INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Re-investing the Kahswenta:
Rotinonhsyonni Identities today.

by Greg A. Hill, B.F.A.
A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Canadian Studies

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
February 13, 1998
©Greg A. Hill, 1998.

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-26956-6

Canada

**The undersigned recommend to the Faculty
Of Graduate Studies and Research acceptance of the thesis**

**“Re-investing the Kahswenta:
Rotinonhsyonni Identities Today”**

submitted by Greg A. Hill, Hons. B.F.A.

**in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts**

.....
Thesis Supervisor

.....
**Acting Director
School of Canadian Studies**

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

January 1998

Abstract

What is *Rotinohsyonni*?

The question above is posed as an interrogation of the elements and factors that constitute a sense of *Rotinohsyonniness* in the present day, as manifested in the artworks and attitudes of five contemporary Rotinohsyonni artists.

Taking into account the historical relationships between the First Peoples of Turtle Island and the various colonizing nations of the European west, the ability to even ask the question “What is Rotinohsyonni?”, represents a shift in the locus of power--away from the homogenizing and totalizing imperatives of colonialism and towards some understanding of our “selves”, by our selves.

The effects of a colonial past, and present, have yielded confusion concerning the issue of Aboriginal identity in general, and Rotinohsyonni identity in particular. This thesis is a personal examination of the question “What is *Rotinohsyonni*?” informed by ways of seeing, self identification, and the perspectives of five artists who live and work from this site; Patricia Deadman, David Kanatawakhon Maracle, Shelly Niro, Jeff Thomas, and myself.

Acknowledgements

I wish to extend my appreciation, to my supervisor Julian Smith for his thought provoking conversation and critique, to my committee members, and especially to Ruth Phillips, who has contributed to my efforts in more than one capacity, always giving selflessly of her time and energy.

My great appreciation goes out to Patricia Deadman, David Kanatawakhon Maracle, Shelley Niro, and Jeffrey Thomas, for sharing their thoughts with me which provided me with the inspiration to push further when I doubted I was even headed in the right direction.

I must also acknowledge with love and respect, the support and encouragement expended by my life-partner, Sue-Ellen. Her intuitive sensitivity has provided a level surface through the peaks and valleys of this “educational adventure”. My colleague Kiera Ladner continues to model perseverance and strength through her commitment and successes as an academic, and as a friend.

Finally, my family, especially my parents have always supported my every endeavour and somehow their encouragement has never been diluted.

To all of you I say, Nyawen.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to our expected child.

Nothing has been written on the blank sheet that is your future and yet you have already made such an imprint on those who wait in anticipation of your arrival. I hope someday that these words can honour you for the motivation you provided at the right time. See you soon...

Table of Contents

Preface _____	1
Introduction- Building a Canoe _____	10
Chapter 1- Setting out from the Shore _____	25
Chapter 2- Heading into the Current _____	42
Chapter 3- Portaging the Rapids _____	85
Chapter 4- Paddling Upstream _____	112
Conclusion- Refining Our Skills _____	146
Appendix 1- Interview with Patricia Deadman _____	154
Appendix 2- Interview with David Kanatawakhon Maracle _____	171
Appendix 3- Interview with Shelley Niro _____	191
Appendix 4- Interview with Jefferey Thomas _____	210
Sources Consulted _____	235

