitors from far away. Someone who knew him when she was a kid said she remembers being in the museum and hardly being able to move. You had to have your hand in your pockets. His eyes were pretty sharp, and he made sure people behaved around his things. I gather that he was a fairly quiet person, but not that he was shy—just quiet and a bit reserved. But quite interested in history; and not just local, but history in general.

The Quint: So everything in the museum you see was Sam's?

Jones: All the material that you see, and in the collection, the majority of it is still his original collection. We've been collecting since his passing, but our mandate is considerably narrower—that we collect material that is of relevance to The Pas and the surrounding area.

Because we only have so much room, we have to be selective.

The Quint: Did he ever say one collection was his favourite or the one he enjoyed most?

Jones: I would say his favourite was his birds, his bird specimens, but he liked and enjoyed collecting all kinds of material.



The Quint: Why do collectors like to collect things? I'm not a collector myself, so I don't understand the compulsion to collect.

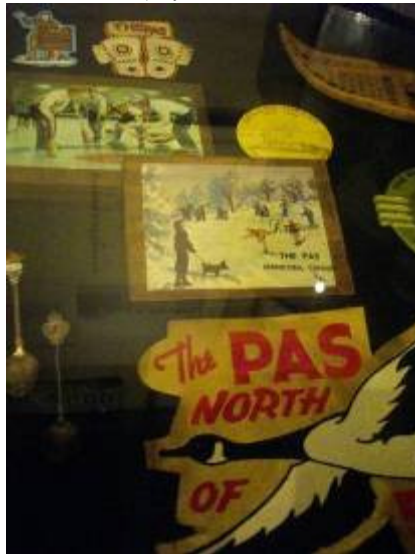
Jones: I'm a collector, but I've slowed down a bit because I don't go out much. But I like to collect handbags. I guess if there's something you really like, it's nice to have a sampling

of various styles and varieties. I think Sam was quite the educator, and he really wanted to have some sort of collection of the history of this area there so that local people would have the opportunity to learn from the past and the present, and to keep it for future generations to learn from. And he was a bit concerned that, if this collection wasn't kept and preserved, the material might be sold, likely down south in the US; then if we were to purchase this material back, it would certainly cost us a lot more. Why bother going back route when you can just keep the collection here?

The Quint: So when he died, did he leave instructions about the Museum?

Jones: Yes. His wish, and I think this occurred prior to his passing, was that the Town of The Pas would take over the care of his collection. And part of that obligation was to ensure that they had staff who were trained in museology properly to care for and preserve the collection for the people of The Pas and

area to enjoy.



The Quint: He was serious about his museum. It wasn't just a hobby then.

Jones: He eventually won numerous awards, including a Golden Boy in the late sixties. He was well regarded in the museum community nationally and provincially. And he didn't receive a regular pay check as we do today: he had his little donation bear which you might have noticed when you came in—that little grizzly bear with a donation box. He worked long hours, and was pretty much always accessible. The museum was open every day. The hours changed, but I think they were from around lunch time to evening. They may have changed a bit in the winter.

If you didn't find him in the museum, you might have found him out in the garden. He lived from the proceeds from the donation box. A number of service groups were quite instrumental in helping out, like providing him his first bunkhouses.

The Quint: He had a lot of public support...

Jones: He had his Little Northern Museum. That was arranged by members of the local Rotary Club and other like-minded citizens. And then, as a centennial project in 1970, the Rotary Club, and I believe this was spearheaded by Jack Johnson, arranged for the building which is now Big City Motors; so that was the new Sam Waller Little Northern Museum. With his passing they had a number of staff and then, in the early eighties, Paul Thistle was hired as the curator, and basically was required to do two jobs, doing the work that my colleague and I do. They were running out of space, and wanted to find a bigger area. This building was vacant. It was nearly demolished, but they were

able to get it and have it refitted to become the current Sam Waller Museum. That was a ten-year project, retrofitting this building to house the museum and then moving the artifacts from the old museum to this building.

The Quint: So they got the best of both worlds then. They preserved a historic building in The Pas, and they put a museum in it.

Jones: (nods) This building has provincial designation, actually. It's the largest brick building north of Dauphin.

The Quint: It was the old courthouse?

Jones: Courthouse, community hall and jail. The top floor had the community hall, this level had the two courtrooms, and downstairs had the jail for men and women. And originally the sheriff and his family lived down there as well. When it was used as a jail, people weren't here very long. It depends who you ask, but I think at most it was a week, because if it was something more serious they would have to go to a

larger institution.

