Yuma State:

A philosophical study of the Indian residential school experience.

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by
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Dedicated to

the memory of

my parents

And to all the Native

Residential school

Students

Acknowledgments

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Abstract

Indian residential schools in Canada span a history over one hundred years producing a storm of controversy that is ongoing. The principal parties to this controversy include a number of Christian churches in Canada, the federal government and the Native students who attended these schools. This thesis exams a segment of that issue.

The current debate rages over the extent of sexual and physical abuses of children victimized while in residence at these schools. Little discussion has been targeted in the area of the impact of attempted assimilation on the lives of former students.

My contention in this study is that the delicate maturational stages of Native children were tampered with arbitrarily by those in authority resulting in life-long social disorientation for many of the Native people who attended these schools. My thesis is rooted in the contention that the internalization and orientation of two disparate worldviews in repressive atmospheres undermined the natural development of the child.

By way of methodology a personal narrative covering my years at a residential school is produced and examined using phenomenological description and analysis.

Three factors underpinning this analysis are the roles of the residential school, the concept of the existential self, and the impact the two world views played in the intellectual formation of the residential school student. These background components are treated in some detail. The heart of the study materializes in the Autoanalysis which depicts chronologically my own deteriorating self-concept while at a residential school and my eventual emancipation of consciousness and self-identity.

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2.0 Introduction

> *Each individual is born into a culture, and its orientations and basic beliefs shape him and remain deeply rooted in his personality all of his life. If he moves into a new culture with other orientations and basic beliefs, the two versions of reality are dissonant within him.*
>
> Einstein's Space & Van Gogh's Sky[1]

This study is based on my residential school experience at the St. Joseph's Boarding School in the former city of Fort William, now Thunder Bay, Ontario. Like myself, many former Native residential school students have been left in a peculiar ontic state, an especially dysfunctional way of *being* in the world suffered at the hands of government and church. While still in the critical stages of our development, we were indoctrinated into the Western worldview under repressive conditions. The worldviews of the Western European or Euro-Canadian and Anishinaabe were fundamentally and diametrically opposed in key conceptual and perceptual areas, a condition that created immanent learning dichotomies for Native children in attempting to adjust to a particular social reality. The consequence of the assimilationist program attempted at these schools was a form of ideational dissonance and perceptual confusion created in our minds, a state I call the "Yuma State of consciousness". In the following pages I will explicate and clarify what I mean by the Yuma State of consciousness. This study, then, is a form of cathartic exercise to free myself from the bonds of mental imprisonment or psycho-socio maladjustment.

The term 'Yuma State' is a *double entendre*. It originally was the name of a former territorial prison in the State of Arizona. At St. Joseph's we first learned of this prison in the westerns we watched on television. Considering the prison-like trappings of a residential school we, in fantasy, thought of St. Joseph's as Yuma State in our cowboys and Indians games. It later became my mental

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[1] Lawrence Leshan & Henry Margenau, *Einstein's Space and Van Gogh's Sky: Physical Reality and Beyond.* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1982), p 3.

incarceration in a view of the world of social dysfunctionalism. I offer this study to others as a way of freeing themselves of this psychological disorientation or mental imprisonment.[2]

For more than a few years I have been baffled by the idea of personal identity, unaware of any philosophical theory surrounding this notion but more along the lines of 'trying to find myself'. At times my musings followed a general psychological pattern, which invariably led me to thinking of others like myself who attended a residential school, in the hopes of finding some clues. Other times I focused solely on myself, following the formative years of the personality paradigm, and wondered what elements and features of my own history played a part in shaping who I turned out to be. As a Native and former resident of St. Joseph's Boarding School for six years, it seemed natural to suspect that institution of playing a key role in my development or lack thereof.

The school location is currently an elementary school playground in Thunder Bay and each time I pass by the area I stop and think for awhile of times past. Now defunct and dismantled, Indian Residential Schools across Canada, including St. Joseph's, are currently seen as having created serious experiential consequences for Native people. In trying to come to terms with my own

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[2] A friend and colleague, while surfing the net, stumbled on some interesting facts about this institution that I had confined only to memory. The appellation Yuma stems from the rich Yuman Indian culture of the region and specifically from the word 'uma' meaning fire. Today, it is a city of 65,000 that is home for, The Yuma Territorial Prison State Park. The prison opened in 1876 and housed 3,069 prisoners, including 29 women during its 33 year operation. Interestingly, despite its notorious background, most prison sentences were short due to the ease of obtaining early release. It was considered a model prison and humanely operated. The worst penalties for infractions were the dark cell, commonly referred to as 'the hole' in prison jargon, the ball and chain for escapees and no executions ever took place there. Prisoners were able to do handicraft, go to school, and receive regular medical attention. After the prison closed in 1909, it became a high school, a haven for hobos during the depression and finally a tourist attraction.

identity, I inevitably concluded by perceiving my former grade school alma mater as the pivotal socializing instrument to my identity confusion and hence social disorientation in mainstream experience. While drawing these conclusions about the school I found myself wrestling with an uneasy reluctance in pointing an accusing finger at my former custodians. One plausible explanation by some aboriginal writers attributes this reticence by Native people to our spiritual disposition which triggers our reluctance to castigate other people or religious institutions. However the need to breach this silence for the sake of healing has prompted Native people to acknowledge and disclose their experiences within the walls of these bizarre institutions. Overcoming my own diffidence, in the following pages I outline the general structure of the Indian Residential School System, its mandate and collusion with the government to assimilate Native children to a second class Euro-Canadian identity. In particular I assert that: 1) as a former resident of an Indian Residential school I experienced a deep epistemic dichotomy that partially explains my resistence to be molded, so to speak, into a brown 'white person' and the ontic consequence for me, generally understood in 'methodological behaviorist' jargon, or psychology, as maladjustment; and 2) the intended purpose of these schools as instruments of assimilation, was doomed to fail because of a fundamental and intractable collision of two worldviews. Coupled with the fact that these schools were repressive, the consequence of this heteronomous project was the thrusting of Native people into a racist social milieu that rejected them and which, conversely, they couldn't accept themselves. The proposed cultural replacement scheme was an attempt to embed the Western worldview which was ultimately intended to absorb an alien indigenous consciousness averse to the materialistic Individualism of Western European ideology.

Part of my thesis includes a personal narrative relating a dual experiential life journey in a

residential school and my home reserve. The intent of this parallel narration is to bring to surface the fundamental structures of a socializing environment that manifested two competing worldviews for Native children to internalize in their development, one orientation attempting to absorb the other. In retrospect what I saw as most detrimental personally were the deeper layered institutional features of a residential school and the Western social belief system and values imposed in the racist and repressive program employed at the school. Nothing in the way of Native cultural importance was disseminated to us to impart a sense of 'wholeness' or balance in being Native, or a person. Instead we were spoon fed, so to speak, stereotypical Western-centric images, of what it meant to be *Indian*.[3] Dennis McPherson and Douglas Rabb in *Indian from the Inside* provide a helpful analysis of the labels bestowed on us which they describe as outside-view-predicates.[4] To reinforce our Euro-Canadianization, a program fraught with the technology on how to become secondary resource citizens, was in place at the school. This technology involved many other things attempting to get us to perceive ourselves as they saw us, as uncivilized Indians on the way to becoming colonized and assimilated Indians.

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[3] Throughout I employ terms, such as; Indian, Native, Aboriginal, Indigenous and Anishinaabe interchangeably depending on usage in context and tone of the meaning referred to. The terms Indian and reserve are used in their historical nuance. The current usage of First Nation is now the preferable designation for a reserve. Native, designating the Native peoples of the Americas is commonly used today but at times is cumbersome and equivocally refers to other ideas as well. Aboriginal and Indigenous are also equivocal and generally used in academia. The term Anishinaabe is the name preferred by the Ojibway and Cree to denote the original people of North America. It is less ambiguous and has an exclusive ring to it. The term 'white people' and related inflections are used in the historical sense to refer to the dominant group in Western Euro-Canadian culture.

[4] Dennis McPherson and Douglas Rabb, *Indian from the Inside: A Study in Ethno-Metaphysics,* (Thunder Bay: Centre for Northern Studies, Lakehead University. 1993).

After leaving St Joseph's Boarding School for the last time we, former students, more or less all went our separate ways in life and only made rare and casual acquaintances over the years and even then rarely spoke of the school itself. As the years rolled by, I began to assess the impact the school had on my life piecemeal without drawing any general negative conclusions. If anything, the opposite was true when I consider the times I often naively defended the school and its benefits for me whenever the subject was broached. I am now only able to attribute part of my past ignorance as a stage in the process of 'mental colonization'. As I grew increasingly aware of the historical philosophical and cultural dynamics of the residential school system, my thoughts began to crystallize and I finally started applying the facts to my own personal development as understood in the social scientific paradigm. I started recognizing various character traits relative to my own identity that I discerned were shaped by my stay at the school. Comparing them with other former residents of St. Joseph's, I observed similar patterns of attitudes and mannerisms which seemed absent from other Native people who did not attend a residential school. I tentatively made the following hypothetical generalizations in assessing myself and can only suppose others experienced the same social disorientation.

In my adult years I became critical of my ancestry often making jokes and a lot of self effacing gestures brushing them off as Native humor. The term 'conquered' is often used in self-reflection by colonized Native people, myself included, oblivious to historical facts and the contributions Native people have made to the world. I was unaffected by many pro-Native cultural events and suspicious of pow-wows, sweat lodge ceremonies, etc.. In relating to non-Native people, I became overly obsequious in manner to please with an opposite explosive emotion of anger when challenged. These perceptual experiences seemed associated with an overall strange alienation from

white people, a sense of always being on the 'outside looking in'. The term "inferiority complex" might well be a fitting moniker of many of my attitudes and actions. A close affinity to these behaviours was the fear of authority with the accompanying gesture of eyes down when speaking to others. Asserting my rights was a non-existent precept in a conscious state of subjugation and oppression. Perhaps the tell-tale sign of my subjugation and paralysis of inaction was the ease of adjustment to institutionalization and inappropriate association with and dependence upon paternal agencies, a dependence born of consciousness of people racially marginalized in society. Jails, psychiatric hospitals, alcohol treatment and detox centres, Salvation Army hostels, welfare agencies, all became permanent conscious dwelling venues throughout most of my adult life. The overall pattern of my actions were also the result of a weakened sense of self affirmation. As my thesis unfolds, greater clarity and understanding regarding the basis of this 'social maladjustment' will emerge.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Applied Phenomenology

Phenomenology in my methodology materializes in several ways, first in the description of the *'being and becoming'* of the *'self'* as described by Maurice Natanson.[5] Secondly, occasional references are made to various practitioners of phenomenology to illuminate various notions in the exposition of this paper. Some of these writers include: Paulo Freire, David Abram, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean Paul Sartre, Douglas Rabb and Dennis McPherson. Max Van Manen's application of the method in his ground breaking study of pedagogy I also found useful.[6]

The theme of this study focuses on my development in adolescence under the mantle of assimilation and revolves around a primary concentration on the role of 'consciousness' in personality growth for an authentic identity. As background material for analysis within this theoretical framework, the realm of consciousness affecting maturation of an identity, I examine three necessary components: the self, a unified cultural field of constructs, and the makeup of these constructs defined in terms of Western values and Native values.

The locus in consciousness as a starting point is the reflective experiencing 'self' identifying itself as 'I' as opposed to the 'Other'. Maurice Natanson's treatment of the self in transit from a solitary ego to cognizance of the 'other' and then the social world is developed from a phenomenological and existential standpoint which I find illuminating and useful. The second component, the cultural constructs the ego depends upon in its metamorphosis will be examined in

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[5] Maurice Natanson, *The Journeying Self: A Study in Philosophy and Social Role*, (Don Mills: Addison - Wesley Publishing Company Inc., 1970).

[6] Max Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*, (London: The Althouse Press, 1990).

relation to commentaries made by a number of writers on language, values, social environment and spirituality and adding the worldview argument as a backdrop. The third component, the field of cultural constructs and other perceptual data which Natanson discusses is the environmental field the ego feeds on in its development. Natanson writes under the assumption the field is unified, that it is a Western cultural environment. The treatment of this component stresses the repressive and destructive elements of the residential school milieu. Michel Foucault's deconstructionist critique of penology, *Discipline and Punishment,* and Roland Chrisjohn's critique of residential schools in the *Circle Game* bring to life the unsettling pathos of an incarceratory setting.[7] My use of their descriptions magnifies that fractured field of two warring cultural constructs in the added repressive milieu under which the Native child was socialized in residential school. The three components support the general discussion based on the phenomenological outline of the Van Manen paradigm.

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[7] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, (Random House). John Chrisjohn, Sherri L. Young, Michael Maraum, *The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Residential School Experience in Canada,* (Pendicton: Theytus Books Ltd., 1997)

3.2 Phenomenological Analysis And Interpretation

Drawing from the phenomenological method, Max Van Manen outlines a procedural schema for which a human science approach might be adopted by a researcher. In order to bring forth a more comprehensive understanding of what it entails to be a teacher, Van Manen suggests a holistic paradigm of investigation and practice as opposed to the traditional methods in Euro-Western pedagogy. Past efforts in teaching more or less centered on bringing the standard techniques of a unilateral teaching curricula to children. The central question Van Manen asks is how a child learns. To do this, he suggests investigation in the ways a child learns by immersing oneself in the consciousness of a child through techniques designed to better understand these phenomena. Phenomenological essences as understood by Edmund Husserl (1859 - 1938) seem to be the key to understanding. The techniques involve writing, introspection, and interpretation. Through writing narrative we may gain insight from essences discovered, interpreted and introspected to draw clearer meanings and understanding. A dialogue with children is essentially what Van Manen's method requires in order to generate the narrative.

The Van Manen paradigm in my own work centers on my autobiographical sketch entitled *Yuma State* which covers my formative years and ends after my high school years. The key feature of the narrative are the six years spent at a residential school, an experience which I saw as dominant in structuring my eventual outlook in life. The text of the narrative was written from memory, and structured as a stream of consciousness unfolding chronologically. It is an exercise in phenomenological description. The text also serves as the main source for extracting essences not immediately discernable. In applying a hermenuetical approach to the text my prose unveils a language replete with implications that reveal a sub-text of attitudes and beliefs defining my

consciousness and reality.

Findings throughout the text were extracted as phrases from the narrative, labeled and intended as referents from which categories were listed and ordered as sub-themes to draw conclusions. The findings and referents are condensed in Appendix I, *Chronological List of Selected Categories*. A table in Appendix II, *Chronological Table of Concepts*, was then drawn with the sub-themes and computed numerically. Correlations of the numbers of the categories with the chronology of the table produced an interesting schema for analysis. For example in my early years the numbers with the category "Native Values" were noticeably high and at the end of the period disappeared entirely. Conversely the category "alienation" was strong in the end but relatively weak at the beginning. The implication clearly suggests a fractured consciousness in the making.

4.0 FINDING YOURSELF IN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

> *'...the total institution does not produce a **new** self, but **no self at all**:...if inmates become available at a young enough age, the tactics of total institutions won't merely 'disrupt or defile' selves, but hinder their development in the first place. By **not allowing** the formation of 'adult executive competency', the inmates are prevented from being or becoming persons **at all**'.*
>
> *The Circle Game*

Introduction

This stark and chilling epigraph was intended to depict the fate of anyone confined to an institution. The writers of the *Circle Game* focus on the repressive atmosphere and assimilation program in which Native children were confined and nurtured at an Indian residential school. Viewed from a broad theoretical angle, their descriptions are essentially what happened to children at these schools. In the beginning stages of the residential school system, those in charge were understandably reluctant about allowing Native children to return to their families and homes, when you consider their motives. The idea of a personal identity, as it may have been conceived of at the time, was surely on their minds and the contamination of their efforts to inculcate a new identity for the children was one of their chief concerns. Sanctioned by the will of the government and willing acceptance of the various church denominations involved, these schools assumed the role of surrogate parents for Indian children and would now control their development and socialization. Unbeknownst to everyone, certain unseen factors had already transpired, with respect to the minds of their charges, that thwarted the would-be social engineers' goals. The end result has had serious ontological repercussions for the children involved and in a broader sense the Native community in general.

Keeping in mind the historical mandate of the assimilation program and its failure, my thesis regarding my own development fits within the experiential boundaries of this theory. By not forming an 'adult executive competence' I was unable to form an authentic self or identity in terms of my own cultural orientation to the social world. It is this mental state or "false consciousness" that resulted, and which I carried for most of my life, that I illuminate in my analysis and conclusions.

4.1 The Self

Maurice Natanson, employing the method of phenomenological reduction in the existentialist manner, guides us from a primordial starting point of a person in a self-reflecting mode to basic consciousness. Applying the method of *epoche* to illustrate the evolving self in a field of experience, he states: "In the phenomenological suspension ...the ego is seized in its bare being, without the assurances of the sustaining notions of world and sociality. The awareness of being truly an ego 'on its own' is the experience of anguish. In some ways social existence is a means of translating that anguish into a self-acceptable form of balance."[8] The social existence Natanson alludes to, is presumably the unified cultural field of Western culture, but could be any unadulterated cultural cognitive field of experience. Having stripped the reader of his comfortable mundane world of existence, he proceeds to chart the journey of the developing self onward to the discovery of the 'self' and later 'person'. After stranding and isolating the locus of ego in bare consciousness, Natanson introduces terminology for two different aspects of the self, the "I" and the "Me"where "The Me is the source, then, of what is typical and habitual in experience; the I, of what is innovative and audacious. With this we come to a very large dimension of the self: its involvement in the types and typifications of mundane reality."[9] To moderate the ego's course of action, Natanson establishes a formula of does and don'ts necessary for progress from "... 'childhood to death' where Me is programmed to schemas of action or formulas and recipes for practical affairs and 'typical techniques' for use in anything the Me finds in a daily routine, even typical ways for handling the

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[8] Ibid., p 15.

[9] Ibid., p 18.

'atypical'."[10]

Using the college freshman as an example Natanson provides us with this particular Me's can and can't does, from all its specific and routine modes of conduct which are "...types of action; they are the typifications through which the self is inserted in the world and gears into its ongoing development. To utilize such typifications – and there is little choice in the matter – is to respond to a situation in terms of the Me, which bears the inventory of types available to the student...."[11] Professor Natanson is of course referring to an older white student already integrated in a culturally homogeneous inventory of schemas of action from one culture, saying "The self, then, lives in a social reality defined through a complex of types, constructions of typical elements and aspects of possible action. The stockpiling of such types starts in childhood and continues throughout the life of the individual. The integral action of the Me and the I aspects of the self are means through which typicality and the *fiat* of action are achieved."[12] Natanson clearly points out all of the self's directives, rules, schemata and guides for habitual action at the disposal of the agent.

But what happens to the Me and the I when the self is challenged with two diametrically opposing and intractable constructs of everyday existence which are expected to be acted upon? The I of course acts anyway and the resultant action is of interest to us here, but more on that later. Next Natanson points out the self's most potent ability in consciousness; that is self-reflection upon its role. Here the self dramatically grasps its manifold roles but Natanson limits the role from the egological standpoint by saying:

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[10] Ibid., p 19.

[11] Ibid., p 20.

[12] Ibid., p 20.

> Let us begin, then, with role and role taking within the *reality* of the taken for granted world of daily life. There role first manifests itself in terms of the schemata of typified perceptions and interpretations, through the constructs of the experiential world. Not only are the formulas and recipes of action included in such constructions, but perceptual experience itself is a subtle part of the typified world....it is necessary to realize that the dominant phase of the self's action resides in the span of action in which the individual expresses the meaning of his own act. From the egological standpoint, then, typification is rooted in self typification: the individual's interpretation of his role *is grounded in his understanding of himself.* The prime level of typification is that of the self constructing for itself the shape of the world it then finds and acts in.[13]

Natanson's model of the developing self proceeds on to the 'person' and the 'other', but for my purposes here it is enough to explain the complex nature of the self and how it acts upon a supposedly stable inventory of signals and symbols for shaping its social reality. Natanson deals with a self embraced within a unified reality of a particular culture with all its psychological tapestry and trappings of and for the Western mind. The selves of students presented with two distinct worldviews must have faced a nightmare of does and don'ts that in many cases left them suspended in a world of continual ideational dissonance.

This is a relatively elaborate description of the self with the 'Me' and 'I' engaged in 'dialectical interplay'. But when discussing the epistemological implications of students in a double cultural milieu, it is this very complex mental structure of the Self that underscores the presumptuousness of those who forced young Native children to accept a foreign worldview of types, roles and typifications. Above and beyond this is the fact that each student already came encoded with a worldview of constructs, a Self that would oppose Western values and constructs the residential school officials had hoped to instill. The dialectical interplay, to borrow Dr Natanson's

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[13] Ibid., p 23. Emphasis my own.

phrase, of two competing 'Me's and 'I's must surely have caused an ideational dissonance of some sort that demanded the ego's or self's loyalty or conversion one way or the other. If the dissonance is strong enough it must have an impact on the ego's 'specific orientation toward the future in terms of projects and disposition.

The term "dissonance" is drawn from Leon Festinger's *theory of cognitive dissonance* introduced to psychology in 1957.[14] According to Festinger, we generally strive for consistency between what we know or believe and what we do. The inconsistency he designated "dissonance"and consistency "consonance". He hypothesized that whenever dissonance appears we first attempt to reduce it and secondly we avoid situations and information that cause dissonance. The manifestation of this inner conflict sometimes dramatically revealed itself when some Native residential school student was harshly reprimanded for some behavioural anomaly caused by the pressure to reduce some dissonance. One example is when Native children reared under the Native values of time, non-interference and ambient openness are harshly reprimanded for responses not harmonious to the Western invariants of time, regimen and the insularity of cloistered settings. At times the elements for many students including myself were responsive and at other times simply not. The job to harmonize elements for their own agenda would be the task of all those under the auspices of the Indian education program including nuns, teachers, priests, staff, government officials and so on. The methods of indoctrination ranged from out right corporal punishment, class-room setting, television, games such as marbles, role playing, literature, movies, all and everything that stimulated the senses to aid in the conforming to Western values. A case in point with regard

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[14] Leon Festinger, *The Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957).

to responsiveness might be our apathy or difficulty in relating to the Dick, Jane and Sally characters in our primary grade readers, and yet we were more responsive to their pets Spot and Puff as 'other than human beings'. The theory of ideational dissonance becomes that much more dramatically illustrated in the dissonance laden and repressive atmosphere of an Indian residential school.

4.2 Indian Residential Schools

> *the relentless burden of life in Indian Residential School was a deliberate, well thought out, long-practiced policy, undertaken to achieve particular results*
>
> *The Circle Game*

To appreciate the alien world a young Native child encountered upon entering an Indian residential school and the purpose for being there, it is necessary to backtrack a little to find out why these structures existed in the first place. Some accounts of the these educational anomalies are cold, brutal and barren, but when the veneer of apologetic rhetoric about them is stripped away, that is all these institutions for *cultural replacement* amounted to. The terms assimilation and cultural replacement are used here interchangeably and David Nock's work describing some of these variances in Indian education policy seems an appropriate starting point. [15]

The scope of this historical process had its origins outside of North America and was three-tiered sequentially, first from colonization to assimilation and the Residential School System Indian Education policy. A fourth policy dealing with Indians' outright removal was practiced in the United States but a trace of moral indignation ostensibly prevailed in the British Empire prompting the clergy to seek other avenues to address the Indian problem. Professor Nock describes three policies implemented to deal with the Indians of Canada. After their usefulness as allies in defending Canada against the Americans in 1812 and in setting up of the initial economic infrastructure by way of the fur trade, Native people had become dispensable. They now had conversely became troublesome as obstacles for a new economic order. Their homelands, viewed as prime farming tracts, were targeted

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[15] David Nock *A Victorian Missionary and Canadian Indian Policy: Cultural Synthesis vs Cultural Replacement,* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988).

by the government to attract a ground swell of white settlers from Europe. Their displaced plight was almost overnight relegated to the impolite distinction of "the white man's burden". In acting on this burden, "...one can conceive of three broad strategies for dealing with the native peoples: cultural replacement, cultural synthesis, and cultural continuity".[16] In short, what cultural replacement entailed was total assimilation of a weaker society into another 'stronger society'; while cultural continuity generally implied the tolerance of another culture to evolve at its own pace. Between the two extremes, cultural synthesis implied a policy towards "...cultural adaptation that encourages the synthesis of two cultures, that retains elements of both, and that encourages the voluntary borrowing and adaptation by the weaker cultural system." [17] What is of importance to our discussion is the strategy of "...cultural replacement, especially as encouraged by residential schools run by the missionaries and paid for, in part, by the federal government." [18] Professor Nock's book centers on the missionary work of Edward Francis Wilson during the 1870s in Ontario but could also serve as a commentary on the government's and churches' early attempts with assimilation and the residential school's beginnings in Canada. Wilson establishes the first residential schools in Ontario around 1873 and this sets the stage for what every residential school thereafter evolved into "...as programs of cultural replacement with the avowed aim of Westernizing the Indian children as completely as possible."[19] At the outset, Wilson encountered two frustrating features from the standpoint of his goals in establishing a residential school. One was the indifference or resistence Native parents had

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[16] David Nock, *A Victorian Missionary*, p 1.

[17] Ibid., p 2.

[18] Ibid., p 2.

[19] Ibid., p 3.

to having their children taught in these schools, and secondly the short period in which the children were allowed to return to their homes for the summer. This brief interlude Wilson believed was retarding their Westernization, especially with regard to purging the children of their Native language. Nock credits Wilson for abandoning his ideas concerning cultural replacement in favour of cultural synthesis. Unfortunately the government of the day had other plans and cultural replacement remained the real policy until the schools closed more than a hundred years later.

Canadian Indian education policy at the time, modeled on another British program in India, was haphazardly conceived within the broader visionary objective of saving "...the ignoble savage." As Nock puts it: " The fate or role of the Indian ideally...was to become a Christian, British-oriented, proletarian who would work for other people either as tradesman, unskilled worker, farmhand or as a domestic servant."[20] Every residential school was founded and organized to serve that purpose or goal. Eventually funded by contract with the government, the first residential schools and curricula were designed and implemented for the purposes of, Christianizing and assimilating the Native into the body politic. The children would become the victims of this grand scheme. For fear of contamination, the children to be educated were separated from their natural environments as much as possible, hence the long schools years and short summer stays with family. While these schools were being erected, there were some doubts as to the Indians' 'basic intelligence to become civilized', an attitude that prevailed well into the lasts days of the residential school. Few students were encouraged to go on to high school, much less even think about post secondary education.

The curriculum for Indian education in Indian schools mirrored the goals and aspirations of assimilative policies. These programs were in reality financed in both the United States and Canada

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[20] Ibid., p 71.

by Indian money. According to Michael Coleman, Indian education in the U.S. was almost entirely funded by Indian treaty money: "...direct government financial aid, ...accounted for perhaps less than 10 percent of the money poured into the efforts to 'civilize' Indians. The mission societies themselves raised some of the money; Indian treaty money supplied the bulk of it." [21] Most, if not all, residential schools exacted labor in one form or another from the residents; the upshot being of course the resident was laboring towards his or her own assimilation since the product of the students' labor partially offset the costs of running these schools.

Writing about the curriculum at one of Wilson's schools, Professor Nock notes that "While the boys were being taught trades, farming, and, in a very few cases, white collar occupations, the girls were trained in domestic duties, either for future employment as domestics or as wives for Shingwauk graduates."[22] Michael Coleman echoes basically the same strategy in the American version saying:

> ...the goal remained the extirpation of tribal cultures and the transformation of Indian children into near-copies of white children. The varied curricula totally excluded Indian cultural knowledge, and generally fell into the "half-and-half" pattern: half of the curriculum comprised common school academic subjects, generally the English language, ...and the religion of the denomination. The other half required physical labor appropriate to "proper" gender roles. The boys learned such skills as blacksmithing, woodwork, and...American methods of farming. The girls learned "civilized"cooking, dressmaking, and other "domestic arts." Thus educated into the ways of the Christian civilization, young Indians would return to their tribes as mediators between cultures. [23]

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[21] Michael C. Coleman, *American Indian Children at School. 1850-1930,* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), p 39.

[22] Nock, *A Victorian Missionary*, p 84.

[23] Coleman, *American Indian Children at School.* p 40.

Imitating the American initiative, Wilson "...thought of filling up the vacancies in the school with white orphans. Besides thus providing charity to the boys and aiding the Indian children in their English, the idea was advanced 'with the view of imbuing the Indian boys with a little more of that spirit and perseverance which generally characterizes the Anglo-Saxon race'...."[24] This practice obviously would have a profound impact on the Native child's concept of identity and self-affirmation.

Residential schools have been characterized as total institutions, monuments of regimentation, complete institutions, and other not so complimentary designations, to impart a sense of what they more or less resembled and of their true purpose. Bestowed with a variety of names as boarding schools, Indian schools, orphanages, institutes, as if to differentiate and individualize them, their basic purpose remained the same. Historians have often, if not always, been apologetic and sympathetic to the efforts of government officials and missionaries as benefactors in bestowing the gift of civilization upon the Indians. Beneath this veil of altruism though lingered a more racist and sinister economic agenda in Euro-Canadian and American relations with Native people. Opposing views of these institutions offer a starker reality, a grim indictment and hard-to-swallow truth.

After writing my own personal account of St Joseph's Boarding School and later comparing the experiences with other accounts of residential schools I was more than stunned in noting all the similarities in the events, incidents, curricula, punishments, rituals and so forth. Up to that time, I naively viewed my grade school alma mater as not fitting the mold of these other dreaded 'monuments of regimentation'. In reading Isabelle Knockwood's *Out of the Depths* I was moved by her depiction of the Shubenacadie School in Nova Scotia and felt her a kindred spirit as I

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[24] Nock, *A Victorian Missionary*. p 84.

responded to many of the nuances of her experience. [25] Her description and possible explanation of the ghost story incidents at her school suddenly brought familiar meaning and confirmation to my own recounting of these phenomena which I first thought of as inane and vacuous occurrences. Her description of the Shubenacadie school and staff itself was strangely similar to my own experience at St. Joseph's.

Current debate notwithstanding regarding these schools, I've often wondered about their deeper meaning and *raison d'etre*. In terms of 'complete and total institutions', Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* [26] offers a compelling analysis of power-relation dynamics that exist in settings of incarceration. Foucault maintains, that from the 17th century onwards less emphasis was given corporeal punishment and more on the mind. Physical punishments as penalties, were seen as *passe* and the mind then became the object in rehabilitation. The prison then evolved as the apparatus *in toto* to reshape the criminal. The complete hegemonic power over an inmate of Foucault's prison is poignantly summed up as follows:

> "...the prison must be an exhaustive disciplinary apparatus: it must assume responsibility for all aspects of the individual, his physical training, his aptitude to work, his everyday conduct, his moral attitude, his state of mind; the prison,... is 'omni-disciplinary'.... has neither exterior nor gap; it cannot be interrupted, except when its task is totally completed; its action on the individual must be uninterrupted: an unceasing discipline. Lastly, it gives almost total power over the prisoners; it has its **internal mechanisms of repression** and punishment: a despotic discipline.... It must be the most powerful machinery for imposing a new form on the perverted individual; its mode of action is the constraint of a total education: 'In prison... one can imagine the power of the education which, not only in a day, but in succession

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[25] Isabelle Knockwood, *Out of the Depths: The Experience of Mi'kmaw Children at the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia,* (Lockeport, N.S.: Roseway Publishing, 1992).

[26] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* trans. Alan Sheridan,(Randam House) 1977.

> of days and even years, may regulate ... the time of waking and sleeping, of activity and rest, the number and duration of meals, the quality and ration of food, the nature and product of labor, the time of prayer, the use of speech and even, so to speak, that of thought, that education which, in the short, simple journeys from the refectory to workshop, from workshop to the cell, regulates the movements of the body, and even in moments of rest, determines the use of time, the timetable, this education, which, in short, takes possession of a man as a whole, of all the physical and moral faculties that are in him and of the time in which he is himself' ....[27]

To paraphrase this quote for the sake of brevity would diminish the ambiance of repression Foucault captures in an incarceratory setting. In applying this to the residential school agenda, one may simply change some words. Residential school children committed the crime of being Indian and their rehabilitation will be assimilation. It is arguable whether the prison program was intended for children but the fact is the program of residential schools did indeed fit, to a lesser degree maybe, this regimen. Foucault continues, "...the isolation... guarantees that it is possible to exercise over them...with maximum intensity, a power that will not be overthrown by any other influence; solitude is the primary condition of total submission: ... Isolation provides an intimate exchange between the convict and the power that is exercised over him." [28] In the testimonials of former students most if not all spoke of the all-encompassing loneliness of living at residential school, despite the fact that many attended these schools with siblings. The hegemony of the custodians over their lives was complete.

Is this prison analogy too far-fetched a description of the residential school? Chrisjohn, Young and Maraum, the authors of the *Circle Game*, don't seem to think so. Extrapolating from Erving Goffman's *Asylums* the relation of the those in custodial power and their clientele, John

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[27] Ibid., p 236.

[28] Ibid., p 237.

Chrisjohn and company paint the picture even more grimly stating that:

> Bernanos once said, 'One cannot understand the least thing about modern civilization if one does not first realize that it is a universal conspiracy to destroy the inner life.' Residential Schools, as part of its civilizing manner,' were designed to achieve this destruction in Aboriginal Peoples; the means whereby they carried out this assault were recounted by Goffman....Interestingly, Goffman, a Canadian developed his account with no apparent knowledge of Residential Schools.... the principles of operation he abstracted ... from homes for the aged, asylums, private boarding schools, monasteries, prisons, concentration camps, ... He called such places **total institutions**, defined (in 'family resemblance' terms) as social institutions which were 'walled off' in some way to the world at large; which 'broke down' the barriers that existed in greater society between places of work, sleep, and play; and which enforced and maintained an extreme power disparity between a large inmate population and a small supervisory staff (which continued to be integrated with the outside world)...."[29]

In the residential school setting the tactic to destroy the 'inner life' or to 'strike the soul' is accomplished partially by the following:

> ...indignities and abasements that made up life at Indian Residential School: the constant stream of racist slurs that accompanied lessons; the regimented moment-to-moment attention to one's activities; the haircut and school uniform; the persistent undercurrent of hunger; the impenetrable loneliness; and so on. As well, we hear of good times, times that reveal the barrenness of the rest of the existence at Residential School: the delight of being allowed an hour's play with a Christmas or birthday present sent months earlier, but withheld; the relish in eating a good meal when an inspector or other dignitary was visiting; the swell of pride in an eleven year old child that has learned to handle the machinery or do the job of a full-grown adult; the explosion of joy at getting a visit from one's parents.[30]

Learning to handle the machinery like adults did not come easily as Isabelle Knockwood's description of children handling the laundry clothes attests. Children often suffered injurious

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[29] John Chrisjohn, Sherri L. Young, Michael Maraum, *The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada,* (Pendicton: Theytus Books Ltd., 1997). p 70.

[30] Chrisjohn, et el, *The Circle Game*, p 69.

accidents and their aftermaths.[31] Despite repeated warnings and instructions concerning the handling of these machines ten and eleven year old children prone to day dreaming or other distractions would inevitably and unavoidably become casualties to these accidents.[32]

The milieu in which the Native child is enmeshed at residential school is what Chrisjohn deems a "...deliberate, well thought out, long practiced policy, undertaken to achieve particular results."[33] To accomplish their tasks, institutions like the residential school, which had as its ultimate goal assimilation, attacked the self. Chrisjohn, using Goffman's account of total institutions, poignantly points this out repeatedly stating:

> The recruit (sic) comes into the establishment with a conception of himself (sic) made possible by certain stable arrangements in his home world. Upon entrance he is stripped of the support provided by these arrangements....he begins a series of abasements, degradations, humiliations, and profanations of self. His self is systematically, if often unintentionally, mortified....entrance typically...find staff employing ...admission procedures, ...assigning numbers, searching, listing personal possessions for storage, undressing, bathing, disinfecting, haircutting, issuing institutional clothing, instructing as to rules, and assigning to quarters.... Action taken on the basis of such attributes necessarily ignores most of his previous bases of self-identification.
>
> The barrier ... between the inmate and the wider world marks the first curtailment of self. In civil life, the sequential scheduling of the individual's role, both in the life cycle and in the repeated daily round, ensures that no one role he plays will block his performance and ties in another. In total institutions, ... membership automatically disrupts role scheduling, since the inmates separation from the wider world lasts around the clock and may continue for years. Role dispossession therefore occurs as, ...the privilege of having visitors or of visiting away from the establishment is completely withheld at first, ensuring a deep initial break with past roles and an

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[31] Knockwood, *Out of the Depths*.

[32] An incident at St Joseph's I clearly remember but failed to mention in my narrative involved an Anishinaabe boy who broke his arm trying to stop the spin dryer in the basement laundry room.

[33] Chrisjohn, et el., *The Circle Game*, p 69.

> appreciation of role dispossession... Although some roles can be re-established by the inmate if and when he returns to the world, it is plain that other losses are irrevocable and may be painfully experienced as such. It may not be possible to make up, at a later phase of the life cycle, the same not now spent in educational or job advancement, in courting, or in rearing one's children.
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> In addition to personal defacement ...there is a personal disfigurement that comes from direct and permanent mutilations of the body..., loss of a sense of personal safety is common and provides a basis for anxieties.... Beatings... may lead many... to feel that they are in an environment that does not guarantee their physical integrity.[34]

In summing up the awesome power of Goffman's 'total institution' on the self, Chrisjohn points out that no matter what the age the subject or persons, these places;

> ...'unmake' the people over whom they gain control. It matters little how old an inmate is...; whoever that person **is**, and how he or she defends and asserts it, must be taken apart and reassembled enough to allow what remains to operate in accordance with the institution's requirements. By doing this, the total institution does not produce a **new** self, but **no self at all**:...if inmates become available at a young enough age, the tactics of total institutions won't merely 'disrupt or defile' selves, but hinder their development in the first place. By **not allowing** the formation of 'adult executive competency', the inmates are prevented from being or becoming persons **at all.** [35]

Having outlined the nomenclature that constituted total institutions and their programs, Chrisjohn poses the question as to whether or not Indian Residential Schools fall within the aforementioned category. The verdict seems overwhelmingly so after examining the bulk of the literature on residential schools. Further more, it seems the verdict is inclusive in that "It made no difference where in Canada an Indian Residential School was located: the specific tactics enumerated by Goffman as 'mortifications' of the self precisely describe the psychology of their operation." [36]

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[34] Ibid., p 72.

[35] Ibid., p 73.

[36] Ibid., p 74.

For these 'total Indian institutions' Chrisjohn summarizes their efficacy for handling Native children. They were firstly as schools marginal with much more time spent in 'religious indoctrination'. Monitoring of the child own's time was constant. Corporal punishment generally exceeded 'Canadian Standards' or the norm of other schools and the infractions warranting such punishment were not infractions for other Canadian children such as: "...speaking their own language, seeking contact with brothers and sisters, and being unable to do a fully grown person's work."[37] Children not punished or who avoided severe treatment often stood helplessly watching their siblings or peers degraded, "...furthering the total institutions goals: '...there may be occasions when an individual witnesses a physical assault upon someone to whom (one) has ties and suffers the permanent mortification of having (and being known to have) taken no action.'"[38]

The schools, aside from the punishments, were 'harsh environments' with little heat, 'oppressive' uniforms, 'barracks style' sleeping quarters, the constant state of being hungry, and in many cases unfit food for eating: "Some were driven by hunger to obtain food by creative means (we refuse to use the word *steal* to describe a child's actions under such circumstances).This led to one kind of consequence if caught (harsh discipline), and another if not (guilt for 'stealing,' or having more food than another child). [39] Chrisjohn speaks also of an atmosphere replete with children longing for emotional survival and always vying for a modicum of security. A child often felt the absence of love, caring, and safety; "...that they were or felt they were exposed to the predations of

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37 Ibid., p 75.

38 Ibid., p 75.

39 Ibid., p 75.

school staff or older, stronger students; that no one was there for them."[40] Referring to one institutional mechanism Chrisjohn points out that:

> The potential for emotional devastation was built into the Residential Schools in terms of such regular features as: initial separation from parents and family; prolonged isolation from parents, family, and people; the period of adjustment to institutional rules; and the constant faultfinding and racial slurs addressed to them by staff.[41]

Moreover, in his final condemnation of these schools Chrisjohn concludes that:

> Residential Schools implemented a well-established technology that targeted the spirits, minds, feelings, and bodies of its wards. Its goal was not so much to create as to destroy; its product was designed, as far as possible, to be something not quite a person: something that would offer no intellectual or spiritual challenge to its oppressors, that might provide some limited service to its 'masters' (should the 'masters' desire it), and that would learn its place on the margins of Canadian society.[42]

A cursory examination of the materials in print on residential schools, both in the United states and Canada, reveal the same pattern of educational programming and living conditions described in the *Circle Game*. The materials speak to the original intent of these schools, level of educational standards, the marginal educational goal intended and expected of the students (for even those with high potential) remained fundamentally the same, up to the time of their closures. The *Circle Game* is a brilliantly written document, though caustic in theme and terminology, that uncovers deep seated racist infrastructures and attitudes of the schools. This book, written as a report for the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*,[43] proffers the suggestion that a myth, 'The Standard Account'

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40 Ibid., p 75.

41 Ibid., p 76.

42 Ibid., p 76.

43 *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, 1994.

`has been propagated to neatly whitewash what really happened in an effort to thwart or obscure the legal ramifications and consequences of these schools. The position is well argued and convincingly written. More than anything else though, the report renders a stark and chilling illustration of the alien world a Native child encountered for his transformation into a 'white person' or a "not quite person".

The aforementioned residential school depictions span a broad spectrum of viewpoints and lengthy historical process. On the one hand they are perceived to have been benign altruistic institutions, and on the other as sinister and devious with brutal programs that were deliberately intended to shape individuals for specific purposes. Which ever way one tends to view them, such depictions shock the sensibilities of readers, both those who read with incredulous indignation, and for others who see them as accurately depicting what actually happened. Even if a middle ground were sought between the two extremes, one has to admit that these practices were: designed for a target group, the "Indians"; conducted surreptitiously by two agents in collusion with hidden agendas; inflicted upon a group involuntarily; and finally done so under sub-standard living conditions, all for the purpose of assimilating Native people. These facts have finally been basically confirmed by most parties privy to this monumental story. For over a century the residential school system in Canada operated virtually unchallenged, with the clergy and government acting in concert to inculcate in the minds of Native people through their children a foreign worldview and ideology for the sole purpose of replacing their culture and expropriation of their land base. Focusing on the children the perpetrators of assimilation saw them as the conduits for European ideological colonization. Ironically, as will be shown, it was the Native people's philosophically grounded relation to the land that doomed the residential school system in Canada.

The Anishinaabe child did not enter an Indian Residential School *tabula rasa*, but came endowed with an already active mind and entered, as Chrisjohn stated, "the establishment with a conception of himself (sic) made possible by certain stable arrangements in his home world,"[44] a home world that is a vast culmination of cultural enrichment he or she inherits as a birthright. Within that home world the child internalized unique values, customs, mores and aptitudes. All of these cultural elements for molding character and personality were ignored for one imperialist cultural goal that disregarded the integrity of the child. Central to this grand scheme of assimilation of the Native child was his or her indoctrination into white civilization. The outcome, of course, was a complete failure and generations of Native people emerged from the residential school system to engage in yet another struggle for survival created by this cultural replacement experiment. However if you were to subscribe to Chrisjohn's thesis that the schools intended to produce "...something not quite a person: something that would offer no intellectual or spiritual challenge to its oppressors...", then I suppose you might concede that they did indeed succeed to a certain degree.[45] The problem remains though, that in spite of their efforts the schools inadvertently added to the resilience of a people with a will to overcome yet another front in the cultural genocidal war.

The primary obstacle to assimilation and perhaps the saving grace for many ex-residents of the residential school system was a Native worldview already rooted in the minds of Anishinaabe children. Their personal life difficulties notwithstanding, former Native residential school students maintained their worldview identity, albeit tenuously, and now use it as a tool to revitalize themselves, their communities and, on grander scale, to reclaim their lands and birthrights.

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[44] Chrisjohn, *The Circle Game*.

[45] Ibid., p 76. See page 29 of this study.

4.3 Native & Western Values and World Views

Having discussed the essential structure and reality that made up the residential school system and presented a rudimentary analysis of the self, the third component of this triad we now turn to and that is, the two conflicting worldviews that assaulted the daily consciousness of residential school students. The interplay within this mental matrix of warring constructs made for a perplexing backdrop which ought instead to have had a unified "... vast container of patterns of action, largely... evident in common sense experience, which are known as formulas of action or recipes for practical affairs... for handling, whatever problems turn up in the course of daily life."[46] The patterns of common sense experience, though, vary from culture to culture particularly, more so, when two cultures' constructs are antithetical to each other. This is the dilemma Native residential school students confronted when attempting to order their actions and thoughts as we shall see.

There are a number of definitions and descriptions explaining the notion of a 'worldview' and what it might entail. Overholt and Callicott adopt the view of A. Irving Hallowell that all cultures:

> provide a cognitive orientation toward a world in which man is compelled to act. A culturally constituted worldview is created, which, by means of beliefs, available knowledge and language, mediates personal adjustment to the world through such psychological processes as perceiving, recognizing, conceiving, judging, and reasoning... which, intimately associated with a normative orientation, becomes the basis for reflection, decision, and action...and a foundation provided for a consensus with respect to goals and values.[47]

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[46] Natanson, *The Journeying Self*, p 9.

[47] Thomas W. Overholt, J Baird Callicott, *Clothed-in-Fur and other Tales: An Introduction to an Ojibway Worldview*, (New York: University of America, 1982), p 6.

The idea of a cultural worldview as cognitive foundation for normative judgments of the culture and the individuals who orient themselves within it is then further explored by the authors.

Overholt and Callicott quote Clifford Geertz, who makes the distinction between the cognitive and normative orientations but who also recognizes the correlative features of both when considered from the standpoint of individual cultural cognition. Geertz explains that:

> In recent anthropological discussion the moral (and aesthetic) aspects of a given culture, the evaluative elements, have commonly been summed up in the term "ethos," while the cognitive, existential aspects have been designated by the term "worldview." A people's ethos is the tone, character and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mode; it is the under lying attitude toward themselves and their world that life reflects. Their worldview is the picture of the way things in sheer actuality are, their concept of nature, of self, of society. It contains their most comprehensive ideas of order.[48]

Overholt and Callicott further emphasize Hallowell's point that instinctive mental cognitive "... processes as *perceiving* and *recognizing* are also mediated by a `culturally constituted cognitive orientation' and therefore may be expected to vary, ...quite significantly, from culture to culture. Furthermore,... `there are basic premises and principles implied, *even if these do not happen to be consciously formulated and articulated by the people themselves*'".[49] In summing up this double edged conceptual notion of worldview, the authors conclude:

> The ambient and collective quality of the concept of a cultural worldview, together with its unconscious dimension, its unnoticed effect upon such seemingly independent processes as perceiving and recognizing, and its subtle influence upon

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[48] Ibid., p 6.

[49] Ibid., p 7.

> conscious thought through unarticulated assumptions, premises and principles, raises *serious ontological and epistemological questions....*"[50]

The importance of Callicott's and Overholt's analysis of worldview for our investigation is that it reveals dramatic implications for the hybrid conceptual world that Native residential students experienced. The students would later endure the conflicting evaluative elements and cognitions that affected their ability to determine consonant courses of action from which their cultural selves were to operate.

As a consequence, many students availed themselves of disparate cognitive survival strategies. Some attempted to adjust to a demanding cultural milieu for conformity. In one sense, by improvising these paradigms of reality some residents were able to cope with their ontological or 'egological predicaments'. Many were able by virtue of their own personal backgrounds or traits, to adjust by adapting to the epistemological dictates of the dominant culture. In layman's terms, if you became an 'apple' (a moniker attributed to many Native people by their own people), red on the outside and white in the inside, you could adapt ontologically to the white world but at a cost in compromising the integrity of your true self. Generally speaking, those with more or less Caucasian features were able to exercise this typification to fit within this ontological mode. In other words, they could pass as white. A great many others found such conformity, more subconsciously perhaps, abhorrently unacceptable and dissonant. Consequently those that rebelled or acted in a resistance mode later unwittingly drifted on the fringes of Euro-Canadian society. Others simply adopted a lifestyle that might be equated with the sociological concept of *anomie*.