List of Illustrations

Figure 1.	(detail) Kahswenta, reproduced from <i>Council Fire.</i> , 1989:	cover 8-9.
Figure 2.	Reproduced from Greg Curnoe. <i>Blue Book 8.</i> 1989: 3.	6
Figure 3.	<i>Landrights</i> , Norval Morrisseau, 1975.	24
Figure 4.	<i>Joe series #1-3</i> , the author, 1991.	31
Figure 5.	<i>Joe series #2- revolutionary, traitor, loyalist</i> , the author, 85x60cm, 1991.	32
Figure 6.	Kahswenta wampum belt.	48
Figure 7.	(diagram) Negative space.	51
Figure 8.	(diagram) Object/Subject space.	52
Figure 9.	(diagram) Rotinonhsyonni world view.	58
Figure 10.	Reproduced from author's sketchbook, <i>quantum theory</i> , 1993.	60
Figure 11.	Patricia Deadman, <i>Serve Series- self serve</i> , 1992.	75
Figure 12.	(diagram) Kahswenta with perspective grid overlay.	85
Figure 13.	(detail) Cavell, page 83: from Jean Du Breuil. <i>La Perspective pratique nécessaire à tous peintres.</i> , Paris, 1663.	90
Figure 14.	Cavell, page 83: from Jean Du Breuil. <i>La Perspective pratique nécessaire à tous peintres</i> , Paris, 1663.	91
Figure 15.	(diagram) Dürer's definition of parallel lines.	92
Figure 16.	(diagram) Converging parallels.	92
Figure 17.	(diagram) Dualistic whole.	96
Figure 18.	(diagram) The Cycle of Ceremonies.	96
Figure 19.	(diagram) The Circle Council Wampum.	97
Figure 20.	(diagram) Longhouse Confederacy.	99

Figure 21.	(diagram) Circular Kahswenta.	105
Figure 22.	(detail) Dürer's perspective device.	105
Figure 23.	(diagram) Schematic for parallel thinking.	106
Figure 24.	George Catlin, <i>The Author painting a Chief...</i> .	112
Figure 25.	(detail) reproduced from Olive Dickason's, <i>Myth of the Savage</i> , 1984: 57.	116
Figure 26.	Patricia Deadman, <i>Serve Series- conserve</i> , 1992.	119
Figure 27.	<i>Pollution: It's a Crying Shame</i> . Poster for Keep America Beautiful, Inc., by Marstellar Inc., Berkhofer 136.	120
Figure 28.	Patricia Deadman, <i>Serve Series- reserve</i> , 1992.	121
Figure 29.	Patricia Deadman, <i>Serve Series- preserve</i> , 1992.	122
Figure 30.	Patricia Deadman, <i>Serve Series- deserve</i> , 1992.	123
Figure 31.	Patricia Deadman, <i>Serve Series- self serve</i> , 1992.	124
Figure 32.	David Kanatawakhon Maracle, Rotinonhsyonni design work.	126
Figure 33.	David Kanatawakhon Maracle, Rotinonhsyonni design work.	129
Figure 34.	David Kanatawakhon Maracle, Rotinonhsyonni design work.	130
Figure 35.	Jeffrey Thomas, <i>Returning the Gaze.</i> , 1990 (diptych).	132
Figure 36.	Jeffrey Thomas, <i>Plenty Chief.</i> , 1985.	134
Figure 37.	Jeffrey Thomas, <i>Founder of the New World.</i> , 1990	136
Figure 38.	Shelley Niro, <i>Mohawks in Beehives.</i> , 1991.	137
Figure 39.	Shelley Niro, <i>The Rebel.</i> , 1991.	138
Figure 40.	(detail) Shelley Niro, <i>The Iroquois is a Highly Developed Matriarchal Society.</i> , 1991.	139
Figure 41.	Shelley Niro, <i>The Iroquois is a Highly Developed Matriarchal Society.</i> , 1991.	140

- Figure 42. Greg Hill, *Chief giving George Catlin a lesson in Representation.*, 1997. 145
- Figure 43. Sue-Ellen Gerritsen and Greg Hill, postcard for performance, *Scene/Seen with both eyes open.*, 1996. 148
- Figure 44. Sue-Ellen Gerritsen and Greg Hill, *Joe and Venus overseeing the transition.*, postcard for performance, *Canada: Made in China.*, 1997. 151
- Figure 45. Kahswenta with circle overlaid. 153

Preface

Terminology

First, it is necessary to set out which descriptive terms I will be using, how I am using them, some explanation as to why, and also, what they mean.