The Quint: I have to ask you this question, because people have been asking me to. Are there any ghosts floating around in here?

Jones: Allegedly.

The Quint: Honestly? Where are they? I haven't seen one.

Jones: Well, I haven't either. But old buildings make noises whether you want them to or not. Strange noises happen, people believe in ghosts, and there you go. There have been stories, but I haven't been able to confirm anything.



The Quint: OK. Tell me a ghost story.

Jones: Well, I don't actually

have a ghost story.

The Quint: A noise story?

Jones: During my first year here, I was working alone and there were three kids here who probably should have been in school but weren't. They weren't bad, but they were probably thinking, Maybe I'll pull a fast one on her. I was telling them a bit about the museum and what we had, and they were wondering if there were ghosts around, and then the air-handling system in the temporary gallery started acting up, and it's loud ...

The Quint: What did they do?

Jones: Their eyes were bugged out of their heads when that (gestures) started going off, and so in about two minutes they were gone...out the door. It was priceless. Because of course when this is going on, you're trying to keep a straight face and say, Well, it's not the ghost...but it could be.

The Quint: So they took off and went back to school?

Jones: They didn't stick around and I don't think I've seen them since. Unless they come in when I'm not here.

The Quint: That's part of the story circulating in The Pas about the ghost in this building?

Jones: (laughs) Ah huh



The Quint: And downstairs in the basement you can go into where the old jail cells used to be?

Jones: Just the old women's cells. Actually it's the way the building was originally set up. Over the years they switched the configuration of this building. From the sixties to seventies, the jails may have been on the top floor,

because I've heard stories about prisoners throwing things outside or throwing down lines so people could tie something to them and they'd get their cigarettes or whatever.

The Quint: It's an interesting place.

Jones: This building's really been an integral part of the community, and is to this day. One of the projects we're looking to do is to find funding to develop better signage, because we still get people coming in and thinking we're the courthouse. So of course we say, "Cash only, no unmarked bills" (laughs); and they go down the road to the current courthouse. So that's quite funny as well.

The Quint: The museum has that *look* to it, the *look* that says it's got to be a courthouse.

Jones: It still says "community building courthouse" outside, so we'll find something that clearly states the name of our museum. Maybe a banner, but we don't want to alter the look of the actual building, because it's a

designated heritage building.



The Quint: You do Outreach for kids downstairs too. You have a room for them?

Jones: We have in the past and still do, but we haven't explored it all that much because of our schedules. But we'll certainly do presentations to school groups. We need a bit of notice and what they'd like us to do. Sometimes teachers just cannot bring their students to us, but we can always go to them if that works out a bit better for them and if it fits with their schedule. We just need to know what they would like us to present.

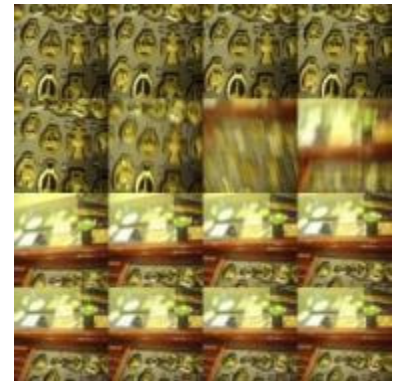


The Quint: What would you like to see the museum doing in the future?

Jones: I would like to have more programming done

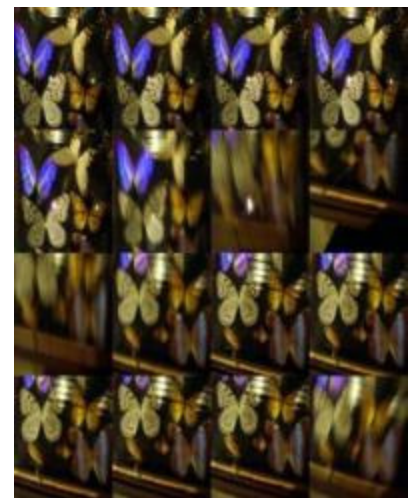
throughout the school year. In the summer we have our kids' craft morning and sometimes adult-related programming. It would be nice if we had more of a developed schedule of programming. In September we'll think about a theme and we'll have evening programs for one day of the week to do something for the general public. Again, with our current resources that's a bit difficult to maintain. But I'd like to do a bit more of that.

travel around the region, not the province. That would be nice.



The Quint: Is there anything else you'd like to see in the museum?