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[50] Ibid., p 7.

In the ensuing years, whole aggregates of Native people fell within the ambit and labels of the Western social sciences of the *maladjusted* or the disease models, eventually to fall within the safety net of the 'Therapeutic State'.[51] Most labels had specific and purposeful functions for groups in Euro-Canadian society, according to various theorists. Some of these markers were identified as alcoholism, antisocial behaviour, or the most recent, Post Residential School Syndrome. Many people did indeed have legitimate and serious adjustment problems but for the most part many simply fell within the authoritative dictates of these labels and were made dependant on consequent remedial agencies. The crux of the problem however, stemmed from a much broader dilemma which to Dr. Viola Cordova felt was the Native person's "... inability to act on the basis of his own values and worldview".[52] The residential school system was the quintessential tool or instrument which achieved this end.

The cognitive schema of the worldview paradigm elaborated on by Overholt and Callicott presuppose mental processes whereby individuals absorbed social constructs and therefore acted within a given cultural context, a point I had earlier alluded to in Natanson's description of the Self. The Self has, 'little choice in the matter' in which the "I" utilizes typifications for action in responding to situations in which the "Me" bears the inventory of types available to the agent. This seemingly well oiled cognitive mental machinery was tampered with in the case of the residential school students' inventory of types. There was an element of coercion to alter the students' choices to conform to a program of assimilation. In other words the residential school student faced or was

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51 Chrisjohn, et el, *The Circle Game*, p 104.

52 V.F. Cordova, 'EcoIndian', *Ayaanggwaamizin: The International Journal of Indigenous Philosophy*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1997, p 33.

equipped with a mixed bag of realities he/she had to respond to, much like watching a double screened television and attempting to interpret conflicting signals to react and respond to. These conflicting worldview values in effect caused a form of ideational dissonance which affected courses of actions or roles Native students depended on in forming identities and social survival skills.

Callicott and Overholt narrow the focus of interpreting the Native worldview, in particular the Ojibwa worldview by centring on their narratives and oral tradition. Callicott contends or rather implies that Ojibway narratives provide the only valuable source for discovering the Native worldview of one group. Dr. Viola F Cordova an Apache philosopher is disturbed by this growing trend in Native studies and in philosophy particularly among non-native experts on Native epistemology and ontology attempting to decipher Native worldviews by circumventing a more genuine and viable source of knowledge: that is, the Native people themselves. She dismisses the sweeping notion of white contemporary ethnographers and thinkers that the contemporary Native person is only a passing "contaminated" relic of the post-contact period. Rooted in this conviction is the belief that since the Native person adopted the white-man's modern technological world and attendant amenities this seems to be an indication that Native people have lost touch with their traditional knowledge, values, customs and are epistemologically assimilated and for all intents and purposes, ontologically white. An interesting aspect of Canadian intra-cultural history that pervades the minds of most Euro-Canadians is the fact that Native people are excluded from having participated in the development and evolution of modern society. The latter, it should be noted, is firmly rooted in the converging of two worlds, duly noted as `Old World' and `New World' after 1492. It wasn't till contact and the vast extraction of resources and technologies from North and South America that Europe was able to evolve, at least scientifically and technologically, into

modern society. These contributions however do not automatically mean Native people gave tacit consent to the wanton exploitation and misuse of technology that underscores the economic ideology of the West. Jack Weatherford and Warren Lowes both provide revealing accounts of the extent and sophistication of Native North American generative material and technological involvement in the transformation of Medieval Europe into an Industrial empire and ultimately modern technological society. Both authors title their books almost identically with the words *Indian Giver.* [53] Catchy sounding as it may be, its an unfortunate choice for a book title with its glaring idiomatic racist slur. Both books however, illustrate some of the contributions Native people have made to the world.

A corollary of the industrial revolution was the advent of two major European philosophies that underpinned the West's economic models of harnessing nature. The tenets of Liberal Individualism and Marxian socialism were anthropomorphic in intent and praxis without consideration for other entities and processes on the planet. The Anishinaabe by virtue of their worldviews, strictures and beliefs could not act in concert or adhere to these ideologies without compromising the basic tenets of their philosophies. The two dominant and rival Western ideologies with their attendant values and attitudes that emerged and were transported to North America shaped their prescriptive norms around the economic paradigm and were both anthropomorphic in their philosophies. While they differed "...fundamentally in their definition of the social structure..." their values might be described in a Wittgensteinian `family resemblance' way. Patricia Marchak describes these values, assuming "...equality amongst citizens is a rational and just arrangement for society;

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[53] Jack Weatherford, *Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World,* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1988). Warren Lowes, *Indian Giver: A Legacy of North American Native Peoples,* (Penticton: Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with Native People, 1986).

that personal freedom should be maintained and cherished; that race, colour, sex, and other conditions of birth should not determine a person's opportunities or status in life. Both value rule of law. Where they differ is in their interpretation of how well these values are achieved by a capitalist system." [54] Both ideologies also were heavily laced with Western cultural norms and influenced by Christianity. The ideology of liberal individualism in a democratic state was of course the dominant strand in the North American consciousness and reality while at the same time totally oblivious to Native worldviews. The complacence and arrogance of the West's normative orientation, its workable ethic for survival is now in doubt as Callicott and Overholt suggest:

> The neo-Western scientific worldview has been so spectacularly successful in its essentially mechanical mastery of the natural environment that its advocates sometimes claim that it is therefore both a better and *truer* representation of the real than any of the non-Western alternatives. However...the only thing for which technological success is evidence is ...the doing of certain things (propelling projectiles, creating large explosions, arranging concrete and metal on a large scale, sending signals rapidly, transplanting organs from one body to another, etc., etc.) is facilitated. These are not insignificant accomplishments, but they *prove* nothing beyond themselves.[55]

These accomplishments have steered Western man into a precarious existential corner and also made him utterly depended on material contrivances, thereby widening the gap of alienation to his past, relation to the planet and himself.

Overholt and Callicott, further question the West's prolonged ability to continue within this scientific economic model. They note that "Today, doubts have been expressed about the sustained viability of neoWestern civilization which may, it is feared, prove to be self-destructive and

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[54] M. Patricia Marchak, *Ideological Perspectives on Canada*, (Toronto: Mcgraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1981) p xi.

[55] Overholt, et el *Clothe in Fur and other Tales*, p 17.

therefore, as genes which destroy their carriers, fail the ultimate challenge of the principle of natural selection."[56] The manifestation of this dilemma now seems apparent in every major aspect of Western culture. Native culture, on the other hand, provides a cosmological orientation from which the West could profit.

Dr. Cordova, in pointing out the distinction of being Native and, the difficulty white people have in `changing a value system that defies assimilation, remarks that:

> Variations of a set of ideas exist among contemporary Native Americans: a sense of belonging to, and being dependent on, this planet; an identification with a specific place of origin; a lack of competitiveness; a disdain for acquisitiveness; a tolerance, and curiosity, for and about the differences people of different groups exhibit; humour; respect for the integrity of the other. All of these shared actions are based on some common notions that seem widespread among Native Americans. We did not acquire them because we have been exposed to "the mainstream" throughout our lives but despite that exposure. The set of ideas exists prior to the forced actions expected of us by "the mainstream." [57]

To emphasize this `sense of belonging to, and being dependent on this planet' Cordova shares a poignant personal anecdote that underscores this stubborn Native sense of attachment and relation to the land. Her daughter one day brought home her "Anglo" friend and her child. Together, each with her own child, both parents went outside and immediately set their toddlers on the ground. Her friend placed her child on a blanket to protect him from the 'dirty' ground; "She brought toys as distractions and she did not *join* her son so much as *hovered* over him in a protective manner: not allowing him to crawl away from the blanket; not allowing him to grasp at the grass 'dirty'."[58] Her daughter on the other hand gently thrust her child on *terra firma* minus any blanket to allow the child

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[56] Ibid p 17.

[57] Cordova, *EcoIndian*, p 33.

[58] Ibid., p 33.

to explore his ambient natural fixtures, 'dirt' and all; "She introduced him to the grass, encouraging him to touch it, even taste it. She pointed out the temperature, the breeze, the sky and clouds." [59] The Native woman with a modicum of supervision, and consciously unaware perhaps of her ancestral instincts, allowed her child to become, even before learning her language, inured to the tactile, olfactory, auditory and taste features of his/her original place of belonging. This seemingly insignificant act was also a modest gesture on the part of a Native mother acting in accordance with another tradition and value; non-interference, all within the ambit of motherly concern for the child's safety of course. "This", Cordova concludes, "is why we are different."

David Abram in *The Spell of the Sensuous* relates his encounters all over the world with this same, ethos, cognitive symbiotic interaction of indigenous peoples with the living world that is conspicuously absent in 'developed countries'.[60] This preverbal cognitive interaction of the child and later communicative and reciprocative relation of man and his world is grounded in the developmental stages of education in Native societies. The language, ethos and behaviour of the Anishinaabe is saturated with a symbiotic and immutable codependence and relation to Mother Earth (or the more broader concept of ecology). Thus ownership as such is impossible, ethically speaking, within the moral strictures of the Indigenous mind. What you shape and form from your own labour and craft, in the Lockean sense, from Mother Nature's gifts you own. But this does not logically or automatically entail that you own or can own the land without seriously compromising or replacing your Anishinaabe values. As Abram states:

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[59] Ibid., p 33.

[60] David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, (Toronto: Random House, 1996)

> The disclosure that preverbal perception is already an exchange, and the recognition that this exchange has its own coherence and articulation, together suggested that perception, this on going reciprocity, is the very soil and support of that more conscious exchange we call language.[61]

This claim is consistent with others like Merleau-Ponty who claim language to be ancillary to our immediate surroundings. He credits Merleau-Ponty with having "... begun to work out a notion of human language as a profoundly carnal phenomenon, rooted in sensorial experience of each other and the world.... he wrote...of the gestural genesis of language, the way that communicative meaning is first incarnate in the gestures by which the body spontaneously expresses feelings and responds to changes in its affective environment." [62] Patrick Heelan speaking about the utility of applying phenomenology to natural science remarked that:

> ...visual space tends to have a Euclidean geometrical structure only when the environment is filled with a repetitive pattern of regularly faceted objects carpentered to exhibit simple standard Euclidean shapes, and tends to have a hyperbolic structure when vision is deprived of these clues. I conclude that visual perception — and by analogy all perception — is hermeneutic as well as causal: it responds to structures in a flow of optical energy, but the character of its response is also hermeneutical, that is, it has the capacity to "read" the appropriate structures in the world, and to form perceptual judgements of the World about which these "speak."[63]

All perception then, it seems, structures the way in which we speak with our ambient world; which is why the first facet of Native culture attacked by assimilationists of the residential schools was language.

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[61] Ibid., p 61.

[62] Ibid., p 61.

[63] Patrick A. Heelan, "Perception as a Hermeneutical Act", *Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 37, 83/84, p 61.

Since they were mostly unaware that language was grounded in another more integral cognitive matrix of interpretation, assimilationist school administrators were unable to extinguish Native children's proclivity to retain the structural nature and foundations of their language which were naturally reinforced whenever they went home or received visits from home. However school officials attempted repeatedly to prevent children from returning to their homes during the summers and discouraged visits whenever possible, since they correctly assumed that the influences of their cultures would revitalize their minds during that time and unravel the school's efforts. Residential school students, most of whom were from northern reserves relatively isolated from Euro-Canadian society, came from an environment and land that structured and shaped their normative orientation, mediated through their language and upbringing, one which included their core Native values, attitudes and behaviours. Residential school officials were able only to temporarily and superficially prevent students from learning their own language, their own thought. The language and thus thoughts of Native students were of the sentient kind born out of the natural ambient expanse in sharp contrast to the enclosed and cloistered surroundings of concrete, fences, and rules of residential school life. Their worldview was fostered and engendered in openness and freedom and mutual respect for Nature, not enclosures and the factory driven mental discipline of the European mind.

The problem of *runaways* was a perennial and pervasive problem for residential schools across Canada. The reason was not just because Native children were lonesome and rebellious but sprang from a more powerful primal urge to return to 'their place of belonging'. So strong was this phenomenon that Native children risked severe consequences and in some cases their lives. School officials dealt with these acts of resistance swiftly and with a firm hand lest these overt acts of resistence escalate to hinder their ultimate goals. Two cases of a runaway death and a suicide are well

documented in a book by Elizabeth Furniss.[64] In both cases, the victims' intentions were motivated by the conditions and treatment at a residential school.

Abram, as well as some other Western philosophers, ponder an essential ontological problem regarding Western civilizations' future direction in the context of the West's peculiar alienation from the planet querying "... what had made possible the absence of this attentiveness in the Modern West? For Western culture, too, has its indigenous origins." [65] One possible answer is offered by Native American writer and activist Ward Churchill who admonished an innocent but condescending German audience wishing to help American Indians in their plight, to look into their own origins for an answer to their own alienation.[66]

In musing over the West's alienation and indifference to its past, Abram perhaps echoes Patrick Heelan's view of perception having the "... capacity to `read' the appropriate structures in the world" when he concludes that "...our obliviousness to non-human nature is today held in place...by the very structures of our civilized existence...."[67] The structures Abram refers to include the material infrastructure and societal conventions and symbols related to nature that block off nature from man consciously and physically. The only time the Western man encounters nature is, "...only as it has been circumscribed by our civilization and its technologies:...[68] The sense of urgency in

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[64] Elizabeth Furniss, *Victims of Benevolence: The Dark Legacy of the Williams Lake Residential School,* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992).

[65] Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, p 27.

[66] Ward Churchill, *Indians Are Us*, (Toronto: Between The Lines, 1994).

[67] Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, p 28.

[68] Ibid., p 28.

Abram's words are not the paranoid musings of one disenchanted Westerner bemoaning the West's insatiable appetite for conquests of nature. Other prominent spokesmen including scientists have warned of the consequences of such thinking. David Peat, physicist and philosopher, notes the great Native American leader and philosopher Seattle's insightful evaluation of the White man, "...The Earth is not his friend but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on.... His hunger will eat the Earth bare and leave only a desert."[69] Having said this, Peat also mirrors Ward Churchill's remonstrance to the German audience with his own admonition for North Americans, stating "I believe that despite society's prevailing sense of separation and alienation, we can still capture that earlier sense of wholeness. Indeed, if we go back far enough, we are all, in a sense, indigenous people and our childhoods were flooded with a similar intensity." [70] Going back far enough would, I suppose, mean for Western industrial society to rediscover a pre-industrial ethos aligned maybe more around communal interests rather than one entirely based on economic individualism which many social scientists view as the current anathema plaguing contemporary society. Whether this is possible in an ever-increasing economic, competitive and technocratic global community remains to be seen.

The social values and cognitive orientation within the Western economic paradigm throughly pervaded the residential and pedagogical program imposed on the minds of residential school students. The entire daily consciousness of the Native student was mired in a program, as I repeat Chrisjohn's description, with a "... goal ... not so much to create as to destroy; its product was designed, ... to be something not quite a person: something that would offer no intellectual or

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[69] David Peat, *The Philosopher's Stone*, (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1991), p 11.

[70] Ibid., p 11.

spiritual challenge to its oppressors, that might provide some limited service to its "masters" (should the "masters" desire it), and that would learn its place on the margins of Canadian society". [71] What was to be destroyed was the vestige of an aboriginal culture still lingering in the minds of the students. To implement this program it was necessary that complete isolation and control of the student be maintained. From the way students were dressed, their physical appearance, social mannerisms, religious orientation, puritan work ethic all deliberately calculated within a prescribed 'technology'. The methods included the class room, labour, type of literature, television, games, vernacular, reward and punishment or conditioning, fear tactics (the Russia menace), and films of totalitarianism. The future roles of the students seemed apparently less important than their subjugation to a system that would accomplish assimilation in the long run. The attempted inculcation in the minds of Native students by the residential schools were Euro-Canadian values which were antonymous to the Native culture values already taking root in the young Anishinaabe minds. The Western pedagogic methods were also at variance to those of the Anishinaabe.

Native values are at the core of the Anishinaabe worldview; the epistemological, metaphysical and perhaps most importantly ontological elements of these values are those by which Native people order and structure their world and act in confirming their existence as Anishinabek. Various methods are used among the Ojibway to teach these values in their children, one of which is through storytelling. The settings, plots, themes and characters and action of many of these stories would be incomprehensible to the uninitiated non-Native audience and just plainly absurd. But to the Ojibway, it is still the principal means of instruction in proper behaviour, general behaviour expectations, history of 'the people' and has the added feature of having an entertainment element

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[71] See page 29 of this study.

as well. While the adults narrated the stories and were also part of the audience, it was the children who benefited the most and were the most ardent listeners. Storytelling was generally carried out during the cold winter months in the comfort of Anishinaabe homes or around a main camp ground fire, when there was little else to do. However the opportunity of storytelling arose at times spontaneously and at any time of the year should the occasion arise and the time warranted it.

Story telling was one pedagogic medium of several in demonstrating values among the Ojibway. Behaviour of adults of course was another. Once instilled in the child these values are indelibly etched in the mind for life. They can be suppressed and temporarily replaced or supplemented by other values but the dominant Native value lies dormant occasionally surfacing to shape the actions and consciousness of the individual.

Another method of instruction is the method of *modelling* rather than the *shaping* paradigm of teaching as that practised by Euro-Canadians. One of the distinguishing features of little people is their ability to watch and mimic behaviour. The Anishinaabe were masters at taking advantage of this teaching tool. They were able to instruct when the child was ready, not when the adult is ready. Sensing that a child desires to do something the adult follows up with hunting, fishing or what ever enterprise is to be undertaken, and carries out the task with excellence keeping in mind that he is teaching also. He does not teach per se but exercises prudence in his work and encourages the child as much as possible. The instructors in many cases are grandparents. Children at times may be referred to one who specializes in a given art to learn if the parent is unable to undertake the task. Discipline is carried out in various ways during instruction with the exclusion of corporal or any physical punishment. Corporal punishment violates the number one value of the Anishinaabe and that is respect for another being. Lorraine Brundige points out in her thesis *Continuity of Native*

Values, while elaborating on the value of non-interference, the abhorrence that Native people had for corporal punishment of a child. She states, "The Native people the Jesuits met not only had a horror of restraint which the Jesuits disapprove of but they (The Native People) could not stand to see any child punished. The Jesuits were concerned that parental attitudes would get in the way of the priests instructing the children."[72] To underscore her point Brundige provides a compelling and poignant quotation by a Jesuit that stresses this repugnance to Native child corporal punishment. It entails an incident whereby a French child strikes an adult Iroquois and injures him. By custom the Native people demand a present to appease the victim. The whites on the other hand exhorted their custom of punishment. When the child was stripped and readied for punishment all the Native people present gasped in horror. The victim of the child's transgression immediately threw his blanket around the child and entreated the whites that he be punished instead. This disdain for physical punishment of the child was prevalent among all the Anishinaabe peoples particularly among the Ojibway as one observer noted:

> Ojibwa parents were extremely fond of their children, and this feeling was reciprocated as the young ones grew up. Children were treated gently, tactfully, yet firmly, and were constantly reminded of those things which the parents considered essential to their well being. Their deportment was a serious consideration, but in the course of training, physical cruelty was never applied. Fear might be used, especially with recalcitrant children but never to the extent of producing a loss of self-confidence. [73]

Fear and shame were often used tactfully as tools to provide some strictures in controlling undesired behaviour. Francis Densmore, America ethnologist, commenting on the fear tactic among the

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[72] Lorraine Brundige *Continuity of Native Values: Cree and Ojibway,* Masters Thesis, (Thunder Bay: Lakehead University, 1997.) p 50.

[73] Emerson S. Coatsworth, *The Indians of Quetico*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957) p 16.

Chippewa, stated: "Fear was often used to induce obedience, but not to the extent which injured the child. For example, it was said to be a frequent custom to put a scarecrow where it was unsafe for children to go." [74] One of the people Densmore spoke to "...remembered a very steep hill where she and other children liked to play. One day they found a frightful scarecrow at the foot of the hill and they were so scared that they never went there again."[75]

The wide chasm of meaning and emphasis, of values and the attitudes towards corporal punishment, between the two cultures and worldviews further underscores the complexity of meanings, ideas and behaviours that residential school children endured during their school days. Over four hundred years spanned the time of the aforementioned story by Brundige to the time of the last residential school days. But as her thesis states, the continuity of these same values and attitudes prevail and must be consciously noted for retention.

There are a number of specific values and attitudes unique to Native people that have sustained them in the past and may hold the key to their intellectual and overall cultural survival in the future. Some have already been mentioned and many are analogous with those of other cultural groups in North America. However with Native people these values form the core of their inner consciousness and are primary in shaping the basic modes of their behaviour, attitudes, and actions toward their world on a daily basis. Lorraine Brundige, extrapolating from the work of Mohawk psychiatrist Dr Clare Brant, identifies several key Native values by means of which she links the past to present day behaviour among Native people. Her source for past behaviour patterns, particularly

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[74] Frances Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1970) p 58.

[75] Ibid., p 58.

among the Iroquois, she extracted from the documents of the Jesuit Missionaries. A cross-reference of past behaviour among the Iroquois and contemporary Native people she interviewed showed a consistency and continuity in Native values and behaviour. The values upon which she focuses most of her attention were: non-interference, anger must not be shown, time, sharing, attitude of sharing, value of protocol, teaching by example. Not only I but others as well are inclined to agree with her affirmation that: "It is my belief that the ethics for Aboriginal people has as its foundation *Respect*."[76] The term "ethics" used by Dr. Brant Brundige equates with Native values.

The time span from the first Jesuits in North America to the present is quite lengthy as Lorraine Brundige points out. Nevertheless she found a remarkable retention and determined resiliency in Native people regarding the maintenance of their values in the face of tremendous societal pressures to discard them. One pressure she mentions, of interest to myself, was the manner in which residential schools attempted to ignore Native values. There are some minor qualifications and some variances as to the interpretation of these values by Native people, but the fact that they are still practiced by many people today underscores their importance and sustaining power. The value of non-interference, according to Brundige, centered on the rearing of children also applies in other areas of Native life as well. In adult affairs it was considered extremely rude to interfere in others' personal business except in rare and exceptional cases. Non-interference does not imply that unbridled behaviour was condoned, for everyone was responsible and subject to the consequences of their actions. Teasing, gossip, ostracism and even exile in extreme cases were used to curtail unwanted behaviour.

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[76] Brundige, *Continuity of Native Values*: p 41.

The value or ethical edict, that anger must not be shown was very important among the Ojibway and Cree "The emotion of anger was in itself not dangerous, however, ... anger could upset the harmonious balance of living and working together. If that were to happen the survival of the entire group would be at risk." [77] The suppression of anger is often seen as inadvertently dangerous to the individual but in the case of Native people "...they have always participated in a number of rituals that serve to strengthen self control, such as the Cree Sundance, fasting, vision quests and sweat lodges.... As a result of these rituals the Native person develops amazing endurance and stamina, both mentally and physically." [78] In other words Native spirituality provided the Anishinaabe, the tools to deal with any number of emotional imbalances. This feature of the Native temperament at times presented modern day therapists frustrating challenges in attempting to encourage Native people to express their anger openly and forcefully with little success. The 'sweat' is becoming more popular among the young to deal with adjustment problems.

The concept and value of time to the Anishinaabe is vitally important, and this value has been grossly misunderstood by Europeans. Time in Euro-culture is intrinsically tied to their economic and cultural strictures of ordering their behaviours and activities; and they tend to criticize indigenous cultures who do not adhere to such cultural constraints. The frenzy of production during Industrial Revolution germinated the working class notion of time and was dictated by the elite class and the church, for both sought unceasing labour and greater production from the general populace. This notion along with its sister notion, the Protestant work ethic carried over into contemporary labour parlance to contrast European superiority to other cultures who did not subscribe to their views on

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[77] Ibid., p 60.

[78] Ibid., p 60.

hard work and time. In European society indolent and irresponsible people contributed to the formation of the notion 'hard work' later projecting the reverse image in the racial slur "lazy Indian" to indigenous peoples. In Anishnaabe society time and work were also geared to accommodate the rigours of economic survival. In the metaphysical sense the Anishinaabe concept of time was cosmologically cyclical and focussed on the now as compared to the linear notion of time in Western society.

Of all the values and behaviour in the Native cultures, that baffled and frustrated European aquisitiveness is the value of sharing duly noted by Brundige "The importance of *sharing* is such a significant factor in Native life that the concept and resulting behaviour has received manifold attention dating from the earliest European contact to the writings of contemporary authors." [79] Sharing, as with other Native core values, had a spiritual and relational element to it. Hoarding and the 'love of material things' were considered signs of weakness. Material things were valued but generosity and magnanimity even more. Friendship over material was the norm. The ambivalence felt in accepting gifts often catches one committing a *faux paus* among Native people. One traditional custom that balances these sometimes awkward social gestures is a reciprocatory gesture of giving something in return. It has been said as an observation that status comes with the reputation of giving in some Native groups. The legendary tradition of largess among Native people is the massive give-aways, by the West coast Native people, commonly recognized as the Potlatch. The same custom is practised in other Native groups as well including the Ojibway and Cree. The communal practice and emphasis on the value of sharing conflicts with the Western ideology of

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[79] Ibid., p 86.

economic individualism where one individual is able to hoard and amass enormous amounts of wealth creating permanent friction among 'the haves and have nots'.

Gratitude as expressed by Euro-Canadians is not the custom of Native people and therefore it is not uncommon to find Euro-Canadians perplexed when this social amenity is not expressed to their liking. Native people are not ungrateful when bestowed with something of value, however great or small be it a compliment or some small material token of gratitude by the other. Brundige disagrees with the conclusion drawn by Brant that excellence is expected by Native people from others who perform some activity usually warranting some recognition. She states that:

> Not showing gratitude may have come about out of respect for each person's worth. By not showing overt gratitude it would be easy to maintain equality within a group. When offering a thank you, you are in effect admitting that someone has done something special thereby elevating that person socially. V. F. Cordova and I were discussing this concept of gratitude one day and she said it was very difficult for her to learn to adjust to the non-Native practise of saying thank you. Overt gestures of thanks were used in her community. She believes that saying thank you disrupts social equality. [80]

Another possible reason a verbal thank you is not extended or welcomed is that Native people prefer humility and overt gestures of recognition is not commensurate with the notion of equality. Many times a discreet smile shows appreciation for gestures of good will. By contrast the non-Native culture in North America profusely extends various overt displays of gratitude, a practice possibly derived from the market system. "Thank yous" are extended even when the appropriate or commensurate emotion of gratitude is absent. At times when a "thanks" or "thank you" is not extended, a snide retort or derisive "thank you"is returned to the silent interlocutor.

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[80] Ibid., p 104.

The show of excellence that some Native people exhibit, according to apologists for residential schools, emanated from those schools. Making mistakes at these schools were at times met with physical abuse or by racist innuendos. This invalidation or censuring of the self caused generations of Native people to fear making choices, or take risks doing things they might otherwise fail. Perfectionism is often accompanied such behaviour.

The value of teaching by example, practised by Native people with children, is termed 'modelling' as opposed to 'shaping' which is more the European style of tutoring their young. These disparate pedagogic approaches stem in part from disparate worldview orientations. The Western anthropocentric dualistic version objectifies its environment while Native people personalize their world. The Western term "environment" itself as external connotes a separateness from, whereas in Native cosmology the holistic sense of being and connectedness is preferred and practiced. Lorraine Brundige stated "...children raised in an atmosphere where teaching involved being 'a part of' experienced severe emotional trauma when first sent to residential schools. For the first time these children were introduced to the concept of a separate hostile environment."[81] On the other hand, the modelling educational paradigm of the Ojibway is all inclusive in that "...Native people teach everything by the concept of modelling. Native children are taught to listen and watch, to take the time necessary for learning. This (is) a major difference between the two cultures."[82] Rather than forcing a child to learn by rote and a system of reward and punishment, Native children are traditionally taught more by visualization and encouragement to learn in a pleasant and favourable

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81 Ibid., p 132.

82 Ibid., p 133.

setting. Residential schools also bound children to foreign teachers rather than to their own people, another factor that constituted a 'hostile environment'.

Protocol in Anishinaabe society required observance of certain conventions and amenities. It also varied between Anishinaabe groups such as 'position of the drummers' at pow-wows, how food is offered and eaten, how you enter a dwelling and so on. Such differences in behaviour are understood and appreciated when observed in the spirit of respect and non-interference. In addition to the treatment extended to others, such conventions are followed in relations with other-than-human entities if you will; animals, the earth, water and wind. The most common and yet one of the highest gestures of respect in acts of protocol is the offering of the sacred plant tobacco to people, and to the *land* personified as Mother Earth for providing many of her gifts.

Brundige elaborates her commentaries on Native values around the work of Dr Clare Brant, *Native Ethics and Rules of Behaviour*. While she agrees with their inherent continuity, she disagrees with Brant's judgement as to their origin. She disagrees with Brant's Western characterization of Anishinaabe existence as 'hostile', with regard to the environment and their gregariousness being 'essential' for their survival, and as a result these values presumably evolved. What Europeans considered as hostile in the environment, Native people viewed as the natural occurrence of events from time to time and adjusted their attitudes and activities to such conditions. It seems difficult to imagine that the pre-Columbian abundance of game and edible plant life and methods to garner these goods for the winter months made starvation a plausible explanation for the evolving values. Another explanation for the starvation argument may be that Anishinaabe methods of survival and life-ways were seriously disrupted by European incursion and their resulting dependence on an unstable material culture, forced survival hardships, characterized in the Western sense as 'hostile'

or 'essential'. A lot of what has been *established* and attributed to Native people flows from Western documentation, and the account is often tainted with skewed versions of the facts. Brundige advises caution as to the interpretation of materials garnered from Jesuit documents.

The Pre-contact populations of Native peoples were numerous and their respective technologies permitted sufficient extraction and use of the land and resources. Their economies partially framed the values and traditions by which Native people lived and ordered their lives. They were, further more, spiritual in origin rather than by any feature of 'desperation' as that characterized by Dr Brant. Brundige provides a cogent argument that the continuity of Native values prevails despite the hegemonic pressure to disintegrate within a larger and culturally alien consciousness.

Lorraine Brundige covered several specific values of the Ojibway and Cree worldview of which commonalities may be found in other Anishinaabe peoples in North America. Jace Weaver, a Cherokee, further qualifies these values as a unique vein of thought running through the consciousness of the Native mind. Weaver quoting another writer asserts "...there is to a remarkable degree a shared consciousness and identifiable worldview reflected in novels by American Indian authors, a consciousness and worldview defined primarily by a quest for identity'."[83] The single most important qualifier identified it seems, is that Native worldviews and values have a quintessential spiritual element to them which is absent in Western ethical thought. Weaver says that:

> While many Natives would affirm some or all of these components, it is legitimate nonetheless to inquire to what extent they reflect,... generalized emotive and psychological factors held in common by many people around the world at one time or another and/or an essentialized Indian identity.... It is indisputable that worldview continues to be important for Natives as a source of personal or collective energy, identity, and values. Because of the failure of native cultures to recognize any split

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[83] Jace Weaver, *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) p 27.

> between sacred and secular spheres, this worldview remains essentially religious, involving the Native's deepest sense of self and undergirding tribal life, existence, and identity, just as the Creator undergirds all the created order.[84]

This does not mean Anishinaabe groups embrace the same religions when in fact "Native religions ...often differ from one another as drastically as Christianity differs Buddhism or Judaism from Hinduism. Thus, the worldviews they engender differ as well."[85] Another defining value or affirmation that links Native peoples' worldviews is the idea that "...Indian identity is derived from a sense of place–what Vine Deloria and Jamies-Geurrero term 'geomythology'." [86]

Weaver summarizes from other Native writers the following values: "spatial verses temporal orientation of Native peoples', 'view of time that is cyclical rather than linear', 'non-anthropocentric and ecologically oriented worldview', 'a mentality shaped by ancestral values', awareness of another hegemonic dominant worldview, 'foundational native values such as holism, equality, respect, harmony, and balance', 'living in harmony with the physical and spiritual universe, the power of thought and word to maintain this balance, a deep reverence for the land, a strong sense of community', 'a mythpoeic mentality, great influence from local physical conditions, a keen sensitivity to animals and plants, a rich sense of the spiritual world,' and a predilection for ritual".[87] More personal values include respect for the family, the preciousness of children, honouring the elderly, pride in craftsmanship, the value of working for a purpose with one's hands, listening to one's neighbour, being discreet (especially when another's honour and dignity are concerned), taking

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[84] Ibid., p. 28.

[85] Ibid., p 28.

[86] Ibid., p 28.

[87] Ibid., p 28.

time to be introspective and contemplative about the mysteries of the universe, valuing the oral tradition, humbleness, sharing, generosity, humour and belief in the integrity of the person.[88] 'Respect for the integrity for the other' was also emphasized by Dr Cordova as previously mentioned along with 'identification with a specific place of origin', 'lack of competitiveness', 'a disdain for acquisitiveness' and 'tolerance for the differences in others'. [89]

This litany of values, is not by any means exhaustive but they are basic to the consciousness of the Native psyche. One may argue that they are common to all cultures. However Native writers are able to profess a discernment of uniqueness in that Native people are able to differentiate and contrast their perspective from that of the Western mind, a fact which leads Weaver to conclude that, "...the Indian as subaltern knows quite a lot about the mind set and psychological makeup of those in the dominant culture; only the reverse remains untrue.[90] As an example, the meaning of the term *respect* to the Native person is all encompassing and understands the Western version as well which tends to reserve respect for the particular and for extenuating circumstances. Respect for private property seems to be foundational for Westerners whereas its Native correlative notion is *respect for individual, community and land.*

A sense of place, a spiritual component, and a loyalty to community are notions that are pervasive in all the Anishinaabe peoples' worldviews and religions while other traits and secondary values will vary in emphasis from group to group. The concept of community is so important in the Native ethos that Weaver, quoting others, states that "...the most important relationship in Native

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88 Ibid., p 28.

89 Cordova, *EcoIndian*, p 33.

90 Weaver, *That the People Might Live* p 27.

cultures is the relationship which humans share with each other, a relationship that is embodied within the idea of community....Community, in a Native sense, is not simply a place or a group of people, rather it is, ... a place that has been 'inhabited for generations,' where 'the landscape becomes enlivened by a sense of group and family history.'"[91] The relationship between the land and people within the concept of community is crucial says Weaver and it reflects, "... the spatial orientation of Native Peoples....When natives are removed from their traditional lands, they are robbed of more than territory; they are deprived of numinous landscapes that are central to their faith and their identity, lands populated by their relations, ancestors, animals and beings both physical and mythological. A kind of psychic homicide is committed."[92] Weaver was alluding to the large scale removal of Native people from their lands, a common event in the histories of Canada and the United States. The same 'psychic homicide' occurred with the removal of children from the communities and their transfer to residential schools. The idea of community was then synonymous with land for Native people and within this conceptual matrix the individual evolved for: "The self is the locus where tribal values become concrete." So individuation in the value of 'integrity of person' as noted by McPherson, Rabb and also Cordova was important to Native people. Weaver concurs, adding that by virtue of their worldviews, Native people gravitate toward an ethic that equally involved the importance of the community, and thus loyalty to the whole becomes another important value. Contrasting Native individualism with the Western concept, Weaver says, "Native societies are synecdochic (part-to-whole), while the more Western conception is metonymic (part-to-part); as Donald Fixico notes, Natives tend to see themselves in terms of 'self in society' rather than 'self and

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91 Ibid., p 38.

92 Ibid., p 38.

society'. It is what Allen refers to as 'a greater self' and McPherson calls an 'enlarged sense of self.' It is in a profound sense a mentality that declares. 'I am We'."[93] Lacking a fitting term or concept to capture what he means by Native loyalty and commitment to the community, Weaver creates the neologism of communitism. Native people in general, not only in literature, commit themselves to their community for validation of the self and not to some colonial ideology such as that found in most North American mainstream communities. Weaver concludes: "Not to be committed to Native American community, affirming the tribes the people, is tantamount to psychic suicide. It is to lose the self in the dominant mass humanity, either ceasing to be or persisting merely as another ethnic minority, drifting with no place, no relations, no real people."[94]

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[93] Ibid., p 39.

[94] Ibid., p 43.

5.0 FINDINGS

In conducting phenomenological inquiry or reflection one must search for the essence of lived experience. We view certain phenomena in lived experience, in this case presented in my personal narrative, and recognize structures or themes emerging. As Van Manen suggests, "The insight into the essence of a phenomenon involves a process of reflectively appropriating, of clarifying, and making explicit the structure of meaning of the lived experience." [95] There is a consensus among people in a unified cultural orientation in recognizing these thematic structures and thus meaning is reified in common recognition of phenomena. If it isn't, it may be the result of varying cultural nuances of particular ideas. Having been Western educated and raised, I can proffer various themes and categories that others may recognize. On the other hand because of having also been oriented in my Ojibway culture, certain nuances of experience may be recognized only by others similarly raised. An example of this mutually exclusive awareness occurs when people fail to find a joke amusing that is cross culturally shared by two groups with differing languages. Phrased another way, Van Man speaking of someone perceiving phenomena from another culture says "Every new object he sees appears in front of his eyes in a modality that permits a certain role in that conversation. Any object that cannot adopt such modality therefore cannot meaningfully enter the conversational relation."[96] In the case at hand, the structures I allude to are, generally speaking, shared by all as I conduct my study in universal themes, elucidating the dissonance experienced. As themes emerge, sub-themes or categories may be instituted for further clarification. The two major themes that run through the narrative as my *stream of consciousness* are subjugation and resistence.

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[95] Max Van Manen, *Researching Lived experience*, p 77.

[96] Ibid., p 116.

Both themes undergird my contention that a dissonance of some sort, be it ideational or cognitive, constitutes a major factor running through my consciousness, and the assumption here is that others, particularly former Native residential school students, will recognize this also.

Subsumed under each theme are categories unifying and synthesizing the principal themes of subjugation and resistence. These are brought together in Appendix I, *Chronological List of Selected Categories*, and Appendix II, *Chronological Table of Concepts*.

Throughout the text of my experience, the phenomenological description, I write from memory about what the state of my conscious experience was, and about specific facts regarding that lived experience. What I am doing therefore is a form of phenomenological ontology as I attempt to describe and clarify my experience of that dissonant state of being I have called the Yuma State of consciousness.

6.0 Yuma State: An Autobiographical Narrative

Chapter One

Anishinaabe Child

My earliest memories begin around age three, although at times I can recall being encased in a *tikinagan*, an Ojibway child rearing practice that ends somewhere around the first year of a baby's life. Whether this is humanly possible to remember that far back I don't know. I may have been a late bloomer and didn't leave this secure cocoon until about the age of three. In any case that experience, itself, left an indelible impression on my memory.

I was born in Beardmore, a small northern railway town situated near the south end of Lake Nipigon, Ontario. I should have been born on the Gull Bay Indian Reserve, which is my home reserve, located just opposite Beardmore on the west side of Lake Nipigon, roughly forty miles away. The reasons for being born away from home are purely logistical. My father was a pulp cutter and we were the Ojibway of Gull Bay, traditionally hunters and gatherers. Beardmore, at the time, provided an excellent venue and opportunity for my family to engage in these activities. My father did his logging at camp six just outside of Beardmore and we picked blueberries in the surrounding area and sold them to local buyers. Blueberries would later symbolize a more powerful continuity of place for me in my life, a life that was to be shaped during my formative years by two culturally disparate people.

The area around Beardmore, during this period, was a veritable vineyard for blueberries during the summer months, most notably during August. In late July, the entire populace of Gull Bay would pack their belongings and clamour aboard trucks, cars, boats, and head like a small

military armada to Beardmore for the annual blueberry harvest. At times, blueberry merchants from Beardmore would facilitate these movements from blueberry patch to blueberry patch with their own vehicles. Once, I vividly remember five families, including mine, packed in one of these trucks. The truck was in the three-ton class with tandem wheels and had lattice-like guardrails with a tarp that could easily go on top to hold and secure all the baskets of blueberries, and of course, the families. This tarp came in handy when it rained and we often did get caught in the rain while being transported to another picking area. During this one particular incident, 'Scrap Iron', the nickname given to the merchant truck owner by virtue of another one of his many trades, stopped and parked his truck alongside a curb right down the main street of a town. He apparently had some lengthy business matters to attend to. Why he would subject us in such an undignified manner to be gawked at for most of that day remains a mystery to me. As a business man, he probably thought concerns of this nature were insignificant. There we were, packed like human cargo on the back of this truck with all our belongings, blankets, clothing, tents, tools, pets, and pots and pans, dangling by string along the sides. It is the memories of moments like this that make American novelist John Steinbeck's book The Grapes of Wrath one of my favourites. Our own predicament might very well have been deemed the blueberries of wrath since in many ways it parallelled the plight of the migrant workers during the depression described in Steinbeck's book. That scenario played out each year for our people from Gull Bay at blueberry harvest time.

Over the course of their lives, my parents had twelve children and I was the third eldest. Sometime around my fourth year, the three eldest, along with our maternal orphaned uncle, were scooped up one day by the powers that be and shipped off to an orphanage in Fort William, which is now a part of the City of Thunder Bay, Ontario. The adoption of my uncle by my parents is, as a

rule of thumb, customary in Ojibway tradition. It seemed natural that he would endure the same fate in store for us other children in the family. We were living in Beardmore at the time of this particular incident. I barely remember the Children's Aid lady who commandeered this entire exercise but the policeman who accompanied her I have never forgotten for he and his fraternity have somehow embodied or have been thematic in many nightmares and fears I had for many years after. I remembered distinctly the blackness of his uniform, his size, the black panel truck, his red face and, most of all, his loud angry voice barking orders and threats. Years later, I learned this was not an isolated incident but part of a much larger and grander scheme by the authorities to send Indian children to residential schools.

Be that as it may, my eldest sister and I did not pass the medical examination upon our arrival at the St Joseph's Boarding School. As active and imaginative kids that we were, we borrowed this characterisation, 'Yuma State', from one of many westerns on television. We would later come to associate or form our identities from these westerns, albeit with much confusion. More on that later. In any case, in the course of my medical examination, a small spot was discovered on my left lung and, for this reason, I would spend the next three years at a sanatorium in the suburbs of Fort William, with tuberculosis. Fortunately, a significant period of my convalescence was to take place at an annex of the larger hospital on the Fort William Indian Reserve. The locale of the annex, given the dubious distinction of being named Squaw Bay, is one of prettiest natural spots one will ever see or imagine. The hospital was perched on a low hill overlooking the Bay, which itself was guarded on the opposite side by a huge wall of precipitous rock that is part of the Nor' wester Mountain Range. At any given time in the day and from a specific angle, one can discern the outline of a Native woman's figure etched out by nature against the cliff. Adjacent to the hospital stood a small

whitewashed church where I would have my first religious experiences which, I sensed at that age, were a little bit more unusual than everyday mundane matters. The physical interior of this building and general layout plus the behavioural expectations of participants left a lasting impression of awe with me. At the time, since I was only three or four, I could not put a finger on what it was I intuited, but I felt it was quite important and had a lot to do with some Power beyond all these people. I also sensed at the time with the help of a friendly cuff at the back of my head, that it had a lot to do with how I was to behave in this building and during the rituals. Much later, I would learn that a great deal of this mysterious power was shaped by people I would see as distinct from the people I belonged to.

At some point during my stay at the hospitals, over a course of three years, I may have forgotten consciously who my parents were and to which people I belonged to as a group. What I do recall is that most of the people I was close to – the patients – were distinctly different, most notably in colour, from the group who I deemed the caretakers: the doctors, nurses, cleaners, janitors, and so on. Strangely I did not necessarily feel I belonged to any one group other than that of being a patient. My facial features and hair at that age were quite fair and no one pointed out, either directly or indirectly, any signs that directed me to form any ethnic alliances with any particular group other than the patient group. The one person who visited me periodically who could have reinforced my lack of ethnic awareness was a paternal aunt. On my father's side of the family there are very distinct Euro-Canadian bloodlines and features and my aunt had bright red hair and a very pale complexion. She may have attempted to relate to me incidents about my heritage but I perhaps did not feel compelled to hear anything of interest regarding this subject. Part of this indifference may have been due to the seemingly interminable length of my stay at the sanatorium and the notion that this was

perhaps my permanent home. This complacence would soon end in dramatic fashion and without any forewarning. One day, it was announced with little fanfare that I was going home and that the aunt who was visiting me would accompany me home. The suddenness of the news threw me off guard and I didn't know how to react other than in surprise and shock. Home! Where is that? Who are these people that are supposed to be my relatives and people? One of the notions I did manage to internalize through osmosis at the hospital was that I did belonged to someone and somewhere other than there at the hospital. After the initial shock of the announcement and mixed emotions about what would happen to me wore off, I was eager to discover this mystery of what home was and my excitement and anticipation started to grow. Little did I know how mutual these feelings and emotions were also growing in an entire community in the north.

The people of Gull Bay are the descendants of one of several groups of Ojibway people or Anishinaabe that were signatories of the 1850 Robinson Superior Treaty. And prior to signing the treaty, they were part of a larger group that migrated in pre-Columbian times from the east to perhaps facilitate the colonial fur trade or to escape further encroachment of their homeland in the east. They were known as the Northern Ojibway group and their southern brethren became the Chippewa, who also migrated southward to Minnesota and Wisconsin. The Gull Bay Anishinaabe, at the time of the treaty, were settled on the northwestern fringe of Lake Nipigon, partly on the mainland and partly on an island, roughly four hundred yards off the mainland. The Jackfish Island area at the time was teeming with wildlife such as; fish, waterfowl, moose, caribou, bear and beaver, which was used for sustenance. The little harbour on the island, protected in the back by a mountain, could not have been a more perfect spot for its beauty, comfort and relative isolation. On the mainland, a little trading post was erected by the Hudson's Bay Company to accommodate trade. Here on Jackfish

Island, the Anishinaabe settled in after the treaty, and prepared to carry on their quiet and unobtrusive lifestyle. Shortly after the turn of the century however, two things occurred that necessitated their departure from this spot. The need for better hunting areas and an Influenza epidemic that decimated the population. Initially, sometime in the early twenties, a couple of families set out to settle at the present location of *Kiashk* (Gull) Bay which is a fairly large bay on the west side of Lake Nipigon. It too was an ideal location for hunting, fishing and trapping, occupations that these people carried out with great efficiency.

Fishing was facilitated by *nabikwanuk*, boats sturdy enough to handle the rough open waters of a lake eighty by forty-five miles in area. The fish were then transported to a fishing community at the southern tip of the lake to MacDiarmid where they were further shipped by truck to a variety of destinations. At the height of this industry in the fifties, this occupation provided in addition to monetary compensation most benefits career employees seek in any occupation: security, nearness to family, interest, satisfaction and advancement, all of which are supposed to ultimately lead to contentment. Most of the equipment was fashioned and maintained by the people themselves, including the punts, outboard-motors and nets. The latter were woven and outfitted with corks and lead weights by the women at home. They were periodically brought and cleaned and wound on large spools to dry. Trapping also provided most of the amenities that accompany many careers. It may have been more labour intensive than fishing but for adventure, interest and contentment, it was unmatched. Most Anishinaabe trapped in pairs, were flown out after freeze-up and returned in the spring laden with fur. In regard to their respective occupations, the people of Gull Bay were very efficient, highly productive and excelled in skills that matched those of others anywhere else. But

it was during the early fifties that the Gull Bay people were to embrace a new occupation that made them less isolated: logging or pulp cutting.

At about the time of my release from the hospital, Gull Bay was still only accessible by boat. However, a logging road from the TransCanada penetrated the bush area just a few short miles away and in the spring of 1954 a small fishing truck was meandering its way to a rendezvous-point to pick up fish for delivery to Port Arthur. One of its passengers was a plump seven year old Anishinaabe boy, unsure of his own identity, but full of anticipation of meeting a family and home he had forgotten after three years in the hospital.