In non-Aboriginal history, naming has always been in the control of the *dominating* society. I will be using the verb, *dominating*, in place of the more often used term, “dominant society” because I think the verb form of the word imparts a present sense of activity that more accurately corresponds to the political realities of the day. With this in mind, when discussing the Aboriginal Peoples of Turtle Island I feel it is important to use the Kanyen’keha¹ words; Onkwehonwe, Rotinonhsyonni, and Kanyen’kehaka, as they are from the Kanyen’keha language.

Onkwehonwe, pronounced “ohn-gway-HOHN-way” means the “real/first/original people” and will be used as an inclusive term to refer to the original inhabitants of Turtle Island (now known as North America). *Rotinonhsyonni* is the Kanyen’keha replacement for “Iroquois”² and will be

¹ Meaning the Mohawk language, literally, *the way of the Kanyen’kehaka* (Mohawk people).

² For the etymology of the word “Iroquois” (probably from an Algonquin word “Irinakhoiw” meaning, “real snake” or “real adders”) see A.C. Hamilton. *A New Partnership*. p. 6; *The Six Nations of New York.*, p. viii; and B. Maracle, p. 239.

used from this point forward. *Rotinonhsyonni* is pronounced “ro-dee-no-SHOW-nee” and means “people of the long house” referring to the people of the “Confederacy” or the “Iroquois”³. *Kanyen’kehaka*, (Mohawk⁴) is pronounced “ga-nyoon-geh-HAH-ga” and means “people from the flinty lands”.⁵

Where it is relevant to do so, that is, when context determines such, alternate terms such as: Indian, First Nations peoples/person, Status Indian, urban Indian, traditional Indian, warrior, red-man, sauvage, savage, amerindian, primitive, and/or any other term that has been used to describe the original inhabitants of these lands may be employed.

Often, I use the term “reserve” to refer to “lands set aside for the use and enjoyment of Indians”. Although it is sometimes considered more preferable to use “territory”, I reserve those occurrences for making a political point:

Territory is the widely accepted contemporary political definition

³ The “Iroquois Confederacy” consists of Six Nations: the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora (who joined the Confederacy c.1722).

⁴ The word “Mohawk”, is said to have come from the Dutch (but probably is derived from the Algonquin language): “...Mohawk is a misnomer applied by the Dutch settlers who mistakenly thought these people were cannibalistic. Mohawk means literally “people eater”” (R. Campbell, *People of the Land of Flint*. 7).

⁵ You may notice that the spelling of the Kanyen’keha words I use vary from source to source in the literature (ie. Rotinonhsyonni/Haudenosaunee). I am using the *standard orthography* as used by linguist (and one of the artists featured) David Kanatawakhon Maracle in his Kanyen’keha language learning materials. This is also the orthography chosen by Brian Maracle in his recent book *Back on the Rez...* (1996).

used in reference to lands occupied and held by Kanyen'kehaka. Previously the term "reserve" or "reservation" was in wide use, and still is the preferred term used by the Canadian and American governments, however, as the [Rotinonhsyonni] people push for recognition of their inherent right to govern themselves according to their own fashion the descriptive "territory" has become the preferred choice. (David Kanatawahkon Maracle, 1995 xiii).

Persons or cultures other than Onkwehonwe will be referred to as non-Aboriginal, non-Rotinonhsyonni, European, Western, Occidental, and/or as "Other". The term "Other" has typically referred to those that are not part of the dominating society (and their homogenizing, totalizing tendencies). By using "Other" to refer to non-Aboriginal/ Onkwehonwe/ Rotinonhsyonni/ Kanyen'kehaka persons I am reversing the way the term is usually employed in current *post?*colonial discourse. In forming an anti-colonial stance for this writing, I feel it is not only appropriate but necessary to locate Onkwehonwe in a position of importance, even if this risks placing the "Other" in a marginal position.

I would like to quote the following text as I think it provides an excellent example of what I am attempting to explain. Rotinonhsyonni artist and writer, Rick Hill "turns the tables" or inverses the gaze in the following text which accompanied his photo and painting exhibit, *Portraits*⁶.