Jones: I would like to develop more temporary exhibits relating to all aspects of our collections, but again you need more time and staff or volunteers than we currently have. It would be nice to do more in-house exhibits and maybe to do travelling exhibits, to



gallery quint

James Dean



Norma Johnson



James Dean

James began painting with his son. “I started with him to keep him company so he’d do it,” James said, “He inspired me, and I’ve never looked back.” Working in acrylic and oil, James is an avid fisherman who translates his love for and knowledge of freshwater fish into his art. In mid-March James will be putting on an evening workshop in The Pas. A presentation on Plein Air, he will be looking at its history, the Group of Seven and their “sketching” as well as the equipment needed: “For me it is very significant in the whole Canadiana art approach. You capture both the moment and the type of day it was. To look at these finished Plein Air paintings later on is a step back to a time and place.”







James H. Brown



James Dean 2007



















Norma Johnson

A Snow Lake resident since 1958, Norma Johnson has been quilting for 20 years. For her, painting is a recent activity. She began five years ago by experimenting from a book. "I always thought I'd like to do it," she said, "But I never thought I had the talent." Her daughter encouraged her to take adult education classes with Paul Lamoureux in Winnipeg. "I just loved it," she said, "And when I'm in Winnipeg I go and take a class." Norma, who loves Nature and blending colours, specializes in landscapes.