I left the Fort William sanatorium hospital with little fanfare and was to be accompanied by my aunt to Gull Bay. Passage from Port Arthur to Gull Bay usually involved securing a ride by automobile up to MacDiarmid where any fishing boat on its way to Gull Bay might be caught for the remainder of the trip. During this particular trip, my aunt was able to secure a ride for us by way of a small fish truck, whose owner was the middle-man for the Gull Bay fishing industry. For most of the journey, particularly during the last half, we travelled through bush country with its long, winding, rocky, and, this being the spring-time, extremely muddy road in some areas. For the adults, it must have been an arduous and taxing experience but for me it was sheer heaven and I didn't suffer the usual kid 'are we there yet' malaise. It was my first conscious awareness of an automobile trip and on this one through the bush, I wanted to experience every mile of the road with its countless bends, hills, lakes and open sky, periodically punctuated with wildlife. Because I was having such a great time, I didn't want this ride to end. After several hours, we finally came to a spot that was so muddy the truck got stuck and could not go any further. The driver and his helper got out to see what they could do. My aunt and I sat in the cab and watched helplessly. After what seemed

like a very long time trying to extricate the truck from its muddy prison, I noticed two adult males approaching us; they just seemed to mysteriously appear out of nowhere from the bush. Prior to this incident, though, I did recall hearing a sound emanating from the bush which I recognized, with the help of a mind slowly inuring itself to some distant past, as an outboard motor and its dying engine. My young mind didn't, at the time, relate or link these two incidents together. As the new arrivals drew near, there were some greetings exchanged among the men. Almost immediately I noticed that their physical appearances and mannerisms were different than what I was accustomed to. They were darker in complexion and seemed more subdued than the driver and his helper. The younger, taller and less reticent of the two spoke to my aunt in a language that both startled me at first and yet had a familiar ring to it, like my remembering the outboard motor sound. To my astonishment I heard my aunt speak Ojibway for the first time to her brother, my paternal uncle the taller of the two strangers. And yet, when I thought about it, she did exhibit the same reserved bearing and mannerisms as these men. My uncle and his friend attempted to help with freeing the truck from the mud with little success. After a while, it was decided that my aunt and I would be escorted to the reserve and, at the same time, additional help would be sought to help the fish buyers retrieve their truck. My uncle lifted me up onto his back and, with his partner leading the way, the four of us disappeared into the woods. In a few minutes, we approached a shoreline where a skiff was tethered to a dead fall. Again, a rush of adrenalin overcame me as I anticipated a fast boat-ride. In a few minutes, we were aboard and speeding off to a new destination. This new experience was exciting and I kept glancing around trying to absorb everything. Because of a head-wind, the ride was a bit bumpy. Looking back, I saw the shoreline recede steadily and quickly while, in its wake, the boat parted the water creating a v-shape wedge of waves. Sections of ice from the recent breakup were

still visible along the shoreline. Ahead, the distant blue-gray hills lined the horizon with intermittent dark silhouettes that denoted the various islands. As a spray of water, brushed aside from the plunging bow of the skiff, sprinkled my face, the breeze, quickly, dried it off. I began to wonder what lay ahead for me.

We had been cruising for about twenty minutes when we rounded a large precipitous bend. My attention was then directed far ahead to what looked like the outline of a village. In the distant, I could make out sandy cliffs and, just above them dotted here and there, houses, most of which were painted white with black tar-papered roofs. As we drew closer to the reserve, I could make out a little harbour to the left, that supported a fairly large dock with mooring posts and automobile tires strung out on the sides to prevent abrasion of boats. But what caught my attention most was that a huge crowd had gathered on the dock and seemed agitated or excited in anticipation of some event. A short distance away from the dock, my uncle slowed the engine and his partner stood ready to tie the boat. As we inched our way to the dock, I looked up and saw a sea of brown faces smiling and laughing with their attention apparently focussed on the contents of the boat. Little did I know or appreciate that all the commotion was for the welcoming of a chubby little boy who had been away for three years in a hospital, one of their own. After being hoisted up on to the dock, my aunt guided me through the crowd where individual people began touching my clothing and my hair out of curiosity. The dock was L-shaped and my aunt made her way to the end of the dock toward some people who seemed to be waiting. I was led to this one woman who stood quietly to the side with a gentle and almost shy smile on her face. Beside her stood a dark skinned boy just a little taller than I was. I was then introduced to my mother and then to my older brother who, in a few short days,

would play a very dramatic role in an incident that was to affect me psychologically for the rest of my life.

For the previous few days, from the time of the announcement of my release from the hospital up until this very moment, I had accepted my fate rather nonchalantly and unquestioningly in a sort of wait-and-see manner. I don't recall being prepared for any dramatic changes in my life but the transition for me did not seem all too traumatic. I accepted my mom for who she was and my new home and surroundings rather casually. I would, in a short while, form a natural and close bond with my mother and the rest of my family. My father, this being the spring, was still out trapping in the bush. My mother stayed at home caring for three of seven children she had had by this time in her life.

When all the greetings and news subsided, my mother lifted me up onto her back and proceeded to walk home a third of a mile away with my brother at her side. I could not help but notice the difference in worlds between Gull Bay and what I experienced in the city. The most noticeable difference was the sense of stillness and relative quietness of life on the reserve. I could hear almost every sound; the sound of chopping wood, of dogs barking, the drone of an incoming fishing boat. Out on the lake, I could make out a lone figure in a canoe powered by a small outboard engine. On the way to our house at the end of the village, I took a brief moment to wonder and assess both my mom and brother. I remember trying to look objectively at the side of her head and thought simply 'so this was my mom'. She sensed me shifting a bit and asked what was wrong. I said nothing and with that, I closed a chapter in my life that should not have happened, that being the stay in the hospital away from my family.

In the next little while, and with a little more freedom than I was accustomed to, I began to get more acquainted with my family and my new home. I met uncles and aunts who I almost entirely forgot. Vague memories assisted in my becoming more inured to these experiences. I had a little sister barely able to walk and a little brother besides my older brother staying at home. A few days later another younger brother and sister came home from the hospital after they had their tonsils removed. I was also to learn our oldest sister was in the hospital for TB.

Almost immediately, I began to explore my physical environment with great relish as this was denied me for some time. One of the stipulations that was impressed upon me was that I was not to go swimming out in the lake for reasons related to my continuing recovery. Quickly, I broke this rule and I suffered the consequences which was confinement to the indoors for a few days. For the most part, life for me consisted primarily of getting up in the morning and just playing all day long or simply doing all the things any seven year old does on an isolated Indian reserve, particularly one denied all these things for three years.

It was just one of those particular ordinary days when, *it* happened. The skies were partly cloudy and it seemed mild out that afternoon. The three oldest of we boys were playing around the house and my mother was washing clothes in the porch the old fashioned way with a scrubbing board and tub. My oldest brother made his way into the house and we younger ones continued playing outside. Tired of the game, I made my way to the porch to see what my mom was up to. Nearing the porch, I could hear the grating and splashing sound of clothes, board and water. As I stepped into the porch, my mother turned around to greet me. I don't recall hearing the sound but my mother must have for she let out this wild scream or yell that something awful occurred. A split second later, while she continued staring at me, she let out another scream and collapsed on the floor of the porch.

In a panic, I tried leaving the area of the porch and for some strange reason I felt slightly immobile and numb. Limping a few yards from the house, I came to a stop and looked down at my legs. My left pant leg was covered in blood from my waist downward. Despite seeing all the blood, I didn't feel any pain. I still did not know what happened but I was terrified and started crying in horror that something awful happened to me. Not knowing what to do, I continued limping up the road towards some people who were approaching me with disbelief in their eyes. An elder was the first to reach me whereupon he picked me up and started carrying me towards our house. That was the last I remember before I passed out. I must have been out for a couple of hours before I woke up and I immediately experienced a tremendous amount of pain all over my body with the slightest movement, including each time I inhaled. I then became aware that I had been shot with a 22-caliber bullet. As this was related to me, I became almost inconsolable, crying aloud that I didn't want to die. This profound awareness of life's fragility would remain with me for all of my adult life. Apparently, my older brother had been playing with a gun when it discharged and the bullet went through the door leading to the porch and came to rest on the left side of my groin. After settling down a little, I noticed the whole house was filled with people, the very same people who just a few days earlier had welcomed me home at the dock. My mother also got over her initial shock and was by my side trying to comfort me. Apparently, an airplane had been summoned to fly me out to Nipigon where the nearest hospital was. A short while later, I heard the plane flying above and that alone cheered me up somewhat in anticipation of this new experience. Our house was the last one in the village and it was decided I would be transported bed and all down the cliff to a skiff and to the dock where the plane was moored. When we reach the dock, it was packed with people again, this time to see me off. Lying prostrate in the boat, I looked up to see everyone throwing money

down into the boat. My mother collected the money thanking everyone for their generosity and concern. I was loaded on the plane and we took off. The exhilaration of flying must have lessened the pain from my shot wound, for I was trying to get up and look around to see the world below. It didn't seem long before we were at the hospital and I began another convalescence period. I don't remember too much about my stay in Nipigon but it wasn't very long before I was home again and resuming my catching up activities I started before I was shot.

The year that followed the shooting incident was perhaps one of the most important of my formative years. It was the last year I would spend an entire winter at home on the reserve. Aside from own my childish concerns, interests and focus, I did take in a lot that was going on in reserve life. I began to internalize the community ethos, mores, social practices and customs, much of them transmitted to me by my parents. I didn't yet manage to speak the language but picked up enough to get by on. Being raised in the city for about three years, with all the attendant mannerisms not conducive for reserve life, didn't hinder my transition period, for I adapted quite well as perhaps any boy of seven might. I did get teased a lot for not speaking the language that well and laughed at for a lot of other things I did. For instance, my inquisitive nature compelled me to asked a lot a questions unabashedly about a lot of things in general, to people I naively assumed spoke English as proficiently as I did. Often I would get this look of incredulousness and a laugh from the older people. Most often I wouldn't get an answer but I knew most people tolerated me with amusement. Perhaps I embarrassed my mother a lot. Years later, I was told that my mother carried an enormous burden of guilt for the things that happened to me and that I may have taken advantage of this. I didn't miss the attendant comforts of life in a hospital such as my own bed, regular meal times and

change of clothes, the comics and more elaborate toys and so on. Slowly the freedom and familial closeness I was now enjoying at home, I wasn't prepared to trade at any costs.

In that year I spent at Gull Bay, I began with subtlety to pick up nuances of behaviour from adults that depicted their passive mannerisms in their relations with white people. Conversely I noticed non-Native people; school teachers, Hudson Bay managers, DIA officials, the police, to name a few, reacted reciprocally with patronizing mannerisms and, in some circumstances, paternalistically. These ostensibly servile behaviour patterns, I would internalize and integrate temporarily in my own behaviour. Later this behaviour would be reinforced far more so by the boarding school experience. It seemed like I was to learn my place in a hierarchy of things not yet perceptible. By the time I was to be introduced to the regimen of residential school living I had integrated to life on the reserve. I was still the spontaneous kid, full of emotional energy, that I had at the Sanitarium but less spontaneous, a bit more cautious of people, in particular white people, and very especially those in authority. In one sense, this passive demeanour was kind of a blessing in that it provided me with a strategy in avoiding confrontation with residential school authority which I would soon come to meet head on in the very near future. On the other hand, this passiveness in its most nefarious form would have a long term negative effect and would completely pervade my behaviour through life. I don't doubt this process afflicted many more than just myself.

Chapter Two

Fall 1955 — Summer 1956

In the fall of 1955, I was for the second time scooped up along with some of my siblings and sent off to the Boarding School in Fort William. This time I wasn't to be spared by a debilitating illness and would have to spend the next five years in an institution that did everything but assimilate us into mainstream society, as it intended to do. When we arrived at the doorsteps of St. Joseph's Boarding School that fateful day in 1955, we may have instinctively sensed what was in store for us when we gazed up at this dark, ominous, and imposing medieval-looking structure of brick, stone and concrete. Built around the turn of the century St. Joe's was set back from Franklin Street about twenty yards and was guarded all around by a high hedge that seemed sufficient to dissuade nosy passers-by. The overall structure looked as if it were built haphazardly and piecemeal with little aesthetic input by its architects. Covered mostly in dark weather-worn brick, the motley green gables perched atop the sixth floor looked more like a clumsy old hat than an attractively and symmetrically designed roof. Splotched here and there were windows of all shapes and sizes through which no one dared to look out. The building's design focussed more on its function than how it might appear , and those that ran it seemed unconcerned by what outsiders and passers-by might think of it. If any image of the school was presented to outsiders, it was one carefully staged, contrived and orchestrated. Those were my first impressions of St Joseph's Boarding School that day.

Having finished appraising the school, we entered through the front doors and into a dark lobby where we were greeted by a nun who welcomed us in and told us to wait while she left to bring the Mother Superior. In a few minutes the sound of footsteps made us turn toward two nuns

approaching us from down the dark hallway. They appeared like apparitions in white as their habits were partially imbued in the darkness. The Mother Superior was introduced to us by the other nun and my first impression of her was of the soft and pleasant tone to her voice. I couldn't help but notice the huge crucifixes dangling from their habits. While our escorts discussed the handover details with the Mother Superior, I absorbed my new environment with some trepidation. I was at once aware of certain uneasy sensations. I heard light music off in the distance — piano music. You could also hear people, off in the distance engaged in light activity, somewhere down the hallways. I could smell pleasant odours of food, preparations for supper I supposed, since it was already late afternoon. I could smell many other foreign odours but could not pinpoint what they were. The sensations were innocuous enough, but my young suspicious mind deemed them too good to be true. These initial sounds and smells would remain with me all of my life and would always be a reminder of memories associated with loneliness, abandonment, alienation and sadness. As much as I wanted to cry, I determined not to for the sake of remaining strong and not to set off a chain reaction in the others. After our relatives left, we were led away, our little sister in one direction and we three boys in another. Total gender segregation was standard procedure for reasons known only to those who created it. We would only see our sister at Christmas time, the only time of the year girls and boys would be allowed to mingle. My younger brother and I stayed close to our older brother and followed his every move.

Two nuns were assigned to look after the boys who numbered around sixty or seventy. The older and perhaps more experienced nun acted as the leader of the two. The younger and much prettier one was the first who took us under her wing and gave us our first instructions and introductions. She was much kinder in demeanour than the older one. I wonder if there is a genetic

predisposition for these traits. In life it seems the more attractive people are always the kinder ones. Throughout that first year her demure nature and presence would always mitigate the stern, stringent and harsh temperament that accompanied the older one. After all initial introductions were over, we were told to stay downstairs till supper after which we were taken upstairs to the uppermost floor that was the boys' dormitory. The basement was pretty well the day room for the boys. Here we had lockers to keep our coats and winter gear and other miscellaneous items. We also had face clothes and towels assigned to us that had our individual numbers attached. The numbers were assigned in reverse order to our ages for reasons unbeknownst to everyone. My number was thirty-five and my older brother's was thirty-four and younger brothers thirty-six and thirty-seven respectively. They were attached to everything that was assigned or belonged to us: towels, clothing, pajamas etc.

The current residents were playing outside and would soon be summoned by bell to get ready for supper. They would file in and go to their lockers put away their outdoor gear wash up and wait for suppertime. While doing this they would size up the 'new guys' who in this case would be us. We would just sit on the benches and just try to maintain a brave front in this strange and unfriendly environment. Just before supper we were instructed to line up single file just before the door that led upstairs to the refectory which housed the eating quarters. We were to form this single line formation over the years, on a moment's notice and at any time for various purposes. Lineups were used for disciplinary purposes such as standing still for long periods. They were also used to march us to the refectory for meals, to retire for bedtime upstairs, to school classes, outings and of course for required religious functions.

From the basement we marched upstairs to the main floor where the refectory was. When we entered the dining hall, I welcomed the odour of the food and my stomach juices must have gone

into a frenzy as we had not eaten for some time. Despite this though, I still proceeded to approach everything with caution and curiosity. The hall was long and well lit, for the walls and ceiling were painted a light sky blue in contrast to the dark hallways and other parts of the building. There was an aisle at the centre that parted the rows of tables and benches. At the end of the refectory the food was laid out on tables. We were assigned our places at a table before the grace-before-meals and then we marched to retrieve our main dish and dessert. When we were served our dishes, I noticed the girls refectory partially through a doorway that led to the kitchen. In the hopes of spotting my younger sister, I took a quick glance with no luck. I was discreet, for behaviour of this kind I intuited was frowned upon. The meal was served by two or three of the residents, a chore that would be assigned to everyone sooner or later. While the two nuns looked on, I took notice of the older one for the first time and what I saw instilled a sense of dread which was not totally unwarranted as I would later find out. She was slightly shorter than the younger one but seemed more robust in physical stature. Her face wore a very stern expression on a bland complexion. Her flaccid jowls protruded out from the tightly fitted habit around her head. She hid behind a set of thick rimmed glasses that added to her owl-like features. And as if that wasn't bad enough, when I dared sneak a prolonged stare at her, I noticed she sported a light moustache. These features, encircled by the blackness of her habit, seemed to underscore the dreaded sternness she exuded. Later this image I formed of her would reify into sheer terror.

Meals began and ended with the saying of grace. The meals were not out of the ordinary and quite palatable but some rare occasions we were confronted with the ordeal of eating something totally repulsive to our tastes. For many it was spinach, but for me it was pumpkin and one day it was served, if you can believe it, as a dessert! Most of the time it was served as a vegetable and even

then it tasted atrocious to me. Generally we were able to dispense with it in one form or another. Often we would deal it away quid pro quo for other favours to some other resident who was born without tastebuds or somebody with maybe masochistic tendencies. One was well advised to give these guys a wide berth when interacting with them. Anyway the nuns would often get wind of this practice and on some occasions one had no alternative but to eat. I don't recall the punishment meted out for this offense, not eating your food or any food served you, but it was bad enough for me to get sick in horror when faced with this dilemma. My older brother was one of these hard nosed cases who could eat anything and maybe came to my aid that day, for I can't remember having been punished for that one occasion. I think the nuns came to their senses after that first year and forced eating must have been abolished soon after.

After supper that first day we new arrivals went downstairs briefly while the other boys went outside to play for awhile. Then, we were escorted upstairs to the dormitory where the three of us were shown our beds and presented with another set of face cloths and towels, along with a set of pajamas. From the basement to the upstairs dorm we had to ascend twelve flights of stairs each evening and descend the same each morning. For other purposes, such as doing chores, we had to do this more than once a day. For the five years I spent at St. Joseph's I often wondered how many flights of stairs I had negotiated.

That evening, the strange experience of sights smells and sounds permeated my thoughts again in some strange inexplicable way like that afternoon when we first arrived. I sat on the bed that was assigned to me and felt the rough texture of the army blanket. I leaned down and smelled the clean white sheets and pillow case. These things were not new to me as I had experienced them before at the hospitals. Now, somehow though, there was something strangely uncomfortable about

them as if they all represented some impending danger. All the beds were uniformly aligned, made of cast iron and painted white. Even the scent of the wood emanating from the floor and walls had a distinct odour that evening. I supposed this was all perfectly natural to expect all these new sights and sounds. I walked over to the south end of the dorm to the veranda and took in the sights of the city. The huge dark shape of Mount Mackay with its flashing red lights was the first thing I noticed. And then all the bright lights, of the Westfort area, sparkled brightly in the distance. It seemed like I could hear all that was going down below outside. Then I noticed the railroad track directly below. I knew that it led to somewhere – anywhere – away from *here*. When I heard the train, far off in the distance, it immediately reminded me of home and my mother. Somehow I managed to keep myself from breaking down. What ever it takes, I will deal with it, as this was to be my new home for some time, I thought. The rest of the evening went by quickly. After the lights were out, and every one else was asleep, I continued on with my observations. Staring around at the beds before me, with their human occupants, I briefly wondered about their own predicaments. I would meet many of them tomorrow. The last thing I took notice of that night, was the red glow of the exit light. It seemed both sinister and, at the same time, a beacon of hope for maybe a better tomorrow.

No sooner was I asleep when we were awakened by the ringing of a bell. That probably was the most annoying sound I would hear for years to come. When I had an opportunity, I gave the bell a closer inspection. The bell was made of brass and in the shape of a sphere with rib-like sides. Inside were two metal bearings that made the ringing sound. The nuns would ring the bell by holding it in the palm of their hand and twisting their wrists. Many were tempted to hide this contraption, but few dared. While I was still trying to wake up, an older boy came over and helped me make my bed. I learned later, he was assigned to help me, something that was routinely done for the younger

residents. After we dressed and washed up, we formed a line and went downstairs to the chapel for mass. This was another routine we would do every morning except Saturdays for the next five years. During mass, I noticed that the alter boys were also residents. A couple of years later, I would also become an alter boy, one of the few experiences I didn't mind while at the school.

After mass that second day we went downstairs for breakfast. I don't remember much about what came next that second day except the fact that I met my first friend. Sometime during one of our breaks from school, my brothers and I went outside to play. There were boys everywhere, but I walked over to this one around my age sitting on a concrete pillar working on something. As I came closer it looked like he was fashioning a gun holster out of a discarded linoleum tile. He used a nail as a punch and a rock as a hammer to make holes for the seams. I became interested in his craft work and sat next to him. With little fanfare, by way of introductions between us, I found myself helping him and we just became friends.

Over the next five years I would experience many things that left some important or poignant memory in my life. Only one stands out more than others leaving a lasting impression on me about certain people. One day, sometime shortly after we arrived at the orphanage, I was upstairs in the dormitory, attempting to darn one of my socks, the way we had been shown by the older boys. The technique involved placing a burnt light bulb in the sock to support the area of the sock we were to darn. With the needle and darn we would simply sew the sock. Despite my best efforts, I just couldn't do it properly. Suddenly without warning, the older nun appeared and, with a menacing glare, started screaming and hollering at me. While in a profound state of anxiety, I was ordered to roll up my sleeves and at the same time, I braced myself for what came next. She began slapping my arms, all over, with a sturdy sixteen-inch ruler. The pain was stinging and I reacted with a healthy

prolonged scream. This followed with a suppressed post-licking whimper for fear of triggering her to reload and continue the torture. Her actions, and the severity of the punishment, for what seemed to me as innocent behaviour on my part, was inappropriate, shocking, disquieting and thereafter left me with a dread whenever I was in her presence. From that day on, I would never forget the look on her face, and that countenance of meanness she exuded. What was most traumatizing, was having to be singled out before your friends in a very humiliating manner. If others were ever subjected to the same punishment I had never witnessed or heard about it. That initial beating was followed by several bed-wetting beatings from her shortly after. Whenever we would line up for a strap thereafter, I was among the first in line. There seemed to be less trauma in getting the ordeal over quickly and then sitting back and watching others receive their due. Anyway these future regular straps were relatively easy to take compared to my inaugural beating. Later I was to view certain punishments with less intimidation and trepidation than others. I would never trust authority of any kind afterward, and would always be on guard and ready for the worst. That particular nun, unbeknownst to me at the time, would be assigned to other duties the next year.

That first year at St. Joseph's was the most difficult and I suppose that goes for most things you start out in, be it a career, the military, a prison sentence and so on. But at eight years old this was my first institutional experience in a very intimidating, strict rule oriented and loveless environment. It was to say the least, terrifying. In the aftermath of my first punishment and in the manner it was administered, I would for the rest of the year, be on continuous guard of my behaviour and as far as humanly possible avoid the older nun's presence. Whenever I was in close proximity of her, I would feel myself stiffen with anxiety but at the same time attempt to try to carry on as though nothing was wrong. It was both emotionally and physically unsettling. It seemed as though

at times I was a condemned man awaiting execution. Her absence meant for me relief from tension and anxiety. Whenever she became sick for a few days, which was rarely, it was a god-send I thought. Other extended periods of her absence such as at class time which was most of the day and when we were asleep at night were times I relished and often prayed. Eventually night time too became a nightmare as a result of a particular habit I developed not unrelated perhaps to all this. By mid-fall of 1955, I started to wet my bed and, the first time I was found out, I received another severe beating in my wet pyjamas this time, and with the added humiliation of it being in front of everyone again. This drubbing was partially mitigated by the fact that others had done so as well and that I was not alone. Only one boy I remember was excused from punishment for reasons I can only guess were medical, for he wetted his bed on a frequent basis. His exemption from punishment, would provide me with a plan one night to avert attention to myself that following morning. Early one morning I awoke in horror to find myself and sheets drenched. After calming myself down from panic and with a little forethought I decided to exchange sheets if at all possible with the boy exempted from punishment, that is, if his sheets were still dry. Quickly and quietly I stole over to his bed and groped to see if his sheets were dry. Luckily they were and I then proceeded to delicately remove his sheets and replaced them with my own. He was, to my advantage, a heavy sleeper and was unaware of what had transpired. As for my pyjamas, they were hardly detectable the next day in terms of having been wetted. The next morning business went on as usual and no one was aware of the clandestine activity hours before; no one that is, except me. I don't know how or at what age one develops a sense of conscience or guilt so over powering that it compels one to right some wrong one has perpetrated even at the risk of bringing down the wrath on oneself. But that was exactly what developed in my mind shortly after that incident. I had already reasoned that the plan had worked

quite well and that no one was hurt by it including my unsuspecting victim and the ingenious plan and execution I thought were nothing short of brilliant. However I started to have a nagging feeling about the impropriety of what I had done and decided to desist from ever doing it again. That momentary twinge of moral righteousness however did not in any way prompt me to disclose what I had done. From thence I would have to resort to alternative plans, one of which involved waking up early enough to wash the sheets in the sink and hope they would be dry enough by morning to avoid detection. This method shortly after became unnecessary as my bet wetting suddenly and mysteriously stopped. Divine intervention maybe? Who knows.

After having settled in those first few months in the fall of 1955, the first sign of any sense of hope and relief from this grim and stringent atmosphere was the coming of the Christmas week and Christmas. A week before Christmas each year a concert was presented by the school and residents to entertain dignitaries, relatives and all those involved with the school in some capacity. It was to be an exciting and joyous occasion and everyone waited in great anticipation. Usually the program consisted of a play, the Nativity, followed by lots of Christmas carolling by the students. Later on in the program, Santa Claus would arrive accompanied by George the Porter, a character who was suppose to be a black man. However this man's makeup hardly concealed his true race and everyone knew so. After Santa finished handing out gifts, with much "ho ho ho" and gladhanding, both he and George the Porter would leave to the awe and wonderment of hundreds of adoring eyes.

There was a lot of preparation and practise before the concert, and in the weeks leading up to it everyone worked hard and all were on their best behaviour especially myself lest anyone of us be denied this wondrous occasion. To my knowledge no one was ever penalized or prevented from being a part of the concert because of some infraction. Weeks turned to days before the big event.

Individual residents memorized their parts in the script. Others took part in the making of elaborate decorations. Those in the choir practiced each day guided by the teachers and musical director who happened to be one of the nuns. As the day of the big concert neared the excitement in the air mounted. Well, as fate would have it, for me it was not to be. Two days before the concert, I developed the mumps and had to be quarantined in the dormitory. I was absolutely crushed by this sudden and dramatic turn of events. The one thing I had depended on and looked forward to for weeks was denied me, for a reason no one except maybe God had any power over. By this time in my short life, I had learned to fear and respect His 'mysterious ways'. There was no appeal process and despite being inconsolable in terms of explanations, I accepted my fate without too many tears and was determined to see this through. While everyone was downstairs merrymaking that night, I sat on the edge of my bed looking out at the city in total dejection. After a minute or so, I took some comfort in the thought that one of the boys had stated that Christmas Day was supposed to be an even more exciting day than the concert event. I made a small plea and said a prayer to God not to let me die before Christmas which was not to far off. After that? Well – we'll see.

Having collected myself from my self pity, I momentarily pondered this illness I was inflicted with, the mumps. Rubbing my very swollen and tender jaws and cheeks, I wondered about this source of my confinement and sorrow. I thought I must have looked like a squirrel or rabbit. I looked around for some distractions from my woes. As I scanned my surroundings, those strange feelings returned, the ones I first became aware of when we arrived at St. Joseph's months ago. My senses seemed sharper now, maybe because I was alone and it was quiet. It was dark in the dorm but some light radiated from a light far down the hallway into the aisle. What I noticed most were odours, especially the mustiness in the air like an attic atmosphere, the smell of wood panels and

stripped cedar floor. It was a clean mustiness I sensed reminding momentarily of our chore duties. I remember leaning down to smell the clean sheets and pillow case of my bed and remembering how nice and comfortable it felt and then recoiling back as if suddenly frightened by a snake. This simple little pleasurable experience was abruptly erased by the cold reality of where I was, a place where constant vigilance of my behaviour was necessary, and where anxiety, dread and loneliness were nearly always constant companions. The one event that would have alleviated some of this misery vanished. I walked a short distance down the dorm aisle and stared at the beds. Grouped together in various cubicles, I couldn't help but notice, like I did several months back, the white-washed cast iron frames all bearing identical mattresses, army blankets, sheets and pillows. They seemed to be looking at me in my solitude. I remember feeling something sinister about this picture maybe its uniformity, I didn't know. I would experience this feeling again years later in a reformatory.

Returning to my bed I once again surveyed my surroundings. It was faintly dark now, and almost quiet as I heard faint and muffled sounds emanating from other floors below. Only hours before this place was bustling with the din of about fifty other boys ages ranging from seven to the middle teens getting dressed for the festivities downstairs. Now it was still, quiet and haunting with one lone figure wallowing in self pity and with some unease about another disquieting thought. Many stories bandied about regarding the dormitory being haunted with ghosts. One such story, was of a giant white rabbit hopping from bed to bed after everyone was asleep. Those few unfortunate insomniacs who survived to tell their story we didn't envy. Another story was of the levitations of some of the residents off of their beds while they were fast asleep, acts presumably carried out by ghosts. Shaking off these eerie thoughts, I turned my attention to the window and the vista of the night-time city.

The city lights against the dark night sky resembled a sparkling necklace on black velvet. The most distant lights, those of Port Arthur again reminded me of home and how I yearned to be there. The muted sounds of downtown nightlife and industry were momentarily broken by the far off wail of a train whistle. I could also hear the foghorn in the harbour. Together, these sounds only added to the already lingering loneliness of my thoughts. Gradually becoming drowsy from all my reverie I gently plopped over in my bed and went into a coma-like sleep, unaware of the sounds of returning celebrants. Tomorrow I would, I'm sure, hear all the gloating accounts of what happened and what I had missed.

Christmas day was naturally the most exciting day of all at St. Joseph's, its appeal accentuated by the stressful existence of that first year. I didn't know what to expect other than the fact that we would be receiving presents and that was good enough for me. Several times during the month before Christmas we were taken to several public places for parties sponsored by various service groups in town like The Knights of Columbus and The Moose. In each instance, we were entertained, presented with a gift and some condiments and so by Christmas we had a small aggregate of goodies for the tree. My favourite outing was the annual Santa Clause Show at the Fort William Gardens. The place was packed with kids which added to the excitement. I couldn't help but notice the difference in our appearance and demeanour with that of the rest of the crowd. We seemed more reticent and reserved in terms of expressing ourselves. We were no less elated than other kids about the event and the gifts but were reluctant to exhibit unnecessary emotions. Following the party we marched back to the boarding school and handed in our gifts.

Finally came the arrival of Christmas Day. Many of us had difficulty falling asleep the night before but no problem getting up that morning. We all jumped out of bed in anticipation of the old

brass wake up bell, washed up, got dressed up in our best clothes which for me included, a white shirt, tie and gabardine. Our shoes were polished to a nice shine. I made my bed especially nice that morning, perhaps to ensure things went right that day. You could have flipped a dime on my blankets. When we were all ready we lined up and marched downstairs. I believe we went to midnight mass the night before and so proceeded straight down to the main floor and into the refectory which was resplendent with decorations. In addition to our Sunday morning breakfast we had Christmas candies, cookies and cake. After breakfast we were ready for the basement where we knew by now all our Christmas presents had been held. When we got to the basement everyone made a mad dash for their gifts which were all spaced out in bundles with our name tags on them. Everyone tore into the wrapping paper and ribbon, barely able to contain their euphoria. Many of the boys were already showing off, making comparisons and in some cases trading before others opened their first gift. I just stared at mine for awhile and savoured the moment. I never had such possessions before amassed in such a pile, all nicely packaged and newly wrapped. I do remember receiving individual gifts at the hospitals before but not in such quantity. Each pile amounted to a generic set of five toys or so but for many of us it didn't matter, at least for the moment. A few residents sponsored by the Children's Aid Society had more elaborate and expensive toys, a fact which did not go unnoticed and to the envy of others. In addition to the presents we received, were many edible goodies which we stuffed ourselves with. I don't remember thanking God that day for keeping me alive for this occasion. Had someone reminded me of that solemn entreaty I made to Him, the night of the concert, I would have been on my knees and arms, head bowed like a Muslim in prayer, thanking Him profusely. How soon we forget.

A short time later while still savouring our treasures it was announced that we were allowed to go on the girls' side to visit our sisters and mingle. This new twist in our celebration came almost as a shock since it seemed ingrained in us from the start the girls side was literally 'no man's land' and to think we would be allowed to go there was almost too much. I looked around for my younger brother and with some other boys dashed over to the girls' side. The segregation policy aside, some of the older male residents were always attempting to communicate with the girls by various means. In the basement, both sides were separated by the laundry room where laundry chores often made it easy to engage in gossip regarding matters on both sides. And so, we had no trouble finding the girls' side, and if you did, you simply followed the crowd. Of course the whole affair was strictly chaperoned. In the midst of the celebration my brother and I looked for our sister. While doing so, I instinctively caught sight of the girl's senior caretaker and immediately sensed in her an air of strict authority underneath a veneer of placidness, the latter perhaps temporarily brought on by the Christmas spirit. My behaviour therefore was guarded but more relaxed than usual. Having found our sister, a great sense of familial recognition and feeling overcame all of us. We were at first awkward and shy then later more relaxed and we talked about our new things and about home. The change in all of us was striking in terms of our affected behaviours tempered by months of regimentation. Our visit did not last long and we soon said our goodbyes and returned to our side and to the real world. The rest of the day slowly and agonizingly returned to normal. It seemed so strange that one day in the year contrasted so sharply with the rest, that it seemed almost unreal and unnecessary, especially here at St. Joseph's where Christian spirituality should and ought to have been pervasive.

Like most other boys in any setting we formed cliques and I belonged to one which amounted to several friends with similar attitudes, ages and interests. Other subcultural traits such as those of boys who thought they were cool and those who might be deemed geeks or nerds also determined demarcation lines of class structure. In the boarding school setting of St. Joseph's there were also various hierarchal standings from seniors downwards to older boys, sophomores and the youngest. The latter were perhaps the lowest in terms of privileges. Then there were the pets, squealers or rats, the sycophants and those that cried incessantly. These might have been even lower than the newcomers. In the course of my five years at St Joseph's I may have been all of these personae at one time or another, either by my own admission or deemed so by others.

In this miniature institutional setting were unwritten behaviour rules of "does and don'ts", much like an adult prison setting. Those who didn't rat, took their straps without the histrionics, fought their battles, avoided being a pet or sycophant; those taking the part for some younger or poor unfortunate soul were often quietly looked up to and admired. Rare was the individual who engendered all of these qualities but those who managed some of these were able to experience residential school life with their sanity intact. I remember that many of us likened St. Joseph's to a prison, a notion formed from the many television westerns we viewed over the years and also from a young generation with strong familial and social ties to reform schools, provincial reformatories and federal penitentiaries. Even at our ages, notorious Canadian reform institutions such as Guelph, Burwash and the dreaded federal penitentiary Stoney Mountain, were common knowledge and on our minds and in our conversations in some form or other. It wasn't very difficult to make the ties from residential school living to prison life. There was no for bars, the thought of the consequences of our actions was enough. The rules, chores, single file marching, strappings, behavioural

expectations, mannerisms, exercises, our sentences, all these features exemplified the prison life milieu. Those that ran away of course represented escapees. One penal characteristic that stood out and perhaps most poignantly was our personal numbers. I remember on one occasion how a few of us once beamed with pride our numbers after having seen the movie epic film *Ben Hur*. The protagonist of the same name, a prisoner, had the number, 41. The number for us was some kind of badge maybe, representing courage, strength, determination and patience, even though we may not have measured up to these attributes they were good material for fantasy and imagination. The term 'Yuma State' came from a US western and alluded to a state penitentiary and we immediately applied it to the boarding school. There wasn't any spiteful intent in the comparison, the term just sounded catchy and the appellation stuck for awhile anyway, especially in our playground activities. The name among other things was very effective in helping forget our personal predicaments and made life for me at least that first year just bearable.

Another reprieve from the daily drudgery of residential school living was the television privilege a privilege, that could easily be suspended en masse or individually for any infraction. Television was one small pleasure each resident savoured with great relish and all did their utmost to prevent its suspension. This privilege was usually bestowed unequally with the older boys, and 'pets' receiving more viewing time then the younger boys and not so favoured residents. I and most everyone favoured the westerns and one series we enjoyed very much was The Adventures of Radisson and Grosseliers, a series based on the historical exploits of two French Canadian fur traders. Their capture and eventual and partial assimilation with the Indians amidst the setting in the Canadian wilderness was both exciting and a source of many ideas we would integrate or incorporate into our games. Strangely and sadly though our cultural and historical umbilical cord had been

severed with our people and our personal affinities had been soundly entrenched with our white heroes. Few if any residents (85% native) sided with the Indians and those that had to do so in our games did so grudgingly. This strange anomaly of our socialization would later have profound and tragic effects on many residents later on in life, myself included. The Native characters were always depicted as inferior and laughable even in their own element and environment. My older brother as I recall was one of those who did not find this scenario amusing but always kept any dissension private. One Native character on the Radisson and Grosseliers series named Naushaka played an informant or go-between for the French duo between the Indians and the whites. In one scene Naushaka is shown looking askance and pointing at some hanging wolf-skins boasting to some onlookers, "these are the wolves I killed" when in fact according to the script he was rescued by Radisson from those very same wolves. This and other scenes of Native people on television, depicted them as incompetent and subservient to their white counter-parts. Small wonder that their modern descendants are reluctant to emulate or associate with such behaviour. Despite the subordinate roles Native people were assigned to on the screen, there was something odd about this scenario that perplexed and assaulted the sensibilities of many young Native people, particularly that of Native people being depicted as incompetent in their own environments such as portrayals of being attacked by wolves and rescued by white men. This supposed verisimilitude of art imitating life did not conform to many of the residents' sense of reality where human and non-human relations were less hostile and volatile. For the most part, many of the young Native viewers, including myself, probably accepted this mental subjugation as something bigger, irreversible and unimportant, perhaps resigning to that old adage 'when in Rome do as the Romans do'. But then again Rome was here for us on Turtle Island.

The movies at the local theatres did no better in their profiling of Native people as perennial 'losers'. Indians were always depicted as losing battles against the cowboys or US Cavalry in westerns. When we all heard the familiar and famous bugle charge of the bluecoats at some crucial rescue scene, we would all cheer in unison at the demise of those heathen red devils. Privately though, we were perhaps more sophisticated as viewers than we let on to believe and more often than not were not fooled by the imitations of Indians by blue bearded and well tanned actors. We all wondered at times though, hoping against hope, that maybe leading actors such as, Jeff Chandler and Burt Lancaster, in roles as famous Indians warriors, were both part Indian so our self effacing image of our selves would lessen. Despite our misplaced reverence regarding our white television heroes there were seldom any disagreements about who was to be who in our playground battlefields. Many of the participants were quite willing to be Indians as long as little negative fanfare or teasing accompanied this role. Few if any Indian heroes were ever seen on television, a fact that subdued our desire to be Indians either in fantasy or reality.

There were many firsts for me that year: first communion, first fight, first strapping and so on. But the most exciting, challenging and rewarding venture of all was learning how to skate for the first time. Just watching others skating around that first winter alone provided me with a sense of awe, wonder and envy. This ability to glide around smoothly on a sheet of ice at speeds determined at will by one's own ability was to me a small demonstration of ultimate freedom anyone could acquire, and this I wanted. Well, having this ability is one thing and getting to acquire it is another story. Little did I know the degree of humility I would have to submit to or acquire and the embarrassment I would have to endure just to reach the pre-novice level which basically entailed being able to stand up on your skates and have someone take you around by the hand. Skating is

something most Canadians are supposed to acquire naturally and usually begins around the age five years old. Well I was a healthy nine year old with unbridled energy stored up and ready for blast off. Since skating is a physical sport, some equipment and preparation is essential before one starts. Prior to my arrival at St. Joe's I had never seen anyone skating outdoors before so when the subject of ice skating and hockey was bandied about by other residents in the late fall of 1955, I was oblivious to what everyone was excited about. I did take part in building the rink which began by erecting the boards and sealing them at the bottom with sand to prevent water from escaping when the flooding began. When the right amount of snow fell we began to trample it with our boots and a push and pull a hand roller so as to harden and smoothen the foundational layer of snow in the rink. The flooding began when it became cold enough outside to do so. Usually several flooding were required before anyone was allowed on the rink.

One day a huge mat was brought in downstairs in the basement at about the time the rink was finished. It was about one and half inches thick, black and made of laminated rubber. It was rolled out along the side of the lockers and benches and led to the exit door nearest the rink. Shortly after this a huge box or crate was brought downstairs filled with skates. At a given moment all the boys rushed to the box to retrieve a pair of skates. Watching them was like watching hyenas tearing away savagely over a fresh kill. I wondered what the rush and commotion was for since it seemed there was enough skates for everyone. Later I learned the reason why. Many of the residents were already accomplished skaters and hockey players and knew how to select the best skates. Usually they chose skates with high quality leather thick enough for good ankle support. The toe of the skate boot also needed to be hard enough to withstand the shock of puck shots, stick blades, boards and perhaps more importantly other skates that inevitably would make contact with yours. Most of the skates

were tied in pairs so the first wave of skaters were able to find those they were familiar with or had used the previous year. What was left in box was for us 'new guys' who lacked the savvy for ice hockey but were never-the-less hungry for war. The rest of us hungry vultures grappled over the remains which usually consisted of unmatched pairs of poor quality. "What the hell," I thought, this skating can't be all that hard. I did manage to procure, what I thought were, the finest pair of skates I ever saw and wondered what idiot managed to overlook these. They didn't match but the important thing was they both had blades. The leather was a little soft but I was sure the cold outdoors would take care of that, and the toes were also a bit tender but at least one of them had a lace. Some of the other tenderfoots didn't fare much better. We then proceeded to lace up. We eyed each other through the corners of our eyes to see the proper method of lacing up skates but it seemed no one knew and everyone just did their best. One of the new guys had just finished lacing up and was proudly admiring his skates in a very awkward stance when he was soundly lambasted for standing on the tile floor and ordered to get back on the rubber mat by one of the seniors in charge. Having laced on my skates I too proudly gazed down wobbling a bit and then decided it was time to take to the ice. Realizing I had forgotten my hat and coat in my locker, I crawled over to retrieve them since my locker was not adjacent the rubber mat. My coat was ordinary looking and thick enough to provide me with warmth but my hat was of the checkered Elmer Fudd type, which I wasn't overly fond of. My coat I barely managed to button up since it overlapped a couple of sweaters. Putting on my mitts and pulling down on my ear flaps I waddled over to the exit door. Between the basement exit door and the outside door at ground level, I had to negotiate some concrete steps. This I managed to do without too much difficulty and at the same time honed out some rough spots on the concrete with my new blades not realizing at the time the importance of sharp blade edges for ice skating. This for

me was a moot point since I would be on my ankles for most of the time for the next little while anyway. As I opened the door I realized the rink was about hundred or so feet away and the path was hardened ice created by excess water from the flooding. This I thought would make it easier to glide across to the rink. However, just before making my first step on ice, my confidence failed me for a brief moment and I thought I saw my short life flash before me. Shaking off this last thought, I patted my hat down one last time, stepped on to the ice, and into hockey history and immortality. Well it didn't quite exactly go that way. No sooner had I released the door frame with my hand when I came crashing down hard on to the ice surface. After several attempts to get up, I crawled, as other newcomers were doing, over to a smaller rink next to the main rink. I noticed some of the new guys already pirouetting on their blades and this I swore I would be doing by day's end. Most of that first afternoon I spent trying to get up and stay on my skates. The experience of skating for the first time is like trying to balance yourself on a log in water with both the log and your feet covered in grease. I would try getting up and once up the slightest body movement would cause my feet to peddle forward and backwards to maintain my balance. All afternoon that's all we new guys did and we spent more time down than up. We didn't care, we were having a ball laughing at each other. I wondered if any of the nuns were peering through the windows upstairs and were just as amused by all this. It was late in the afternoon when we noticed our clothes were starting to attract little ice balls on our socks, pants and coat bottoms. If ever we were going to make it to the National Hockey League someday we at least had to be on our feet and gliding freely that afternoon, we thought. This I managed to accomplish that first day. That night I slept bone weary with a little contentment. Just before I dozed off, I thought of my mother and wondered what she was doing at home far away.

My schooling at St. Joseph's in 1955 began at the grade two level. Since I had not completed any grade level at this juncture in my life I was probably placed at the grade two level instead of one because of my advanced age and not for any scholastic reason. Grade two at the age of nine was not under any circumstances something one would care to boast about. However, I would remedy this minor setback and personal affront by skipping a couple of grades in the years to follow. I was not academically inclined or astute those first few years at St. Joe's for my immediate concern was just getting by each day without getting into trouble. If anything I had an interest for, it was the visual arts. I loved to draw and would do so at every opportunity often during other lesson periods even at the risk of being caught. Punitive measures for this infraction would include having my art privileges temporarily suspended, being made to stand in a corner, or sent to the closet in isolation. The worst punishment of all was the 'spring', a penalty reserved for the most blatant of offences such as talking repeatedly, throwing spit balls, pinching others in the back or daydreaming which I was prone to do. The spring was another or lessor version of the strap only a small flexible spring was used instead of the standard red classroom strap and was usually used across the knuckles. The pain inflicted by this little gadget was minimal and was administered in the closet away from view of the rest of the class. Who benefited more by this somewhat secluded approach, the teacher or the pupil, it was hard to say. Our grade one and two teacher was by comparison very mild mannered and likable. When angry it was plainly obvious she had difficulty in maintaining an air of indignation or genuine disgust when administering the strap. At times I too had some difficulty in suppressing my snickering. I would sometimes eye her to see if I could detect her expression or demeanour when she meted out punishment. After the strap we remained in the closet to regain our composure and then signalled to return to our seat. Our classroom ran from east

to west along Arthur Street and I sat in the row of seats next to the large windows which often bathed our room with sunlight and for some of us daydreamers it was an ideal conduit to the world outside and away to some far off place. If I wasn't daydreaming I would be drawing or doodling. My favourite subjects for art were generally gleaned or extracted from television programs such as Robin Hood or any one of the Hollywood Westerns. My art work showed some promise but lacked seasoned sophistication and the rudiments of perspective drawing. The characters I drew whether on horseback or on foot and when facing a viewer looked as though they were standing on their tippy toes. It would be some time before I would correct this and other incongruities in my art. Be that as it may, drawing and daydreaming allowed me a reprieve from the monotony of school work and also offered me an opportunity to imagine far off places offering more serenity and contentment than boarding school existence. My reverie was often broken by a poke in the back or ribs by another student alerting me to the fact that the teacher was seeking my attention. Feigning attention I would then straighten up and resume study. Usually it was my pal that covered for me when I was misbehaving.

My best pal in grade two was a cousin of mine and by a curious co-incidence we were unaware of the fact that we were related. According to my mother he had the dubious distinction of cracking my head open with an ax one day when we were about three or four. The mutilation was over some minor disagreement or so or maybe just some innate instinct of his that suddenly compelled him to scalp someone. I still bear the scar of that love tap. One day at about the time of the scalping incident my cousin and his siblings were taken from their home. We would not reunite with them till many years later. After our boarding school encounter, I would briefly meet him in

a bar one day. We both swapped stories and our boarding school experiences at that time still oblivious to the fact that we were related.