⁶ *Portraits: Paintings and Photographs by Rick Hill, at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Mar. 7- Apr. 6, 1986.*

THE WHITE MAN IN NORTH AMERICA

The trails of the people of the Caucasian persuasion across North America are littered with objects of their disposable culture. A builder of sacred temples such as churches of our Lord Bingo, the pale people are true transients. They build, move on, build again, and move somewhere else, and what they leave behind may hold the key to understanding their true nature.

Every now and then you can still find evidence of Caucasoids on the concrete pathways of their cities or on the frozen cultural tundra of their suburbs. It seems that they have been everywhere, marking their wanderings with crosses, toxic wastes, by-laws and signage. It appears that their spiritual ways teach them that through destruction comes rebirth. Rust regenerates. Eagles regurgitate. And the dead levitate.

The people of the colour of pure snow are passionate inventors, in the Frankenstein tradition. Their ingenuity is limitless. Their inventions work miracles. Where would the world be without plastic, patent leather, nuclear waste, and sexual aids. A favourite pastime of the fair skinned folk is to juxtapose their creations of mechanical fantasy next to our Mother the Earth. They find great joy in leaving it to the future generations to clean up after their inventions.

The largest secret society of the Caucasians is the Followers of Narcissism. Their holy mission is to erect icons in their own image. Cities, offices, museums, churches, and corn fields are homes for the realistic images of themselves. Such statuary confirms their virility, and their followers often rub the toes of their favourite idol, for either good luck or sexual satisfaction, I'm not quite sure which.

I have lived amongst these exotic peoples for over thirty years, and I've gotten to see another side of them. To call them White is a misnomer, because some are actually pink and others are tanned by the sun. I postulate that a name change is in order. We should refer to the Caucasians as people of the first buck, as the majority of the capitalist entrepreneurs always frame their first dollar and religiously display their earnings above the cash register.

My attempt to document the Whiteman in North America has taken many years of field work and I'm proud to present this series of photographs that should prove once and for all that the Whiteman still exists. (Rick Hill, February 1986)

As an artist's statement this is an unusual example. It combines an ironic "anthropological" viewpoint with dry wit. The expected explanations of political, emotional, and/or financial motivations for making the work are not

there, at least not on the surface. The text is both a manifesto and a humorous reversal. With the accompanying photos--all of which display these characteristic traits--the viewer is cajoled into a re-evaluation of their "place" in relation to the work specifically and to the larger issues in general. I would like to implicate the preceding text as a departure point from which I can define a pluralistic sense of Rotinonhsyonni identity.

While I am not focusing on Rick Hill's work here, this digression helps to illustrate the depth of Rotinonhsyonni attention and criticism given to the political issues that affect us all as Rotinonhsyonni artists. A more detailed survey of the richness of Rotinonhsyonni art would be a worthwhile project and would further develop the goal of expanding limited notions of Rotinonhsyonniness, although a project of this nature is beyond the scope of this thesis.

As stated previously, I have taken a more personal approach--because I can--and because I feel the personal, subjective viewpoint is a potent antidote to his/her/stories of "objectivity". I try to balance my personal observations and attitudes with those of the four artists chosen as well as those of other artists and thinkers whom I have found influential.⁷ These influences have formed

⁷ Artists such as, Jimmie Durham, Teresa Marshall, Robert Houle, Jenny Holzer, Barbara Kruger, Rick Hill and Greg Curnoe.

and shaped this work both in structural and metaphorical ways. I am using *words* in different ways. I am using them sometimes for their aesthetic presence--almost always in combination with their attendant meanings but sometimes, if given the opportunity, words have the ability to take on new meanings. I firmly believe the communication of new ideas is possible by looking at words in ways that alter their meanings, and create new ones.