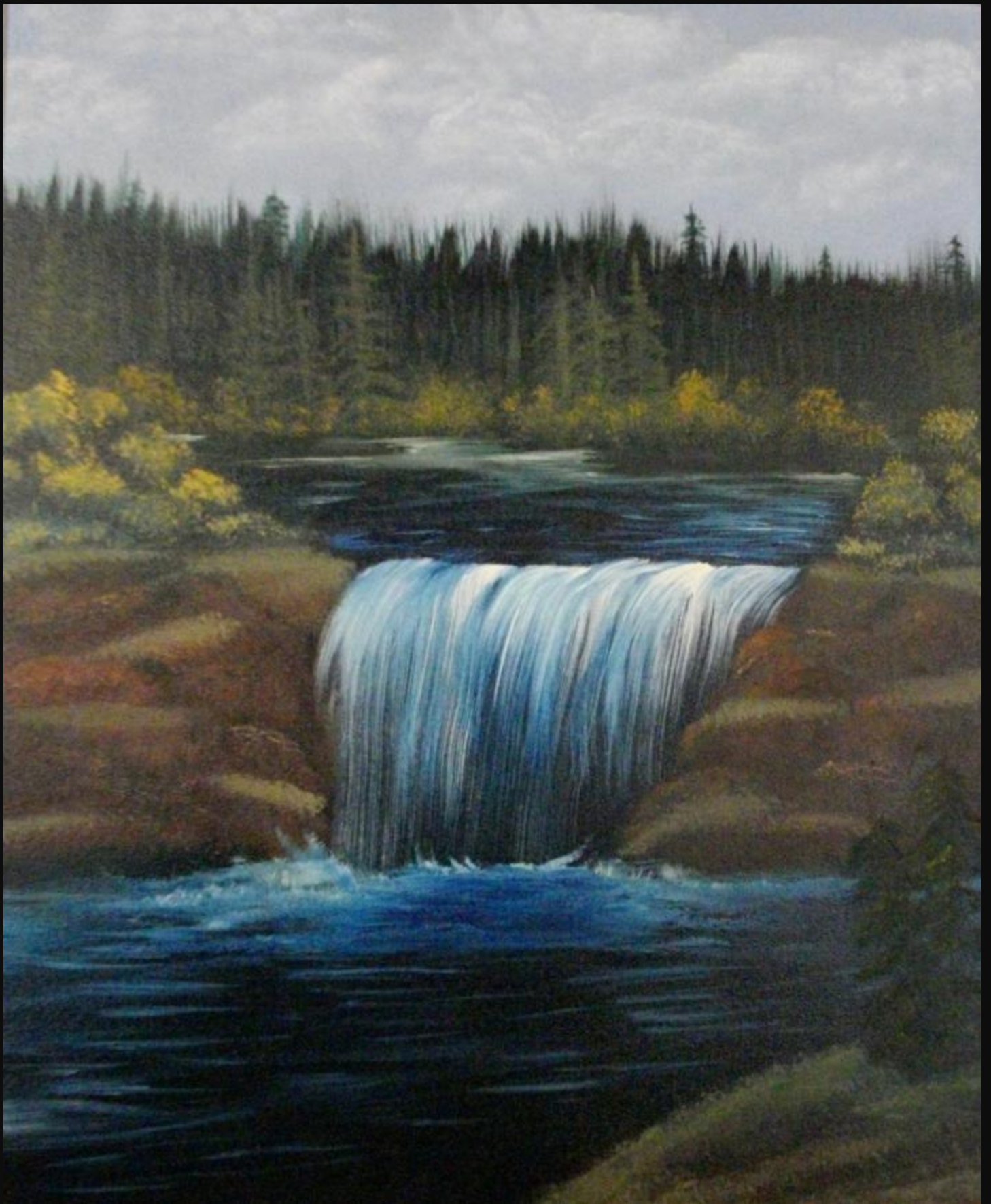


















CONTRIBUTORS

Alex Boyd lives in Toronto. He writes poems, fiction, reviews and essays, and has had work published in magazines and newspapers such as *Taddle Creek*, *dig*, *Books in Canada*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Quill & Quire*, *The Antigonish Review* and on websites such as *The Danforth Review*, and *Nthposition*. He booked and hosted the I.V. Lounge reading series for five years, and is co-editor of the online journal *Northern Poetry Review*. His personal site is alexboyd.com, and his award-winning first book of poems, *Making Bones Walk*, was published in 2007.

An environmental health officer/public health inspector at the Cree Nation Tribal Health Center, James Dean has made his home in The Pas with his wife Elma and two children for the past 23 years.

A doctoral candidate, John Hanson is teaching courses in Aboriginal Self Justice at the University College of the North. He lives in The Pas with his wife and two children.

A single mother of two children, Anne Jevne lives and writes in Northern Manitoba.

A mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Norma Johnson lives and paints in Snow Lake, MB.

Dave Kattenburg leads two lives, and is therefore doubly confused. He teaches Anatomy & Physiology, Biology and other life-science courses for UCN and Inter-University Services, in Norway House and The Pas, and is also an independent radio producer specializing in global environment and development issues. Dave's documentaries, based on travels around the world, have appeared on CBC Radio and Radio Netherlands, as well as on his websites, www.earthchronicles.net and www.greenplanetmonitor.net.

Patricia Kolb was born in Timmins (Ontario), studied creative writing in Toronto, and has worked in coffee shops, cafés and restaurants all across Canada. She often organizes regular “open mic” nights of spoken word and music using those locations as venues. She has written two self-published chapbooks: *Kicked Sand* and *Poe Slept Here*. *Bête de la Neige* will be her third.

Currently on a research leave in New Zealand, Dr. John Minnis specializes in the area of First Nations' education and teaches courses in Sociology at University College of the North. John was raised in The Pas and spends time with his family at Clearwater Lake.

Dr. Samuel Veissière specializes in the ethnography of cultures of struggle and resistance that emerge in trans-national and post-colonial contexts. He has conducted fieldwork in France, southern and northeastern Brazil, cyberspace, and the diasporic Canadian North, and is currently working on a book based on his research in Brazil and narratives of Brazilian mobility in Europe. After a year in Bunibonibee Cree Nation, Sam and his family re-located to Thompson where he teaches Anthropology and is the Chair of Social Sciences for UCN.

Jay White is a stay-at-home father with a toddler son. The birth of his son seemed to lead to his own birth as a poet. He now listens to his iPod and scribbles furiously during ever-increasingly-shorter nap-times in a suburban home on the outskirts of Saskatoon.

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Elna and James Dean

call for papers

the quint is issuing an open call for its third issue (June 1st) on the theme of childhood or any topic that interests writers in the North. We are seeking theoretically informed and historically grounded submissions of scholarly interest which are also accessible to non-academics. As well as papers, *the quint* accepts for consideration creative writing, original art, interviews, and reviews of books to be published throughout the academic year. The deadline for this call is April 30, 2009—but please note that we accept manu/digi-scripts at any time.

quint guidelines

All contributions to *the quint* will be forwarded to a member of the editorial board. Manuscripts must not be previously published, nor should they be submitted for publication elsewhere while being reviewed by *the quint's* editors or outside readers.

Hard copies of manuscripts should be sent to *the quint*, University College of the North, 504 Princeton Drive, Thompson, Manitoba, Canada, R8N 0A5. We are happy to receive your artwork in digital format, PDF preferred. Email copies of manuscripts,

Word or RTF preferred, should be sent to the appropriate editor: poetry/fiction jbachinger@ucn.ca; interviews/fiction sbarber@ucn.ca; articles acrowe@ucn.ca; art smatheson@ucn.ca; creative nonfiction dwilliamson@ucn.ca.

Essays should range between 15 and 25 pages of double-spaced text, including all images and source citations. Longer and shorter submissions also will be considered.

Bibliographic citation should be the standard disciplinary format.

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