Well 1955 turned to 1956 and the months continued to drag on by, it seemed. Spring came along which no one seemed exceptionally crazy about except maybe the nuns. It was the transition season from a snowy winter and a nice warm summer. These periods kids can relate to especially when it comes to carousing and frolicking outside. Spring is for grownups, who sometimes become invigorated reminding us of the start of the life cycle again and new growth, which is to most kids boring stuff especially when one is preoccupied with more important things like playing marbles, perhaps the only exciting thing that occurs during the spring at least till it dries up outside. It was at marbles I think one day in late spring, while desperately trying to hold on to my steadily diminishing cache, I quietly stood up and looked up at the sky as if someone or something was calling me. I took a deep breath, smelled the air and with a little twinge of excitement I recognized the distinct smell of summer. I immediately associated the latter with the thought of going home and while the end of the school year was still some time away I couldn't help but feel cautiously excited. Going home was the subject on every one's lips shortly after and plans were already being drawn on the first things each was going to do once they got there. For me I just wanted to get the year over with, go home and worry about things like that later. In the back of my mind was the lingering thought of something always going wrong at the last minute. Up till then it had been my experience that things will go wrong when you least expect it. The last week of school was almost unbearable. I remember my mother writing us a short letter informing us when they would be picking us up.

The last day was a blur. I vaguely remember caring whether I passed my grade or not. The end of the year classroom parties might as well have taken pace on a another planet. Some of the kids

had by now gone home which made our wait that much more agonizing. When our parents finally arrived to pick us up, we all seemed a bit nervous and reserved at first since we all had not been together for a year. I remember a distinct smell of alcohol on their breaths which made them a little bit more relaxed than we were and which also made me feel a little uncomfortable. It wasn't the first time I was in the presence of my parent's use of alcohol but I had acquired a new attitude regarding alcohol which later would have more significance in my life. Disregarding this minor inconvenience, which I was probably the only one who thought it so, I was just eager to get on home.

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One of the more enjoyable aspects of going home was the ride to Gull Bay. On leaving the former city of Port Arthur, we would drive down on Lakeshore Drive on Highway 17 northeast to Nipigon, but at Hurkett we would branch off north on to a bush road that meandered toward Gull Bay for about a hundred miles. This portion of the trip would take about four hours and we enjoyed every moment of it. We would jockey for position in the car to get a better view of the road ahead. If we didn't take turns or share the middle aisle in the car, which had the best vantage point, the grown ups would a make us do so. Things we would look out for were hills, distant valleys, timber groves, lakes, rivers, creeks, culverts and most anything besides the road. Oddly enough, even any signs of humanity were novel especially in this wilderness. A shack or a deserted logging camp were periodically spotted. Over the years we got to know the names of the camps by their numbers. Camp six, Camp 2, Camp 14 and so on. Also there were names for some of the natural features such as Albert Hill, Poshkokagon River, Black Sturgen Lake, Chief Bay and Jalopy Corner which was named so because of its sudden and severe turn which on occasion caused cars to swerve off into the

bush. But of course the most anticipated of happenings was a sighting or glimpse of an animal or two. The most frequent were moose sightings which at times prompted the driver to stop for a better and extended look. On rare occasions we would see bears and even rarer a wolf. Smaller game was spotted more frequently: rabbits, squirrels, fox, skunks and occasionally a beaver or muskrat.

As we neared the reserve our moods and focus began to change from curiosity about the bush to nervousness about home and the people. Uppermost on our minds were our behaviour expectations. There were many questions. How were we supposed to act? Who were we going to see first? Are there any cars there? Many of these questions would be answered in due time and would unravel naturally. When we arrived the first thing I noticed as I did many more months before was the contrast in sound level between reserve life and city life. From the car window I could almost hear everything outside whereas in the city the same point of view would have a produced a muted effect. People casually commenting on our arrival could be distinctly heard over the noise of screaming kids and barking dogs running along side the car as it slowly cruised through the reserve. Our house was at the far end of the village and any attempt to arrive unnoticed was out of the question.

The next few days at home would be one of adjustment. Obviously the difference in lifestyles would have an impact immediately in our orientation to everyday living. For ten months we had our own beds, ate at regular time periods, up early in the morning, chores to do, washing up regularly, limited play time, prayer time, daily Mass and so on. With the exception of not having our own beds we pretty well adjusted to doing or having everything else to a greater or lesser extent depending on the circumstance. Our mother was also a former resident at St. Joseph's Boarding School and as a result retained certain features of it she liked and encouraged us to do likewise. One of the things she

liked was her devotion to her Christian faith and whenever she had a chance to go to Mass it became a household affair. When the priest arrived in Gull Bay to celebrate Mass the occasion was not taken lightly in the village. In our household we would all get dressed up and go. Mass in Gull Bay was far more relaxed then it was at St. Joseph's. My younger brother and I would always get to the point of fooling around sometime around mid-mass or so. Getting bored and fidgety we would sometimes poke each other till a good cuff on the back of our heads would quell any further disturbances from us. One day on another occasion when our mother was out of town, the two of us went upstairs in the back with the choir and some other parishioners. Settling in on one of the pews my whole attention became focussed on the choir which was made up of women only who sang their hymns in Ojibway. At nine years old I had a raw aptitude towards music and, having already been exposed inadvertently to probably Mozart, Chopin and Handel in the orphanage hallways which I found pleasing, I was very intrigued at the sound of hymns sung in Ojibway which to me was very melodious and fitting. The lead singer was very large and had a powerful voice that at times covered for those singing out of key. Attempting to follow along I found my Ojibway wanting. While I had been engrossed with the choir, my brother who up till then had been behaving himself, was ready for a round of poking and jabbing again. Way upstairs in the back we were strategically hidden behind the grownups and the choir. In time our fidgeting started to get a little out of hand till full blown animosities between each other erupted. Earlier before mass, we had made a temporary exchange. I borrowed his nice black leather belt in exchange for a pair of my jeans. In the midst of our quarrel he demanded his belt back. Invoking the 'fair is fair' principle I demanded my jeans back right there and then right in the middle of the service. If we had not been jarred back to our senses by loud laughter from the congregation, which had nothing to do with us, I don't know how far I

would have gone. In fact if I remember correctly I was attempting to yank the jeans off of him when the laughter broke out. The cause of the other church commotion was later related to me.

When the priest arrived that day he had difficulty in finding alter boys to help serve mass and so an adult from another village volunteered his services to which the priest agreed and welcomed. This particular service was a Requiem mass which generally meant it was a high mass and alter boys were expected to give the appropriate response. Little did the priest and most of the congregation realize that the volunteer alter boy had little knowledge of the proper Latin responses. At a specific point in the mass, the priest bellowed out the melodically familiar Latin requiem bar, " Dominus vobiscum". The would-be alter boy looking about him, and without missing a beat, retorted a resounding, "dum dum, de-dum, dum" in proper cadence. It was this momentary and unintended lapse of irreverence and amusing inventiveness on his part that provoked everyone into raucous laughter. Upon hearing the incident recounted to me I was barely able to contain myself. As for the incident with the belt and jeans between my brother and I, we would have to put off for the time being.

Being a moderately sized reserve family of seven in the fifties, having a bed of your own was out of the question but sharing a bed was no real inconvenience, unless of course one of the sharing occupants was a bed wetter. If bunks were available, the "first come first served" policy was invoked. Meals were not necessarily always at a specific time of the day and many a time it was an extended family affair. People who happened to be visiting at the time generally were part of the dinner party and elders were always served first. In the course of the summer I would experience a wide variety of dishes with the main one for youngsters being macaroni and baked bannock. Other dishes included, moose meat, fish, wild fowl, and rabbit all prepared in a variety of ways. Species

of fish included pike and pickerel, but mostly white fish. When caught other delicacies included sturgeon, lake trout, and eel pout. The fishing industry in Gull Bay during this period enjoyed a boom and so many of these varieties of fish went to the dinner table. Sturgeon was quite common in most households. Bannock was generally baked or fried. Molasses and raisin bannock were real treats. When available blueberries were added to the diet.

As for chores, they consisted basically of chopping wood and making sure there was enough water available for cooking and washing. The water supply would have to be retrieved from the lake below which was really a large bay and part of Lake, Nipigon. Our house was roughly a hundred yards from the edge of a cliff that descended down forty feet or so to the lake where we would have to fetch the water. The cliffs were continually eroding and narrow ledges were etched out in the soft sand to act as natural stairways. To make it worth your while it was necessary to carry a couple of two and a half gallon galvanized pails. On washing days several trips were necessary. This procedure might have seemed a bit arduous for the fainthearted but for the adventurous and daring it was a piece of cake. Before wells were established in Gull Bay, the task in winter was quite another story. When the chores were done we had all our time for ourselves and there was plenty of it with tons of things to see and do. The reserve and its environs was our playground. People's yards and property were not necessarily off limits unless they had some unruly dog tied up loosely some where in the back. I remember my older brother being bitten once by a mongrel who left four incisor punctures in his leg and I wanted no part of that.

Of all things that kids do in the summer swimming is perhaps at the top of the list and in Gull Bay with plenty of water available swimming was the number one activity. Whenever a bunch of us kids happened to be together on a hot day some one would invariably signal the time for a swim by

spelling it out loud, " S-W-I-M". Another signal would simply be in pantomime some form of swimming stroke. In any event we would all shoot down to our favourite swimming venues which would either be 'down the hill' below or the reserve dock at the end of the village. The dock was for those who knew how to swim well or were ready for the opportunity to try deep water swimming. Usually at the dock a lot of other activity was going on mostly having to do with commercial fishing. The road leading in to Gull Bay from the outside world during the fifties was still incomplete, at least in terms of regular traffic, and therefore the water route was still the only means of transportation from other places, making the dock a very busy depot at times. Canoes, punts, skiffs with outboard motors and larger boats were tied up around the dock, but there was always a spot from where we could swim. The grown ups didn't mind us at all and in fact often found it entertaining to watch us.

One of the biggest thrills around the dock for us was when a bush plane came in with certain VIPS, or there to pick up fire fighters. The largest and loudest model was the Otter, especially when it took off. You had to cup your ears with your hands at times to muffle the noise. Once in a while a tourist boat, usually American, would be tethered to the dock and we would sometimes solicit them to toss coins in the water for us to dive for. Fishing boxes were piled, one on top of the other, for diving purposes and even higher for those willing to chance derring-do. My own swimming skill level that first summer was nothing to boast about and I also was a little wary of water for various reasons. Some of the older boys were very good swimmers, my older brother included. He and another boy his age, twelve, swam out in the middle of the lake one morning, while us younger kids just sat around the dock watching them. They seemed to be in their element like a couple of otters. They may have been eight to nine hundred feet out in the lake, but the conditions that morning made their voices sound as if they were only a few feet away. It was warm and calm and over the ripples

of water I could hear every word they spat out. Suddenly, at one point after a prolonged period, I could hear my brother half laughing winching in pain and telling his friend that he had a bad cramp in his leg. Having cramps while swimming was one thing that was drilled in to us was pretty much like hearing you were a goner. So when I heard my brother utter that deadly word I was a bit nervous to say the least. His friend was laughing and telling him maybe it was time to come in. I watched them work their way in with a mixture of emotions ranging from admiration, disbelief and of course with a genuine palpable sense of relief as they both stepped on to the dock dripping. I couldn't help at that moment but quietly and mentally bestow on them, the highest honours in the aquatic culture to those most deserving. I probably thought it best to keep those thoughts to myself lest they got a sudden case of swelled heads and thereafter ruin everything.

The other swimming venue down by the shoreline below the cliffs was equally stimulating in terms of providing its own unique water and playtime diversions. The shoreline was roughly half a mile long and allowed for everyone to swim, on occasion both women and children included. You could simply wade around in the shallow areas or tread out in deeper water. Wading around in the weedy patches or other underwater structures presented an opportunity for us to gape at and sometimes handle some of the minute and varied species of freshwater creatures. Frogs, minnows, tadpoles, crayfish and leeches. The dreaded "blood sucker" as the leech was more commonly known instilled fear in everyone even the most seasoned summertime pranksters. Often we would use these much maligned and intriguing creatures as playful threats to anyone who happened to be in the vicinity during a particular capricious moment of tomfoolery. Girls were often a prime target for these antics. In addition to the water the sandy cliffs and beach provided means for horseplay and adventure. In some of the more difficult to reach areas swallows built their nests by digging holes

in the cliffs and these in turn became curiosity items. Other common birds along the beach included pipers, kingfishers and of course the ubiquitous seagull. I was, by some sheepish whim, bequeathed the name of 'Kingfisher' from the older girls, because of the way a tuft of my hair would spike out after swimming. As I was starting to developed a sensitive ego at this stage in my life, I didn't accept this moniker too graciously. When I confided in my mother about this irritation she attempted to assuage my feelings, as mothers will sometimes do, by merely shrugging it off as something to be honoured with, being named after a beautiful bird, that is. At that age I wasn't too impressed by my namesake who to me seemed a little short with small wings, sporting a wet Mohawk and had this uncanny ability to hover in one spot for some time, waiting for its prey. Somehow my mother's words didn't placate or soothe my bruised ego. I should have known better than to confide in a woman in matters of this kind I thought.

A close second to swimming for summer time amusement on a reserve is exploration and general kicking about in the surrounding woods. In fact to many, without intentionally sounding stereotypical, the woods might be considered the main environmental attraction for amusement for most Indian boys. I would have no argument with that call especially for us the Summer of '55. The geography of Gull Bay is as diverse as any area imaginable. The village proper has for its perimeter a tree line marking a dense wooded area with numerous trails and paths created by both man and beast. Many of the paths lead to the river roughly a third of a mile away. The Gull River flowed out to the left of our village as we faced the bay and also acted as a natural fire line and did just exactly that the summer when we were nearly engulfed by a huge forest fire.

Besides the myriad of paths in the bush, were various gullies, dried up creek beds, meadows, marshes, bogs and tree stands. Birch, pine, spruce, balsam and poplar were the most common trees

with a smattering of aspen and alders. Cedar was found mostly along the river. Nature was without exaggeration inimitable in playground architecture and design. Climbing trees was a popular thing to do for various reasons either to inspect various bird nests, to view the surrounding landscape, act like Tarzan, or simply to climb because they were there . We were always admonished not to bother the bird nests. We interpreted this to mean not to touch them at all. At times this rule was not always observed and the eggs would sometimes be deserted by their mothers if they were touched. This was not always the case from my observations anyway. I often saw crows return to their nests after being handled, however I took the idea of respecting nature very serious in my grown-up years. To pretend we were hunters was another popular antic using toy guns or some fashioned out materials readily available for such use. Some of the older boys used sling shots and I remember once seeing a boy using a defective gun. Generally though, this idea was frowned upon especially by myself because of the shooting accident. In and around the village many of the games we played simply evolved from very imaginative and creative minds.

That first summer after the boarding school, something that stood out in my mind as a continual source of irritation was my inability to speak my language. Added to this, was a particular affectation that I had picked up from the boarding school which sometimes amused certain people and irritated others. When spoken to in Ojibway in Gull Bay, I would often respond, maybe too haughtily at times, "I don't speak Indian" which would invariably draw an air of contempt by some older people. Speaking Ojibway at the school was discouraged and forbidden I was told. Not knowing my language I would have no knowledge of this prohibition, although I never ever heard anyone speak Indian at St Joseph's including my older brother who was quite fluent. I made friends

easily and hung around with a small cadre of kids my age. We would eat at each other's homes and at times sleep over.

The area surrounding Gull Bay in 1955 was engulfed by a huge forest fire which consumed approximately 85,000 acres of timberland. There was a lot more activity than usual in Gull Bay associated with the fire. Planes were constantly coming and going for men and supplies. Boats and land vehicles were employed to do the same. The dock was pretty much full of activity all the time. I remember certain days the sun was blocked out because of the smoke. Another time one evening we sat on the roof of our house watching the flames across the river wondering if we were going to be evacuated. But the memory that stood out most vividly in regards to that fire was the news of a drowning. Until that time the idea of death at my age was very remote even after having had a brush with it myself. I had never been to a funeral and much less seen a dead person. Every one at first began speculating who it might have been and where he was from. That evening a friend of mine and I decided to find out more about this deep mystery of life first hand. The next day we were up early and went down to the dock. In our excitement to rush off, we forgot to eat our breakfast which for me would be regrettable later on in the day. We were hearing rumours all morning on how the drowning happened. The victim was a white man, a firefighter from down east. He was manning a water pump that fed the fire hoses from the river. His job was to keep the pump running smoothly and continually. The Gull River near the first rapids where the pump was located has powerful under currents and he apparently had fallen in and was dragged under. From what I had gathered around the dock that morning the body was supposed to be brought to the area around the dock which was a major logistic point for the fire. If this were true, I decided to hang around the dock to satisfy my curiosity concerning this matter, while my friend found it more worthwhile to go home to eat. I

waited all after noon trying to suppress the noise and discomfort emanating from my innards due to hunger. Sometime shortly after supper just as I was ready to go home the body was brought down by one of the emerald green Department of Lands & Forests trucks. The body was on a stretcher wrapped in a dark body bag and temporarily placed on the dock. The only people around were fire personnel and myself. Those handling the body were waiting for a plane to ship it off somewhere, his home I guess. I sat on some old fish box and stared at it for awhile from a distance. The colours and contours of this particular image of the body on the dock seemed more pronounced now in the early evening sun. I wondered what he might have looked like but not to the point of seeing him, though. I briefly thought of his relatives. I just mainly wondered mostly about what brought me here in the first place. Death, and maybe I thought a bit more about the river, its power, its mystery to create such wonder and destruction. The plane came around shortly after and flew the body home. I went home that night and to bed without supper.

Sometime in the latter part of July most of the reserve occupants were preparing to make their way to Sand River on the other side of Lake Nipigon. This was the area many of the Ojibway people in the region went to during this time of the year for the annual blueberry-picking season. This I knew was going to be a very exciting venture for me and others as well. Most people went to Sand River by circumventing the lake in automobiles while others went by boat. My father bought a boat that summer and that obviously was the way we were to travel. These boats were designed for commercial fishing and made by 'the people' themselves. My father's boat was about thirty five feet long painted white with a green cabin and trimmings. Judging from the way he acted nonchalantly around the boat he seemed to be very proud of it. He was, comparatively speaking, poor in terms of material possessions and the steady growth of his family insured this meagre material station in life.

Having packed all of our possessions on to the boat early one gloriously sunny morning we were ready to leave. My mother was more of a land person and water to her was one more parenting concern that had to be simply reckoned with, and before the summer was over her worst fears concerning water would materialize. Shortly after casting off, my brothers and I headed to the bow of the boat to have the best view of what lay ahead. On this cue, my mother immediately ordered all of us tethered securely to the boat. Despite our objections to this sudden affront to our male egos she was intent on having her say on this one even at the threat of all returning to land. When cooler heads prevailed it seemed reasonable enough to allow her some leeway or slack in matters concerning our welfare. Furthermore, she had the foresight and prudence to wait till we were out some distance before having us fastened to the boat, thereby avoiding the snickering gaze of onlookers, we thought.

Speed is not one of the main features of these boats and it was therefore incumbent on everyone to find amusements peculiar to their liking to avoid boredom and the monotony of a relatively lengthy boat ride. The trip would cover the course of two days making brief camping stops here and there I was told. The task of finding things to do was a fairly easy one. For starters I would just stare down at the bow or keel of the boat as it sliced through the calm waters with ease. The effect was almost hypnotizing after a while. I glanced back now and then and watched my father as he to seemed mesmerized by the panorama of water, sky and distant land before him. My mother brought out molasses bannock with jam for all of us and I practically wolfed my piece down. In Ojibway, bread or bannock is called *pa-quezh-a-gun* which when translated in English means 'to break off a piece'. This was before the time of sliced bread, I guess.

In a short while we went through an isthmus that separated the bay from the main body of water on Lake Nipigon. Soon we could see the open lake, water and sky and barely make out any

land in front of us. This was definitely a new thrill and for the next while or so I kept traversing the boat from bow to stern to absorb as much of the view as possible without becoming a nuisance. At the back of the boat I leaned against the gunwale with my elbows and just stared into the distance. The loud drone of the motor blocked out any audible distractions which made my other senses much more keenly aware of my surroundings. The soft warm breeze brushing across my face was soothing even with the occasional smattering of airborne insects deflecting off my skin. I could feel and smell the light dampness of lake water everywhere. By midday, the sun's effect on the lightly disturbed water surface produced a dazzling spread of shimmering light before me which at times caused temporary blindness if I chose to prolong my gaze at it. In time my attention focussed on the land formations. The hills in the land closest to us seemed more spectacular when viewed from a foreground of moving water. The trees high on the crests were almost recognizable, at least the giant poplar were. Someone pointed out the barely perceptible outline of anglers and a skiff against the distant shoreline. I was slightly annoyed by this unexpected intrusion in my private reverie and maybe also the fact that others had already conquered and traversed these uncharted waters of my imagination. The more distant receding mainland had less to offer in terms of scenic attractions other than the fact that they gave a sense of how large the lake was. There seemed to be islands popping up everywhere like natural way stations for passing seafarers, one of which we would later stop by for overnight camping. Other islands appeared like light bluish mirages in the distance. The only visible sign of life were seagulls.

Sometime in the late afternoon we pulled over to one of the islands for our overnight stay. My dad and a friend of his who came with us helped my mother make camp and later they went off in the punt to set a net for fish. My brothers and I helped our mother with some menial chores and

then went off to explore the island. When we returned, supper was almost ready and we all waited anxiously. Someone had found a handful of blueberries, but not enough for jam, a small reminder of what lay ahead for us and what our objective was for this trip. The smells and sounds of cooking food and the taste of tea made over an outdoor fire are memories that remain with me for life. I liked watching fried bannock made over an open fire. My mother dextrously handled the well seasoned black frying pan over the fire as she gently dipped the small soft bundles of pliable dough in sizzling hot lard. In a few minutes she would pull them out one by one and cover them for awhile under a clean dish towel. We probably had fish and potatoes that night many years ago as they were always the easiest to prepare under such circumstances. But tea and bannock were my favourite appetizers then and my most memorable.

That night I laid peacefully under my blankets in the tent and concentrated on my last thoughts of the day. Wisps of smoke from the fire outside and the smell of the tent canvass permeated the air inside. The strong clean scent of the cedar boughs underneath our blankets was almost intoxicating. Campfire light flickered dimly against the tent, as the quiet chatter of adults around the campfire sipping tea and the occasional crack of an exploding ember outside all combined to create a wondrous mood of security. The farthest thing from my mind that night was St. Joseph's Boarding School. The last sounds I remember before falling asleep that night were the gentle ripple of waves slapping against the hull of the boat, a couple of mosquitoes whining aimlessly about the tent, and the all too familiar sound of a loon belting out its call.

The next day we continued our journey, made a couple of stopovers and reached our destination late in the day. Sand River is roughly opposite Gull Bay on lake Nipigon. My curiosity regarding the naming of the river was satisfied as I looked at the light creamed coffee colour of the

water. As we idled the boat inward from the mouth I noticed a garter snake wiggling across its surface and disappear in the weeds. A landing at the river entrance indicated a road leading off somewhere inland. We moored the boat a short way up the mouth to ensure its safety from a storm. That evening and most of the next day was spent on locating and setting up a campsite. Many families that left Gull Bay before us were already set up at an area about a half mile inland. A truck was procured to take us there. This particular spot, when we arrived there, resembled a little village and we immediately set up our tent on a low rise a couple of hundred feet from the main road. That evening when we were settled in and had finished supper some people came over to visit. They talked mostly about the best spots for picking and the prices paid for the berries. Two merchants came in periodically from Beardmore to buy the berries and at the same time brought in groceries for the pickers. Pre-made baskets, which came in bundles of four, were also provided by the merchants. Other baskets, that needed their handles stapled on, came in larger bundles which were prepared when needed. The blueberry buyers were paying two dollars for a large four quart basket and a dollar for a smaller basket. Groceries could be charged up and paid later from your berries. The only requirement for the berries was that they be clean which was not too labourious a task to maintain. That evening before bedtime we all helped in the preparations for the next day's picking. Lunches were made, and containers for picking and carrying the berries were constructed. I intended to use a small basket. Others preferred pails. My father made a large wooden container that fitted neatly in his large packsack. When filled, the container was quite heavy and head straps were needed to ease the burden of bringing the berries home. This task was difficult and sometimes berries were hauled in from as much as a mile away especially during late summer.

The next day we all set off on foot to the blueberry patches. One of the most delightful of sights in the woods during summer is coming across a fresh patch of blue berries. They are very pretty coming in various shades with a waxy leaf and are usually grouped together in small bundles like grapes. When at their best, they have a sky-blue tint, are the size of a small grape, and as a bundle, when given a slight tug, they gently ease into your hands. In my estimation they are the tastiest berry ever designed by nature and come freely in abundance. To find such berries, you usually had to locate areas not yet found by others, either to accommodate your own and families needs, or simply not to impose on another's find. My father was a very adept woodsman and rarely found it difficult to locate a productive spot. Having found ours we immediately set upon our tasks. There was no rush or great expectations from the adults concerning our progress in picking. The only things we were warned to watch out for were bees and snakes, little annoyances peculiar to blueberry country. We generally did well in the mornings and slowly slacked off in the afternoon as the heat of the day got to us. The adults in the meantime would pick at a steady pace. Later, time was taken for a good lunch period and a short rest. My father usually went off somewhere to find fresh water. I once went with him and watched him dig a hole in some dry creek bed with his hands. In a short time cold water trickled up forth from the hole. The dark earth was filtered out and we had fresh ice cold spring water to bring back to the camp. At the end of the day, we would make our way back to the camp, have supper and clean the berries. The rest of the evening we had to ourselves. I would go visit other tents and find friends to play with. Our main playground area was the main road that led out to Beardmore seven miles away.

When the berry merchants arrived to buy berries, the matter was no small occasion. People would come to gather around to sell their berries, buy things, and generally chit-chat about any

number of things. On weekends some people would go to Beardmore with their cars or hitch a ride with the buyers and then later return to continue picking. That was the basic routine day in and day out. Aside from the berry picking duties, I found a lot to do that summer. We would sometimes hitch a ride back down to the lake and swim all afternoon. Later we would walk back to the camp. Throwing stones at various targets along the road was a poplar game. When a snake was spotted we would try and capture it and bring it along. I wasn't too shy of snakes as others were and often handled them with ease. Another game along the road, mostly carried out by the older boys, was to disturb hornets nests and run for cover. This was something I definitely didn't care much for. To spice things up, talking about bears became little unsettling for some. We were all in unfamiliar country and the road we were walking on was pretty much deserted most of the time. Fresh bear tracks were as common as car tacks along the way. Back at camp we would pretty much be ready for a good supper and much needed rest at the end of each day.

The rest of that summer of 1956 went by quite quickly and almost uneventfully except for two rather dramatic incidents involving my younger brother and myself. Sometime before leaving Sand River for Gull Bay at the end of the summer, my younger brother somehow found himself in the water at the mouth of the river, an area that was pretty deep. Not knowing how to swim, he thrashed about wildly till someone managed to pull him out. That needless to say threw a scare into everyone. As if that wasn't enough, I too found myself in a similar predicament. While at Sand River I had amassed a considerable collection of returnable pop bottles which required some cleaning. Stopping over on one of the islands on our return trip to Gull Bay, I decided to set some time aside to wash the bottles. In that late August day on the island, I donned a heavy coat to protect myself against the cold and also put on my rubber boots. My bottles had already been stacked at the back

of my father's boat and were waiting to be cleaned. I started washing the bottles by leaning over the transom and dipping them one by one in the water and rinsing them. Throwing caution to the wind I probably leaned over a bit to far one time and suddenly plunged helplessly into the lake. I managed to upright myself and started trying to keep myself from going under. I knew how to swim just enough to stay afloat for a short period, but my waterlogged coat and rubber boots which quickly became very cumbersome started slowly dragging me down. The gradually descending embankment I needed under my feet to thrust myself upward for air was quickly disappearing. I'll never forget that desperate and terrifying sensation one has before almost drowning. My older brother's swimming friend, who was returning to Gull Bay with us, happened to be the only one near the boat at the time and he managed to grab me and help me climb back aboard. Though I would be indebted to him for the rest of my life, his ended tragically in a pulp truck mishap years later. Discarding my wet garments, I crawled into bed and went into a deep sleep that afternoon. I would always thereafter heed my mother's warnings regarding water safety.

No sooner had we returned to the reserve when talk centered around our return to St. Joseph's that fall. It was a dreadful feeling, the thought of returning that is, and yet I was quite resigned to my fate, not putting up too much of a protest. My mother placated my feelings a little by buying me some new clothes. Getting in the car that fall for our trip back to St. Joseph's was difficult for everyone, especially my mother. My father on the other hand was probably more philosophic and stoic about such matters. I remember him always stressing the matter of getting a good education and to him that meant for us to return to *the* school. Looking back through the rear car window as we sped down the road I could see the familiar landscape surrounding Gull Bay and wondered how long it would be when we would be back.

Chapter Three

Fall 1956 — Summer 1957

After returning to the boarding school and getting over the away-from-home blues, I was ready to start my sophomore year. I was eager to rekindle old friendships and get on with the business of the old routine again. Being a sophomore also had some advantages over being a new guy. For one thing, you did not get teased as much. You would not have as much confusion orienting yourself to what is expected of you and what you needed to know. Friends that arrived before you often brought you up to date on the latest of happenings. One of the most encouraging news items I heard, almost immediately, was that my old nemesis would not be minding us anymore and that two new sisters would be assigned to the boys' side. Hearing this I must admit made me very optimistic since I honestly felt the departing nun was one of a kind and yet I still remained very cautious. I would reserve judgment until I had met and grew to know the new ones.

I can't really say exactly the manner in which I first met the new sisters in charge but my impressions of them regarding their respective temperaments were almost immediate. They both seemed young and surprisingly good looking. The idea that nuns are suppose to be old and homely was a myth engendered for various unimportant reasons and it ultimately made its way to my own discriminating mind. The senior of the two, though, gave me the impression that she would not take any guff from anyone. Her facial complexion was darker of the two and supported two dark and deeply set eyes that when focussed, I swear, they could see right through you. Her eyebrows were narrow, very dark and were separated by a hardly noticeable but distinct frown. She had a slender and pointy nose and the thin lips of her mouth projected a sternness about it that did not completely

mask her sense of compassion and fairness. She was slightly smaller of the two and both were of average build. Any notion that her size would be an impediment to handling herself in regard to discipline anyone was quickly dispelled. I remember her once ready to do physical battle with someone who I thought was one of the tougher boys. His reluctance to continue his temper tantrum in view of her resolve to stand firm earned her respect from others as well as myself.

The other of the two was laid back and reserved. She was also tough but at the same time more vulnerable. I once witnessed her crying in my presence because of some disturbing worldly event that to me seemed insignificant, but her openness to her emotions displayed to me a side of her humanity not commonly associated or expressed by the nuns. In time I would assess their treatment of us in the remaining four years of my stay at St Joseph's as comparatively favourable, at least compared to the previous year. Mind you, both were quite capable of handing out discipline, but in my estimation in a fair and equitable manner. Of the two, the senior one was the more robust in manner and spirit. She played outdoor sports with the boys on various occasions, including hockey. With the assignment of these two nuns to the boys' side, my life at the boarding school changed considerably for the better in contrast to the year before. I did not have to live in constant fear anymore and I was able to conduct my behaviour less guardedly and be able to anticipate the consequences in a more predictable manner. I was also inured to the bleakness of residential school existence now, partially by experience and the fact that I was year older. Being punished became a matter of course rather than some anomalous or freakish accident occurring on someone's whim.

One of the first priorities for these nuns in working with the boys involved a process that was not welcomed by any of the parties involved. Each fall, many students including myself, returned with a hygiene problem that later formed an image of ourselves as part of being 'Indian'. We had

lice, and by this time, we would make a joke of anything uncomplimentary or self-effacing about ourselves. The kidding, perhaps alleviated the uneasiness we felt about hosting these minute creatures. Other things like bad odour, drunkenness, laziness, dirtiness, later began creeping into our vocabulary further associated with our image of what it meant to be Indian, a process that started before we had any inkling as to what was happening to us. The most common manifestation of this behaviour was always laughing and ridiculing ourselves, not realizing that in doing so we eroded our self-confidence and dignity as human beings. The usual manner in which one acquires lice is the sleep-over at the house of some friend or acquaintance house who had lice. And so, returning from home at the end of each summer, required a torturous de-licing routine for those who had them. Our heads were shaved and then saturated with a stinging solution from huge brown bottles that was suppose to eradicate those critters. For most of the time, we viewed these creatures as small inconveniences and the consequences of having them as a small price to pay for the relative freedom we had during the summer. I remember my mother trying to control the problem each summer by every method she knew short of locking me up entirely till I went back to school. Personal hygiene, for the most part, came almost naturally to us, since Native people almost always lived by water and we in Gull Bay spent a great deal of time in water during the summer months. Be that as it may, the stigma and prejudice attached to having lice as part of being Indian had already been formed. As I had earlier observed many of our ideas concerning the stereotyped Indian were presented to us through Western literature and art at the school and also by attitudes of non-Native people we encountered. The negative images obviously stuck to us more so than the romantic model featured in Western culture.

That fall of my second year I was placed at the grade four level, a little more respectable than the year before, I thought. In a new classroom with the third, fourth and fifth graders, I would have only one strong memory about that period of my schooling. One morning our grade four teacher began reading aloud to us each morning a portion or maybe a chapter of Anne of Green Gables by Lucy Maud Montgomery until it was finished some time later. The reason why she chose or was instructed to read this particular novel at the time was the farthest thing from my mind. I only remember that everyone seemed transfixed by the readings, including myself. I don't know what it was about Anne 's life that interested me but I couldn't wait to hear the reading each morning. A lot had to do with Anne's sense of spirit and freedom I suppose, and for any ten year old that was important. Maybe the fact that the character was an orphan was supposed to have some meaning for us, something I certainly didn't consider myself to be. The setting was also of great interest since the author took great care in illustrating the world of the child outside. The book is a classic and our teacher was a very skilful and caring reader who had a *captive* audience. The reading of the book must have been an inspiration to me, for shortly after the book was completed in class I applied for a library card at the downtown library and started reading voraciously. My reading skills were terrible at the start as I had been more of dreamer and not the studious type. The subject material I started with was far below my grade level but soon I graduated to serials like Black Beauty, White Fang, Jim Kjelgaard's books of the wilds, Big Red, adventure stories and every Hardy Boys book I could get my hands on. Time became an important factor in my reading schedule. I would even get to the point of reading under my blankets at night with a flashlight after lights out. Now instead of daydreaming in school, I started having problems just trying to stay a wake. My new found interest in reading now provided me with more and diverse material for fantasy and reverie, but at the same

time a plethora of other problems ensued. When I should have concentrated on required reading I was indulging in subject matter more to my liking. Besides falling asleep in class a lot, my grades were affected. What should have pleased my teachers now appeared more as a bane than boon. In time, my problems somehow worked themselves out but I had become a student only with potential and always doing just enough to get by.

One of my great passions in life was engendered that year and that was hockey. Having barely learned the previous year some of the rudiments of ice skating, I had graduated that year to holding on to a stick, and in some of the hockey scrimmages we had I was even able to touch the puck a couple of times. The point is, I wasn't a very good player but a few of the other residents were very good and could have played in the junior league in town. One player I remember who was allowed to play hockey outside the school with a city team was one of the white residents.

Our interests in hockey was not only confined to just playing the game. The majority of boys watching television became polarized in partisan sports hockey between two of the National Hockey League teams in Canada: the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Montreal Canadiens. I chose the latter because of their winning record and the fact they had the symbolic representation of the country emblazoned on their jerseys and identified as the Canadiens. Others chose the Leafs for the same reasons only they substituted the city of Toronto as truly representative of Canadian hockey. Whatever the reasons, we again identified with something we as a people could not or were not suppose to do. Anyway we started expressing our Canadianism openly in our personalities through hockey.

Aside from hockey, we were treated once a week to a skating party with the girls on the boys' rink, the only other time during the year besides Christmas we were allowed to mix with the girls.

The boys' rink was the only one strung out with lights and a loudspeaker. I believe it was held on a Tuesday night and of course the event would be fully chaperoned by two nuns skating together or with some of the girls. The mood and tempo of the skating was set by a blaring sound coming from a PA system, with music by the Richard Strauss' Waltzes, most notably Tales of the Vienna Woods and The Blue Danube. The whole scene might have seemed foreign to a passing stranger. The nuns, the music, the lights, the evening skaters, all against a background of descending white snow could have resemble something out of Europe. If my memory serves me correctly, this skating affair was strictly a privilege for the older boys or seniors. In any event the year I enjoyed the privilege was something I looked forward to each week. The purpose of the skate party was ostensibly to encourage or cultivate our gentlemanly ways, a goal that probably fell far short of its mark. My best friend who was a year older and myself had other ideas. We intended to just simply show off our skating abilities in front of the girls. That too seemed to fall short of its mark since the girls seemed more absorbed with other matters, or gentlemen maybe. My friend would tease me about one particular girl for reasons only he knew since I wasn't yet concerned about the idea of girlfriends other than just horsing around in front of them. The general effect of the skating party for me was that it provided another welcome pause from the drudgery of life at the school.

One of the strangest events at the school that bewildered me over the years was of the regular presentation of World War II films which I now think as inappropriate for kids' viewing. Many of our television programs were on a regular basis censored by one of the nuns. Scenes such as girls in bathing suits were censored simply by darkening the monitor and I believe Elvis Presley appearing on the Ed Sullivan variety show was also partially censored. Scenes with extreme violence were rare with the exception of war correspondence programs such as *You Are There*. Narrated by Walter

Cronkite, this program also showed events of the Second World War depicting scenes of devastation and mayhem but this series, oddly enough, we were allowed to watch. With regard to the movie presentations, I remember we would all assemble on a Friday night once a month in a classroom which was set up with projector and screen, and for the next hour or so we would view the devastation and destruction created by the bombing of enemy targets by the allies. The shows I must admit held our attention. Some of the more graphic and unforgettable scenes and sounds I have never forgotten, and other aspects of the films as well, such as the endless drone and hum of allied aircraft bombers as they opened their bombbays and released their payloads on enemy targets below. From a side view of the planes, the bombs are shown being released in a continuous and uniform flow and the scene would suddenly switch to a bird's eye view of enemy territory below from the navigator's and bombardier's compartment. One after another the detonations and the accompanying sound effects of the bombs instill in you a sense of dreadful power and destruction and at the same time leaves you with a genuine sense of relief and reminder whose side you are on. Periodically, scenes would flash by of Nazi Nuremberg demonstrations and marches. Images of Hitler's unforgettable screams in German accompanied by the black uniformed guard of the SS and other Nazi cronies, epitomized authority in its most frightening state. We were also shown scenes of concentration camp victims. Pretty potent stuff for ten year-olds, I say. After each showing you could hear the murmur from the residents about the intensity of the subject matter. We obviously were moved by the heady subject matter and message of the movies.

If the subject matter of the movies were intended to frighten, they did just exactly that with me. For years after, most of my worst dreams and nightmares were deeply imbued with feelings, experiences and images of totalitarian and autocratic environments and settings. Occasionally in my

conscious state I would project these images on figures in authority that played a role in my life, especially those wearing dark uniforms. I remember an incident years later in which I found myself engulfed in a state of fear, somehow related to this notion of totalitarianism. The scenario began with myself and another prisoner being transported in a police van to another holding depot many miles away. The route was a gravelled road and relatively isolated. We were escorted by only one policeman. Somewhere around the midway point I started entertaining the weird idea that our escort could easily shoot us, for some irrational extreme right-wing whim or other, and later claim that we were trying to escape to cover his iniquity. No one would be able to rebut or discredit his claims, I thought. In the midst of my reverie the van started to slow down at which time I suddenly became fully alert. When the van stopped I could hear the policeman open his door and get out. The rustling sound of his winter uniform, as he walked to the back of the van, was pounding in my ears--or was it my heart? As the back door of the van opened I could feel my legs shaking and when the officer told us to get out and stretch I thought it was all over for us. My companion nonchalantly got out and proceeded to relieve himself on the shoulder of the gravel road. I slowly did the same but at the same time gave our escort a very nervous side glance. Finishing our business our escort instructed us to get back in the van and we continued our journey. My then active imagination, bolstered by a slight hangover may have gotten the best of me, I conceded. Prior to this incident though, my own personal experiences with the police and comments of others regarding police brutality may have added to my anxiety in the aforementioned scenario. Not until we were back in the van though and down the road did I burst out in a muffled but uncontrolled laughter. Suffice it to say I was greatly relieved at that point.

Another point of interest that second year of school occurred when I was introduced to the assignment of a weekly chore. This I didn't mind, which essentially I thought is a part of growing up anyway. Some chores were more interesting and sought after than others. Each week we would anxiously wait and try to guess what chore we would be assigned to that particular week. The ones that come to mind most were: the laundry, stairs, the refectory, dormitory and infirmary, the basement or our day room, and the peeling of vegetables for the kitchen, to name a few. Working in the kitchen or the refectory might mean access to extra goodies, one reason this was a priority chore. Another was working in the laundry room which enabled us to interact with the girls. A less desirable chore was the mopping and dusting of the stairs from the top floor to the basement. Perhaps the least sought after chore was the basement floor. At the end of each week, the tiled floor had to be scrubbed clean on hands and knees. Each tile, approximately a square foot in size, was cleaned by adding cleanser and given a good rubbing. Scuff marks were cleaned by adding some slimy concoction and rubbing. This was perhaps the toughest of chores but it was done only once a week and often facilitated by several boys. Chores were nothing knew since I did them at home also. The degree of difficulty varied on conditions and timing, I suppose. Back home on the reserve time was not a factor as long as you did them. At the school most chores were done on a daily basis mainly after breakfast and before classes began. The only time chores became an issue is when they impinged on one's free time. On Saturdays records were made and broken in terms of how fast they were done, so that one was free to go and play outside. If they were not done properly at first, they had to be done over. In certain instances chores were done for you by others in exchange for other favours, money for instance, or other favours such as confectionary articles, desserts at meal times

or simply from good will. I never looked at chores as arduous or dreary as some others may have as long as they were administered in a fair manner.

Up to this point in my life, the problem of alcohol had not figured significantly in any way, but in the latter part of that second year at St. Joseph's it slowly crept into my consciousness and life. My only awareness about it at the time was how it was used sporadically on the reserve and in town by way of local beer parlours. On the reserve, certain people were often seen drunk and carrying on down in the village. More often than not the spectacle of people drunk openly carrying on was seen as something comical and nothing too serious. Mind you, getting drunk on the reserve then was no easy task. Since most people had no direct access to alcohol one had to produce it for oneself by making home brew sometimes referred to as 'Raisin Jack' elsewhere. The ingredients could simply be obtained at the local Hudson's Bay Company store. The only drawback is that the brewmeister had to wait at least two weeks before tapping into his potion. Some simply couldn't wait that long and often prematurely drank their brew. The potency of the brew was relative to the duration of its fermentation period. The longer the better was the general rule of thumb. Having drunk his brew the night before, the reveller would simply have to sober up the next day and life went on. In various instances 'the Mountie' would have to be summoned to apprehend miscreants. Both of my parents at this point in time were in their seminal drinking years. Their drinking wasn't causing many hardships for us or for their friends as both generally were regarded as friendly, good natured and good providers for their children.

At about the same at the boarding school we as Native students were being inculcated with the inferred symbiotic relationship between alcohol and the Indian. Through all forms of the media and the occasional slip from adults alluding to drinking and Indians, we began to internalize with

great reluctance this trait into our very beings. Western cultural characters such as 'Injun Joe' coming from no less a North American icon as Mark Twain, the proverbial by-word 'drunken Indian,' common everyday jokes, and the endless characterisations of Native people as only drunks not to mention lazy, became too burdensome a cross for us to bear. Avenues of escape were sought, the most effective probably being denial, if even that was possible. We began to laugh derogatorily at our selves, joined the crowd, adopted white nuances of behaviour, white heroes, others bleached their hair and in desperation others according to some reports attempted to scrub their skins. Those with salient Euro-Canadian features took refuge within their biological sanctuary by outright denial of their heritage. With regard to my own physical features, I couldn't escape my Nativeness, but if push came to shove I resolved to act with dignity. Most of these tactics would come in later years or away from the confines of the boarding school, but it was here at the school that the inferiority complex was first engendered. How I used to loathe admonitions from adults who, when upon hearing of some self-effacing remark from a resident, would cry out, "Oh! You should be proud to be an Indian". "Don't you realize you are the first citizens of this country!" Right. By this time their chances of convincing a wooden Indian at a cigar store would have been much better. For me perhaps the most painful outcome of this personal conundrum was an ambivalence of love and shame.

Visitations by relatives at the boarding school were the highlight of every resident's stay at the school. It was an opportunity to consummate familial love, receive gifts and to connect if even briefly to home. The end of the visit was usually accompanied with sad whimpers and outright crying and in some cases desperate pleas to be taken home. Our own family visits were no exception. I often yearned for their visits and at times was excitedly and surprisingly shocked to hear

that they were upstairs in the visiting room waiting for us. As I had mentioned my parents started drinking during these years and of course any journey to town meant visiting local drinking establishments and by the time they arrived at the school the influence of alcohol was obvious. In the past I had hardly noticed this social *faux pas*. However, in the latter part of the 56/57 semester I had started to develop and incorporate the myth regarding the drunken Indian image and projected it on my parents and perhaps all Native people. The concept of alcoholism as a disease was yet light years away, at least in social awareness, and the stigma of drunks as socially recalcitrants people without willpower seemed the norm of the day. Despite the profound love I had for my parents, I began to grow less excited about their visits and dreaded that when they did come they would be seen by others. The younger kids were still blissfully oblivious to the problem. At ten years of age shame had become a close companion; not only shame of my parents but of my race. I wasn't aware of the social and psychological dynamics of the problem at that age, but the discomfort of this psychological dilemma was poignant and powerful at that age. Judging by the behaviour I observed and the experience of others related to me over the years, I knew I was not alone, the knowledge of which in some small measure gave me some comfort. So by the time the end of my second year at the school came to a close I was needless to say more than ready to go home and experience a vastly contrasting lifestyle back at home on the reserve. There at least barriers were of a natural kind. When our parents came to retrieve us they had been drinking and the powerful new trait I had developed surfaced and caused much consternation during our departure. I began to look away from people and at times looked downward where the field of vision was at its narrowest. Only till we were safely out beyond the city limits away from prying and judging eyes did I regain some equilibrium and composure and even began to get excited about the prospects of an exciting summer. In the taxi I

waited until the cabbie said something reassuring before I began to relax. Looking at the driver now I consciously for he first time judged and cast somebody as 'one of them' and not 'us'. The alienation from the rest of the world was now starting to gain momentum. As we rode home I looked at both my parents in a new light and saw their antics as funny and okay and once more became very close to them.

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Almost immediately back on the reserve our changing behavioural patterns and urban influence were discerned by others, our non-Native affectations and pretensions. In pretending not to understand various Ojibway words, since forgetting your language implied better, I would condescendingly query my friends about certain things, "What does that mean?" or "How do you say this or that?" you knave I thought, "How dare you speak to me directly." Obviously these antics would cause much embarrassment and annoyance for my mother who would periodically take us aside and without speaking a word give us that admonishing glare which, for most of the time, was enough for us to refrain from such further conduct. Most of my friends and even my father found it amusing and unimportant. However my mother saw immediately the ramifications of what was happening to us and attempted in her own way to communicate that to us. The single most important aspect of our ways was being denied us at the school and there was very little in her power to combat this problem. After a week or so back home the novelty wore off anyway and normalcy once again returned, at least for everyone else. The sad part of it all was that we were actually forgetting our language we had learned as children, the most productive period of learning. Thenceforth we were

left with our own to deal with social situations that invariably found us on the wrong side of the debate. When addressed in Ojibway, I didn't understand. I would merely ignore the speaker which in that case amounted to a slap in the face to my interlocutor. From less understanding individuals I would often receive an uncomplimentary rejoinder. For the most part it wasn't that much of a hardship. The handicap of not knowing my language would haunt and plague me more in my adult years. For the time being my immediate concern was just to enjoy my summer.