As an artist and as an academic my educational background consists of two *fields* of knowledge that have at various times been at odds with each other. Even though there is an established academic side to art, there is a division made between art theory and

**I am not a
woman,
Innuit,
Métis,
Mohawk,
Muncey,
Potawatami,
Attiwandaron,
Chippewa,
Ojibway,**

(Cumoe 1989)

art practice. In the writing of this thesis--in its structure--I am attempting to combine these sometimes antithetical viewpoints. In order to do this, I am considering not only the content of the writing but I am also looking at the words in an aesthetic way.

This strategy reflects both current technological advances, such as the use of wordprocessors over typewriters, and methodological advancements coming out of cultural/anti-colonial theory and the need to respond to diversity--both ideological and methodological diversity. All of these concerns are the form *and* content of this thesis, as they both shape--*form*--and reflect the expression of--how *form* is used to express ideas--identity.

Other Format concerns

Visual metaphors and Rotinohsyonni philosophy are important sources of expression that influence the format. These also find their way into the writing as images--sometimes they are cooperative, sometimes they are counterpoint. Diagrams, artworks, and illustrations are juxtaposed with the text acting as counterparts to the text as they provide emphasis, parallels, and epiphanies as well as contradictions, rebuttals, and refusals.

It is important to me as an artist to have the visual materials working with the *words*--that the visual/aesthetic aspects of words, combined with the

substance of visuals work together to enhance the content and communication of each. Finally, I feel this method is necessary as an aspect of interdisciplinarity, which I see as a willingness to be open to a broad knowledge base and a variety of cultural experiences.

Font usage

I have chosen to use two different fonts to represent the Onkwehonwe and the non-Onkwehonwe voices speaking through this writing. To represent the Onkwehonwe voice I will use the Avant Garde type face. Avant Garde is also used when I am in personal storytelling mode. I feel this font is especially representative of my own voice as the *avant-garde* is a French term which has come to mean “at the cutting edge” in an art context (Atkins 102); therefore I can represent both the French component of my identity, and honour the words of my forward thinking Rotinonhsyonni compatriots.

To represent the non-Onkwehonwe voice and my own as I write in a structured linear, and analytical way, I am using *Boston*. An old Rotinonsyonni word for “white people” was *Wastonkehaka*. Translated, this means the “people from Boston” (there is no ‘B’ in Kanyen’keha), or, “the people from the place/the way (referring to the English language/culture) of Boston” (David Kanatawakhon Maracle).

In order to avoid a possible polemical relationship between the two voices (and again, to represent my own composite identity), this font rule is not an absolute, just as I will argue that an essentialist notion of identity may be a misguided one.

Paper

My visual arts training sometimes leads me in directions not immediately relevant but after some consideration vitally important and natural to the way this thesis has come together. As an artist, a primary concern is for materials--questions of archival quality, suitability to the project, and aesthetics are important considerations. This is why I have chosen, *Mohawk White Vellum* as the most suitable (and aptly named) paper for this thesis. It is a 20% recycled (postconsumer fibre), acid free, text weight (120m) paper.

Introduction- Building a Canoe

**How does
one write
from the
margins?**

A margin has been created for us, a place on the sidelines for our enjoyment. We are allowed to play with appropriate toys given to us to occupy our time and make little accomplishments. The margin is necessary as a way to explain our existence. It is necessary as a way to understand why we are here. It is a lifeboat to cling to in a sea of ambiguity. It is a safe place on the sidelines to scream from as the game is played on the field. It is the place between the edge of the page and the content of dialogue and opinion. (Belanger, *Tango* 14)

The scope of the subject investigated here is broad, to include no less than the deconstruction of fundamental cognitive processes that are at the root of how we place ourselves or conceive of ourselves in relation to the “world”. The world referred to is the one that our senses indicate to us as existing external to ourselves (although even this basic *fact* can be questioned). As Wilf Peltier has so profoundly put it, our senses register stimuli--what they receive and what we have rationalized as exterior to our selves--inside of our heads.

Of course to tackle a project as grand as deconstructing the universe as we/I know it would be a vain and foolhardy enterprise. Knowing this, and yet remaining a little foolhardy, and a little vain, I am here looking into how the other four artists and myself have constructed our *selves* in relation to the “external” world. How do we imagine our *selves* in relation to the outside world? How do we see?