Gull Bay, being situated by a relatively large bay meant that most of our time energy and activity as kids would be spent in and around water, a fact that probably was in no small measure a concern for many parents. At the back of our reserve was the Gull River, a deep and powerfully flowing waterway. Since it was some distance away it wasn't much of a concern. Our main swimming and play area was the shallow shoreline below the sandy bluffs guarding our village. Swimming was our primary pastime or simply just wading and exploring around water imitating hunting and fishing activities. Tiring of this routine we would seek other amusements for more challenging and ambitious activities. Since boats and all types of water craft are a natural corollary of life around a bay we as kids instinctively seemed attracted to them in one way or another. The shoreline was dotted with overturned canoes and punts that lay in wait for future use. Out in deeper water a larger fishing vessel would be anchored. The more daring swimmers would occasionally swim out to them and back. My own swimming prowess did not permit me to undertake such risks.

An exciting and more ambitious alternative to just swimming was that of raft building. The winter logging industry provided much building material by way of drifting pulp logs along the shoreline. Strapping these logs together with boards, nails and rope, we could and often would contrive a fairly sound water craft. The more creative we were, we would build a small cabin and

erect a mast of some sort. Having done this we would pole the raft up and down the shoreline imitating none other than the archetypical raft-builders of them all: Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer. The latter were of course our contribution to enculturation with our peers since those characters were not endemic to the literature prevalent in Gull Bay at the time. In addition to the smaller logs that drifted ashore, much larger timber used to create the booms for pulp transportation during breakup, could be extricated from their underwater moorings with some effort. At each end of the log were holes that supported the couplings. These logs were huge, quite buoyant and not easy to roll. Having done this, one log could be used as a raft and it looked much like a surfaced submarine. This was an alternative to raft building which was time consuming and often repetitive work since one overnight storm could pretty well undo all of your efforts.

One abnormally cool day in late afternoon that summer I strolled over to the edge of the bluffs near our house to look across the bay. 'Down the hill', as we designated the shoreline and beach below, was deserted for it seemed just too cold to swim. The only sign of life was a small dog meandering around along the edge of the waterline heading in my direction. His only concern it seemed was just to find a morsel of food to get by that day. As I stood staring at him from a distance he, as though sensing this, stopped short and looked up at me momentarily then turned around and went back in the opposite direction to continue his search. I then turned my attention once again to the bay. As I gazed across the watery expanse I felt a strong tailwind pressing against my back. The wind was blowing out toward the opposite end of the bay. Dark rippling shadows quickly skirted across the surface of the water which had a deep blue hue. In contrast the late afternoon sun cast a golden mantle over everything else but the shadows. Looking upward I saw the clouds clumped up

like English dumplings scudding across the sky. It seemed more like late August than the middle of July.

Maybe it was through my peripheral vision that I first noticed it but suddenly it was before my field of vision. A punt, half in the water and half on land right side up. The oars hung loosely to the sides. This just didn't seem right. I had been there for sometime already and hadn't noticed anyone. I recognized the craft as one owned by an elderly relative. Maybe some other kids had been fooling around with it and just left it, for it was very unusual for grown-ups to leave equipment in that state. Looking around first to see if anyone was watching or coming to tend the boat I slowly made my way down the pathway of the cliff. With a fixed-like gaze on the boat I closed in on it as though it were beckoning me. Some water had already accumulated near the transom by now so I stepped in and proceeded to bail it out. In a little while the displacement of water in the punt and my weight freed from the shoreline and it started to drift backward. A slight and sudden sense of panic ensued so I stepped out anchoring the craft with one leg in the water. Calming down I looked around up the hill and then thought "oh what the hell, I might as well take it for a little spin along the shore line." Using one of the oars as a pole, I more or less tried to guide it around like I would a raft. Being a greenhorn in matters of this sort, I didn't realize how quickly the natural elements take over and how they affect the surface of lakes. With the combination of gusting wind, the outward moving water, the size of the craft and my ten year old strength, I might as well have been drifting down a fasting moving river current. Judging by the still shallowness of the water I quickly tried to use both oars to save the boat and also myself much embarrassment later. In seconds I noticed the tops of the weeds underwater which meant that I was past the point of no return, at least without help. I knew I couldn't swim back at this point so I just sort of calmly sat for a moment to think. I looked up

towards the bluffs anxiously to see if anyone was looking and couldn't see anyone within my visual range anyway. The boat was drifting out quite swiftly by now. For the moment I was safe so long as I sat calm and still. The bay in the direction I was heading was about seven miles wide so while the water surface on this side of it was undisturbed further out in open water the swells and waves would be quite rough for a craft this small. There was always the possibility of capsizing or being swamped. In the direction I was facing I could make out the reserve dock barely visible now. I was about three quarters of mile out from the area I started out from and yet I was still unusually calm. I don't recall even calling out for help since I was not truly aware of what danger I was really in.

The first people I noticed were those standing on the cliff where I was before all this drama transpired. I could barely make out the waving and am sure they were yelling but I was too far out to hear under the windy conditions. I was so focussed on these far-off tiny figures that I didn't notice the lone figure swimming out towards me from the same direction. The next thing I sensed was the barely audible sound and sight of a boat coming from the direction of the dock headed my way. It was only when he was a couple of hundred feet from me that I noticed an uncle, one of my mother's brothers, swimming towards me. I was of course pleased to see my rescuer and yet a little nervous about the aftermath of this whole affair. Climbing aboard quietly he glared at me with a look as if to say, "You little twit, what can I say," and then grabbed the oars and with a powerful heave attempted to row back home. He was very strong and one of the oars immediately snapped against the headwind and so he like me, because of my foolhardiness, became one of the rescued instead of the rescuer. In a little while the boatsman reached us and towed us home. You can bet I learned a very important lesson that day about the forces of nature and the reason to heed and respect them.

From that day forward I would never challenge her but that resolution doesn't apply to all humans it seems.

My father, as I alluded to earlier, was not a man of means and every little material possession he had, he cherished and appreciated very deeply. One day one of his friends gave him an old canoe made for one man, and it was badly in need of repair. He set it aside some where around the house to deal with it at some future date. One typically warm and windy July afternoon, shortly after my cast-adrift incident, my older brother, noticing the old remnant of a once beautiful cedar canoe, beckoned me over to inspect it with him more closely. The frame and ribs, albeit very grayish and dusty instead of the beautiful golden tone of new lacquered cedar, all seemed intact and sturdy. The diminutive and antiquated craft was apparently seaworthy. All that was required was a fresh canvass covering and refinishing. In the midst of our study of the canoe my brother abruptly burst out with the lyrics and melody of the opening of the Radisson and Grosslliers television series. Realizing immediately what he was thinking and up to, I barked at him with a resounding, "No way". Minutes later we were toting our dad's little dream on our shoulders down the hill. He found some old clothes around the house and fashioned himself an old *coureur de bois* outfit to look something like one of the characters in the series. I assured him that I was only going to help him carry the canoe down the hill and that I would be mum about the whole affair. He should have been a lawyer for in no time I had a paddle in my hands and was hollering with him some made-up French Canadian phrases and heading out to the wilderness in our dad's refinishing project to trade and live with the Indians. As part of his convincing entreaties I could be Radisson. and he would take all the blame if worst came to worse. He also assured me that both of our parents were out of the village anyway and that they wouldn't be home till late that night. By that time we would have the canoe back, dried, and no one

would be the wiser. So for the next half hour or so we gently bobbed up and down in the waves, around a small shallow area off shore, mimicking the famous French Canadian two some. We were having the time of our lives. In time I noticed that the waves were getting much bigger and stronger to the point of forming whitecaps. This new development, which should have been a warning signal, made our adventure that more daring and fun. Pitching and rolling with the waves we'd spit out an occasional French Canadian expletive to give this little fantasy of ours a sense of realism. Suddenly and without warning as a large wave lifted my brother high up in the air, much to his delight, I heard a loud crack and then felt the weight and wetness of enveloping water as the fragile frame of the canoe was severed in two by the pressure of the wave. Not realizing the scope and gravity of our misdeed, we emerged quickly from the water laughing our heads off. What seemed so amusing was our naivety and maybe how vulnerable we would have been in the wilds in former times. As soon as our merriment cooled a little we looked around and surveyed the situation. The canoe was slowing being dragged to shore by the waves in two pieces. My brother looked silly in his drenched costume. He started pondering aloud what explanations he might offer for the halved canoe. As we braced ourselves for another round of laughter I suddenly froze in my tracks with a spine tingling sensation as my eye caught the outline of figure standing imposingly high up on the hill looking down at us. Realizing it was none other than our dad up there I quietly muttered that regretful intonation, "uh oh". My brother and I stood there momentarily and pensively staring at each other like condemned men instead of robust frontiersmen wondering what we were going to do. As we started to wade ashore we looked up and noticed our father had already retreated to the house. We knew there was no escaping our present dilemma for we had been let off a number of minor indiscretions in the recent past but this was a capital crime. I don't recall any other instance where my parents used the

willow switch on us but somehow we sensed this was it. In fact my brother, convinced of his inevitable fate, walked along the tree line home to retrieve a sturdy willow switch. What about my concession of him taking all the blame. Unfortunately for me we were both caught with the smoking gun and standing over the demolished canoe and we would both suffer the same fate. Well I intended to prolong the process a bit. I took to flight in the bush toward the trail leading to the river. I found a huge windfall along the path so I sat down in the warm sunlight to ponder my comeuppance. I removed my shirt and pants to dry them off. As I soaked in the sunlight I wondered if my mother would intervene on my behalf. Not likely I thought. About an hour or so later my clothes had dried and I decided to head home and face the music. Walking with the tiniest steps I could muster I kept rubbing my derriere anticipating the blows I would undoubtedly receive. Then remembering that ancient proverb, " a coward dies a thousand times," I gathered myself and walked briskly forward to meet my doom.

For most of the summer I enjoyed myself as much as I could. A good deal of our time was spent also in the woods following the whims of our curiosity regarding whatever nature had to treat us with. Invariably this throwing caution to the wind attitude got one in to trouble at times. I remember once when one of my friends climbed a poplar tree to the top and then found his way down with the help of gravity, his fall broken by the branches. Luckily for him he only suffered a broken leg. Another time I stepped on a bee nest wearing only baggy shorts and they zeroed in on you know what. Well the blood curdling yell that emanated from my very being sent everyone scurrying in all directions. They apparently thought I met a bear face to face. Had that been the case, I think I would of have quietly wet my pants instead of wetting a leaf to apply to the bee stings. To

this day I 'm not sure that remedy ever did work. In any case my recovery was almost instant and I went about my business.

Most of the time our sojourns in the woods were relatively uneventful. At times an unusual bug caught our attention and we would examine it and many of the other smaller creatures that roamed the undergrowth. Searching for the perfect sling shot crutch was another reason we found time to wander the woods. Another favourite pastime was running in the rain especially during a downpour clothed only in our birthday suits. The worst time in the summer of course was on those long drawn out rainy days spent indoors.

Well July turns to August and we find ourselves once more heading east to the fertile blueberry hills of Sand River for the annual harvest. It would be our last year going to that particular spot for reasons I know not why. Maybe for economic reasons I guess. It seems that we from Gull Bay were not the only people that went to Sand River. Ojibway families from other locales were also assembled there each summer. Many people from the various communities were interrelated and it was an opportune time to rekindle old acquaintances. My parents knew many of the people and they obviously looked very happy being among old friends and relatives from other areas. I suppose this sort of get-to-gether with the Ojibway people had been going on for a long time and blueberry picking wasn't the only unifying factor in this assemblage. Good hunting and fishing spots were probably the locus and it was an opportune time for many meetings of the Ojibway people in the past. For the time being blueberry picking provided the impetus for people to make the journey to meet each other. There was a strange sense of closeness in this type of setting. After working all day long picking, people came home tired to their tents and prepared supper. Unlike cooking indoors on the reserve in an enclosed structure, people cooked outside and sometimes together feeding and

sharing with each other. It was very homey. People I didn't know were always around visiting my parents on a daily basis. Ojibway was spoken entirely by the adults and a mixture of Ojibway and English by the young. You could almost discern the varying styles and dialect from each community. There were some minor changes from the previous year but things generally were the same. Aside from being a year older we were veteran berry pickers now and we were able to keep some of the money we earned before contributing to the family coffers. I established some new friends that were not around the year before. The same two berry merchants came around that summer. The one with the larger truck 'Scrap iron' endeared himself with the people more then the other with the smaller panel truck who seemed to have the bearing of a sly and conniving merchant. Strangely though it was 'Scrap iron' who was victimized with pranks from the older boys. I remember once when he was leaving, having finished his business, some older boys jumped on the back of his truck and started handing full baskets of berries to those trailing on foot. The berries were then sold back to him on his return trip. Shenanigans of this sort did not go unnoticed and I'm sure the miscreants somehow paid for their misdeeds in some form or other, not then but at some other time in their lives.

One weekend when our parents left for the town of Beardmore for an overnight hiatus I and a friend my age decided to go find them. This entailed hitchhiking or walking roughly seven miles. It was a warm sunny day and I had on a pair of knee-high shorts which were not exactly common attire for native children. We started out before noon to take advantage of the yet cool morning air. Whenever a car going in our direction appeared we stuck out our thumbs indicating our intentions but none stopped. To kill the boredom of walking we talked a lot and kicked cans as we trudged on. In a little while I began to feel the rising hot air from the gravelled road which drained some of our energy. Dust churned up from passing vehicles hung in the air then clung on to sweat now tricking

down our faces. The smell of gas and exhaust emissions added to our discomforts. After a mile or so one of us broached the taboo subject of bears. To intensify our already heightened anxiety we came across fresh tracks, at least they looked fresh. We started to talk louder and yell intermittently in hopes of quelling our fears. This strategy worked a bit at least blocking of our thoughts about them. By late afternoon we spotted a large clearing ahead and a bend veering to our left. For some time now the sounds of work and industry had been growing louder and louder. The top of a mine shaft had become visible a ways back, growing more pronounced as we reached the clearing. On seeing the mine we became more relaxed and realized we had covered three miles. Ordinarily we could have covered this distance in shorter time but the heat and little side interests prolonged our journey. The old Leitch gold mine was part and parcel of the Sand River blueberry cultural lore. Every day you could hear the distant twelve o'clock siren from the blueberry patches and on any clearing on a knoll you could spot the mine. As we passed the mine, we noticed the rest of the way to Beardmore was paved with asphalt. Just a short ways from the mine we got a ride to town which was another four miles away. In Beardmore we both found our parents who were mildly surprised and shocked at our bold initiative. For our efforts we were treated to a nice restaurant supper and later we went to the picture show while they went to the beer parlour. As much as I appreciated the treats I wouldn't want to repeat that same episode.

Well the rest of the summer came and went quickly and we were off to boarding school again. Leaving Sand River that year was strangely melancholic even though not realizing I would not see the area again for many years. When I did return, the area was fully overgrown with mature poplar and young pine stands. Throughout our adult years that blueberry culture has remained with our family, for every summer we go picking one of nature's most delightful and freest gifts.

Included now are grandchildren of my parents, hopefully to instill in their minds one of the ties that bind our people with the land.

Chapter Four

Fall 1957 — Summer 1958

Returning to St. Josephs boarding school that fall, that dreadful feeling accompanying our departure from home still retained its intensity and maybe even more so than previous years. The sense of aloneness and despair are yours alone to bear despite the fact your siblings are with you. As though it were some consolation more students from Gull Bay would be going to the school that year. Nevertheless you, as though in death, must make the journey in solitude. Why does going away have to be so depressing? Looking back at the road leading from Gull Bay that fall I noticed the yellow leaves on the ground and somehow from that day on I would associate them with something very sad. The irony in the fact that they too, at least the ones still on the trees, were dying as I was inside, though it escaped me at the time.

Once we reached our destination in Fort William my initial depression at leaving home had subsided a bit and I was ready to embrace the new school year and whatever it had to offer. This being my third year the adjustment was needless to say reasonably ordinary. I have to assume I was in grade five since my memory fails me with regard to this interval of my grade schooling. The fact that I had three teachers up until I made grade five confirms this. There was nothing exceptional about school that year except the fact that we had the occasional visitor come and make a presentation or just talk to us. One of the guests that intrigued me the most was a missionary priest that once lived in the immediate area on Donald Street. He apparently spent many years in Japan and was obviously impressed with the people there. He talked a good deal about his work and the people he worked with. That was all very interesting but all that I could have retrieved myself from a book.

Then one day he gave his talk but this time he brought slides to share with us. This immediately caught my eye. The slides took you vicariously there it seems, to Japan, and this of course aroused the curiosity of the class. In some of the slides the priest posed with the people he apparently was working with, mostly peasant people from the country side. That far-off land on the other side of the world appealed to my to day dreaming proclivity. I wasn't aware of the post war repercussions to the Japanese at the time but their way of life, at least that depicted on the screen, struck a familiar chord with me. Their simplicity and docility shy friendliness I related to, maybe because it reminded me of our people a bit. I realise that the pictures were of a select group of friendly rural people but the fact that Japan had been a powerful industrial and aggressive country was the furthest thing in my mind. Anyway the slides and other presentations alleviated if even temporarily the monotony and boredom of classroom studies.

Much of my reverie in the class now did not always entail day dreaming per se but just thinking of my existence here at the school. I would come down occasionally with deeply felt moods of depression triggered not only by inclement weather outside but now even rays of sunlight breaking through those elongated classroom windows had that same effect on me. Perhaps the ubiquity of sunlight momentarily bridges feelings of home and other more comforting places and thoughts. There was a clear and lingering envy of public school children, like those of St. Mary's down the street, who went home every day after school. The boarding school itself was not a terrifying ordeal as it was my first year and the two nuns that minded us were relatively fair and generally pretty good. Straps were still part and parcel, acceptable and bearable within the boarding school milieu and not especially dreadful incidents anymore. It was the interminable periods of confinement to a system obviously foreign and beyond one's control that was mentally debilitating and frustrating. Other

disturbing ideas and feelings began to permeate my thoughts now. The fact that we (the majority of the residents) were a different people and the subtle signals of racial prejudice from the inside and outside began to germinate ideas and feelings in my mind at this age. I once heard one of the white residents use the term 'smoke meat" referring of course to Indians but for them to use such terms was a rarity since they were easily open to retribution both physically and orally had the practice become common place. For the most part though the attitude of denial crept into my consciousness as a survival instinct and would stay with me for most of my life. I wanted life to be less confrontational and more ideal, so by denying certain realities I pretended that the myth of racism did not exist. At about this time another idea began germinating in my mind that education in itself would be powerful enough to carry me through the rest of my boarding school and high school days which I will mention more of later. Some members of this little community including my older brother didn't share my idealism and thus sought ways to express their dissatisfaction. The most common way was simply to run away. Residents including girls began running away at a phenomenal rate. It probably was a perennial problem but it became quite discernable during this one period. My brother took off one day and he probably made it home but was eventually brought back as were the other runaways. As quickly as it began it stopped. It is my guess that the returnees were threatened with more pernicious alternatives like being sent to a reform school or something. I wasn't scared to run away but I had other ideas on my mind by now. I resolved to just continue on and make life as endurable as possible by focussing on things of interest or just plain fooling around. Other experiences at the school would soon unfold that would help terminate some of my darker moods and days at St. Joseph's.

The 'Mountie' and maybe all police are something of an enigma to Native people, but the RCMP were more closely allied to reserve life since Natives have been historically the responsibility of the federal government. Those that have come to the reserve at times seemed amiable enough and were often admired and liked by some. When the officer arrived though to carry out an arrest his demeanor changed and the image of him also was transformed into something menacing. They generally came to Gull Bay quite perturbed when they were unable to get 'their man'. Enlisting the services of a Native policeman was one way they were able to accomplish this. Despite this love-hate relationship with the Mountie, the bright red uniform and the pointed wide brim hat always drew the adulation of kids everywhere. So when it was announced at St. Joseph's in the fall of '57 that the Boy's Scout program would be started, everyone grew excited. The idea of a uniform for each individual joining the scouts was very enticing indeed but the idea of having and owning a 'Mountie hat' was the icing on the cake, for want of a better metaphor. Having been aware of the boy scout movement if only rudimentarily I always dreamed about being one. I remember seeing a Queen's scout once adorned with all his badges. I was truly impressed though having the chance to be a scout was something not really meant for us. Anyway my older brother was definitely excited about it too. The day we assembled downstairs to begin our first introduction to the scouts my dream almost totally soured for the man who was to be our leader was the epitome of drill instructors in the United States Marine Corps boot camp. He may have been in his fifties, with a slender builb but wiry and muscular. His face was narrow with high cheek bones and he sported a thick moustache under a pronounced hook nose. Through his dark rimmed glasses peered two gray eyes that belonged more to an eagle than a man, and they alone instilled a sense of dread in you. His scout uniform momentarily took on the stamp of fascist authoritarianism. Before hearing his voice for the first time

I felt like running away or stepping back from the lineup of first recruits. He was introduced to us by one of the nuns and then he took over. Almost immediately he started barking away about the merits and challenges of the boy scouts and what it took to be one. He went on for some time and before long everyone was starting to fidget and grow weary in line. 'Shut up' and give us our Mountie hats I thought, at which time he looked directly at me as though, God forbid, he heard my thoughts. It was my first conscious defiance of authority albeit in thought only. I really didn't like him and that first meeting was just merely to lay the ground rules for us, and there seemed to be only one: "Don't cross me or else". The idea of scouting almost crumbled but I was at this point ready to put up with anything just to get my hat. After the first meeting we all exchanged notes about our expectations from scouting. We talked about the scoutmaster of course but we all were used to authority, and his fractious nature was not going to discourage us in the least. The next few weeks comprised of learning some of the fundamentals of the scouting movement. We were organized in patrols of six or seven members with a wild animal designated as our mascot. The overall group was the fourteenth troop of Fort William. My patrol was the named the Moose patrol which I didn't care for that much since our namesake was such a homely and bungling sort of creature. I didn't realise at the time that this animal was the mainstay of the Ojibway people, much as the buffalo was to the Plains Indians, and that he had other attractive qualities as well, such as power, speed, size and a keen sense of smell. Anyway the most sought after mascot was the wolf who possessed all of the more admirable qualities in an animal. Who would have thought at the time that the naming of patrols and many other features in the scouting movement were practices directly extracted from the Ojibway and other Native American peoples. We all could have simply used our own clan names of which mine is the bear or *Mauk wa.* Anyway we spent a number of weeks learning about the bush

and how to survive 'white man' style which seemed so rigid and rule oriented more deleterious than beneficial. Aside from woodcraft we learned how to tie rope knots, do first aid and communication through Morse code. We would later go on camping trips, a prospect everyone looked forward too.

Well the day arrived when we were going to be outfitted for uniforms and our hats. This was the high water mark of our expectations of scouting. We hadn't earned too many badges up to this point but that was far less important than the actual uniform itself. The only exception of the uniform that didn't appeal to any one was the wearing of shorts. These, for some reason or other, appeared foolish and sissy. Fortunately for our own peace of mind we didn't have to wear them. We went to a local shop that supplied scouting apparel. When we purchased our hats, there were instructions in how to shape them properly. What had to be done was to pour water in them and let them stand overnight. The water saturated the material and eventually went through. The next day the hat was ready to be shaped, dried and ready to wear. If it wasn't done properly the shaped of the hat would be affected. The rim also had to be ironed. I took great pains in this procedure to do it properly and in the end I had a beautiful 'Mountie' hat. Some of the other boys including my brother botched the shaping of their hats and the result was less than pleasing to the meticulously minded scoutmaster. At lineup and inspection I couldn't help but chuckle a little under my breath as my brother looked kind of silly with the brim of his hat drooping a bit. Be that as it may, we all had our uniforms and were eager to display them to the world. What better way to do this than take part in some of the public activities around town. One of the things we did to raise money for our scouting was to sell apples. Before going out on the street with my supply of apples I had to shine them first with a cloth so that they stood out. I asked the senior sister what I was supposed to say regarding the price of an apple. She demurely suggested I simply say, "Let your conscience be your guide." What ever that

meant I didn't care, but I fastidiously memorized that phrase in order to get it right lest I got ripped off or insult someone with some other meaning. With my produce in hand I set out to the spot designated me, downtown Fort William, and spent an afternoon selling apples. I think we were sternly instructed not to eat any of the apples but I did anyway. I probably did well or average in my selling venture. Only one customer left a lasting impression with me. This one lady in a thick fur coat came by and asked me the price of an apple. I proudly uttered most eloquently, "Let your conscience be your guide" and with that she plucked out two apples and dropped a nickel in my money container. I immediately thought I must have gotten the words wrong in my entreaty and must have told her to just help herself or something. As I gathered my thoughts, I reserved one for her, "What a cheapskate!". Old Lord Baden-Powell must have been rolling in his grave since one of the Scout Laws he promulgated, as the founder of the movement, was to be considerate, courteous and helpful to people. On the other hand maybe he momentarily suspended that decree on witnessing such an abject display of stinginess. All the other donations ranged anywhere from a quarter to a dollar but never below twenty five cents. Anyway live and learn was the lesson for that day. Some other outdoor activities we did included planting trees with other troops in the city and we attended a regional jamboree. One hiking trip we went on, we learned how to cook pork chops and vegetables in a tin foil fold in open fire. That was pretty clever according to everyone.

One day we were introduced to another scoutmaster that would be taking the place of the former leader. He was a lot bigger in physical stature than the first and his most prominent feature was that he was bald, something that was funny to us since very few Indians were bald I suppose. More important than any of his physical traits was the fact that he was very friendly and likeable. Everyone got along with him and maybe our discipline unravelled a bit but our scouting suddenly

got another boost of enthusiasm under his leadership. It was announced one day that we would go on a hiking trip with him and needless to say everyone was gung ho about this venture. We would be going to Mission Island on foot and the trek would involve hiking a few miles. We were full of energy and so this posed no problem for us but as for our new custodian we weren't sure. On the day of our trip we packed our own lunches and set out on foot with our scoutmaster. A good portion of the hike was through the city in areas we hadn't been before. We tried as humanly as possible to comply with his commands and to act like scouts by not wandering all over the place and stay in formation. A few of the scouts, including myself, couldn't help but stray into alleys and buildings along the way to explore or investigate whatever caught our attention, but mostly we marched inconspicuously through the city without incident. Once out of the city proper and nearing the forested areas leading to the island our eagerness to run and explore and break formation was becoming clearly visible. This posed as a personal and discipline problem for our new master. He at once gathered everyone together and instructed us to stay in groups until we reached our destination. I'm sure he was petrified at the thought of losing one of us or someone getting seriously hurt. We assured him as best we could that we would act like scouts and apply everything we learned in this particular outing. Sensing that he made his point he relaxed a bit and we continued on. Some individuals broke formation and disappeared momentarily into the tree lines and then reappeared. This didn't go unnoticed by our master and he seemed uneasy again. Upon reaching the designated spot he gave us one last instruction and told us to go in groups and do the things we had on our patrol agendas. By this time the entire troop as a unit was ready to burst from its organizational yoke and each individual just wanted to take off and explore on his own or in couples. He told all of the patrols to return to this same spot at four o'clock and then all hell broke loose. The entire troop

dispersed in all directions, some in pairs others taking off by themselves. So much for discipline. Being cooped up for months was just to much for our constitutions and when we neared something more akin to the reserve environment we simply gravitated to it. A few of us stayed with the scoutmaster more to appease him and keep him company than do anything particularly related to scouting. We all wanted to just explore and fool around in the bush. He didn't appear to be relaxed or happy about being out here for this occasion. It must have been a terrible strain for him that day. He expressed concern about the idea of people getting lost or hurt. We assured him about the first concern that it was unlikely since the area in question was limited in size and the general layout rather open. About someone getting hurt well that was another matter. Hopefully we might have an opportunity to use our first aid training we joked. He smiled rather feebly at that suggestion. While this core group sauntered about with our scoutmaster I quietly stole away from the pack and disappeared into the tree-line to do my own thing. This area we came to was but a large promontory, a square mile in size, jutting out into Lake Superior. It was covered mostly in poplar stands with a few spruce and pine trees sparsely scattered here and there and any one part of the area was no more than three hundred feet or so in width. It was also basically flat and visibility was quite good so anyone able to get lost here should be up for a commendation or merit badge for doing so. Bordering the north side of the area was a beach blanketed with all kinds of rocks. This area was a natural attraction for kids. As I glided through the trees towards the sound of waves I caught up with some of the other boys and we started to explore the area. Some started throwing rocks out toward the lake while myself and others searched for neatly shaped rocks. We would occasionally turn over larger rocks and examine the various life forms dwelling underneath them. Someone suggested the corny idea of building cairns to let others know we were here as if we were miles from nowhere. Oh well

since that was scouting, so be it we surmised. We piled rocks atop each other to indicate some arbitrary direction in which we were going for others to discover and muse about. Tiring of this we started climbing trees. One of the objectives of tree climbing is to climb to the top so you are able to see the landscape around you. We found this one large spruce tree and climbed it to the top. Both the Sleeping Giant, a well known natural landmark of a sleeping form, and Mount Mackay were clearly visible. Shortly after, we started to get hungry and those of us that had our lunches sat down and ate. Someone then suggested we start making our way back and we did so. When we arrived at the meeting area most everyone was assembled there except the scoutmaster and some others who were with him. Assuming he was lost, a search party was formed, which pretty well included everyone, to go look for them. In time we were all together and then we prepared for the long trek back to the school. At least it seemed long because we were by this time all bushed. Out of the entire excursion only one member of the entire troop was injured and that was a slight ankle injury. We fashioned a makeshift *travois* with two poles and our jackets for the casualty and proceeded to carry him home. We kept dropping him and so he finally decided to walk, surprisingly fully recovered. We suspected he was acting anyway to avoid walking, hence the careless ambulatory medical care. For us the outing was a success in terms of rejuvenating our inner psychological resources to continue boarding school existence. Our boy scouting resolve and development may have ebbed slightly but it was evident no one that took part in the outing was disappointed. We were prepared for the repercussions had the scoutmaster submitted a negative report concerning the breakdown in discipline, but to everyone's surprise he did not. Despite his concerns during the hike it was quite evident that he enjoyed himself also. Not long after, my interest in scouting began to wane a bit and I eventually withdrew my participation. My disinterest was partially fuelled by the militaristic nature

of the program and the commitment to a rigid form of activity. My proclivity to be free outweighed some of the more attractive features of scouting including my 'Mountie hat'. The real and immediate reason for my gradual disillusionment with the scouts was its strict and constraining of moral behaviour code. With seminal idealistic tendencies taking shape in my still young mind coupled with a growing strong religious guilt complex I could not conscientiously behave within the psychological parameters dictated by these behavioural dictums. Knowing full well my attempts at 'clean living" could not possibly mitigate some of my flagrant moral transgressions and weaknesses now or in the future, I so naively concluded then, that the only course left open was to leave the scouts. The forces that shaped those convictions were to instill in me a self-destructive behaviour that would have dire consequences in many of my adult life decisions. Unbeknownst to me then of course these psychological and sociological forces were acting on me and taking shape in my mind. Having gone to many confessions by now, its efficacy as a conduct shaping mechanism proved to be negligible. This being the case I probably subconsciously concluded I was "no good' and therefore accepted my moral weaknesses while still hoping against hope I was at least marginally salvageable as a human being.

I don't remember the first thing I ever stole but the items I most sought after at the school were comic books and the nearest corner store or confectionary a block away was the ideal spot for my pilfering. The owner I sensed in retrospect must have looked the other way at times for reasons only he knew, out of pity maybe. My *modus operandi* was obviously suspect which involved simply buying an inexpensive item with a comic already tucked away under my shirt. I made some effort to conceal its crinkling sound when moving my upper body area to avoid detection. This I did on several occasions without being confronted. My stealing career was short lived however. I got

caught one day when I attempted to move to big ticket items. At a downtown record shop I removed a forty-five rpm record from the shelf using the same method as the comic book caper. I pulled the job off cleanly went back to the school and found one of the nuns waiting for me with the knowledge of what I had done. I was ordered to return the record and given a choice I would have preferred three or four straps to the embarrassment I was about to experience. On returning the record I had my head down in absolute shame and disgrace. The lady accepting my redemption was so kind and assuaging about it all that I couldn't help but cry. I went back to the school and resolved not to experience that again. Needless to say I laid low for awhile. Later as an young adult and after serving time for theft in a provincial reformatory, I developed an abhorrence for stealing and never did so again. My loathing for it stemmed more from an egotistical stance rather than any ethical argument put forward against it. The idea of my arbitrarily claiming something I had not earned was to me so brazen an affront to my very being. Doing without unnecessary items or luxuries was not so great a hardship in life and I concluded that placing personal integrity ahead of wanton acquisitiveness was more important. Over the years I may have unintentionally crossed this personal interdiction I had set for myself but for the most part I always avoided outright acts of theft and other 'gray areas' of cheating and acts of fraud. How much more smooth life would have been had I been able to apply this principle in other areas of my life.

Other offenses that insured getting the strap included, getting caught smoking, caught with men's magazine pictures that catered to our prurient interests or 'impure thoughts', going downtown without permission and of course stealing. One of the prevalent discomforts endured by everyone at the school was hunger at nights which could have been alleviated by a small snack before bedtime. Unfortunately we did not have that luxury and so going downstairs to the kitchen to fetch some

goodies after lights out was a common occurrence. I personally don't classify an act of this sort stealing but none the less it had to be done surreptitiously. One resident had the ingenuity when about to be caught in the kitchen pretended he was sleep walking. The nun that caught him gingerly escorted him back upstairs with the supposed somnambulist still holding arms stretched out in front of him ostensibly the way a sleepwalker did. I found this tactic very amusing and imaginative.

Going downtown without permission, in an odd way, presented some problems for me. On the one hand, I had no compunction about the ethical issues of deception and lying generally speaking, since any opportunity to be away from the school for any period I felt to be morally or psychologically justifiable. However, several times I stole away was done so while I was supposed to be working at a part-time job away from the school property. For the nun that allowed me to accept the job, I felt profoundly that I betrayed her trust in me, something that disturbed me. Once I went downtown to see the film Ben Hur, which cost the unheard sum of seventy-five cents. Most of the time, you could go to a Saturday matinee double feature and buy popcorn for twenty-five cents. Anyway, Ben Hur was so spiritually inspiring that I went to confession as soon as I could and afterwards acted piously for a whole week until my piety slowly wore off.

Well the 1957-1958 school year was coming to an end and one act of theft I committed before going home left me a little disconcerted. By now, my sense of morality was taking shape if only in the sense that I felt guilty for stealing anything. The only mitigating feature of this particular act as far as I was concerned was the fact that I stole from the well-to-do and that the bicycles were used and needed some repair. One day, my brother and I came upon a shed at the back of a mansion and two old bicycles were propped against the wall. We decided to take them. Since we would be going home in a couple of days we hid them in some bushes and told no one. We arranged to meet

the rest of our family in Port Arthur on the appointed day. Since the tires were flat, we toted them to the nearest garage and repaired them. After this, we headed out to Port Arthur by way of Memorial Avenue, which at that time was a small highway lined with trees separating the two cities. When we arrived and met our family, we concocted a story about obtaining the bicycles honestly. Had they known of our larceny we would have had hell to pay since both of our parents frowned upon stealing. Well the ride home that summer wasn't all that euphoric as times past since my conscience was a bit uneasy and also the possibility of getting caught was also uppermost on my mind.

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When we arrived in Gull Bay that summer, my brother and I were like returning heroes among our peers, because we had bicycles and everyone was eager to try them out. These two contraptions were possibly the first ever in Gull Bay so anyone who rode them did so for the first time. Decrepit as they were and the number of kids that tried them simply resulted in their almost instant ruin. Maybe it was all for the best since they created unforseen problems anyway not the least of which were jealousy, accidents, repair problems and the possibility of yet being found out by my parents. Another problem was that the bicycles diverted us from our more customary activities like swimming, exploring, baseball and just plain fooling around. The disuse of our bikes allowed us to resume these activities. On the darker side of our personalities, we would raid gardens at night for carrots and potatoes and tease those who were a little tipsy. Because these pranks were frowned upon by everyone and there was always the risk of meeting up with the wrong side of a willow stick we desisted in these shenanigans.

Being a little older now than in previous summers, my interests and curiosities started to mirror this maturity. More and more I did things on my own. One day while playing baseball, the ball escaped me and rolled into the yard of an elder who was at work building one of those fishing boats I described earlier. The ball stopped just short of his feet and caught his attention. As he gazed at me intently I, in my most facile Ojibway, cooed "*pug doan*", which when understood in that situational context meant "throw the ball". With a wide grin he just stood there and repeated what I said apparently amused at my enunciation of the phrase. I obviously wasn't one of his typical visitors and Ojibway emanating from an eleven year old city kid for him probably sounded absurdly comical. He eventually tossed me the ball back and I resumed playing ball but not before resolving to visit him again to watch his building the boat. A few days later I planted myself near his work area and fixed my eyes on the activity. I' m not sure what caught my attention about this whole boat building episode. Maybe it was just natural curiosity and he didn't seem to mind my presence at all. In fact I might as well have been a crow sitting on a branch nearby since he was totally absorbed in his work. Sometime later he turned about in my direction and teasingly muttered, "*pug doan*", laughed and continued his work. To make the keel and skeg which would house part of the shaft in the boat, he hauled back from across the lake two large cedar trees that eventually he coupled together in an elbow shape. I took some of the chips scattered all over the ground and whiffed the aromatic odour of the wood. Cedar is one of the sacred plants among Native North Americans and is also a durable material for practical purposes in much craft work. Later he lined the keel with ribs for strakes that made up the hull. To make the wood pliable he steamed them in a metal contraption. In the end he caulked the hull, painted it a marine grey and with the aid of friends and relatives launched the boat from the hill just in time for the fall fishing season. The whole process of course

lasted most of the summer but I came by periodically to inspect his progress and satisfy my inquisitiveness. Besides my interest in his craft I couldn't help but wonder what his thoughts were. He worked quietly and purposively never once gesturing that I should leave. Another feature I couldn't help notice was that his trimming and shaping tools were impeccably sharp and every stroke to shape a particular piece or part of wood was done so perfectly. I chopped wood a lot and the axe I used most of the time was quite dull and the idea of sharpening it seemed to me too much work to bother with. I suppose that is what separates the amateurs from the pros. What impressed me the most about this whole affair was the fact that here was a man of Ojibway descent shaping his craft with consummate skill and dexterity capable of producing objects of size, beauty and complexity. This confirmation its seems was very important to me for I was already developing into a skeptic regarding my race. From that time on I would be continually searching for other positive affirmations to ward off the negative impulses of my inferiority complex. This was a strange psychological battle raging within me. For the rest of the summer I spent more and more of my time alone.

One frightening incident that occurred that summer happened in the water, adding one more notch to my growing fear of it. I was forever playing out fantasies of characters I drew from any television series I favoured and this time my hero was Mike Nelson from the television series Sea Hunt. The protagonist Mike Nelson played by Lloyd Bridges was a deep sea scuba diver who each week found some underwater calamity to overcome. The series itself was a veritable showcase of deep sea marine life which included sharks, manta rays, whales, porpoises, eels and so on. Mike Nelson it seemed had a mutually dependent existence with these creatures. Anyway that summer I decided to give my water activities a new twist by recreating a scuba diver image and to do this I needed a scuba diving outfit. So I first sawed two pieces of pine wood cylindrical in shape about a

foot and a half each in length and six inches in diameter. Next I secured them together to a square piece of plywood. I then nailed valve-like gadgets to the wood so that they resembled oxygen tanks. Searching around the Indian dock I found a thick piece of rope used for mooring large boats at. I then trimmed, cut and cleaned the rope so it looked like a breathing hose when attached to my fake oxygen tanks. I finally cut two pieces of leather straps and nailed them to the plywood so that I could wear tanks on my back like a scuba diver. I already owned a genuine pair of flippers and a scuba diving mask to complete my outfit. Pretty ingenious I thought. I was all set now to explore the under water world. Because I was wary of people making fun of me I went down the hill to an isolated spot to try out my new outfit. Swimming around the shore at first to test their buoyancy, I found the wooden scuba equipment proved to be manageable underwater. Coming up periodically for air I aimlessly meandering around just below the surface of the water. At one point I saw a huge log ahead of me lying horizontally with a clearing just large enough for me to go under it. To give my exploring some semblance of realism I decided to go under the log to the other side. Coming up for one last intake of air I plunged down into the water once more and headed for the imaginary cave opening. I was halfway through when my fake scuba apparatus hooked on to a notch in the tree and pinned me underwater. Instant panic made me claw wildly at the soft sand with hands and feet. Luckily the force of my wriggling body snapped one of the straps and I eased the other one off and came to the surface shaking uncontrollably. After settling down a bit I sat on the log which was only half submerged to reflect a long time. I contemplated the stupidity of the whole affair. I can look back in hindsight now and conclude that what could have been a tragedy ended that day with me learning a valuable lesson about safety. I can't recall ever being in a similar situation as I tend to be quite conscious of safety practices now with myself and others in the bush and other potentially

dangerous situations. My Mike Nelson outfit I dismantled with a vengeance and rage and later tossed it in the bushes along the shoreline.

The remainder of the summer I more or less hung out with my friends at times indifferent to their enthusiasms. The idea of teasing people that drank too much also haunted me a bit, partly because I wanted to dissociate myself from drinking as much as possible and also because of the realisation that my parents were plagued with the same affliction. My plans for the future were now just vaguely forming and drinking was definitely not part of them.

Chapter Five

Fall 1958 — Summer 1959

The transition from the reserve to residential school life that fall was by now routine except for the fact that more and more students were coming from Gull Bay and going to St. Joseph's. My brothers and sisters were seasoned residents and where possible we tried to assist the new-comers in making their first few days at the school as painless as possible which wasn't easy. The look of loss, confusion and loneliness on their faces was all too familiar and we empathized with them. In the end though it was up to each individual to adapt to his new surroundings as best as possible.

A number of new experiences that year for me signified a step upward in my personal growth. I was of course turning twelve and I would be in grade seven with the seniors. I would also be moving from the dormitory bed-wise and over to the infirmary. The latter had nothing to do with my mental capacity but was formerly I suppose a place for the sick but now housed intermediate level student residents. I would also become an altar boy that year which for me was a major event in my personal life. In retrospect however two things that stand out in my mind began that fall that would have far reaching consequences both for myself and my older brother's futures. We started to develop specific attitudes and behaviours that would determine the course of events in our lives. My brother started to manifest signs of moodiness, rebelliousness and at times outright anger and violence. He fought frequently with other residents made another attempt to escape and stole more often than usual. He started sharing more of his plans with me about his future after he left the school. The venue for these plans, it seems vacillated between a desire to live in the city and a life back on the reserve. I sensed he wanted to live in the city but a pervasive theme reflected in his ideas

and comments indicated a life on the reserve as a more favourable goal. By this time in his life he felt the overpowering mantle of racism which he could not come to terms with as he was very proud of his native heritage and would not compromise his sense of what it meant to be native. With convictions of this sort and a volatile temper it would be extremely difficult for him, if not impossible, to live in the city. A couple of times when he and I stole away from the school for a downtown stroll, he got into heated arguments with white people. His growing contempt was obviously escalating although he was selective in his disdain for people by targeting only those who he depicted as racially prejudiced. He never wavered in his feelings regarding this matter and this ultimately would be one of the major factors contributing to his disillusionment and tragedy a few years later.

As for myself something began stirring in me that fall and would linger for the rest of my stay at St. Joseph's. It wasn't clear at first but I believe that by the time I reached the seventh grade the idea of bettering myself began to germinate in my mind. This fundamentally translated into getting a good education and what that meant still was unclear. My father started stressing the idea to us that summer and to him that merely entailed getting a trade of some sort. Well I had another year yet before I could make any decisions regarding that matter. In any event I tried doing better in school that fall and I also tried behaving outside the classroom as well. It wasn't easy as I was very energetic and loved to clown around a lot. I also hung around with guys that also were of the same temperament. Whenever I tried to do something productive either in class or after class hours I would invariably succumb to the influence of the other clowns and lose any head-way I made in my personal development. At one point my seventh grade teacher, after one particular lark in class, labeled me an "egotist" in front of the class perhaps in an attempt to shame and thus discipline me.

Unfortunately the notion fell on deaf ears since no one knew what the word meant. She was probably right in her assessment of me though I doubt if she used the term in the right context for that particular moment. A 'buffoon' would have been a more fitting description. As hard as I tried to conform, my proclivity to clown around was just too strong and ultimately I would revert to my old ways and get in to trouble.

Outdoors hockey was still our primary activity at St. Joseph's and we would play as much of it as possible. I considered myself below average in ability but I made up for it in work and desire. Kids from the outside, mostly from the Donald St. neighbour area, would come and play 'shinny' with us. I remember this one kid who came over one Saturday afternoon fully dressed in goalie equipment except for a crucial piece of equipment that protected the most vulnerable part of the body. He alerted us to that fact and beseeched us to be exceptionally careful. Anyone that plays hockey knows the unpredictability of puck movement and that afternoon it somehow found its way to our goalie's Achilles' heel. Bowling over in pain our net-minder blurted out a number of expletives at us and vowed never to play with us again. We knew that the lure of hockey was such that his threat meant only a temporary retreat from the game. Many of the neighborhood kids came over to play on a regular basis. Occasionally partisan feelings would erupt and tempers would flare. But most of the time we pretty much got along. One day a snowball fight ensued after a game of shinny. Our rink boards served as our ramparts while the enemy stood out in the open field. Outnumbering them and in our fortified position we poured it on and they started to retreat. Then in the midst of this barrage I heard this loud thud as one of their snowballs landed resoundingly against the boards. This followed with more similar sounds as they peppered us with these strange snowballs. This secret weapon of theirs was too much and our formation and resolve disintegrated

as we made for safety to the inner sanctum of the school basement. We later learned through intelligence reports that one of their kind came up with the ingenious but barbaric idea of covering up spent coal embers with snow and launching them at us. This tactic probably would have been banned by the Geneva Convention. Anyway we later settled our differences with them and resumed our peace-time relationship with them.

We not only played hockey outdoors but we watched the game avidly on television. Hockey Night in Canada was probably the most watched television program at the school. I was, a dyed in the wool Montreal Canadien fan and wore their famous jersey reverently. I gathered whatever paraphernalia available on them that I could. A couple of years later, I was able to obtain six autographs from the players, including my favourite "the Pocket Rocket" Henri Richard, when they played an exhibition game at the Fort William Gardens. He was given the nickname "Pocket" due to his diminutive physical stature in contrast to his legendary brother Maurice, "the Rocket," Richard. Another popular television series was the Bowery Boys gang with Leo Gorcey starring as their leader Muggs McGinnis. Although many of the shows featuring these guys were predominately set in the 1930s and 40s, their hero-like antics and the free-spirited bravado of the gang appealed to us. The fact that they also defied authority and did whatever they liked did not go unnoticed by young impressionable minds. Being cooped up all of the time lent itself well for idealizing ourselves in characters in movies and television. It was about this time that boxing came to St. Joseph's. A local boxing promoter and ex-pugilist came to the school to set up a boxing program. Naturally everyone became interested including myself and as a result the Fort William Indian Boxing Club was formed. As in hockey I tried to my best to excel in boxing but I would have to settle for mediocrity. One of the drawbacks for this sport for me was the fact that I had myopia. Wearing

glasses while boxing was analogous to playing hockey and not knowing how to skate. It just wasn't to be. I tried boxing without the glasses but being unable to see an oncoming jab to the upper facial area, especially the nose would usually result in tears which would then practically blind you for the rest of the match. Even this absurd boxing style was fun as I swung wildly at my invisible opponent. Anyway I stuck to our boxing program til we all received our coveted jackets with our club name emblazoned on the back. We wore them proudly until the novelty wore off.

Moving from the main dormitory to the infirmary was a rite of passage in a way since certain amenities accompanied this move. The infirmary was a third the size of the dormitory with about seven or eight beds and it housed kids that were at the intermediate level. It was at one time used for those that were sick. In addition, at our age we were expected to behave in a more mature manner with certain responsibilities being placed upon us. We would be placed in charge of the younger ones at times and expected to provide leadership. As a non-conformist this would be very challenging for me indeed. I remember one incident in which I meted out discipline to a younger charge and I injured him. He was a friend of my younger brother and I felt awful about the whole affair, failing my responsibility, as I saw it. Anyway, I took my senior duties less seriously and this feature of my personality would follow me in my adult years. There were some advantages in the infirmary, one being its isolation and absence of the direct scrutiny from our caretakers since the nuns had their rooms away from the infirmary residents which was not the case with the dormitory. This being the case we infirmary students could talk to each other after lights were out at night. We also had little cubby holes with lock, and keys where we could place our personal stuff. I had my bed next to a window that overlooked the city at night. This bed position afforded me the luxury of gazing over the city night sky. The city lights inspired me to dream or fantasize about the world and life beyond

the school. I also had one of the most popular gadgets with the youth of the fifties and that was a 'rocket' radio. The receiver was contained in a little six inch red and white rocket. The antenna was pulled from the cone of the miniature rocket and a single ear phone would provide you with all the programs and stations. This gadget in a sense connected me to the world beyond as I listened to the Disk Jockeys commenting on all the things that were going on in the outside world. Being connected to the outside made life a little more bearable. It seems strange how isolated we were from the rest of the world here at the school. This feeling of disconnection would haunt me til I left the school for good. Anyway night time was also the best time to listen to music and by now I knew pretty well most of the songs on the hit parade and some country material. My music interest dated back to the time I started singing at the age of eight back home on the reserve and my parents were my biggest fans. One of the drawbacks though of this adoration was that I had to sing for their friends when they came home from a party which often would be around two or three in the morning. Any kid awakened from a nice comfortable sleep can well appreciate the agony and annoyance of this disruption of sleep. My penchant for singing and music carried over to my residential school period. My tastes in music was also eclectic even at an early age. I remember sitting on the stairwell at St. Joseph's a few times near the living area of the nuns on the third floor when no one was around. I would listen to the piano concertos not knowing who the composers were or the artists, but the music was alluring and I would listen as long as I could if no one came by and saw me. I was also intrigued by opera music especially when sung by female artists, not understanding it per se but feeling the sadness of the melodies and lyrics. My interest in classical music would later lay dormant for many years. One day I sneaked away from the school and went downtown to watch a movie on the famous Hungarian pianist and composer Franz Liszt. I was mildly surprised to realize I enjoyed it though

I kept this fact a secret lest I was made fun of back at the school. My brief flirtation with classical music at the school would be overpowered by the sound of popular music and rock and roll. Most of the more popular tunes I would memorize with facile ease. I would also come to favour the music of Elvis Presley and thanks to my rocket radio I was able to memorize all his songs as each new hit was released. I had a small part time job and I would save my money to buy such things as white bucks and draped pants which were popular apparel at the time. By this time being popular became important to me and singing and wearing things that were cool were some ways of accomplishing this, so I thought. While mediocre in sports ability I found a medium by which I could express my own uniqueness. During mass I would try and follow the hymns as diligently as possible but for most of the time my mind and eyes would wander during services. We went to mass six days of the week and on Sunday we had the added Benediction service in the afternoon so there were plenty of opportunities to sing.

In the preceding years I watched with envy the altar boys and I wanted very much to be one of them. An altar boy for me stood above the rest and that appealed to my already quickly expanding ego. The altar boys although seemingly elitist and were like little priests that people looked up to. However wanting to be an altar boy was one thing, getting to be one was another matter. One of the nuns took me under her wing and I started memorizing Latin immediately, a prerequisite to being an altar boy. I tried to learn all the essentials as quickly as possible for I was eager to be outfitted with the apparel for serving mass. After learning my Latin I was instructed in all the moves and proper responses in serving mass. When to move the large missal, the amount of wine to serve and the proper Latin responses to the priests's invocations. The day I was outfitted with the boy's attire they were all too large and so adjustments had to be made. I was finally ready for the serving of the

mass. On my inaugural day my garments were adjusted with safety pins so I would not trip over them Before mass when no one was around in the dressing chamber area I would take the wine bottle and place my tongue on the mouth of the bottle to sample the taste. It tasted awful I thought and wondered how people could drink such a dreadful tasting potion. For a moment I thought of the strange irony how this wine was supposed to represent the blood of Christ and yet be responsible for so much hardship anguish and despair for my relatives friends and neighbors back home. Being committed to and believing in many of the Christian tenets and principles at the time I shrugged off the notion that there was any connection although the symbolism of suffering escaped me. At that early age I appreciated the notion of a spiritual world and our own practical and tactile world and found it easy to dissociate any similarities between them in terms of explanations regarding the mystery of their relation. I simply separated matters of my faith from matters related to my immediate and temporal world. My propensity for philosophical explanations was now beginning to form. My first mass went with out incident except for the fact that I almost tripped over my garments when the safety pins loosened.

The rest of the year went by rather quickly and we were sent home for the summer. I was a little wiser now than previous summers and had picked up a new outlook that committed me to seeing through the duration of my schooling. With respect to drinking alcohol I had a strong disdain for it and all its repercussions to such an extent that I loathed being near anyone who drank. I naturally made exceptions for my parents whom I loved very much in spite of their drinking. Everyone else I did not take seriously or simply ignored. I was used to my emotions of shame but still avoided situations that placed me in embarrassing predicaments. The notion of drunken lazy Indians without any redeeming cultural or social value was indelibly imprinted in my psyche now

but I was totally unaware of what was happening to me. I was gradually going over to the other side without the tools to deal with the insurmountable psychological and social obstacles I would come to face in the next few years.

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Back on the reserve that summer I became more aware of drinking behaviors and those people that drank most of the time. By comparison the social stigma attached to the drinking problems associated with reserve life was low key in terms of public awareness during the fifties. Indian reserves were isolated and out of the public eye. Back home in Gull Bay the problem wasn't extensive but it was just as socially and culturally disruptive as it is today. Most of the community problems were caused by a small core of individuals but the continuous effects of alcoholism pervaded each family including my own. I divorced myself consciously from the influence of alcohol though I was physically mired in its disruptive social milieu. It would affect my living condition, I thought, but not my mind.

Most of the guys I hung around with during the summer often out of curiosity went where the action was in terms of fights that went on between those under the influence. Most were harmless and comical but a few were quite violent. Perhaps it was the latter that had more influence on me in my not wanting to be a part of this violent world, thinking instead about my future and prospects that I would shape for myself. Little did I know what lay ahead for me. The drinking problems notwithstanding, I was determined to enjoy my summer as best I could. As with previous summers there was always plenty to do.

The most memorable experience that summer was meeting my maternal grandfather who one day popped into our lives unannounced. I heard much about him but had not remembered anything about him as a toddler. One bright early sunny morning I heard the roar of a Beaver engine as the bush plane crossed directly overhead our house, which was the last one in the village, to make its landing at the dock. My mother got up quickly and said she had a feeling we were going to have an interesting visitor that morning. A short time later a knock on our door had everyone scurrying about to welcome our visitor. When my mother's father entered she introduced him to us and we all shyly acknowledged his presence. My mother made tea for him and they both exchanged some greeting-type comments. The most notable feature of him I found was his gravelly and raspy voice. He was of medium height and sturdy build and had what I thought the most typical features of a true full blooded Indian. He had a swarthy appearance, high cheek bones and piercing dark eyes but unlike my typical Indian he loved to talk, a feature that didn't fit the image of the stoic, noble and reticent Indian. After introductions my mother gave him a big cup of tea and a piece of the cake she had baked the night before. I noticed she had skimmed off the mouse tracks on the icing that I had discreetly brought to her attention earlier. Anyway he drank the tea but gave the cake to my younger brother who gorged it down ravenously. He later retired to one of the bedrooms to sleep for a couple of hours. I later learned a few interesting details about him that border on the legendary. One of the more interesting items was that he went off to war by paddling across Lake Nipigon in a canoe to MacDiarmid. That in itself was quite a feat since the lake is not conducive for small water craft. When we got to know him better we would prod him for stories about his war experiences. Unlike other war veterans who were reluctant to do so, he was accommodating in telling us some of these stories. I wondered though how factual his stories were. Most of what I learned about World War

I in history was of its horror and the terrible conditions suffered by the soldiers, one of the main reasons many returning veterans were reluctant to talk about it. My grandfather in his own inimitable style dealt with its aftermath by not taking it too seriously since it was all over; and though he may have been profoundly grateful for coming back, he chose to deal with it in his own manner. I once asked him why he went over and he simply replied with a touch of levity in his gravelly voice, "for the twelve dollars a month". I'm sure if he was speaking to adults his answers would have been more judicious and somber. Years later after he died I read a quote by him in a text about the contribution of native soldiers overseas. His answer to a question posed to him by the author concerning the war was as curt and simple as I remembered him to be. Another time when I coaxed him on his experiences he told me of the time he took shots at the German ace Baron von Richthofen. I don't know if he was embellishing his story or even if what he said was possible under the circumstances. It didn't matter. As long as he was willing to tell his stories we were there to listen. After the war he was apparently given some assistance by the government to start up a store on the reserve. He was not an astute business man for he virtually credited himself out of business. The location of his ill-fated store we visited as kids and found it overgrown with trees and shrubs, but rusted out old pots and pans half buried left evidence of one of his many fleeting experiences. Of all the people I knew on the reserve his life seemed the most adventuresome. He didn't stay in one place for too long. I once heard that he was a shaman but gave it up for reasons only he knew. He loved playing poker a lot and he once threatened his poker cronies not to spend their winnings so he could win his losses back. As he grew older I remember in the summer times when he would lay down on his back cross his legs and hum ancient Ojibway songs while flicking his index finger in the air. He would attempt to tell us Ojibway stories about times past but they seemed surrealistic and

not in harmony with the standard children's stories we were taught at the residential school and therefore our attention span was short and we would invariably take off and play. Our summer stays were just too short for us to become inured in our culture. My mother also tried telling me some of these narratives but the nature of the stories were such that I couldn't grasp their meanings. The most enduring and impressive feature of my grandfather's life was the fact that he made a significant contribution as an Ojibway to the war effort. He never made a big thing about the war itself other than to make casual comments about it. He lived life fast and to the fullest and acted as if serious matters should be dealt with as quickly as possible in order to get on with the rest of living. While many other natives went to war, the fact that he was from my family was of extreme import to a twelve year old whose self-identity and image was rapidly deteriorating. He lived with us for the rest of his years.

The other major event and memory for me that summer was the fact that my father arbitrarily decided I was to go on a moose hunting expedition with him and one of his friends. This decision was followed by a mild objection by my mother who since my earlier experiences was overly protective of me. My dad assured her that I would be alright. I suppose my dad was carrying out one of his primordial responsibilities and duties as an Ojibway parent to teach his sons the ways of the hunter. I don't remember my reaction to this imposition on my fooling around on the reserve time but once underway I became totally engrossed in the trip. I recall the canoe being rather small for the three of us and our equipment. I was still a bit nervous of water in particular situations, for the memory of almost drowning was still fresh in my mind. We were transported on a larger boat and headed to a place called Duck Bay which would be the starting point of our hunting trip. Once there we got in the canoe and started paddling to the mouth of a small creek that led to a place called

Havoc Lake. Had I known what the name of this lake meant I probably would have made some vehement objections about my inclusion in the hunting party. While my companions paddled I noticed they kept their paddles in the water and did not lift them out of the water after each stroke for the sake of being a little extra quiet. Prior to this I had been looking around my new environment and was absorbing as much of it as possible while they chatted about mundane matters. The day was absolutely gorgeous with hardly a cloud in the sky as the overhead sun dispensed its rays and heat down on us. A soft breeze provided the right mixture of warmth and coolness. As we glided through the water I instinctively grew quiet after both my companions abruptly did so. Tensing my body in a manner I thought the great Ojibway hunters did in ancient times to be exceptionally quiet, I slowly twisted my head like Linda Blair in the movie The Exorcist to look at my father who was gazing intently straight ahead. After a few more strokes of the paddle they stopped and stayed absolutely quiet and still and stared straight ahead. We were about a hundred yards from the mouth of the creek and I also stared in the same direction but did not notice anything significant. All I could see was the soft swaying of the tall yellow grass and bull rushes heading the narrow entrance. Lilly pads dotted the surface of the water everywhere. The variety of flies that flitted here and there was hardly noticeable as my heart started to make its presence known. The only other noticeable object back away from the entrance was a dark deadhead protruding slightly from the water. These old waterlogged pulp sticks could be spotted everywhere around the bay stuck in the sand bottom with one end surfacing. The silence of my companions was beginning to be almost unbearable as we stared ahead at what I didn't know for a few more seconds or minutes and then the canoe edged its way ahead ever so slightly and quietly and stopped again. I was beginning to wonder about the mental stability of my hunting partners as they seemed to be in a trance like state. Then suddenly

and dramatically in an almost hallucinatory manner I watched mouth agape the deadhead transform itself into a large moose. Its huge bulk emerged from the surface with water dripping profusely from its head. My heart was now pounding wildly as the drama before me unfolded. He didn't seem to notice us but stared in our direction munching on the rich lichen he had been foraging below. As he stuck his head in the water for another scoop of his dinner the hunters inched their way forward to get within shooting range of their old 30-30. When the moose rose from his second submergence underwater he then saw us and proceeded to retreat to the tree line above the embankment. We just sat still and watched this majestic animal gently stride away up the embankment in a dignified manner as if prepared to expect the worse. He would live to see another day and I was happy for him as I was swayed by what many may term the 'Bambi syndrome' in my feeling for wild animals, something I inherited from the many Disney movies. As if to thank the hunters he stopped momentarily and gave us one last glance and then disappeared into the bush. What an incredible visual experience, I thought, of seeing what I just saw. No movie projector could or will ever be able to capture or reproduce one's experience with an animal in his true element. For the first time in our trip I was awakened from my monotonous slumber. I had experienced numerous sightings of moose before, either from a moving car window or at some distance and my excitement was usually fleeting. This was genuinely a different encounter. It was our purposively coming into his domain and seeing him absolutely unaware of our presence and his reaction to our intrusion that was quite exciting. The close proximity was another factor owing to my excitement. From that moment on I would make every effort to concentrate on the hunt as much as possible. Was this the goal my father intended? Both he and his partner never said a word to me in the form of instructions or commands concerning the whole episode. They treated me like some seasoned hunter and never once

admonished me for anything. I must have done the right things by being quiet and remaining still at the right times. I wondered though why they didn't shoot. The reason was rather ordinary and simple which I would learn later. I sensed they did make comments about the incident in Ojibway which I didn't understand for my Ojibway was still in its infant stage.

We paddled up stream for a little while until our advance was blocked by a small cascade and rapids. Everything around me was now creating a strange new experience I barely could describe. To our right I noticed a trail by which we would portage this natural obstacle. Getting out of the canoe I took a brief moment aside to give a silent thanks for accepting this trip without objection. The portage was not lengthy and in a short time we were all comfortably ensconced in the canoe and paddling further into the wilderness. My adventuresome spirit once again took hold. I began to notice everything now as I didn't want to miss a thing. The stream was bordered on both sides by tall grass and now and then a canopy of alders and ash overhung the edge of the waterline. The water was crystal clear and I could see all kinds of minute creatures below. A water bug or whirligig would periodically disturb the water surface, momentarily blocking out some of the images. Ahead a small beaver swam in our direction and the paddles were gently lifted from the water and stilled as the young rodent swam past apparently unaware of our presence. Dead falls crisscrossed at various intervals along the stream causing us to duck our heads now and then.

We eventually came upon a small beaver dam which we traversed by depressing a portion of it with the canoe and our footing. This immediately caused a deluge of water to break through the dam. Later on that evening on our way back I noticed that the beaver had made the necessary repair work and closed the dam once more. We continued on up the small tributary till we reached the mouth leading into Havoc Lake. The lake had a horse-shoe like shape running north to south and we

entered in at the eastern most tip of the horse shoe. Our objective was to go around to the other side of the lake. The promontory that divided the lake was made up of a high walled cliff of granite and trees topography typical of the Canadian Shield. I scanned the shoreline in search of life. The piercing trill of a loon call directed my attention to its location. My gaze then caught the flight of a Great Blue Heron along the shoreline. As we neared the horn of the promontory I heard the faint sound of a plane engine as my companions hurriedly made for cover under a canopy of alders at the water's edge. This was the time before hunting rights were restored to native people and hunting practices were done almost surreptitiously. Emerging from the green foliage cover we decided to stop for lunch at the point rounding the bend to the other side of the lake. Judging from the evidence strewn about the spot was obviously a popular one. There wasn't much to do except observe what was going on. Almost in minutes a small fire was crackling and soon after a partial handful of tea leaves was flicked into a pot of boiling water. The smell of the campfire smoke and brewing tea was a familiar and most agreeable feeling. Soon I enjoyed the unmistakable distinct taste and odor of a fresh cup of tea made outdoors. My eyes then wandered over to my dad who was gently handling and kneading dough in a flour bag for the fried bannock I would soon be devouring with bologna. As a naive observer I marveled at some of the little things my hunting partners did quietly and efficiently with little fanfare. Only things that were essentially required were brought along. The canoe was gently overturned to dry and camouflaged under the trees. The fire that was made produced as little smoke as possible. The axe used to execute some of the camp chores was razor sharp in contrast to the one I used to chop wood back home. After lunch when we were ready to resume our trip I noticed everything was just as it was before we arrived. It was as if we hadn't been there. The refuse we produced was bagged and placed back in the canoe. All was done with the least amount of noise.

After shoving off I noticed both men were unusually quiet and I instinctively did the same. We were now on the western leg of the lake which was absolutely calm and placid. It was also slightly humid now and whispers of any kind or the gentle touch of a paddle against the canoe would most certainly carry across the lake and warn an unsuspecting quarry. As we quietly cruised along I took the opportunity to observe and think about my father's friend for a moment. They had been friends for years and it was he that gave my dad that decrepit canoe my brother and I trashed two summers ago. I had seen him before at home when he and my dad imbibed on occasions. In size he was just the opposite my father. He had a slim build and was a bit shorter. His slender face sported two beady eyes that I guessed could see for quite a distance as my father did. He had a crooked narrow nose that perhaps saw a few fights in its time. His lower lip protruded naturally past his upper lip and not merely because of the clump of snuff he was now savoring and chewing. Both he and my dad seemed a fitting pair. Earlier in the trip they joked and laughed at similar anecdotes and experiences they obviously had. Not once was I the subject of their musings and thoughts which was just fine with me. Suddenly my thoughts and the silence were interrupted by a slight movement in the canoe and the sound of broken water surface. My dad who manned the back of the canoe apparently dropped a line and hook in the water to create the illusion of us fishing a ruse he intended for game wardens should they pay us an unsuspected visit. Catching a fish was not his intention and he cursed under his breath more in annoyance at the fish, murmuring that had he intended to fish he probably would not have been so lucky. I silently chuckled at his misfortune. Extricating the fish from the line he gently placed it back in the water as it was a tad too small for consumption. Before placing the paddle back in the water to continue both hunters seemed transfixed on something at the far end of the lake. Although I wore prescription glasses I couldn't see or hear

a thing but the distant shoreline. Looking back for some assurance perhaps my father's friend turned and waited for a signal. Then both of them quietly dipped their paddles back into the water and with quick and deliberate strokes headed in the direction of the mysterious disturbance.

In a few minutes we were about five hundred yards form the shoreline and once again the canoe was motionless but I still failed to see or hear what all the fuss was about. With a determined effort I too gazed in the direction as my partners and held my breath. The silence was deafening except for my slow exhaling breath. All I saw ahead of me was the distant tree line, half glowing with a late afternoon sunset orange and the other half cast in a dark shadow by the mountain to our right. I stared and waited in the silence for what seemed like eternity and then I heard it, the unmistakable sound of something big wading and thrashing in water. The moment the sound commenced the canoe also advanced slowly. Once again I could hear my heart pounding with excitement. We were about three hundred yards from the shoreline when I saw the dark form of a large bull moose almost totally blended in the dark area of the tree line. Like the other moose we saw that afternoon this one was also busy having supper from the rich food source below. When we were within range of the moose two loud shots rang out from the 30-30 that must have wakened every living creature for miles around. In disbelief I saw the moose still standing and preparing to take off when another shot rang out. By this time the moose was in full flight headed for the tree line. I couldn't understand why the moose didn't go down. I wasn't an expert in marksmanship and hunting but even at twelve I instinctively knew the killing range of a moose especially with a 30-30. The latter was a common and popular gun for moose hunting by the Ojibway of Gull Bay and probably elsewhere in those years but it generally is considered a deer gun by most non-native hunters. The shooter for that moment was my dad and that made my perplexity all the more confusing since he

was considered by many an exceptional hunter. Both of them seemed a bit amused by the whole affair and both also began to inspect the old firearm a little more closely. A faulty sight on the antiquated gun was the apparent reason for the miss and not much was made in the way of other reasons or excuses. Both hunters were quite confident about their abilities to down a moose. As for myself I never once questioned my father's ability for I took for granted testimonials of his abilities. Years later I would witnessed for myself when he downed two moose with a single shot each from a twenty two caliber rifle. I know for certain that had I not been there that day at Havoc Lake they would have gotten their moose, faulty gun and all. Perhaps their concern for my safety prevented them from getting within range for a sure kill. Anyway I was almost glad for the miss partially for the sake of the moose and partly because of the work involved when a moose is downed especially in water.

Being unusually humid that day there would have been a zillion black flies around and just as many leeches in the water after the blood. The canoe would have been loaded to the hilt and the portage would have to be traversed moose and all. Well the day was not over yet and I was beginning to grow a little weary. I was still enjoying myself and wondered what was next in store for my adventurous spirit. We stopped briefly ashore once again for some more tea and bannock and then prepared to return home. On our way back I noticed a cloud cover approaching. When we reached the portage it was starting to get dark and by the time we reached the mouth of the stream we entered that afternoon it was almost pitch black outside. Mosquitoes were beginning to irritate me. It must have been around ten in the evening by now and I couldn't see anything except the vague outline of a figure in front of me. I wondered how these guys were going to navigate their way home in the dark which was about four miles away by water. Just as I thought I would be on my way home and soon

resting in a comfortable bed the canoe once more stopped and we listened intently into the night. This time we remained stationary in one spot for about twenty minutes. Only the sounds of crickets and frogs could be heard in the soft breezy but still night. Of course the loon made his continuous presence known with his periodic cry. The mosquitoes were soon replaced by innumerable black flies as if a work shift change took place. I did everything to ward them off but there were just to many. The worst part was their irritation in my ears and eyes. As I tried to brush them off vigorously I was beginning to cause a little commotion in the boat. My dad gave me a silent cuff at the scruff of my head to motion me still. With all the willpower I could muster at that moment I let the flies alone to do what ever they wanted. I wondered though why they didn't bother my companions who acted as if they were immune to these intruders of equanimity. In a moment they seemed to have stopped bothering me entirely. Was I dreaming I thought. Then the barely perceptible sound, that I recognized instantly as a moose wading in water, seized my concentration. Again, as I held my breath, my heart awoke from its silent beat and began to drum thunderously. Judging by its activity in the water the moose was now just barely a hundred yards away. We remained absolutely still until it was almost on top of us. As much as I had confidence in these guys I was beginning to feel afraid for the first time that day. I was wondering also how on earth were they planning to make this kill if that was even their intention. I knew they had a flash light and even that faulty old gun would surely have found its mark at this distance. The moose finally sensed our presence and made a mad dash for safety. As I heard the retreating sound of thrashing water I breathed a deep sigh of relief and once again the black flies returned with a vengeance. Maybe it was the oxygen in my head from holding my breath too long but the last few moments felt almost surrealistic. The entire episode must have transpired a little over a half hour but seemed only like minutes. My companions made some

casual and light verbal observations of the whole affair and we then departed the area to meet our rendezvous with our pickup.

As we cruised home in the warm breeze I thought of the events of the day. All of the discomforts I experienced later seemed inconsequential. The whole day and all that I experienced that day I didn't know at the time had more of an impact on me and my life then any school period in town. I never knew what my father's motives were for taking me that day. Was he trying to make a hunter of me or was he trying to impress upon me the hardships of life on the reserve? If it was the latter he failed miserably because the experience and what I learned that day I would and could not trade for an equally worthy life experience anywhere. Never was I admonished to pay attention or scolded aside from being mildly cuffed on the back of my ear. If I wanted to learn, it was entirely up to me. The classroom was there before me "*a nok a ming*", the bush, in all its glory and wonder, not to be abused nor taken for granted. The dangers were there also if one did not heed or take the necessary precautions or respect the very first lesson I learned and heeded about the bush. I did not become a great hunter but I did learn to respect the outdoors. I would later use all of the skills outdoors including stalking but I never once pulled the trigger probably because I didn't need to and also because of the 'Bambi Syndrome'. I learned more that day without direct instruction but by observation and interest. I learned how to respect and handle guns even if faulty, to make a fire and douse it properly, to make bannock in a flour bag, to canoe, to stalk a moose in water, patience, fortitude in stressful situations, and most importantly not to panic and much more. I suppose the most important lesson I learned that day was to be Ojibway and proud, though this feeling and emotion would soon be truncated by my return to the residential school and city. My pride would

remain dormant but emerge in an instant should anyone challenge my sense of what it meant to be Native.

The rest of the summer rolled by rather quickly and everything appeared mundane and anticlimactic after the hunting trip. I may have grown a bit because of my experience. Games seemed rather trivial now and I was thinking about starting my last year at St. Joseph's. I knew I wouldn't be happy returning but I was now committed to go. In late August one day I walked over to the 'Indian dock" as it was commonly referred to and watched the people prepare for the fall fishing season. Some were repairing their boats while others were mending nets and cleaning and drying them on large spinning spools. I remembered in my younger days how we kids would often spin upside down on those spools for fun. I looked over to the right of the dock at a piece of land jutting out into the bay. Located there was one of my favorite hiding spots on the reserve. A trail led out to a tip of the land behind the large ice houses. The wind was picking up now and some of the leaves were beginning to color and carpet the ground. I reached the end of the cliff and sat down and searched the far off shoreline. Luckily I brought a warm jacket as it was now blowing very hard. The waves were now crashing violently against the rocks below. I came to this spot several times before when I was feeling down to think and rejuvenate my thoughts. It always seemed to work. Today I thought that this would be my last Boarding School summer and wondered what lay ahead for me. I walked home later a little refreshed but still in a melancholic state of mind. A few days later we were on a huge school bus headed back to town for the 59/60 school year.

Chapter Six

Fall 1959 — Summer 1960

My final year at St Joseph's began with a determination to finish grade school and go on to high school. It wasn't as if I was looking forward to high school but I was now determined to get at least a high school education. I knew my social skills outside of residential school were wanting but somehow I would survive, I thought, and besides I still had a whole year yet to worry about that. My eighth grade teacher it turned out was a man. Land sakes, we were about to enter a new decade and now we had a male teacher. I did not know whether St. Joseph's had a male teacher before but this was the first during my term there. He was fairly large and was probably still in his mid-twenties. He had a good-natured disposition and was very approachable but also could be firm when necessary. He seemed to take an interest in our own aspirations and interests. My brother and he became friends almost immediately. Learning about our interest in hockey he took the time to talk about it more than any previous encounters we had. As much as I liked hockey I probed him in other areas. Judging by many of his comments he seemed to me a man of the world and was willing to share many of his experiences and ideas with us, something us guys were not privy to with the other female teachers who had little in common with us. One day he made a remark about university which caught my attention immediately. I asked him to tell us more about it. He apparently went to one school down east somewhere. He told us of how large a university was and all that was taught there. He stressed the point that you were your own boss and that it was entirely up to you to discipline yourself. I was pretty excited about everything he said about higher education. He also spoke of the size of a university campus and the varied subjects you could study and I was very much

impressed. He spoke of the many activities and freedom which I found too hard to believe. It sounded all very real but so remote from my world. At the time I had no idea how I was going to reach that level but I accepted it as some distant goal. I would put the subject aside for the time being and nurture it from time to time.

Things were not always congenial between myself and my new teacher. One day in class while we were supposed to be reading in silence one of my best friends who was also a goof shot me in the back of the head with an elastic band. I turned around to investigate the source of this projectile and found the reprobate responsible for this cowardice act quietly snickering and gloating about his direct hit. Well this called for immediate retaliation and so I searched my immediate desk area for the elastic and found it. To load up this rubbery missile you fastened one part of the band at the end of a ruler and cocked the other by stretching it to the other end of the ruler. To fire it off you simply slid your thumbnail up the elastic and it would sail off with uncanny accuracy. Well this is one weapon I was pretty careless with. When I turned around to size up my target after loading up the ruler I must have accidently discharged the elastic for when I prepared to fire the missile, it was gone. I searched the immediate area for it but to no avail. This all transpiring to no one's attention except to myself and my adversary. Giving up my search I looked up and forward to the head of the class to find in absolute horror my teacher rubbing his now red and puffy eye with his hand. Looking around at no one specific and stretching the band between his fingers he inquired as to who was the guilty party that fired the elastic that caught him square in his eye. For a few seconds I didn't move to see if my friend would take the blame and when he didn't I slowly rose from my desk head down in shame, fear and embarrassment and slowly admitted my misdeed. He admonished me in front of the class but to my surprise did not administer other punishment. From that day forward I respected

him for his tact and tried to behaved as best I could in all his classes. I think my grades started improving under his guidance for he had the ability to motivate us. I remember writing an essay in his class that I thought was pretty good. This was a mild surprise since I never really gave my school work and accomplishments much attention. I also began listening more attentively. I started thinking more about high school that year but didn't know where I would be going. I assumed I would be attending St. Patrick's High School which was next door to the Boarding school which to me was okay since I would be possibly with other graduates from St. Joseph's. Later I would learn another path had been chosen for me, one less to my liking. I would be assigned to another high school much larger and with virtually no other native students. This school was far larger and hence lacked the cozier atmosphere of St. Pat's. My dependence on St. Joseph's also had some bearing on my uneasy feelings.

That winter our teacher became more involved with our hockey games and probably brought his interest to the attention of the nuns. One day he brought over a couple of his friends who were interested in coaching us. That was just fine with us as long as it did not interfere with our shinny time on the ice. Well as it turned out we were told that in order to improve we would have to practice and work hard. I knew there was a catch and so for the next little while we practiced all kinds of ice hockey drills that improved our skating abilities and positional play. In time we were getting pretty good. I don't really know how I managed to make the cut since I didn't think I was that good. Maybe I worked a little harder and displayed more desire to make the team. When we were about ready we gave our team a name and issued a few challenges to outside schools in the area. Our equipment was still a bit used and substandard compared to our adversaries' but we never turned down a match since we were the challengers anyway. We began to win more games than we lost even to teams that might

be considered playing in a higher division than us such as St Pat's High. Our reputation soon caught the attention of the local news paper and our team picture and story was featured in the Fort William *News Chronicle* one day. The caption and a portion of the byline read:

St. Joe Demons Overcome Slump

> A team from St. Joseph's Orphanage is rapidly making a name for itself in the hockey field. This under-equipped team has played most of the separate schools in the city including a team from St Pat's High and has come out on top in eight of their 13 games.

Needless to say we were very proud of ourselves but knew it wasn't a stepping stone to the National Hockey League. We were all very grateful to the volunteers and grade eight teacher who took the time and effort to help us gain a measure of pride in ourselves. After the season ended we were all treated to an evening out on the town. We went to a well known restaurant in town to bask in our glory. There was talk about expanding the program the following year, a moot point for me since I wouldn't be present. There were more things to life besides hockey I thought.

After hockey that winter I refocused my attention on school the next year. My desire to better myself and continue school stemmed in part from my father's coaxing. I knew that a life on the reserve meant one with little opportunity for work and also one with alcohol pervasive in all that we did there. There was no escaping it. As much as I loved the reserve, surrounding land and the simple life style I was beginning to hate drinking and everything associate with it because of the shame it brought to us as a people. I was determined to bypass that existence and perhaps carve out a life for myself that was substantially more comfortable and that meant finishing high school at any expense. For most boys my age school was a 'swear word' and so I kept my aspirations and goals to myself. I spoke only to my teacher about them and he encouraged me as much as possible. I was so in earnest

to go on and finish high school that year that I awoke one night very sad and almost in tears because I dreamt I was denied the opportunity to go on. One of the factors that separated me from others was the fact that I was not as fully integrated into reserve life. Because of my lengthy stays at hospitals early in my life I didn't speak Ojibway that well and I wasn't entirely purged from the city lifestyle by my return to the reserve. Most of my peers returned to their respective areas and homes following their discharge from St. Joseph's the following year.

Spring went and the summer came to St. Joseph's in 1960. The months of May and June were perhaps my most contented in all the years I spent at St. Joseph's knowing full well it was my last. I counted each day anticipating the last. In the meantime there were still other things that preoccupied my interests and energies. One of the more popular pastimes in that period was our weekend walks to Chippewa Park and climbing Mount McKay. Every weekend several of the boys my age hiked over to the base of the mountain and began our trek to the top. We had to trespass on private property and we were certainly aware of the fact that we would have been punished for climbing the mountain had we been found out back at the school. The fact that the challenge was there was the main reason for us to climb not to mention the fact also that we had bundles of energy to expend. I think the climb to the very top itself took about a half an hour. Near the top ice and snow were still present in some areas along our pathway. Once at the top we explored and did some viewing of the twin cities atop the highest peak in the district. We recognized many buildings and landmarks from that distance including the school where we resided. As a result of our explorations we discovered tunnels at the top that exited somewhere around the mid-point of the mountain's face. Once one of our party started down into the tunnels we were all obligated to do so also. No one wanted to be designated a chicken and so we all followed. I was very frightened as our footings were

not that secure and strong drafts of wind would shoot upwards threatening to jar us off our pathway and down into the tunnel. I was very much relieved when we all made it out safely. That was the only time I did that particular stunt as I thought there was no need to prove myself again. For a change of pace we would often take the long hike to Chippiwa Park which by comparison not as exciting as the climb but a lot safer. The afternoon sun beating against the pavement often drained us of the same energy we used climbing the mountain. The only exciting event at the park was watching the animals especially the bears we felt more akin to. They never failed to remind you a little of home. One late afternoon as we headed back to the school one the guys found a men's magazine in the ditch. We passed it around as everyone was eager to examine some of its contents. The pictures were of women clad in flimsy lingerie and obscured even more by exposure to rain and sunshine. Somehow word got around back at the school of our discovery and we paid dearly with our hands. That was probably my last strap at the school. By now I had become calloused mentally and physically to the deterrent effects of that mode of punishment, perhaps a sign that I was ready to leave permanently. Another sign came days later when I had a physiological accident in the bathtub an experience that was quite sudden and unexpected. I was thirteen now and sex education for boys then was still light years away and every thing we learned pertaining to this subject was purely accidental and incremental.

As much as I wanted to leave St. Joseph's Boarding School forever, there remained lingering and residual feelings of sadness and uncertainty. I had become accustomed to the brand of security it insulated me with. I knew of no other living accommodation of home in the city. The comradery and esprit des corps of the other kids I would undoubtedly miss. Even the old building that housed me for five years I looked on with a peculiar sadness. I still remember vividly the day I first passed

the front entrance but the details of my departure from the school are entirely erased from my memory. Years later when I visited the site (the building long since demolished) I strained to hear the sound of the kids playing in the yard, a phenomenon many people claim to experience when revisiting an old haunt. More than anything else though I would in an ambivalent sort of way miss the nuns who took care of us the last four years of my stay. For the most part our feelings towards our caretakers at the school were never encouraged to be expressed openly. The relation we had with our teachers and other personnel of the school was pretty well neutral. We were never close enough to anyone else to rate one way or the other. My feelings toward any particular individual at the school depended entirely on how I related with them and that rule of thumb was probably held by the majority of the residents. The nuns looking after us though played a more critical role in our day to day waking experience. The straps I received were not unusual in that everyone received the same treatment for any particular transgression and I never took them as personal. The punishments were not as if they were administered on a regular basis but applied to more serious wrong-doings. The senior nun played an encouraging role in many aspects of my life that I deem were important to me. She allowed me to work at a small part-time job, assisted as my mentor in my training as an alter boy, and encouraged me in any way she could. One day toward the end of the school term she momentarily let down her guard against her emotional involvement. After cutting my hair she murmured affectionately while gently holding my head, "this is the last haircut I will be giving you". I understood and appreciated a side of her humanity that her vocation perhaps limited her to express openly. I in turn awkwardly tensed myself to this gesture as most boys do when their mothers get too mushy.

Well finally the day arrived when I left St. Joseph's permanently. My younger siblings would continue on til they too became of age. There was little fanfare about my departure and little in the way of forecasting what was in store for me in the future. All I could think of for the moment was the summer days ahead. My attitude towards an uncertain future was simply to wait and cross that bridge when I reached it.

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The summer of 1960 was a bit unusual because of the fact that we would spend most of the time in Armstrong Ontario, a community which is on the Canadian National Railway (CNR) line fifty miles north of Gull Bay. At the time, Armstrong was a bustling little town with a population of approximately 400 to 500 people. There was a small Ojibway population that lived on the periphery of the town. The main industries at the time were the CNR and the Department of Lands and Forests which has since been renamed the Ministry of Natural Resources. Many of the Native residents also engaged in trapping, logging and fishing. Another activity that provided the community with additional income and resources was the presence of American armed forces that manned a radar station and air force base outside the town. The radar station was part of the Pine Tree Line, one of three early warning radar systems designed and constructed by the American and Canadian governments to detect enemy aircraft entering North American airspace. The entire system soon after became antiquated and was dismantled because of new technology.

The reason escapes me why we were located in Armstrong that summer other than the fact my father may have been employed by the Department of Lands and Forests (now the Ministry of

Natural Resources). Anyway the experience of another community for the summer would certainly be welcomed by me. My younger brother and I immediately made friends with other Ojibway kids, some of whom we had already met at the boarding school. We were dependent on and at the mercy of these kids to make out our program itinerary for the summer, since we were in unfamiliar territory. Like most communities in the north, the most popular summer activity for kids in Armstrong was, of course, swimming. However we would have to walk three miles south of the town to McKenzie Lake to do our swimming. This was okay too, since the hike itself always provided ample things to see and do. Armstrong was also a prime location for blueberry picking. The berries could easily be sold directly to the local grocers and stores.

About eight miles to the north of Armstrong, an air force base was located which was one of the main activity areas for the Americans. The radar station was constructed high on a rocky hill just outside the town and it became a very curious item for me. I was aware of the threat of nuclear war, since that notion was pounded into our heads at the boarding school to make us acutely aware of how communist Russia was a dangerous country. Nikita Khrushchev, Russia's president had a bald head and a noticeable wart on his nose and that certainly made him look very sinister. His pictures and television clips always had him shouting with his mouth wide open not unlike Adolf Hitler's pictures. We were forever encouraged to pray for his and Russia's conversion. So being aware of this huge international confrontation and also being within the proximity of some of the logistics and main actors involved in the cold war was certainly more interesting than just reading about it in books and hearing about it second hand. The American presence also provided prime fodder for idle chit chat and all kinds of spooky scenarios. Other than swimming and picking berries, there wasn't that much to do. Since we were like visitors, we depended on others to initiate activities.

In the evenings we hung around downtown a lot and simply watched the activity around the local hotel which was the main drinking establishment. Another popular spot was the train station which had a small restaurant. We would meet almost all of the incoming passenger trains to see who was coming in and who was leaving. The station was always teeming with people and activity. The Americans too were visible almost everywhere you went. There was nothing unusual about them except for the fact that they were in uniform and that there were so many of them. I kept my distance from them as I did with most adults since the only activity most adults I saw engaged in was drinking at the hotel located at the center of town. My family and I had one interesting encounter with one American aviator earlier on in the summer. As we were returning home that summer from the orphanage, our taxi had mechanical problems half ways down the old gravel road leading to Gull Bay and Armstrong. It was about fifty miles to the nearest garage and the adults decided to hitchhike back to get some help while us young kids and one adult stayed back to wait. To bide our time we walked along the deserted road and explored the nearby bushes. Some time around late afternoon a jeep approached us going in the direction we had been. The driver was a U.S. air force officer who climbed out of his vehicle to ask us if we needed any help. Explaining our situation, there was little that he could do. We thanked him for his offer and said we would just wait for our parents and taxi driver. In the meantime my older brother started asking him questions about the nature of his business. Our visitor then started telling us that he was an air force pilot from the United States and was on his way to Armstrong to the air force base there. We asked him specific questions like how to become a pilot. My brother was all ears, since the idea interested him very much. My interest immediately fizzled when he said I couldn't wear glasses as a pilot. Before he left us however, he let us try on his pilot helmet since he had been carrying his equipment in the jeep. We were all

impressed by his accommodating and personable nature and were sorry to see him leave. For the remainder of the day I had to listen to my brother boast how he was now going to be a pilot someday

Towards the end of the summer we returned to Gull Bay. I was almost fourteen now and my moods started to swing from being hyper to just wanting to be alone. I spent a lot of time at my solitary spot over-looking the bay thinking about the days ahead. I knew that there would soon be a significant change in my life but just how I couldn't begin to imagine. I was also caught in a dilemma of yearning to stay home and yet knowing that I had to go on to school for my own sake. My older brother after trying high school in the city for a year decided he had, had enough and stayed home permanently. As for me there were different expectations from my parents. I didn't want to disappoint my mother as well as my father and that meant going on to school. The goal of wanting to better myself, it seems, was a veneer for the more consciously obscure goal that I had been nurturing for sometime and that was simply to discard the "lazy drunken Indian image" an idea that was solidly entrenched in my mind by now. I had no idea of the tremendous burden I unwittingly placed upon myself and even less an idea on how to carry out the program. Probably the first step on the way to that program came in the last days of the summer in Gull Bay. After returning to the reserve from Armstrong that summer, I met two new friends from the city who were staying with relatives on the reserve for a week or so. They apparently had just completed their first year in high school. Through them I was able to learn some procedural steps in terms of what program I was to take. With the information I elicited from them I was able to feel a little more comfortable about what to do when I enrolled. I didn't want to embarrass myself by appearing stupid when queried about my intentions concerning curricula. One of the guys told me that he was enrolled in the technical program which to me meant nothing but the word stuck. He seemed puzzled at my

questions about things that should have been elementary. I stopped questioning him any further and gave him an expression as if to say, "I knew that". I at least had some vague notion about programs and that was the extent of what I knew about high school. My brother did not impart any useful information regarding the programs, since only one was offered at St. Patrick's High School where he went for part of a year. It seems I was now beginning to feel more and more anxious as the time was nearing when I would begin a new mode of existence and I wanted as much information as possible to make a transition as smoothly as possible. I would be starting high school that fall with another person from my reserve. With the little bit of knowledge I managed to pluck from my new friends we headed back once more to Fort William to begin the 1960/61 school year

EPILOGUE

I returned to Fort William that fall in 1960 with a lot of uncertainty and anxiety about my ability to cope with an unfamiliar and new daily existence. I sensed, judging from whatever I picked up at the school regarding the outside world, I would not be very happy at all. The fact that I wanted an education badly was the only factor that made me determined to ride out the storm which would last another four years. Had I been less enthusiastic about completing high school, I would certainly have rebelled and created all kinds of opposition for my continued education. In the meantime I would learn piecemeal what the requirements were psychologically and socially in order for me to accomplish my goal in this new environment.

My final and official break in ties with St. Joseph's came when my boarding home family arrived there to pick me up at the lobby of the school. They seemed pleasant enough and supplied us with as much information as we required about school. Another student from my reserve was to attend the school I was going to. We would be attending Westgate High a school with a student body of about twelve hundred students. This was a far cry in numbers and more impersonal than the small student body at St. Pat's High School.

The morning I was to register at the school, my feet felt very heavy as I walked dragging them all the way to the front school entrance. I did not want to open or enter those doors at all. There were students everywhere, walking in twos or more, chatting on the sidewalks, examining forms, and smoking in small groups some distance from school. Some were playing games and horsing around. The most uneasy fact of all, however, was that they were all white. There was not a familiar face in sight anywhere in the crowd. I dared not look at anyone directly. I almost yearned to be back at St. Joseph's. I managed to muster up some courage and finally opened one of the front doors only to be

bombarded with another deluge of white people. Scanning around to see if there were any Native students I might approach for help, I found there were not at all. I then retreated to a corner in the hallway to think about what to do next. My legs felt like they would collapse from frustration at not knowing what to do. Should I just go home and tell everyone I was scared? That wasn't an option. Should I play sick? That was only a temporary way out. Should I ask for help? That sounds too stupid and I can't be made to look stupid. Finally, after what seemed like eternity, a senior student sensing my desperation, took the initiative and asked if I was there to register. I didn't know what that meant but I said, almost yelling, "Yes". He then pointed me to the gymnasium and told me to go there. I did as he instructed and I found that the gym was filled with students sitting in desks filling out forms. I sat down in one and filled out a form which I later took to the main office as it instructed. Once there, I was finally given some help about what to do. People, I found, spoke so loud as to be heard by everyone. I didn't want to attract that kind of attention. One of the questions asked of me was what course I intended to take that year. Not knowing course content, or what exactly what they were intended for, I opted for the most familiar sounding one, and that was of course, the technical which my summer pals so eloquently counselled me in. Feeling a little sense of mastery over my own future, I completed my registration. After registering I strolled back to my new residence alone and in silence to think about the day. The next couple of days were a blur.

Not long after we had started classes, the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) student counsellor came to visit to see how we were doing. "Where the hell were you the first day?" I thought. He wasn't very big and his hair was white but I guessed him to be around fifty. His voice sounded raspy which amused my roommate when I tried imitating it. I asked our counsellor if I could get a new pair of pants since my jeans were beginning to show signs of wear. He agreed and said that

he would personally come to pick us and go shopping with us that weekend. His easy going manner and quick compliance to my request made me suspicious. That following Saturday afternoon he took us shopping. The DIA would pay for the clothes through a voucher system. When we arrived at the department store downtown in the men's and boy's section, I specifically asked him for a pair of jeans that were the common heavy gauged all the guys were wearing in school. As if not hearing a word I said, he queried the sales clerk to look for something less expensive so I could purchase other things with the voucher like some socks and underwear. In a few minutes the counsellor yelled out triumphantly that he found some things suitable for me that included a nice jacket, some underwear and pants all within the limits of the clothing voucher. The pants were made of cotton and lemon yellow in colour and the jacket was a lime green colour. For one who wanted to remain as inconspicuous as possible, I was going to stick out like a sore thumb at school. That night I wrote a sombre letter home to my mother recounting this incident and hinted at some help. A week later I received a package containing a nice pair of jeans and a leather jacket. I welcomed my new wardrobe with relief and joy but not until after enduring a week of jeering and snide remarks regarding my fashion tastes. From then on, I resolved do my own shopping.

For the next few weeks I focussed mainly on school work and my new environment. I kept my distance from the other students at least for awhile. They all seemed so boisterous and loud especially before the teacher entered the class, something like I was back in my old classroom at St. Joseph's. But now everything seemed so different and alien. The high school subjects were, I thought, more sophisticated and intimidating at first. History was my favourite and my marks reflected that interest. Mathematics was my worst but I managed to pull off a passing grade during exams. My impression of the teachers was pretty well neutral although the geography teacher had

a rapport with the students more so than the others. One day, a funny thing occurred in geography class in which I was inadvertently and unwittingly the principle focus of attention. We had been studying Japan at this point and our teacher suddenly called on me to point out on the map where the city of Nagasaki was. I stood there for sometime in silence, a bit confused on how to answer this delicate question. Pressed for a response, I answered the teacher awkwardly but sincerely that, "I thought it had been blown off the map". This answer triggered a loud course of laughter from the class and an angry frown from the teacher who thought I was being cute. Nagasaki, of course, and also Hiroshima were the two Japanese cities devastated by the atomic bombs during WW II. I at the time had no inkling as to their status regarding their existence and so gave the only answer I could. The teacher rebuked me for my answer, but I paid him no mind, since I felt innocent of any wrong doing. From that time on, I began to relax a little around my class mates and started to open up more though I was still cautious. I was always on guard should anyone bring up the subject of my heritage. As time went on, I tried belonging to a clique which included some junior football stars. Then one night after the fall football play-offs at Port Arthur Stadium, something happened that closed off my relations or made my friendship with any white person conditional for good. One of the players, who I thought was a close friend, said something that I just couldn't resolve with my inner convictions about my race. On our way back from the game to Fort William, we were all running along the side of the road when I mischievously gave him a little nudge and sent him flying into a ditch. One of his runners and part of his pants were soiled and he came out of the ditch livid with rage screaming, "You f------ black bastard". Everyone fell silent and wondered, what next. I just calmly left the group in the dark and walked down the tracks back to my residence. From that time on I resolved not to allow anyone to degrade me in that manner again. I became onion skinned and would

retaliate physically or verbally whenever anyone made a disparaging racist remark. I took racists slurs as signs to exclude me from their racial fraternity, and that was okay with me. At times I listened, as they would often make harmless ethnic slurs between each other but it wasn't the same. I thought, when it came to making remarks about Native people. The comments were often not in jest and had a different slant in tone to them. I would often retaliate with terms like "DP" or "Bohunk" or "go back home" alluding to their European ancestral origin, hoping that they would in turn feel the equally disquieting effect their comments had on me. My retorts, it seems, had no effect. Anyway it was the only way I had to fight back to maintain my sense of dignity. One of the most common put downs was "hey chief" instead of your name. Over the years, I would hear that phrase used many times by white males to Native males in order to get their attention and I immediately would shudder or react with anger at the arrogance implied dominance of one over the other. Because it was intimidating in nature, you seldom heard it muttered when the tables were turned in favour of the Native. I would have many push and shove incidents and outright fights over the course of my high school years over this issue. Be that as it may, I was willing to endure most anything to accomplish my educational goal even if it meant enduring an environment hostile to Native people. So for the rest of my stay at Westgate, I would bide my time and approach everything on a day to day basis hoping in the end I would achieve my goal. My relations and the atmosphere at some of my boarding homes were less stressful, however I was starting to become increasingly more self-conscious of the hegemonic role white people had over my life and that of all Native people. The rule of thumb for getting along with people, it seems, was to conform in a way I detested. Unfortunately for me I was to follow that stricture for most of my adult life, far beyond

my high school years. As long as I acted passive, not ever once asserting my feelings and opinions, I got along with everyone.

Going home for the summers was like most summers at home, only I was older now and my activities centred around things more typical of what a teenager did. Most of the time we played baseball and flirted with girls. We still swam but not with the same enthusiasm as we did as kids. There was only so much you could do on the reserve. I still kept my distance from alcohol related incidents. I began to notice my older brother experimenting with alcohol after my second year in high school. More younger people were also beginning to drink, more so, than previous years when only a core group drank. This in turn led to more social problems with the law and alcohol related incidents. My focus was still intact regarding finishing high school. By now I determined that the worst of two evils was life on the reserve and alcoholism, rather than weathering the storm of high school life, and so I continued.

My third year and in grade eleven, I was placed in a home where I felt very comfortable. My landlady was Italian and a single parent with two boys of nine and ten. She was nice and I liked all of the Italian dishes she prepared. She was pretty lax with my privileges and I hardly ever caused her trouble. Her boyfriend though had a slight drinking problem to which I paid no mind. My work habits in school were a bit shoddy and my grades continued to hover just around the average level. I was unaware at this time, but my resolve to finish school was beginning to gradually weaken. I still did not associate with any high school kids and I pretty well created my own diversions after school hours. Native students were now beginning to increase in number in the twin cities (formerly Port Arthur and Fort William before amalgamation) but most, including myself, were unaware of this fact. It would be another year or so before we organized to socially interact. The school year came

to an end and I passed my eleventh grade and went home again for the summer. Not much in the way of excitement occurred that summer. I spent more time alone contemplating my future. I hinted to my parents about quitting school and only my father strenuously objected to this. My older brother was now more and more involved with drinking. Keeping out of his way and others that drank was my primary goal. It was beginning to become increasingly difficult to decide what to do with myself. I knew the desire to finish school was still strong but at sixteen the desire to work and have extra cash was just as strong. That summer I went firefighting and I received my first working pay-cheque. My brother and I decided to go to town and spend some money. He talked of buying a car and so we went to a used car lot. He managed to talk me into buying this car with him. It was a 49 Ford and cost a whopping one hundred dollars. As soon as we drove off the lot, we felt like a couple of highway drifters like those characters in the TV series *Route 66.* We drove out of Port Arthur on a bright sunny afternoon in our bright red two door sports coupe. Our excitement was short lived though, as the car came to gradual halt some ways down Highway 17 east. Failing to get the car going again, we decided to ditch it temporarily and come back later and pick it up. Later we found out the timing gear was stripped and it would take us two weeks to get the car road worthy again. Anyway our jaunt to the city alone and the lure of making big money had me hooked and I wanted more of the same. I made an agreement with my parents to work that fall tree planting for a couple of weeks and then return to school. My younger brother also decided to do the same thing and he also stayed. The work was very arduous, dull and dirty but firefighting had already prepared me for hard work. Getting up early in the morning was probably the hardest part of the day. I dreamt of summers past when all we did was sleep in, go swimming and just languish around in the sun all day. At times I wished I had gone back to school instead of staying to work for a couple of weeks. My older

brother at eighteen now was a seasoned worker and he laughed at us younger guys regarding our work habits. Because of his drinking habits we saw less and less of him now. We all just left him alone to work out his problems. One night he got involved in a dangerous knife fight that resulted in one individual being hurt and another sent off to Stoney Mountain penitentiary. He was quite capable in looking after himself physically in fights and us younger kids still looked up to him in awe at times. Some mornings he showed up with a slight hangover and just calmly went to work as if nothing was wrong. He was very moody, and yet at times very jubilant. He still spoke of grand schemes he intended to accomplish.

Early one sunny morning we got up for work. Judging by the already warm air outside it was going to be a very long and hot day. Our mother made us breakfast while we made our lunches. She also made an extra one for our brother. My dad had already left for work as he was a foreman and had other preparatory duties to do. We would be transported to the work sites several miles away by the yellow school buses rented for tree planting. I sat with my younger brother on the way to work. We sat quietly and listened to the older men banter and tease some of the younger workers. About half way to our destination the bus came to a stop and all attention focussed on some commotion outside. There were several Lands and Forests trucks parked on the road. My brother and I were sitting at the back of the bus and, since the windows were filthy with sand residue that blocked the view outside, we decided to sit still until we were on our way again. We younger guys were engaged in some idle chatter while others were preoccupied with the commotion outside. Then a hush suddenly and quietly descended upon the workers and all eyes shifted their gaze at us at the back of the bus. I stared back at the sombre and earnest looks on their faces, which made me a little confused, and I wondered what the mystery was that caused their concern. Then I heard my older

brother's name mentioned somewhere at the front of the bus. I felt as though something, a sudden impact, hit me hard instantly. My mind started to race. My heart rate accelerated instantly and my blood rushed to my head. With hands shaking, I tried cleaning the window to catch a glimpse of what was going on outside. Though my vision was blurred by the dirt of the window, I managed to see the outline of my brother's car parked out on the open field. I then knew that something terrible was wrong. I sat back in silence hoping against hope that the worst had not happened. My younger brother immediately got up and disappeared down the aisle of the bus. I kept sitting in state of shock. Someone asked if I wanted to get off. I looked up at him with a blank stare. Then after a few minutes, the bus began rolling away gently down the road again. When we reached the spot where I worked, I got out and sat on a log and continued staring at nothing in particular. I got up and started walking around aimlessly and sat down again. I wished my mind would stop racing. A short time later my father's brother, who was in charge of the tree planting operation, came by and asked how I was feeling. I didn't answer him. I was expressionless. He didn't say a word about what he already knew. Then he suggested we get in his truck and go back to the scene. Without willing myself, I climbed sluggishly in the front seat, still in a trance. We rode back in silence. In few minutes, I could make out people and vehicles way off in the distance, in the middle of the road. I placed my head down on my arms til we reached the spot. When the truck stopped, my uncle got out and closed the door. With my head still down, I could hear the muffled sound of voices and passing vehicles. Slowly, I raised my head, not expecting to see anything but people and vehicles, but my eyes went directly to the prone figure lying in the middle of the road. All of the will power I had mustered, holding back all of my emotions and feelings that had been welling up inside of me for nearly an hour, suddenly crumbled and I gave out a loud agonizing scream. I got out of the truck and walked

over to my brother lying – dead on the road. His black shirt and pants were creased and dirty with sand and dust. I started to lean downward to touch him, but drew my hands back. I just stood there and bawled. I turned around and caught sight of my younger brother sitting on the side of the road, eyes swollen red from crying. Catching my gaze, he burst out with a fresh spate of tears and sobs. I walked over beside him and sat down and bawled for I don't know how long. My parents arrived on the scene shortly after. It was very difficult to watch them as they grieved openly, on the ground beside their oldest son. In time my emotions began to race first from sorrow then to anger and at times to a dreamlike state. I was angry at first why his body had to be left there for the authorities to investigate. I wanted to know who was responsible, but I was angry most of all, at that powerful and seemingly untouchable nemesis – alcohol. I knew already that drinking played a large part in this terrible aftermath, since he had been involved with it for the past week. I began to blame people since they were more tangible than various other possible reasons. I couldn't reach out to anyone or anything specifically to blame. Tiring physically from crying I started to act as if nothing had happened and that it was all just a bad dream. After several hours the body was taken away to town and we went home to continue mourning. It was the worst week of my life. I couldn't eat a thing and my thoughts were continually plagued with torment. I don't remember a thing about the funeral at all, and I grieved mostly alone. My family at this time seemed so distant to me. I did not know how to help them in their grief. I did not take over my brother's role as the caretaker with respect to the family. He was always the tough one in the family and the one that the entire family's dependence revolved around. My dad, always a tower of strength, generally contained his emotions until now. My older brother, on the other hand, had been more sensitive to others than perhaps my father and yet still remained tough. He was the caretaker and now he was gone. After about a week, the

realisation of my brother's death began to sink in. Gradually my taste for food returned, and my thoughts grew more rational and clear. I started to interact with people but I acted superficially and at times, still very distant. If I hated anything to do with alcohol before, I now ignored everything to do with it, as if it was non-existent, including the people who used. One day I vowed openly to an uncle that I would never have anything to do with alcohol.

It was decided that we would remain home on the reserve for the rest of the year since we pretty well missed a good portion of schooling that fall. I really didn't care one way or the other. That winter in Gull Bay was pretty well a waste for me, as I became more absorbed with myself and excluded people from my thoughts, feelings and actions. I pretty well did what I pleased. The months slipped by rather quickly. I took over the ownership of my brother's car, since I had helped pay for it, I thought. The provincial regulations of owning and driving a car on a reserve were pretty well left up to the reserve to regulate, so it was easy for me to run the car as I pleased. Spring came and the monotony of reserve life was periodically lifted with some drunken brawl or incident that was a gossip item the following morning. When I was younger, there was so much to do, and now, each day became a tedious going-through-the-motions affair. The death of my brother was now a remote incident, as if it were a common occurrence. At the time of his death, the whole community had been in shock. He was liked by many people and the fact that a young person died and the way he died made the incident more difficult to accept. We learned shortly after the funeral that he had died from carbon monoxide. He apparently passed out in the car while it was running and succumbed to the poisonous gas. No one had heard of carbon monoxide before and this simple fact contributed to his death. Spring time usually was a time for renewed spirits for me as it was for many other beings and things. As fall was the time of natural demise of things, and the preparation for a hard winter, spring

brought out new life and refreshed the general mood of all. This was the first year I missed that feeling as my life now had no focus and no direction. I did whatever caught my fancy, if only to break the monotony of each passing day.

I woke up late one morning to the nudging on my shoulder by one of my uncles who wanted me to go up to the river with him. Going down to the Gull River was something I always enjoyed. I jumped out of bed in an energetic mood, as I had some idea what he was up to. The trail that leads up to the river begins behind our house and goes for a third of a mile through a bush trail where it ends near the mouth of the river. When we reached the river, we looked around to see if there was any sign of humanity. Satisfied that we were alone, my uncle then continued on in the bush, past where the trail ended. I stayed back a few seconds, to be alone for a minute, with the river.

There is something always mysterious about the river that refreshes your spirit, if you stay alone, to absorb its natural energy. Some of its more common denizens are always present, as if acting like hosts to their domain. The loon and its familiar warbling call, the great blue heron camouflaged in the reeds. Ducks are usually present and not too shy if you are alone. Fish are always popping up, breaking the surface noisily to snap at some unsuspecting surface insect. On rare occasions you could see and hear grander sights and sounds. I once saw an eagle swoop down and catch its dinner. And on another occasion heard the unmistakable sound of a moose wading in an adjacent marsh feeding on the bottom. The river too has a life of its own. The noonday breeze brushing across its surface provides a rhythmic flow of the waves. The sounds of the rippling water along the edges and embankment punctuated by fish jumping and ducks fluttering their wings all adding to the mystery and wonder of the river. I could never get enough of the river's uplifting effect on my moods.

My thoughts are interrupted by my companion's voice urging me to hurry up and join him. I run over to where he was standing in the middle of a bog. About two weeks back, we were in this very same spot placing some last minute coverings of moss over our hidden cache. To disguise it more we had placed a small pine tree shrub on top of the mound. Underneath lay a pot with a two week old fermenting concoction of fruits, potatoes, raisins, sugar and East cakes. We decided it was brewing long enough and he wanted to test it for its potency. As soon as we took off the last covering we notice that the liquid was still fermenting and warm. He immediately dipped in a small china cup and took a couple of swallows savouring each drop. With a wide grin he said it was very good. He then asked if I wanted to try some. I immediately shook my head and said that stuff would not have any effect on me. I had tasted home brew many times as I watched my parents make it in the past. It always tasted awful and I often wondered how could people drink so much of it. It certainly had an effect but you had to drink a lot of it. If you made it right its effect was almost immediate. I don't know why I decided to take that drink the second time he offered it to me. The stuff that I so loathed for most of my adolescent years seemed so suddenly and strangely innocuous in front of me. Maybe it was partially out of curiosity and also the fact that I believed it would not have an effect on me. So when my uncle handed me the small cup I tasted it and then downed it as if I had been drinking all of my life. I thought I was going to throw up but I managed to contain my nausea. I told him that was all I was going drink. He said that was okay and decided to leave the pot to continue to brew but not until after he had scooped out a good portion for his pleasure later on. He took one last drink, covered up the cache and camouflaged it once again. We left the spot just as it was. Walking back down the trail he turned and asked me how I felt and I told him I was just fine. It had been around a half hour since I took that drink. Somewhere around the midway point

down the trail home, I stopped for a moment to listen to the rustling of aspen leaves in the bush. They seemed more perceptibly loud and clearer than usual. My uncle turned and asked if everything was alright. I was set to answer him, when a slight rush to my head sent my thoughts racing momentarily. I looked up skyward and saw the trees tops, blue sky and leaves and felt this wonderful sensation permeating my entire body and being. It was as if the world was being physically transformed before me in the most agreeable way imaginable. All the colours and sounds around me were accentuated almost to perfection, I thought. My head felt extremely light and I felt I would float away if I didn't hold unto something. I sat down slowly on a dead fall and savoured every second of this strange euphoria I was experiencing. I turned to my uncle, his face sporting a wide grin, and saw him smiling with recognition at the experience of my first high under the influence of alcohol. All of my resistence to this strange and magical potion, that was the ruin and downfall of many of my people, was dramatically altered in those very few seconds to one of total acceptance of its mind altering power. I immediately asked my uncle for another drink. I drank it, this time with relish and didn't want to lose its effect on me. My uncle warned me not to drink too much and too fast. He may as well have spoken to the dead tree I was sitting on. After a brief rest, we got up and headed the rest of the way home. The first person I saw was my mother in the back yard and she immediately knew I had been drinking. The look of disapproval and sadness was all over her face and also one of resignation to the inevitability of my fate to drinking. I didn't drink that much but it was strong enough for me to eventually pass out, but not before throwing up uncontrollably. That feeling I had that afternoon, I would never again experience or recreate by drinking. I would drink more often now after that first drink, but the feeling of euphoria was now replaced with depression and sadness and at times violent agitation. I don't remember too much about that summer but the drinking that started

to escalate. I drank with other young people my age and got into minor scrapes related to drinking. We began stealing from other people whenever we could. I was now one of those people I use to tease as a kid running around. Those innocent days were now a far off thing of the past. Some time through the summer I regained my senses long enough to agree to return to Fort William that fall and finish high school. I was still not entirely within the grips of alcohol. I returned to school to stay with the last family I was with the previous year. By now I was completely adsorbed with myself and indifferent to others. The only member of my family that I had some semblance of a relationship was my younger brother who was just a year younger. There were eight other siblings I hardly ever saw or related to. The trauma of the death of our brother was still deeply rooted in me. It seemed very difficult to feel. I could not take over the reigns of familial leadership my brother had in the family on the reserve. He was always on the reserve and was a genuine part of it. By comparison I was more drawn toward the city now and a loner. When I returned to high school, I drew more and more inward and blocked out others in my life. Although I quit drinking to finish school I couldn't focus on my studies. That year, more Native students were enrolled in high schools around the city. I slowly gravitated to my own kind in social activities. In Port Arthur an Indian Youth Friendship Centre was established. I hung around a core group of individuals. During the last part of my school year, I once again started drinking. My grades then started to plummet from poor to worse. Finally my year end exams arrived. In a final attempt at studying, I plunged into my notes to try and pull off a miracle. I drank on the day of my last exam and walked to the school for the last time almost totally inebriated. By now, I pretty well conceded I would fail the year. In defiance I scribbled all over my exam booklet and handed it in. I walked out of the gymnasium and out into the sunny afternoon, free at last. I strolled down the front entrance walkway of the school, not looking back.

It was very hard to swallow that I had failed at two things I wanted so desperately to commit myself to in life, and that was to finish high school and never to take a drink. As I left the school grounds for the last time, a feeling of ambivalence overcame me of both sadness and relief. In an a attempt to regain my composure or possibly save face, I strolled away, thinking of Scarlett O'Hara's famous sigh at the end of *Gone With The Wind*, "After all tomorrow is another day".

7.0 AUTOANALYSIS

The design of this analysis is to trace my developing consciousness from my earliest days onward up to the present. Underpinning this account, are the introductory philosophical text of this study and some added insights by theorists and writers not yet mentioned. What emerges is an epistemic rendering of my evolving consciousness that is the basis of this study. Former students are welcome to assess and compare this study to their own lives to keep 'the conversation' going.[97]

The first four and a half years of my life, of which I only remember segments and based on what I now know, were uninterrupted by white people or culture so to speak, a fact that was not always so in the years that followed. Euro-Canadians, working on our reserve at the time in an administrative capacity, lived segregated by choice, which was acceptable and probably preferred by the Anishinaabe of Gull Bay. This being the case, it only seems logical for me to assume I was growing up with all the necessary cultural elements I needed to form a healthy Ojibway identity. The core of my consciousness or 'bare ego' would have as its field of experience a relatively intact and homogeneous Ojibway culture. My memories partially bear this out. I remember being reasonably happy, never recalling any traumatic incident with the exception of being accidentally burned on the knee by an iron once. I was told that my maternal grandmother, whom I do not remember, favoured me above the others. This is important, in that grandparents played vitally important pedagogic roles in Ojibway society and therefore added another strong dimension to the formation of a strong young

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[97] The term 'autoanalysis' is a term I adopt from George Sioui's use of Autohistory in reference to 'our autohistorical analysis' qua our Anishinaabe history. See George Sioui, *For an Amerindian Autohistory*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press), 1992.

Anishinaabe mind. The closest person I remember, naturally, was my mother, always *being* by her side. I was absorbing all of my external cultural environment or field of experience like any normal toddler, which is the *sine qua non* for healthy development and maturation. This field of experience at that time consisted of all the Gull Bay Ojibway mores, customs, ceremonies, norms, mannerisms, colloquialisms, community ethos etc., in short all of those cultural factors that would shape my Ojibway worldview. This would be the basis for my cognitive orientation to the world, mediated through my most important cultural gift, language. In addition to all this, was the sentient, and ambient absorption of my natural environment, the surrounding land, water, air and all its other-than-human persons. This was my 'sense of place'.[98] Here I was being indoctrinated with all of my Native values, some of which are: the sacredness of all things, *respect* as it is defined in the Native way, 'the value of non interference',[99] the Ojibway sense of time and space, togetherness, sharing and so on. This was the 'structured world' Paul Tillich speaks of as necessary for Self affirmation.[100] My self was being nurtured culturally in the Ojibway tradition, in the Gull Bay Native tradition to be exact; my field of experience. Much of what I was taught, was done so in the Native pedagogic tradition and method of, *modeling*, guided by the principle and value of non-interference. This method basically entailed allowing the child to develop at his/her own pace. Interference only occurred in time of danger or when a child struggled unnecessarily. All relatives and even the entire community took part in the teaching process. Other values as well were taught through osmosis and

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98 Cordova, *EcoIndian*, p 33.

99 Brundige, *Continuity of Native Values*, p 50.

100 Paul Tillich, *The Courage To Be*, (Cambridge University, 1952)

at times directed by a loving hand or word in Ojibway. I was well on my way to enjoying growth to maturity.

My mind was evolving in this sense when, abruptly and without warning, it was interrupted by people whom I never had close contact with up to that point. A very intimidating policeman was the first and most distinct, striking and formidable white person I encountered and whose presence was etched permanently in my mind after that day. His truculent and boisterous manner, and the indifferent demeanor of the lady that accompanied him to haul us away to residential school, subdued any resistence from us. A certain amount of trauma naturally must have ensued but a mitigating factor was being among siblings I suppose. Because of my tender age, I don't recall very much of the abduction and my short stay at the school and whatever conscious effect it had on me.

In January 1951 of that school year, I was escorted from St. Joseph's Boarding school out to the Fort William Sanatarium having contracted tuberculosis. My stay there lasted for three years. Here I lost a good measure of my culture, or rather the absorption of my culture was interrupted, especially with regard to language, but my stay there was reasonably pleasant as far as I can remember. I was aware to a certain degree I was Anishinaabe but it didn't play a significant part in my thinking and behaviour since I was enmeshed in a different cultural atmosphere.

Returning to the reserve, I regained most of what I lost in a short time, but the ability to relearn my language became problematic. I easily understood most of what I heard but was unable to articulate. This would eventually, in time, remedy itself. My stay in the city was soon forgotten and once again I became part of the consciousness of the community and surroundings. All the familiar and comfortable nuances of life at home soon became second nature. The material comforts of city life were replaced by a more simple and appreciative lifestyle. Native values as foundational,

and how they manifested in the thinking of the Gull Bay Anishinaabe at the time, once again permeated my mind. The closeness of members in the community, the appreciation of each other's livelihoods, the spirituality manifesting itself in the actions and speech of the elders, Native etiquette and manners, the visual openness of the environmental expanse, and much more, all synthesized in my mind to shape the major Ojibway thought patterns.

One conspicuous figure that impressed me the most was our Medicine Man. There were several on our reserve but this one prominent member would often come over to our house and treat my parents by first departing in the bush and returning with the plants he needed for medicine. At various times he would suggest and show them how to obtain and use the herbs themselves. His voice was deep, gentle and often punctuated with a low guttural laugh when addressing my parents. My inquisitive probing eyes would often focus on the application of some of the medicine. Others in the community were also capable of dispensing medicine and wisdom as he, but he epitomized all I thought of as the Medicine Man. This was the atmosphere in which I was experiencing the world. This was the basis for my cultural conscious identity where my 'self' would evolve unadulterated, uninterrupted to mature in order to 'affirm' itself, establishing a ground for a whole authentic person.

In the fall of 1955 we once again stood before the entrance of St. Joseph's Boarding School. This time, an acute awareness, of what was happening enveloped my consciousness. Being older now, part of that awareness included the physical aspects of the school and enclosed surroundings. Michel Foucault's concept of the 'total institution' was reified in that daunting building and adjacent cloistered grounds. The dark interior and foreign odors and sounds along with the admitting Mother Superior immediately cast a pall over my mind. Walking down that dark hallway that day, I was

overwhelmed with a profound sense of anxiety I couldn't pinpoint. This makes sense, since anxiety does not have an object, according to philosopher and theologian Paul Tillich. Fear on the other hand, "...as opposed to anxiety has a definite object, which can be faced, analyzed, attacked, endured."[101] My anxiety would later materialize in sheer human terror. But for now the admission procedures would first be endured. Not being aware of the subtle implications of the dehumanization process at the time, the procedure itself was innocuous enough, but the admission routine to an institution would not strike me as significant till years later as I entered other institutions: jails, reformatory, psychiatric hospital, alcohol treatment and detoxification centres, etc. I was being institutionalized for the first time that day. I entered the school that day as an eight year old Anishinaabe, long hair and all. However the machinery of assimilation would soon roll into gear and, by attrition, chip away at the Anishinaabe in me.

When entering a residential school for the first time, and if you are old enough, you endure all the conscious indignities and anxieties of entering an adult reformatory or penitentiary. Being escorted around by nuns, the admission procedure, being assigned a number, a bed, uniform, the hair cut, the rules, that first night in bed, the stares by other inmates as if saying, 'here come the new cherries' and so on. The entire process individualizes you and separates you from others especially family. But the final assault on your mind is being thrown into the general population, as they say in prison, amidst strangers, amidst the unexpected and the prospect of physical danger. Here your impulse is to quickly find an opening somewhere and run. That first day at St. Joseph's I endured all of the above with the exception of the uniform. My brothers and I and some other new arrivals huddled together on a bench and just watched nervously as the other residents arrived en masse. We

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[101] Ibid., p 36.

poked each other nervously as if to dare someone to do something. I postured for position on the bench as my pulse rate increased and I tried to act nonchalantly. Over the din of the crowd you sense all eyes staring at you. You begin to wonder when you are going to get punched out or experience something worse. At this point you naturally think of home and maybe want to cry but refrain from doing so, as you intuit that weakness in an institution is preyed upon. You eventually realize that you are here to stay, and so resign yourself to the transition from a life of freedom to a life of regimentation. The adjustment started the next day and for me came rather quickly and smoothly as if I had been there for a while. Being normally energetic garrulous and eager for adventure, I made friends fast and the transition to residential school came and went. I was still the happy-go-lucky Anishinaabe kid from Gull Bay. Well that was to end in rather sudden and brutal fashion. I should have seen it coming. Maybe the warning signs were there and I just ignored them.

As I relate the incident in my narrative *Yuma State*, I had not expected the suddenness and the severity of the punishment inflicted on me that particular day. I had sensed trouble though in some form days before the perpetrator with her ominous looking features struck but took no heed of this premonition. The reason for the punishment also had a lot to do with the lasting affect it had on me personally. Being slapped forcefully all over your bare arms with a sturdy ruler by a nun for simply not being able to mend your socks was too incomprehensible to the sensibilities of an eight year old boy. After the attack I remember looking around in anguish, desperately hoping for refuge or assistance where there was none. Seeing the fear and pity in the eyes of the other boys assured me they too were shocked at the absurdity of the incident. But for the moment, I was and felt alone, abandoned and pitiable. In the days that followed I endured other bed wetting whippings from her, and there after for the next five years, the heavy strap routine seemed like walks in the park

compared to those initial beatings. I had become calloused and hardened to the strap not just physically but emotionally as well. Prior to that I had never experienced violence to my person and with the vehemence to match. Later the bizarre incongruity of the pious and gentle image of nuns and the meting out of such cruelty did not escape me and left me perplexed about the behaviour of, not just of nuns, but of white people in general. The contrast between the values of the West and Ojibway culture was becoming more palpably perceptible and the disconcerting effect it had on me more tangible. From those initial beatings, a number of emotions and my state of mind had changed forever. From security, I went to experience insecurity, from confidence to hesitancy and doubt, from trust to mistrust, from love to detached caring, selflessness to being selfish, anxiety to dread , the list goes on. An impenetrable emotional barrier was erected around me after that day. I knew I was on my own and no one else mattered anymore. Over the years, as I went home for the summers after each school year, the ability to inure myself within the consciousness of my culture lessened and cynicism set in. Any concept of Self affirmation for me was never to transpire since the opposed worldview values of two cultures clashing within a very repressive field of experience precluded this. Without knowing it I suppose that day I became ready for the assimilation program.

The rest of that year I lived in constant dread in the presence of that nun. So alarmingly conscious I was of her, that to this day I cannot remember the name or visual image of her junior partner. The former, not having seen her for forty five years, picture or otherwise, I could draw her picture to a near likeness. I wondered how could any one have such power over me. I knew she was capable of doing anything to me and that I would have no redress to anyone or anything. Alone in thought I likened her to the worst policeman I could imagine or even an SS officer of the Third Reich in his black uniform. Figures and images like that were constantly drilled into us with World War

II films. Totalitarian state terror has always been a constant puzzle and mystery to me. Incredulous as it may seem to others, I had a taste of what it felt like to live under such a regime that first year at St. Joseph's Boarding School. From that day onward I would consciously live in a police state in my own country. My own dealings with the police and experiences related to me from others years later would only reinforce this conviction. Fear of authority rather than respect would be present in my mind for a long time to come.

In retrospect, I now realize it wasn't just her I feared although she did look incredibly menacing. All things being equal, I could have retaliated and taken more punishment, but the anxiety of something greater, some mysterious and nebulous power, obscured by my ignorance and youth, confronted me that day. Lurking behind her, backing her up, was a force that I couldn't 'face, analyze, or attack' and that was the mantle of racism, oppression and the subjugation of colonialism, backed by a force and violence that was final. Of course I could not even begin to imagine what that was that day as an eight year old. Even as an adult it would have been difficult to conceive of this explanation.

My mind at a young age experienced a bit of that force and power before. I recall the angry bellowing of that policeman who originally picked us up. Or when they arrived on the reserve for some police matter, the casualness and finality of their power to do what they pleased not in the manner in which police normally carry out their business but with the menacing and palpable aura of racism that exuded all over their presence. I remember the superior countenance and mannerisms of the Indian Day School teacher and Hudson Bay Co. store manager, the abject paternalistic actions and attitude of the Department of Indian Affairs agent, and all those that accompanied him on Treaty Day. All of these combined to create the mask of imperialism, colonialism and oppression. This

force also permeated the consciousness of the people on the reserve but it didn't have the same bite as when it met you alone and helpless as child. On the reserve the people merely met this force with the attitude, 'let them do what they do here, and when they are gone, we live our ways as we please'. It was this attitude that the nun attempted to subjugate or break that day. She succeeded only in repressing it.

At the outset of that first year anything that could be imagined as an aspect of my culture was systematically dealt with. Having my hair chopped off like everyone else was an odd experience. When viewing my class picture, I barely recognized the person I was suppose to be. The picture-taking exercise may have been a subtle demonstration for us of the vast and superior difference between the civilized and the savage. Long hair for Native people has more significance than merely not having the convenience of barber around. It was a part of our identity and to have it so casually and callously cut off had an immediate effect on one's psyche. Perhaps it was the start of the self effacing process. Those who didn't mind probably rubbed their bald pates and laughed at each other and left it at that. Since I didn't speak Ojibway too well, I can't remember the prohibition but am sure it was enforced. My older brother who spoke Ojibway fluently and quite casually never spoke a word of it while at the school. Pretty well all of the aspects of residential school life described previously by the authors of the *Circle Game*[102] transpired at St. Joseph's. The technology of assimilation they spoke of included everything within the subculture of a residential school. The atmosphere was permeated in such a way as to produce a product for assimilation. The isolation of the school surrounded by the high-hedged fence was important in dividing us from the rest of the world. The rest of the world didn't matter to me, I just wanted to be home. My consciousness began

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[102] Chrisjohn, et el *Circle Game*.

absorbing, over the years at the school, every aspect required to make me into some form of mutant, with a brown physical body and white mind. I was to be programmed as a nice little acquiescent brown Canadian. Well it didn't work. Some primordial force emanating from my subconscious kicked in and began its own resistence program. The combined forces of two clashing worldviews within me resulted in a non-self, without 'adult executive competency' a condition I designate the 'Yuma State' of consciousness. The resistence within me manifested itself in many ways over the years and prevented me from living a manageable life. Had I given in to assimilation, the material rewards would have been perhaps substantial but at the cost of sustaining a 'false consciousness'.

The most effective attack on my culture, which drenched my consciousness with futility and despair, aside from my language being forbidden, was the degradation of the image I had of myself as an Anishinaabe. The process wasn't instant but gradual. From day one, with the hair cutting, and from then on an incessant parade of derogatory images and ideas, directly and indirectly, bombarded my consciousness. My field of experience was inundated with nothing but the vastly 'superior' culture of Euro-American and Euro-Canadian culture. My role as a Native person in my consciousness became meaningless. My past field of experience as an Ojibway was pushed further back into my subconscious. The media was the most powerful tool in accomplishing this, the classroom and our custodians a close second. We were conditioned and drawn to idolize Western heroes on television, in comics, books, the rhetoric of the day, and the glorification of Western civilization. As a form of resistence, I was always in constant vigil to discern any high profile figure, deemed to be a worthy hero, that was actually Indian or even part Indian, or even small part Indian. Such was the state of my 'quiet desperation' for self affirmation. With respect to television westerns, none of the Native residents, I can remember, ever identified with Tonto, the aboriginal sidekick of

the Lone Ranger. Perhaps we thought, it was better to be dead than be second to a white man on our land, and we killed him in our minds. The one fact that all of North America, referred to by Native people as Turtle Island, was still ours in our minds, alone may have been the sustaining element of a subconscious resistence.

Through television, books, the movies, general public, school personnel and white kids at the school, we drew and etched degrading images and labels of ourselves on our minds permanently; 'drunken Indian', lazy, inept warrior, 'smoke-meat', heathen, savage, inept hunter, stupid, squaw, in general, the inferiority of the Anishinaabe. As a temporary reprieve from this incessant cultural harangue I had to keep repeating to myself 'this was our land and home anyway' and that, they could never erase that from our minds. Most of the values, ideas and images I internalized about myself through our culture gradually deserted my mind at the school. Summer vacations gave me some reprieve. But back at the school the constant attack on our minds was taking its toll subconsciously. By attrition, any aspect or concept of what I felt to be proud of as an Anishinaabe was replaced by an opposite one. The drunken Indian was perhaps the most powerful. This epithet stung the most as I became more aware my parent's drinking. The stereotype entrenched itself in my mind. Seeing other Native people drink lessened the personal shame a bit. Strangely and sadly, 'there is strength in numbers', was a fitting idiom to placate any internal misgivings I had about singling out my parents. The chasm between the bond of parent and child was widening.

The classroom did little to alleviate the problem. Nothing in the literature ever reinforced to us some degree of pride in the former image I had of myself. Anything mentioned about Indians was by way of the romantic stereotype conjured up by Western culture. The image often came by way of the Indian brave on his horse, head up proud, stoic, motionless, later slipping back quietly into the

forest. His Indian maiden, Little White Dove of the fifties' pop song *Running Bear* by his side, was the ethnocentric and sexist image Euro-Canadian culture introduced to Native people. The sexism, born of the way women were treated in Western culture stuck in my mind. Though at times the attractive features of the romantic Indian image gave us pause to think, it really wasn't convincing at all. The condescending and racist attitude did not always escape the precocious minds of Native residential children. Another version of this Indian figure came by way of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Hathaway*. We were always depicted in a secondary or planned vanishing race capacity never involved in mainstream thought, a fact that had a lot to do with lowering our self esteem.

Another more formal, direct and yet subtle and sophisticated method for our Europeanization was the Boy Scout program at the school. Already enchanted by the mystique and Hollywood glamorization of the Mountie, the Boy Scout was the closest thing to which I cared to align myself. I had already sensed and experienced what the Mountie was really like at least in relation to my culture as the ultimate symbol of colonialist domination. However, I was willing to forego certain loyalties temporarily and cross over in my fantasy to be one of them since they epitomized the white hero we were drawn to worship. The Stetson itself was the goal in my fantasy of being in a class of the privileged. The rest of the uniform and couple of badges I had earned complimented the hat instead of the reverse. Once I had achieved my goal, scouting after that was just another avenue for distraction from the monotonous existence at the school.

Ideally we were suppose to embrace the opportunity to become virtuous young men through the attainment of skills, ethics and ideals representative of exemplary young white Canadian males. When we examine the scouting movement however, its history reveals some less than exemplary facts about its founder and agenda. Michael Rosenthal, in *The Character Factory,* portrays the

movement's founder Lord Baden Powell (1857-1941) a British Boar War veteran as racist, imperialistic and deceitful. [103] Powell sensed to his dismay, the waning of the British empire's hegemony over its colonial domains and sought a way to lessen the impact of this tragic demise of his beloved country's honor and glory. Replicating some already existing boys brigades in England just after the turn of the century, Powell, with the help of ideas he apparently stole from Ernest Thompson Seton, put together a movement for young boys in England that he thought represented the ideals of what young men should be and do. Seton, famous in his own right, as a naturalist and writer, was outraged when the scouting manual, *Scouting for Boys* was published in 1910 by Powell replete with Seton's ideas without any acknowledgment of his input and collaboration with Powell. Seton in fact, felt he alone was the true founder of the movement. The scouting movement eventually blossomed and spread all over the world eventually reaching some Ojibway boys in a residential school in Fort William sometime in the late 1950s. The ideas Seton was fuming over, ideas that were the backbone of the Scout movement, activities and ideals, were ironically extracted from, of all sources, the Native people. The woodcraft taught to scouts, the scout patrol organizational system based on the totem (dodem) of the Ojibway and other Native groups, the ideals of human exemplary behavior both Seton and Powell themselves romantically idealized and projected on and through their own interpretation of the North American 'Noble Savage'. Although 'borrowing' largely from the Anishinaabe, both men in their sexist and ethnocentric biases forged their own agendas for using Anishinaabe culture and artifacts.

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[103] Michael Rosenthal, *The Character Factory: Baden-Powell and the Origins of the Boys Scout Movement*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).

As the weeks, months and years went by, the transformation of my Nativeness continued from once very proud to doubt and then self-effacement. Whatever Native value or sentiment I had left in me was virtually inoperable in shaping my 'goals' and 'actions'. In terms of cultural integrity, my mind was in very poor shape and declining. On the other hand, I wasn't buying entirely into the assimilationist program. I do remember once discussing with another student a certain issue that prompted me to utter, 'but we were conquered' which basically encapsulated my conquest and colonized mentality. I was unaware of the Treaty system and historical relations I could have appealed to had I known. Despite this momentary lapse into the hands of the assimilationists the constant awareness and reminders 'we were here first' and 'this is our land' would always work momentarily assuaging my feelings regarding our race and heritage.

If anyone could have entered my mind in the remaining years and months at St Joseph's they would have seen something frightfully and fundamentally different than when I first entered. Instead of the spontaneous, energetic, laughing and open demeanor of a healthy Ojibway youth was instead a frightened, closed-off, conniving, manipulative, selfish, sycophantic, confused and emotionally stunted misfit of a human being without any chance of obtaining what Roland Chrisjohn referred to as 'adult executive competency'.[104] There would be no self-affirming self. In its place was a consciousness I deem my Yuma State of consciousness.

While a great deal of my Native heritage was taken from my conscious and sub-conscious, neither was the program of assimilation successful in making me a reasonable co-operative, capable and productive copy of a white man. A powerful sense of pride remained, although it did not form itself with clarity enough to aid me in forming a strong concept of identity. It kept barely sub-

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[104] Chrisjohn et el, *Circle Game.*

consciously alive that I was an Anishinaabe. But it could not carry me consciously forward with the mental fortitude required to exist in a manner that could be deemed stable.

Sometime during the last two years at the school, an obscure and befuddled idea of getting my education registered itself in my mind. It was instilled there by the constant reminder by my father to get an education. There was no specific goal attached to this educational purpose by way of earning a trade or becoming a fireman, policeman etc.. This idea, for some reason or other, entrenched itself to such a degree that it was to carry me and force me to endure more of a way of life I hated and despised. But getting an education meant somehow at that time I would be able to overcome all of the indignities of being Indian in a white man's world. And so armed with this blurred and muddled goal I entered high school with the intended purpose of finishing. What should have been the happiest time of my life was instead one in which my mind was in a constant state of existential agitation. I had been isolated from the outside world, including my own home, for five years absorbing nothing but all of the niceties and superiority of Western culture while at the same time having my self concept as an Anishinaabe systematically eradicated. What little that was left was downtrodden and thereafter suppressed down into my sub-conscious. The only time it was retrieved was when I was back home safe. At no time during my stay at the school was I prepared or socialized for the outside world. In fact no encouragement of any kind to continue school seemed apparent or forthcoming. That was my decision or the Indian Agent's to follow through on. What had been the high school of my choice because of the enrollment and presence of other Native students was denied me. Evidently I wasn't of the right stuff. And so on my first day, at the high school chosen for me, as I leaned against the wall of the school entrance, I was a total misfit incapacitated as a person and therefore unable to act. Paralyzed by fear, intimidation, and agitation

I really couldn't move to go and make the proper inquiries for entrance registration. Had someone said 'boo!', I would have jumped four feet in the air. I just stood there motionless and if some white student had not taken the initiative to come over and tell me what to do I probably would have stood there all the rest of that day. Such was the state of my capacity to think and act. My whole being as I thought of myself was fragmented and inoperable — my Yuma State of consciousness.

After struggling and stumbling through the admission process and later settling in, I began to wonder for the first time about my ontological relation to white people, which was a strange fractured view that would remain with me for most of my conscious life. This bizarre awareness was stirred by the fact of having to be thrown in their midst en masse at high school, people of my own age. Being the only Native person among over a thousand white high school kids, this introspection from the outside-looking-in viewpoint involved a strange mixture of awe, mystery, anger and confusion. This skewed viewpoint had its origin at the residential school. As a child at the sanatarium, which was my first experience of living among white people, I remember my consciousness then was one of complete assimilation with them, not of racial assimilation, but human assimilation. It seemed peculiar to me why this conscious state of assimilation didn't transpire again here at high school. At residential school, those I encountered were mostly white adults and that alone negated need to be at all any concerned with the subject. The white kids there were far fewer in number, more assimilated with us than the reverse, a fact that also deterred any thought about this alienation. While honed at residential school this cognition of alienation did not become an intersubjective issue till high school. In any case this strange anomaly vexed my conscious state and thus critically affected every aspect of my relations with other people.

The underlying assumption of this view was that I perceived, acknowledged and granted white people an elevated ontological status, although to what extent and in what mode I couldn't grasp. Perhaps culturally in every way since that was all that was continually impressed upon us at residential school. And so armed with this assumption, I began to try and imitate and emulate them in identity instead of acting within the cultural sphere of my own heritage, which was by now long submerged in my subconscious. This view however also separated me from them as a separate species in an another strange and alienated way. Not only were they superior in my consciousness but they were also backed by that insidious power of colonial oppression which had a very debilitating effect on the mind. Instead of being assimilated in the human family, I was becoming subserviently assimilated and mentally enslaved to them or 'not quite a person'. Despite this subjugation I consciously would not give them the satisfaction of knowing that and resisted in any way I admitting it. Whenever a racial slur was flung at me I retaliated with the same. This insecurity translated itself, within me, into a form of constant conflict with them emotionally and sometimes with outright physical fights with them for the duration of my high school days. Not equipped to deal with this internal conflict I dealt with it in a most awkward way. My ambivalent attitude towards white people and my own race ensured a constant internal battle. In this mental state of inferiority, I had become what Paulo Freire termed the 'oppressor within'[105] which is the essence of the experience of Yuma State.

Freire was basically focusing on class struggle, while in my case I battled both class and racism. He spoke of the dehumanization of the oppressed which for me began at St. Joseph's where

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[105] Paulo Freire *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos, (New York: Continuum, 1990). p 33.

my model of 'manhood' was 'prescribed' by white culture, "...transforming the consciousness of the man prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness."[106] This epistemological process of producing a 'false consciousness' today is referred to as Neo-colonialism and is a powerful and subtle force that is difficult to contend with. Only a serious epistemological or 'critical discovery' will alter this strange ontic stance. Besides being repressive, the residential schools were 'ideological processing plants'[107] incessantly and forcefully shaping us to forget our ways and adopt theirs. Nowhere was the dehumanizing effect of colonization more consciously forceful than during my high school days. It was here I felt the awkward existence of a self fragmented by the racist program experienced at residential school. Despite a dormant impulse within me to retain my Nativeness, the power of colonization had its effect and I basically left high school in that fragmented mental condition which I earlier called, as part of the *double entre*, 'Yuma State'. That condition, aside from racially subjugating me, also prevented me from acquiring the necessary self affirmation of being whole and authentic as a human being. So, not totally resigning myself to being a brown white man, I committed myself to a socially dysfunctional status, one that didn't really know what it was he was, and not really sure what to do or act in that capacity in terms of carving out a life for myself. This strange symbiotic existence of colonization, metis philosopher Howard Adams eloquently describes:

> He needed me, so I was kept in limbo, suspended in the horror of capricious existence. Life was so crushing, so grinding, so depressing, and so hopeless in the empty void of the Western world. It was that abominable despair-of half reality and half pseudo. A world of shadows of pseudo reality - of nonconsciousness. A world that drifts on the borders of reality and nothingness. It cannot be stabilized for it

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106 Ibid., p 31.

107 Lee Maracle, *I Am Woman*, (Vancouver, Press Gang Publishers, 1996) p 88.

> fluctuates continuously. It is the hell of vacillating from unreal to real and never knowing which side you are on.[108]

So there I was after residential school and then high school with no real alternatives but to join the multitudes of those 'hosts of the oppressor' that assimilated and then alienated me from my own world as a Anishinaabe and then alienated me from white people as a fellow human being. As the 'oppressor within', I subconsciously and at times consciously maligned my own heritage for not living up to the expectations of the white worldview. As my assimilation was not complete, that little corner of resistence that periodically expressed itself in defiance against Western society kept my Anishinaabeness alive. Often times this resistence awkwardly and ignorantly translated itself into self harm by way of the numerous times I fell into the chasms of Western society's lowest levels. It would be many years before I would understand how this subtle process of mental 'colonization' and the decolonization. A sad corollary to this enlightenment however is the awareness of the extent of this Neo-colonization of Native people.

A comment of Apache philosopher Dr. Viola Cordova was a beginning point for me when she wrote, "There are surely Native Americans that have been assimilated 'into the mainstream'; I can identify them after a very short conversation. There are also those who have not been and they can as certainly be identified."[109] What she refers to is not so much how we ostensibly dress, look and act in public as our attitudes and consciousness of being Anishinaabe relative to the original values of our people, and much of this can be identified in what we say and do spontaneously. Fraser

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[108] Howard Adams, *Tortured People: The Politics of Colonization,* (Penticton: Theytus Books Ltd. 1999) p v.

[109] Cordova, *EcoIndian,* p 33.

Cowley encapsulates this truism by stating "The standard way of telling whether anyone really believes what he professes to believe is to observe his words and actions when he is not professing the belief."[110] Those who have to ask, "Do we have to mend moccasins or make paddles to make a living?" or refrain from wearing a suit or carry a briefcase are ignorant of the tremendous contribution our cultures have made to modern society beginning in 1492. Nearly every conceivable major facet of modern society has some direct and indirect connection to the Native cultures of the Americas. Law, technology, order of government, military, agriculture, economic infrastructure, medicine, diet, sports, philosophy, geography, transportation, the list goes on. Ironically the topsy-turvy effect of colonization, racism and oppression has denied us the benefits of our own cultural legacy as we linger on the bottom of the socioeconomic scale in Canada. The deliberate submersion and concealment of our way of life and philosophy however was to systematically erase from our consciousness and the consciousness of Canadian society in general, our sustaining values and beliefs.

As I left the grounds of Westgate high school for the last time, I was ontologically a social nonbeing in terms of having an identity. I was, in addition, in an extremely agitated state of consciousness brought on by a lack of 'adult executive competency', unable to act towards social goals, expectations in roles and typifications necessary for balance, competence and authenticity as a human being. Unable to properly grieve or form closure in the death of my older brother (also a victim the Yuma State) just after we left residential school, I instead reacted in a state of denial turning to alcohol to sedate my confusion, social responsibilities or 'despair of psuedo reality'. It was

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[110] Fraser Cowley, *Metaphysical Delusion*, (Buffalo New York: Prometheus Books, 1991). p 14.

the only survival instinct open to me. My intersubjective relations to others was seriously fractured and permanently out of commission. In moments of clarity, I sensed I drifted between two worlds with no authentic attachment to others. When racially challenged, a crude sense of loyalty pervaded my consciousness to defend my Native heritage. This was perhaps more my personal ego rather than my Ojibway ego reacting subconsciously. Consciously I acted out the assimilated, colonized template of actions and roles expected of me in the 'white man's' world. However a continuous subconscious impulse prodded my consciousness that something ontologically was wrong regarding my identity. Judging the actions of others was my only means to calibrate or draw these conclusions, and therefore full assimilation was impossible. This dual epistemological role playing however, played itself out in my patterns of actions, goals, and expectations thereby rendering me incapable of a stable lifestyle. At the social level I would continually battle the 'white man' immanently and scorn my Ojibway brothers and sisters, particularly those I deemed, sell outs, as 'whitemanized'. Cynicism without participation became my social *modus operandi*.

In recent years as I studied philosophy, a new self awareness permeated my consciousness piecemeal unraveling critical areas of my fractured identity. Studying both Native and non-native philosophers I began to reconstruct a self or arouse my true dormant self to a level of competence I deemed was true to the dictum espoused thousands of years ago by Socrates: "Know thyself". The impetus for this search was another Socratic mantra: "The unexamined life is a life not worth living." This was my guiding principle of self discovery. The process however was not without its setbacks as I at times retreated into doubt and pessimism.

Another powerful motivating factor was acclimatizing my self to Native Spirituality and philosophy. Equally important is the link between Anishinaabe Spirituality, traditional ceremonies

and indigenous values and worldviews as described by Native scholars Brundige, Brant, Churchill, Cordova, Weaver, Maracle, Adams, Knockwood, McPherson, Sioui, to name a few, and perhaps just as important, Paul Michel, my grandfather, whose short oral narrative, *How the Fisher Lost his Tail* (Appendix III), enumerates a litany of Native virtues, traits and values.[111] The list of contemporary Native writers and their distinct writing style and prose keeps growing. And grow it must as we as Anishinaabe, revitalize our consciousness for posterity.

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[111] Arthur Lower, "How the Fisher Lost his Tail", *Queen's Quarterly*. vol. 75-4 (winter, 1968), 584-591.

8.0 Conclusion

Yuma State is a study in epistemology and ontology of the Ojibway people and of myself. By implication, it is a study of many Native students who attended residential school represented by my stream of consciousness narrative. I based the analysis of my fragmented identity on the Natansonian existential paradigm of an evolving person within a uniform structured cultural matrix. Along with the Callicott-Overholt definition of a worldview orientation, I have demonstrated the stark ideational dissonance a residential student faced in attempting to form an identity within a milieu of two competing worldviews. The cultural constructs, conflicting as they were, disrupted key identity-formation elements in a self's ability to adapt to demanding-to-conform social milieus of 'lived experience'. The upshot of this mental conflict was the adaptation by some to a false consciousness of the colonized to survive but at a cost to their true authentic selves, a potential lost in the discarded matrix of their own Native cultures. Those that rejected these demands, an act immanent in the unconscious, became lost in fragmented social realities of their existence. Many have survived the residential school experiment while others have not.

A tenable solution for myself was a critical journey in self discovery, an 'Anishinaabe from the inside', if you will, transformation — part of which this study provides. Another part included the realization and reprising of a dormant true self that began many years before. Tendencies to backslide were and are still part of this ongoing personal odyssey. In the disruption of my own culture and my own personal tendency for pessimism, cynicism and suspicion, I found it very difficult to find or consider role models for inspiration, contemporarily speaking. However, one method I found useful was a form of 'thought experiment' of projecting myself back to some pre-contact period when the Ojibway ontology, unadulterated by Euro-culture, was by a long shot,

superior to our current social state of affairs. A comparative synopsis need not be made. Part of that imaginary scenario included triangulating or visualizing our *cultural orientation* as it existed and the natural *evolution of our community ethos* shaping our material culture in contemporary *modern society,* a possibility that could have materialized had we been allowed. In other words, taking the good and bad and making the best of both worlds if that were even possible given the seemingly intractable problem of synthesizing opposing values.

Finally a kindred spirit embodying all those humanly possible qualities, particularly the Native values admirable in someone, was the imaginary archetypal model rounding off that long-ago dream. Contemporary models abound no doubt but seem invisible. My maternal grandfather is one who comes to mind for me. Despite a few shortcomings he was a decorated veteran of the first World War and a remarkable story teller. His Ojibway narrative of *The Fisher who Lost His Tail,* as told to Arthur Lower, ends this study in Appendix III. Each and every one of us has or should have such a person to follow.

My text throughout reflects a thematic style vilifying Western culture and people which most so called 'post-colonial' writing or 'victim literature', according to the most the most recent epithets hurled our way, is apt to portray. Such literature is really more a resistence strategy to the hegemonic pressure of Euro-Canadian society than anything else. For the continuing pressure of colonization is alive and well, contrary to what many may believe, and this shapes our defensive and vilifying tone. Even the term 'post-colonial' seems premature when you consider the latest versions of Neo-colonization. More than ever, the pressure and subtle demand to conform in the conscious destruction of our culture are present everywhere and Native people require a larger contemporary body of literature to draw from in forming a stronger strain of conscious resistence.

To say that St. Joseph's Boarding School had any redeeming quality or value in my life only evokes an emotive response in a negative sense, analogous to saying Hitler was ultimately responsible for the creation of the state of Israel. There was no doubt some good, but in applying a cost-benefit analysis I could only conclude, based on what I described in my study, that the costs far outweighed or negated any benefits.

I still remember with an ambivalent a mixture of sadness and fondness the two nuns who awkwardly attempted to instill their Eurocentric way of life upon us. The strap notwithstanding, their custodial efforts I believe were genuinely from the heart and not consciously cruel in any way. The one gesture I remember of a genuine act of love expressed by one human to another occurred when the older one of the two gave me my last hair cut before I left St. Joseph's for good. We talked casually during the hirsute removal. After the haircut as I sat on the chair brushing off the residual particles, she stood there pausing for a moment, perhaps contemplating dropping her detached disposition. Then she gently held my head, pressed it against her bosom and with a trace of sadness in her voice said affectionately like a mother to a son, "This is the last haircut I am going to give you" in a tone as if to say "There's a big world out there, don't let it swallow you up. Good bye." Expressions like this helped remind me, in a world of cynicism and despair, that most people of all races are fundamentally loving and decent despite their subjective and biased ways of treating each other. At various times in my life, this fact alone kept me from reverting to a temperament of violence and self-destruction.

I now realize the higher echelons of the schools, church denominations and government in collusion were the ultimate purveyors of assimilation. For the nun that inflicted the lasting terror that first year, who now has long passed away, I sense no feeling at all other than numb indifference.

However forgiveness and humility as aspects of the greater multifaceted value and belief of *respect* for all things and persons as part of the Anishinaabe ethos naturally specifies a tacit acknowledgment of forgiveness and needs no artificial expression in words.

As other former students I occasionally encounter have done, I once attributed what might be deemed the successes in my life to my former *alma mater*. This stance fails to properly credit the individual, and the true inspirational sources such as home and parents, for my having persevered over obstacles endured under colonial oppression and racism. My education, for example, was inspired by my parents. This also includes my survival abilities. Despite their own problems with alcohol, their gentle loving and kind demeanor engendered a temperament in me that would help me overcome many counterproductive tendencies in my life and ultimately help me rid myself of the consciousness of Yuma State.

Appendix I

Chronological List of Selected Categories

1 The phrases 'is traumatic enough', 'instinct to be free', and 'ensuing struggles' (Intimate or suggest experience of oppression)

2 'To be gawked at by passers-by', (self conscious, reflexive thought, beginning state of oppressor within)

3 'a business man ...thought of concerns of this nature were insignificant' (individualism over people, or community. Internalization of Western value over Native value or resistence to this preference)

4 'like human cargo' (prompts images of the Jewish holocaust, persecution, subjugation, oppression)

5 'during the depression' (equate white man's depression with the Native people's condition in a time of post war national prosperity, oppressor within, subjugation)

6 'Ojibway custom', 'adoption' 'carted off', (tension between Native value and Western practice, subjugation)

7 'lady who commandeered' 'policeman' (figures and action of oppression, and authority)

8 'dark colors' 'black uniform' 'black panel truck' 'angry voice barking orders' 'separation' (symbols of authority, oppression, subjugation)

9 'westerns', 'identities', 'confusion', (cues to identity, assimilation)

10 'religious icons', 'behaviour', 'change', (assimilation)

11 'teeming with wildlife', 'sustenance', 'harbour', 'protected', 'perfect', 'beauty', 'open water', 'mountain', (images of security, harmony, strength, respect, freedom, sense of place, resistence, decolonization)

12 'unobtrusive', 'treaty', 'better hunting areas', 'scourge', 'influenza epidemic', 'hit', 'necessitated their move', (consequences of contact, intrusion, disease, betrayal, oppression, removal)

13 'by the women at home', 'careers', 'home for supper', (sense of Europeanization, colonization, sexism, individualism)

14 'efficient', 'productive', 'excelled in skills', 'match others' (capitalism, individualism, competition, exploitation, colonization of mind, suspicion of identity)

15 'countless, bends, hills, lakes and open sky', 'wildlife', 'didn't want this ride to end', (Decolonization, freedom, resistence, journey, native values)

16 'darker in complexion', 'subdued', 'reticent', 'language', 'familiar ring', 'reserved bearing', 'disappeared into the woods", (detachment from heritage, stereotype of Indian, Europeanization, oppressor within)

17 'houses...painted white with black tar papered roofs' 'a little harbour', (third world images in the midst of prosperity, oppression, inequality, subjugation, containment and a little hope, sense of place, self awareness)

18 'sea of brown faces smiling laughing', 'began touching my clothing and hair', 'one of their own', (Anishinaabe, community, the extended family, humour, Native values)

19 'accepted my mom for who she was', 'new home', 'close bond', (separation, reunion, catharsis)

20 'sense of stillness', 'quietness', 'hear every sound', 'lone figure', 'canoe powered by small outboard engine', (world of the Anishinaabe, time, technology, colonization)

21 'should not have happened', 'being', 'away from family', (invasion, intrusion, imperialism, subjugation)

22 'family', 'aunts and uncles', (extended family, community)

23 'explore my physical environment', 'to go swimming', (decolonization, inure to world)

24 'didn't want to die', 'life's fragility', 'profound awareness', (insecurity, lack of self affirmation)

25 'this new experience', (freedom, Native value)

26 'generosity and concern', (community)

27 'internalize community ethos, mores, customs', 'osmosis', (resistence, modelling, extended family, continuity of values)

28 'inquisitive', 'observed', 'laugh from older people', (learn by modelling, patience, community and pedagogy)

29 'embarrassed my mother', (also a product of the residential school, oppressor within)

30 'didn't miss comforts', 'regular times', 'elaborate toys' 'freedom and familial closeness", (decolonization, regimentation, materialism, vs family native values, internalization of differing worlds)

31 'passive mannerisms', 'servile behaviour', 'paternalism', 'white people', 'internalize', 'learn my place' (subjugation, colonization, imperialism, self conscious, oppressor within)

32 'less spontaneous', 'more cautious of people', 'white people', 'those in authority', (subjugation, beginning of oppressor within, us vs them, the other)

33 'did everything but assimilate', (resistence, native values retention)

34 'dark ominous and imposing', 'structure', 'guarded', (institutionization, subjugation, oppression)

35 'function', (factory assimilation, oppression, subjugation)

36 'Mother Superior', 'trepidation', 'aware of certain uneasy sensation', 'light music off in the distance', 'foreign odours', (fear, distrust, them, suspicion, beauty juxtaposed with dread)

37 'memories associated with loneliness, abandonment, alienation and sadness', (beginning stages of the destruction of self, abandonment, security of self, on your own survival)

38 'gender segregation', 'standard procedure', 'Dickensian novels', 'for reasons unknown', 'only time girls and boys mingle', 'close to our older brother', (separation of family, interference, family, oppression, regimentation, secrecy)

39 'we had lockers, coats, winter gear, face clothes, towels,', 'individual numbers attached', 'reasons unbeknownst to everyone', (individualism, separation, dehumanization, alienation, secrecy, oppression, subjugation)

40 'file in', 'line up', 'size up' 'single file', 'housed the eating quarters', 'standing still', 'march to', (regimentation, herding, dehumanization, incarceration, shaping, destruction of the self, confinement)

41 'refectory', 'well lit', 'light blue sky' 'rows of tables and benches', 'food was laid out on tables', 'assigned our places', 'marched to retrieved our dish and dessert', (institutionalization, confinement, containment, dehumanization, food as a weapon)

42 'sense of dread', 'sternness', 'dark coloured habit', 'strictness', (symbol of authority, oppression, alienation)

43 'meals', 'ordeal', 'repulsive', 'no alternative but to eat', 'for this offence', (forced eating, persecution, eating becomes an infraction)

44 'came to their senses after that first year', (end of an era)

45 'strange notion of sights smells and sounds' 'some inexplicable way', 'army blanket' 'clean white sheets', 'uncomfortable', 'imminent danger',(distrust, suspicion, oppression, subjugation, uncertainty, colonization, insecurity)

46 'led somewhere anywhere from here', 'keep myself from breaking down', 'whatever it takes I had to deal with', (spirit broken, resistence, desperation, hopeless)

47 'red glow of the exit light', 'both sinister and a beacon of hope', (resistence, subjugation)

48 'altar boy', 'noticed altar boys were residents', 'I didn't mind', (means of self expression, resistence, colonization, elite, prison)

49 'met my first best friend', 'fashioning a gun holster', 'craft work', (Europeanization, self expression, other natives)

50 'left a lasting impression', 'she hit me all over my arms', (trauma, perfectionism, diminishing of confidence, breaking spirit, subjugation, oppression, fear for self)

51 'singled out before your friends', 'humiliating manner', (embarrassment, humiliation, self conscious, oppressor within, mortification of the self)

52 'sadistically watch', 'straps were relatively easy to take', (institutionalization, callous, self preservation', resistence)

Chapter Two 55/56 Summer

1 'the military, a prison sentence', 'strict rule', 'loveless environment', 'terrifying', 'on continuous guard of my behaviour', 'dreadfully aware of her presence', (oppression, subjugation, violence, fear for self, dehumanization)

2 'night time too became a nightmare', 'humiliation in front of everyone again', 'others had so...I was not alone', (continuous oppression, dehumanization, racism, self-oppressed oppresses other oppressed)

3 'provide me with a plan', 'I awoke in horror', 'stole over to his bed', 'clandestine activity' 'sense of conscience', ' to right some wrong', (continuous oppression, oppressed oppresses oppressed, shaping of deceit, survival, guilt, respect for other gone and returns)

4 'nagging feeling about the impropriety', 'alternative plans', (conscience, respect for the other, survival)

5 'first sign of hope and relief', 'grim and stringent atmosphere', 'Christmas week and Christmas', 'exciting and joyous occasion', Santa Claus and George the Porter', 'presented by the school to entertain dignitaries and relatives and all those involved with the school (false generosity, assimilation, Europeanization, racism, contrived joy amidst oppression, products of assimilation)

6 'worked hard', 'no one was ever penalized', 'memorized', 'choir', 'concert', (Europeanization, oppression, shaping vs modelling, technology of the oppressor)

7 'Christmas Day was even more exciting than the concert', 'prayer to God not to let me die', 'total dejection', 'my confinement and sorrow', (extreme contrast of emotions from rapture to misery, oppression, tools of subjugation)

8 'my bed', ' nice and comfortable it felt and then recoiling back', 'pleasurable experience', 'erased by the cold reality of where I was', (no balance in emotions, oppression, lack of stability)

9 'Grouped together', 'identical mattresses, army blankets, sheets and pillows', 'something sinister about this picture', (dehumanization, oppression, distrust, regimentation, individualization, colonization, institutionalization)

10 'dorm being haunted with ghosts', 'giant white rabbit','levitations of residents', (emotional stress and devastation, oppression)

11 'sparkling necklace', 'dark night sky', 'home and how I yearned to be there', (seeking refuge in desolateness, survival)

12 'difference in our appearance and demeanor', 'reluctant to exhibit unnecessary emotions', (stunted emotions, self consciousness, oppressor within)

13 'dressed up in our best clothes', 'white shirt, tie and gabardine', 'polished to a nice shine','flip a dime on my blankets', 'marched downstairs', (Europeanization, regimentation, colonization)

14 'mad dash for gifts', 'bundles with our name tags on them', 'savoured the moment', 'such possessions', 'quantity', (acquisitiveness, greed, joy amidst oppressive environment)

15 'we were allowed to go on the girls' side', 'literally no man's land' (separation of family, sexism engendered, detachment vs family unity, oppression)

16 'familial recognition', 'first awkward and shy', 'the change in all of us was striking', 'affected behaviours tempered by months of regimentation', 'real world', 'one day in the year contrasted so sharply with the rest, (world of oppression, subjugation, shaping and molding, separation of family, emotion of joy a weapon in shaping)

17 'formed cliques', 'demarcation lines of class structure', 'hierarchical standings' 'Pets, squealers or rats', (Europeanization, institutionalisms, inequality, oppressor within, discrimination, conditioned to oppress others)

18 'St. Joseph's as a prison', 'reform schools', provincial reformatories, and federal penitentiaries', (institutionalisation, shaping, oppression, innocence lost, penal mind)

19 'no need for bars', 'exemplifying prison life', 'runaways...escapees', 'prison numbers', (penal culture embedded, shaping, oppressor within, subjugation, minimum security)

20 'everyone favoured the westerns', 'exciting source of ideas to integrate in games', 'soundly entrenched with our white heroes', (Europeanization, repression of authentic identity, oppressor within, shaping)

21 'Native characters inferior and laughable', 'boasting', Natives projected as incompetent and subservient', 'did not find this scenario amusing', (conditioning to oppress self and others, dehumanization, shame, racism, television tool for assimilation)

22 'Movies', 'profiling Native people as perennial losers', 'hoping against hope', 'stars such as Jeff Chandler as Cochise was part Indian', 'misplaced idolizations', (desperation in identity, shame, self effacing, loss of identity, resistence against Europeanization)

23 'learning how to skate', 'skating is something most Canadians are supposed', 'to the NHL someday', (Europeanization, only white guys play hockey mentality, lack of authentic identity)

24 'pain inflicted by this little gadget was minimal', 'grade one teacher', 'mild mannered and likeable', (less oppressive atmosphere)

25 'large windows', 'conduit to the world outside', 'imagine far off places offering more serenity and contentment', (isolation, alienation, abandonment, barren existence)

26 'pal in grade two was a cousin of mine', 'we were unaware we were related', 'were taken from their home one day by the authorities', (separation of family, oppression, subjugation)

27 'playing with marbles', (Westernization...)

28 'distinct smell of summer', 'feel cautiously excited', 'lingering thought of something going wrong', 'writing us a short letter', (lack of spontaneity, contact with family not encouraged, continuous consciousness of oppression)

29 'caring whether I passed my grade or not", 'that much more agonizing', 'we all seemed a bit nervous and reserved', 'eager to get home',(family reunion, education unimportant)

30 'our moods and focus began to change', 'how are we supposed to act', 'are there any cars there?', 'contrast in sound level between reserve and city life', 'screaming kids and dogs barking', 'the village', (stereotyping image of Indian, oppressor within, enculturation)

31 'next few days at home would be one of adjustment', 'former resident at St. Joseph's', 'features she liked and encouraged us to do likewise', 'to go to Mass it became a household affair', (did not escape colonization entirely, subjugation and oppression also on the reserve, inure mind to reserve lifestyle)

32 'woman who sang their hymns in Ojibway', 'very melodious and fitting', (West meets Native value in church music, bridge to enculturation)

33 'always at a specific time of the day','people who happened to be visiting at the time', dinner guests and elders always served first' (conscious of time, time as a Native value)

34 'cliffs were continually eroding, 'edge of a cliff', (ecology affected by white people)

35 'reserve was our playground', 'yards and property not necessarily off limits', 'plenty of water available for swimming', (sense of acute freedom vs containment surroundings of the residential school)

36 'American tourists', 'toss coins in the water for us to dive for', (Anglo Saxon imperialism, objectification of native village, tourist attraction)

37 'in their element like a couple of otters', 'varied species of freshwater creatures', 'frogs, minnows, tad poles, crayfish, leeches', 'kingfisher, swallows, pipers, seagulls', (overwhelming interaction with wild life, a kinship with and harmony with the land)

38 'act like Tarzan", 'admonished not to bother bird nests', 'this rule was not always observed', 'respecting nature', (tension between Western and Native values, respect, non-interference, shaping and modelling clash)

39 'my inability to speak my language', 'I don't speak Indian', (clash in values, colonization, dissonance)

40 'news of a drowning', 'idea of death at my age was very remote', 'the victim was a *wapshkeyah,*', (distinct of identities, us them polarity, how death is treated)

41 'I briefly thought of his relatives', 'river its power its mystery', 'such wonder and destruction', 'flew the body home', (value of respect)

42 'He was poor was poor in terms of material possessions', 'all of our possessions', (value of material both Native and Western)

43 'bread or bannock', 'before the time of sliced bread', (meeting of cultures, enculturation)

44 'had already conquered', 'uncharted waters', 'passing seafarers', 'only visible sign of life were seagulls', 'explore the island', (images of Western Imperialism, colonization of the mind, oppressor within, lack of Native content in thought)

45 'memories that remain with you for life', 'fish and potatoes', 'easiest to prepare under such circumstances', 'I laid peacefully under my blankets', 'strong scent of the

boughs', 'wisps of smoke the smell of tent permeated the air', (mind resisting Westernization, security, Native sense of place permeated the mind)

46 'continued our journey', 'locating and setting up a campsite', 'many families', 'resembled a little village', 'evening when we were settled', 'people came over to visit', 'best spots for picking and the prices paid', 'two merchants came in periodically', (images from The Grapes of Wrath, exploitation, subjugation, dual oppression, vs community, families meet)

47 'Groceries could be charged up', 'pay later for your berries', (debt, dependence, subjugation, Western commerce, imposition)

48 'a sky blue tint', 'gently ease the berries into your hands', 'designed by nature and come freely in abundance', 'usually grouped together',(union, family, inured to the world, symbiotic relation)

49 'a very adept woodsman', 'no rush or expectation from adults concerning our progress in picking', (pedagogy of modelling...)

50 'watched him dig a hole in some dry creek bed with his hands', 'cold water trickled up forth', 'fresh cold spring water', (modelling, symbiosis with the world)

51 'our return to St. Joseph's', 'a dreadful feeling', 'my father philosophic and stoic', 'Looking back through the rear car window', (stereotype, duality of two worlds)

Chapter three

1 'get on with the business of the old routine again', 'some advantages of being a new guy', '(resumption of oppression and subjugation, tactic of survival and resistence)

2 'discriminating mind', 'compassion and fairness', 'earned her respect', 'my estimation in a fair and equitable manner', (conscious of other, tenuous link to the oppressor, the Western value of respect, subjugation complete in finding oppressor more agreeable)

3 'my life at the school changed for the better', 'did not half to live in fear anymore', 'conduct my behaviour less guardedly', (oppression lessened, colonization process triumphs, relaxed climate facilitates oppressor within)

4 'poor hygiene', 'associations with Indianness', 'associating with our image', (racial stigmatism, racial slur, oppressor within, subjugation)

5 'Indians almost always lived by water anyway', 'we spent a great deal of time in water',(oppressor within defends fragmented self)

6 'read aloud *Anne of Green Gables*', 'every *Hardy Boys* book', (colonizing the mind, white role models)

7 'Anne's sense of spirit and freedom', 'world of the child outside', 'captive audience', 'character was an orphan', (tenuous link to home, resistence, conscious of oppressive domain)

8 'hockey', 'I wasn't a very good player', 'Montreal Canadiens', 'white boys ', ''allowed to play hockey outside the school', 'paper route', (game link to Canadian identity, self negated, conscious of racism, confidence shattered)

9 'regular presentation of WW II films', 'devastation and destruction', 'cold black uniforms of SS', 'authority in its most frightening state', 'television censored', 'girls in bathing suits and Elvis Presley censored',(selective censorship, extreme violence okay but not sexual suggestiveness, fear instilled, shaping, religious subjugation)

10 'chores', 'access to extra goodies', 'entailed interacting with the girls', 'sense of satisfaction', 'knowing your range of abilities', (resistence, inured to industrial work,)

11 'alcohol', 'slowly crept into my consciousness', (self image formed in relation to alcohol)

12 'Injun Joe', 'drunken Indian', 'a cross to bear', 'adopted white nuances of behaviour', 'inferiority complex engendered', 'media; movies, television, books, comics, racial slurs, 'took advantage of their biological sanctuary', 'convincing a wooden Indian at a cigar store', (technology of racism and subordination, self image survival, racial slurs, resistence, shame, embarrassment, oppressor within entrenched)

13 'I often yearned for our parent's visits', 'they plainly had been drinking', 'incorporated the image of the drunken Indian image', 'I began to grow less excited about their visits', (image of our parents turned against us, shame and love, emotional devastation)

14 'away from prying eyes', 'until the cabbie said something', 'the first time I cast somebody as one of them and not us', (subjugation complete, outside looking in, inferiority complex, mental segregation, oppressor within)

SUMMER

15 'non-native affectations', 'not understand our language', ''forgetting your language implied better', 'the single most important aspect of our ways denied us', (colonization, oppressor within, confused identity, cultural genocide)

16 'Raft building', 'strapping these logs together', 'archetypical raft-builders of them all; Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer', 'our contribution to enculturation',(conduits of assimilation)

17 'fashioned himself an old *courier de bois* outfit', 'French Canadian phrases and heading out to the wilderness...live with the Indians', (colonization, three solitudes)

18 'don't recall of any other instance when my parents used the willow switch on us', 'rubbing my derriere', (Western practice of discipline)

19 'fertile blueberry hills of Sand river', 'Ojibway families assemble each summer', 'rekindle old acquaintances', 'happy among old friends and relatives', 'unifying factor', (continuity of values, sense of place, respect, community, family)

20 'shenanigans of this sort did not go unnoticed and I'm sure the miscreants somehow paid for their misdeeds in some form or other', (retribution, material and acquisitiveness, Western sacred cows, colonization)

21 'taboo subject of bears', 'not common attire for native children', 'you could hear the distant twelve o'clock siren', (Western myths of animals ingrained, western time, western attire)

22 'hopefully to instill in their minds one of the ties that bind our people to the land', (continuity of values, sense of place)

Chapter four 57/58 Summer

1 'aloneness and despair are yours alone', 'journey in solitude', 'why does going away so depressing?', 'mother tacitly accepted our and her dilemma', 'masked her true feelings', 'I knew she was very sad', (emotional devastation, us-them reality, oppression, subjugation, oppressor within)

2 'missionary priest', 'many years in Japan', 'that I could have retrieved myself in a book', 'Japanese their simplicity and docility, shy friendliness', 'struck a familiar chord with me',(subjugation, empathy, imperialism)

3 'just thinking of my existence here at the school', ' deeply felt moods of depression', 'clear and lingering envy', 'was not a terrifying ordeal as it was my first year', 'straps were acceptable and bearable now', (emotional devastation, inured to oppression, alienation from people, the self creates impenetrable boundary)

4 'we were a different people','use the term 'smoke meat', 'attitude of denial crept in my consciousness', 'denying certain realities I pretended that the myth of racism did not exist', (pedagogic constructs everywhere, denial is a subconscious survival technique', overt racism, subjugation everywhere)

5 'idea of education germinating in my mind', 'runaway perennial problem', (education a survival goal within self's control, runaway as resistence...)

6 'the 'mountie' RCMP', 'a native policeman', 'reserve', 'love-hate relation with mountie', (symbol of authority, also mythical symbol for adulation, weapon for subjugation, 'not to serve and protect but to confine)

7 'Boy's Scout program', 'idea of a uniform and mountie hat', 'Queen's scout adorned with all his badges', (British imperialism still alive, uniform a symbol of Western power and status, colonization, western values, badges for badly desired recognition)

8 'scout master', 'a sense of dread', 'stamp of fascist authoritarianism', 'barking away', 'lay the ground rules', (discipline for imperialism, subjugation, dehumanization)

9 'moose', 'a homely and bungling sort of creature', 'was the mainstay of the Ojibway people', 'as the buffalo was to the Plains Indians', (values turned around, oppressor within, assimilation, symbol of strength and survival desecrated)

10 'scouting movement', 'extracted from the Ojibway and other Native American clans customs and traditions', 'learning woodcraft 'white-man style', (imposition, imperialism, cultural genocide)

11 'I took great pains in this procedure to o it properly', 'my brother looked kind of silly', (perfectionism, judgmental, desire to be recognized)

12 'my produce in hand', 'afternoon selling apples', 'sternly instructed not to eat the apples', 'did well in my selling venture', (market system...)

13 'planting trees with other troops in the city', (imperialism with economics, trees were resource not to beautify...)

14 'he was bald funny since very few Indians were bald', (stereotyping...)

15 'comply with his commands', 'act like scouts', 'wandering all over', 'explore and investigate', 'break formation', 'patrol agendas', (instinct to be free, discipline...)

16 'disappeared momentarily into the tree lines', 'explore on their own', 'more akin to reserve environment', 'gravitated to it', 'wanted to just explore and fool around in the bush', (inured to Native environment, opportunity to the call of the *noka ming*)

17 'quietly stole away from the pack', 'glided through the trees', (animal-like phrases...)

18 'climbed to the top', 'sat down ate lunches', 'a search party formed', 'long trek back to the school', 'one member of the entire troop', 'breakdown in discipline', militaristic nature of the program', (reminiscent of soldiers scouting for Indians, westernization through games)

19 'my proclivity to be free outweighed attractive features of scouting', 'could not behave within the psychological parameters dictated by scouting', 'strong religious tendencies', 'moral transgressions', (tensions in the mind of the oppressor within, dissonance surfaces, subconscious reaction to racism in scouting, lack of models in scouting accept the stereotype Indian)

20 'first thing I ever stole', 'I pulled the job off', 'preferred three or four straps to embarrassment shame and disgrace', 'The lady kind, and assuaging ...couldn't help but cry', (subconscious twinge to Westernized concept of theft, stealing undermines the capitalist infrastructure, jargon of western robber, tough guy punishment over public disgrace, rare authentic emotions experienced between lady and boy)

21 'developed abhorrence for stealing', 'personal integrity', (ego degrading, stealing act of greed, disrespect for the other, *respect* foremost Native value, not respect for property but the integrity of the other) *geh go ki moat ken*

22 'stealing', 'hunger at nights', 'kitchen to fetch goodies', (hunger as an immoral act)

23 'some conscience troubling problems', 'no compunction about leaving the school grounds', 'I stole away from the school', 'I betrayed her trust', (deceiving a human being, concept of respect)

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24 'theft of bicycles', 'heroes among our peers', 'they created unforseen problems', (curious metaphor to Natives stealing horses in the West)

25 'he didn't seem to mind my presence at all', 'never once gesturing I should leave', 'craft of Ojibway descent consummate skill objects of size beauty complexity', 'skeptic regarding my race', (pedagogy of modelling, Native value...)

26 'I was wary of people making fun of me', (self conscious...)

Chapter 5 58/59 Summer

1 'seasoned residents', 'a step upward in my personal growth', 'turning twelve', 'with the seniors', (matured oppressor within)

2 'we developed attitudes determining the course of our lives', 'the idea of bettering myself and what that meant wasn't clear', (education nebulous goal)

3 'moving from the dormitory to the infirmary was a rite of passage', 'certain responsibilities', 'as a non-conformist challenging indeed', 'one incident I injured a boy under my charge', 'I took my senior duties less seriously', (learning the tactics of oppression, alienating people into classes,)

4 'as long as no one saw me', 'music of opera' , 'I kept this fact a secret lest I be made fun of', (growth in confidence aborted, individual talents ignored) (music lessons taught to outside children by nuns)

5 'being popular became important to me', 'express my own uniqueness', (self expression turns egotistical than character growth, not goal oriented for myself but to impress)

6 'I watched with envy the alter boys', 'stood above the rest', 'appealed to my already expanding ego', 'elitist', 'little priests that others looked up to', (like a boy scout, male oriented world, elitist and sexists, crave for attention)

7 'wine placed my tongue on the mouth of the bottle', 'strange irony', 'the blood of Christ', 'responsible for so much hardship anguish and despair', 'separated matters of faith from temporal world', (contradiction repressed in subconscious memory, basis for ensuing scepticism)

8 'notion of drunken lazy Indian entrenched in my psyche', 'going over to the other side without the tools to deal with obstacles', 'hybrid and maladjusted personality in the future', (hybrid self: oppressor within yet repressed Indian self)

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Summer

9 'Returning the summer of 59 I would become more aware of drinking behaviours', 'I divorced myself consciously from the influence of alcohol','It would affect my

living condition I thought but not my mind', (oppressor within, alcohol becomes the oppressor'...)

10 'most typical features of a full blooded Indian', 'a swarthy appearance, high cheek bones and piercing dark eyes', 'stoic noble and reticent Indian', 'about him that border on the legendary', (oppressor within stereotypes, grandfather object model for resistence)

11 'his own inimitable style', 'as I remember him to be', 'we were there to listen', 'his life seemed the most adventuresome', 'he was a shaman', 'cross his legs and hum ancient Ojibway songs, (project grandfather larger than life figure, Why? an Ojibway to look up to?)

12 'grandfather's attempt to tell us Ojibway stories about times past', mother tried telling us these narratives', 'nature of the stories I couldn't grasp their meanings', (colonized culturally, important Native values lost)

13 'father moose hunting trip with him', 'his responsibility and duty as an Ojibway parent to teach', 'then suddenly and dramatically the deadhead transform itself into a large moose', (hunting trip modelling paradigm, visual surrealism, mysteries of *nok ka ming*, resistence)

14 'was this the goal my father intended?', "I would make every effort to concentrate on the hunt as much as possible', 'they treated me like some seasoned hunter and never admonished me for anything', (value of non interference, pedagogy of modelling...)

15 'I heard the faint sound of a plane engine', 'the time before hunting rights were restored', 'hunting practices were done almost surreptitiously', (oppressor within, subjugation, cultural genocide)

16 'a fresh cup of tea made out doors', 'as a naive observer', 'my hunting partners did quietly and efficiently with little fanfare', 'only things that were required were brought along', everything was just as it was before we arrived', 'it was as if we hadn't been there', (respect, oppressor within, native ethos, resistence, survival)

17 'I wasn't an expert in marksmanship and hunting', 'by the Ojibway of Gull Bay', (third party reference, colonization, oppressor within)

18 'I learned more that day without direct instruction but by observation and interest', 'the most important lesson I learned that day was to be an Ojibway', (pedagogy of modelling, resistence, Native ethos, bifurcated identity)

Chapter Six 59/60

1 'but somehow I would survive I thought', 'I still had a whole year yet to worry about' (drudgery of subjugation, hope, consciousness of continuous subjugation)

2 'he seemed to me a man of the world', 'he made a remark about university which caught my attention immediately', 'he told us of how large a university was and all that was taught there', (limited education, streamlined for secondary vocations, hope, resistence)

3 'was entirely up to you to discipline yourself', 'gasped in wonderment', 'freedom which I found hard to believe', 'sounded all very real but so remote', 'far off nebulous goal', (hope, resistence...)

4 'I respected him for his tact and tried to behave in all his classes', (bridge the racial gap, relate to the other, outside looking in, manipulation)

5 'another path had been chosen for me', 'with virtually no other Native students', 'my dependence on St. Joseph's', (no sense of control, lack of independence, fear of the outside world, no authentic world)

6 'a moot point for me since I wouldn't be present', (ego centred, survival instinct, selfish)

7 'I kept my aspirations and goals to my self', 'I spoke only to the teacher', 'that separated me from others', (secretive, no confidence, identity crises, oppressor within)

8 'were obligated to do so also', 'that was the only time I did that particular stunt', (oppressor within, aloneness)

9 'I had become accustomed to the brand of security it insulated me with', (dependence, no confidence in self, immature self ...)

10 'we were never close enough to anyone else', 'my feelings toward any particular individual', 'how I related with them', 'the nuns looking after us though played a more critical role', (social skills stunted, subjugation, conscious of other, paralysis of self)

11 'turned awkwardly', 'tensed myself to this gesture', (stunted emotions)

12 'I left St. Joseph's permanently', 'little in the way of forecasting the future', 'an uncertain future', (no relation to the other, aloneness, lack of concrete goal, no attachment to the world)

13 'with other Ojibway kids', 'we were in unfamiliar territory', (objective and detached observer, objectify own race, other as enemy)

14 'Russia's leader had a bald head and a noticeable wart on his nose', 'we were forever encouraged to pray for his and Russia's conversion, (stereotyping, distancing the other)

15 'just wanting to be alone', 'my solitary spot over looking the bay', 'a significant change in my life', 'caught in a dilemma', (maturing oppressor within...)

16 'whatever anyone expected of me now seemed so distantly remote' 'the goal of wanting to better myself', 'was a veneer', 'to discard the drunken Indian image', (oppressor within had a goal, the conscious self hadn't)

17 'I didn't want to be embarrass myself', 'appearing stupid', (oppressor within, oppressed by racist other and racist self)

18 'I was now beginning to feel more and more anxious', 'I would begin a new mode of existence', 'to make the transition as smooth as possible', 'the little bit of knowledge', (locked into oppressed within, spontaneity lacking)

Epilogue

1 'a lot of uncertainty and anxiety about my ability to cope', 'regarding the outside world', 'I would not be very happy at all', 'ride out the storm',(objectify the world, separateness, now oppressor within controls and subjugates, alienated authentic self, no assimilation to society)

2 'they were all white', 'another deluge of white people', (total alienation from white people, overwhelmed by the other)

3 'my legs felt like they would collapse', 'frustration at not knowing what to do', 'too stupid and can't be made to look stupid', (emotional paralysis, unsocialized)

4 'spoke so loud that everyone heard', 'I didn't want to attract too much attention', (subjugation within, oppression continues)

5 'as if not hearing a word I said', 'the DIA counsellor yelled triumphantly', (respect, intrusion by DIA, oppression, alienation, interference)

6 'point out on the map where the city of Nagasaki was', 'I stood there in silence for sometime a bit confused', (alienation to teacher and class setting, surreal world, self outside looking in)

7 'still cautious', 'I was always on my guard less anyone brought up the subject of my heritage', (lack of spontaneity, oppressor within, subjugation)

8 'my friendship conditional', 'I resolved not to allow anyone degrade me again', (alienation has no friendship, outside looking in)

9 'because it was intimidating in nature', 'outright fights over the course of my highschool years', (stunted emotional growth, oppressor within maturing)

10 'I was starting to become increasingly more self conscious of the hegemonic role white people had over my life and all native people', 'as long as I acted passive not ever once asserting my feelings and opinions I got along with everyone', (us them consciousness, Uncle Tomahawk role)

11 'I still kept my distance from alcohol related incidents', (alcohol is subconscious metaphor or personification for Native people? oppressor within)

12 'the worst of two evils was a life on the reserve than the storm of high school', (reserve now completely negative, colonization but not assimilation)

13 'her boyfriend had a slight drinking problem which I paid no mind to', (okay for white to drink but not Indians)

14 'I spent more time alone contemplating my future', 'becoming increasingly difficult to decide what to do with myself', 'hinted to my parents about quitting school', (distancing myself from peers on the reserve, resolve weakening, nebulous educational goal)

15 'the desire to work and have extra cash was just as strong', 'I decided to go to town and spend some money', 'He managed to talk me into buying this car with him', (rationalization, money as a sedative from oppression)

16 'outline of my brother's car', 'I sat back in silence hoping against hope', 'continued staring at nothing in particular', 'I was expressionless',(death, objectifying and distancing myself, stunted emotions, void of spontaneity)

17 'I couldn't reach out to anyone or anything specifically to blame', 'as if nothing had happened', 'the body was taken away', (defence mechanism, alienation, detachment)

18 'If I hated anything to do with alcohol before I now ignored everything to do with it as if it was non-existent including people', I vowed openly to an uncle that I would never have anything to do with alcohol', 'I became more absorbed with myself', (complete alienation from people, barrier)

19 'if there was any sign of humanity', 'to be alone for a minute', 'river that refreshes your spirit', (aloneness constant companion, yearning to attach or relate...)

20 'don't know why I decided to take that drink', 'the stuff I loathe most of my adolescent years', 'seemed strangely innocuous', (succumb to the label of alcohol and Indian, oppressor within)

21 'I told him that was all I was going to drink', 'I told him I was just fine', (denial, oppressor within now dominates consciousness)

Appendix II

Chronological Table of Concepts

CHAPTERS	1	2	3	4 * 5	6	7
OPPRESSION	16	13	2	2		2
sexism	1	1		4		
stereotyping	1	3		2		1
persecution	5	2				
OPPRESSOR WITHIN	8	12	8	13	8	21
WESTERN VALUES	5	8	10	6	1	
individualism	5	1				
materialism	2					
ALIENATION	2			2	1	17
RACISM	1	6	4	3	2	
IMPERIALISM	4	2		6		
INTRUSION	2	1		1		2
EUROPEANIZATION	3	9	4	6		
colonization	7	4	6	4		
NATIVE VALUES	27	27	7	16	5	1
community	6					
modeling	4			4		
RESISTENCE	20	1	5	14	3	
decolonization	4					
SUBJUGATION	18	12	5	7	5	
institutionalization	1	6				
regimentation	4	1				
authority	5					
dehumanization	7	5				
IDENTITY	8	4	3	4	1	1
self conscious	5					
us/them	2		1			
ASSIMILATION	5	7	1			

Appendix III

How the Fisher Lost His Tail

as told by Paul Michel of the Lake Nipigon Ojibways

to Arthur Lower[112]

The following folk tales were told to me years ago by Paul Michel, a young Ojibway of the Nipigon House Band. As Ontario Fire Rangers, my partner, Bob Harris, and myself, were camped on Grand Island, Lake Nipigon. Paul was employed at a neighbouring lumber camp. He used to come over after work, and when he got into an appropriate state of excitement, and after much urging, the stories would come. The gleaming lake, the dark forest, the tent and the canoe drawn up near it, the bright campfire and the flushed, attractive young Indian sitting there telling tales of his people made a picture that will always remain bright in my mind.

– A. R. M. Lower
(Chief Kinegago Kakanoodon).

Once upon a time in the long winter, a hunter met a squirrel, Ajidimoh, in the forest and was about to shoot it. But Ajidimoh exclaimed "O hunter don't shoot me. I am very hungry and have only one spruce cone left. I must die anyway because the summer isn't coming."

"And why is the summer not coming?" asked the hunter.

"Because away down south, King White has shut him up in his wigwam and won't let him go. O hunter, do try to make King White let the summer go."

The hunter became very sad at this news and returned to his wigwam, where he began to weep and kept on until he cried away all his appetite. But one day Wajeeg, the fisher, passed and found out why the hunter was so sad. "I'll go after the summer," he shouted as he bounded back among the trees.

So Wajeeg gathered together all his animal friends, beavers and otters, rats, mice, caribou, moose, large and small in great numbers. "Come down to the pleasant south with me, " he said to them, "where the summer is, and we will bring back, so that the hunter need no longer weep, and Ajidimoh starve when his one spruce cone is gone"

Then off they all went down to where it was warm. They came at last to the village of King White. Here, surrounded by many smaller ones, they saw a huge wigwam with a pole sticking up from it and reaching right up into the sky. And on the top of the pole, they could see a dried mooseskin, and in it they knew King White must be keeping summer tied up.

Now Wajeeg said to the screech-owl, Peebah-kekoo-koo-koo, "Fly to the big wigwam, Screech-owl, and bring us back word of what you see in it.

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[112] Arthur Lower, "Three Ojibway Folk Tales" *Queen's Quarterly,* vol 75-4 (winter, 1968), 584-591.

So Peebah-kekoo-koo-koo flew to the door of the wigwam, gently pulled aside a little of the cloth that covered it and looked in. There he saw king White and many other people smoking and feasting. As he looked, one of them glanced up. "Someone is looking in on us," he exclaimed; "I am going to see who it is." So he snatched a coal from the fire and pushed it through the opening right against the owl's nose. But the owl did not move, not he. He would not betray Wajeeg. He was ready to die at his post. He stood the pain bravely, although the coal burned all the hair from his face and left a scarred ring there that you could see to this day. When the burning stopped the man returned to his place, satisfied that no one was spying, Peebah-kekoo-koo-koo gently replaced the cloth and flew back to Wajeeg to tell him what he had seen.

Now the cunning Wajeeg, the fisher, the leader of animals, soon thought out a way to get at Summer. He ordered the rats and mice to attack the birch canoes that lay on the shore and to gnaw tiny holes in them, so that they would sink when they got into deep water. The beaver Amik, he had attack the paddles and gnaw round them so that they would break when they were used. But to the giants of his army, the moose, and Atik, the caribou, he gave the job of crossing and recrossing the little lake, so that the people in King White's encampment would all come in their canoes to hunt and kill them.

When all was ready, the moose and caribou began crossing the lake and they soon attracted the attention of King White's followers. Out they came to kill them, got into their canoes and pushed off. But the canoes soon filled and the paddles broke and down they went into the water. This was Wajeeg's chance. He rushed into the big wigwam and was about to climb the pole after the mooseskin when he noticed Poodonsk, the tadpole, making arrows: he had been left alone in the wigwam. Fine arrows he made, too, with iron tips and varnished with glue of Nahmah, the sturgeon.

When Poodonsk saw Wajeeg enter, he began to call out to King White to come back, but Wajeeg grabbed his glue and dashed it against his mouth. So Poodonsk could not open his mouth. But he picked up one of his fine arrows and bored a small round hole in the glue. Then he was able to make a faint squeak. That is how Poodonsk, the tadpole, came to have such a small, round mouth.

Having silenced Poodonsk, Wajeeg began to climb the pole towards Summer. When he got above the wigwam, King White and his followers saw him and they were so angry to think that he was going to let Summer out that even with their leaking canoes and their broken paddles, they managed to get ashore. They all came running towards the wigwam. Fitting to their big bows the fine iron-tipped arrows of Poodonsk, smoothed with varnish from the sturgeon, Nahmah, they began to fire at Wajeeg. Higher and higher he climbed as their arrows whistled around him. Soon he reached the moose-hide, opened it and lo! the beautiful Summer rushed forth, once more to reach the waiting northland. But still the arrows whizzed and still Wajeeg climbed. At last when he had almost reached the sky, one hit him in the tail and tore it off. But Wajeeg stayed up there in the sky without his tail, and you may see him still as he points forever and forever at the North Star towards which he sent the lovely Summer. You and I call him the Dipper, but he is no such thing: he is the fisher, Wajeeg, the Summer-maker.

As for King White when he lost Summer he went away from his village, away to the far south. But the Raven Kah-gah-gee, chased him and would not let him alone. At last he turned and flew north again until he came to Kitchigama, Lake Superior. Here one day he thought he would rest, on a piece of floating wood he saw down below him. But the wood sank and he then knew it was one of his enemies, Otter. Tired as he was, he flew on until he came to a rock. He settled on this, only

to be seized and then terribly pinched, for this was Mickinak, the turtle, on whom he had alighted and by him King White was pinched to death.

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