There are many questions that lead only to more questions. My method here will draw upon personal experience--formal education, and life. As I have been formally educated as an artist--and the combination of my life and educational pursuits combine in my current interest and need to define my space in the world--I have approached and defined my topic from a personal perspective. To put it simply one way, I am writing about my understanding of Rotinonhsyonni culture and Occidental culture in a comparative sense. It is not meant to be a dichotomous comparison as my final objective is to demonstrate some form of synthesis. Through the analysis of both metaphor, and knowing, I hope to arrive at a place that reconciles and recognizes the unique qualities of two distinct ‘ways of being in the world’.

Introduction to the artists

In coming to a decision about which of the great many Rotinonhsyonni artists to choose, I relied mostly on those whom I previously knew through their work. I first became aware of Shelley Niro and Patricia Deadman through various exhibitions in and around the London area (where I was living at the time) which displayed their artwork. Shelley Niro and I had crossed paths several times in and around the artist/gallery “scene”. I have not yet met with Patricia Deadman in person, although we have been in many of the same places (even at the same time). I met David Kanatawakhon Maracle when I was a student of his studying Kanyen’keha at the University of Western Ontario in 1994. It was only after I had been able to know him for a while that I realized he actually had time left over from his Language teaching activities to illustrate his language texts, make paintings, and do beadwork. I was introduced to Jeff Thomas by Dr. Ruth Phillips, and have since had the fortune of seeing several exhibitions of his work in the city of Ottawa. His generosity and proximity have enabled an invaluable dialogue during the process of this writing.

All of us have some things in common. We are all artists. We are all

Rotinohsyonni. We are all living in urban centres. All of us, with the exception of David Kanatawakhon Maracle (he is from Tyendinega), have family connections to Six Nations (Grand River Territory). In choosing these four individuals I had to assume there was also some affinity for the issues I was working with and yet I knew I was not taking a big risk. Identity issues affect all of us; this was easy to spot in the artwork, and it was also demonstrated by the perceptive observations that came through in the interviews.

Although we do have some things in common as outlined above, we are also very different. This obvious fact is nonetheless very important to this inquiry as it is a combination of our commonalities and our differences which make any sense of group identity possible. Because after all, if we were all the same we could hardly be a group.

Biographical information

Shelley Niro *b.* 1954

Shelley Niro was born at Niagara Falls, New York. She studied art at the Ontario College of Art and has recently completed a Masters of Fine Arts degree at the University of Western Ontario. She is best known for her photographs although she is an interdisciplinary artist--working in sculpture, paint, photography, and film. Ms. Niro resides with her family in Brantford, Ontario.

Patricia Deadman *b.* 1961

Patricia Deadman was born at Six Nations. She has a Fine Arts diploma from Fanshawe College and in 1988 she received a B.F.A. from the University of Windsor. She also studied photography at the Banff Centre for the Arts and currently resides in Woodstock, Ontario.

David Kanatawakhon Maracle *b.* 1952

David Kanatawakhon Maracle was born on the Tyendinega territory. He is a self taught artist, but busies himself primarily as a linguist and teacher of Kanyen'keha. David Kantawakhon Maracle currently resides in London, Ontario.

Jeff Thomas *b.* 1956

Jeff Thomas was born in Buffalo, N.Y.. He is a self-taught photographer and currently lives in Ottawa with his son, Bear. Thomas prefers to describe himself as a "photo-based storyteller".

Literature Overview

Since Frantz Fanon's (1952) and Albert Memmi's (1957) early examinations of colonial relationships, Memmi's characterization of the colonizer and the colonized--the colonizer/colonized dichotomy--has been expanded from a binary pitting the oppressor against the oppressed.⁸ More recent theory has recognized the potential for the oppressor to inhabit the role of oppressor *and* oppressed simultaneously (Iris Marion Young, 1990).

As the colonial era is winding down in many parts of the world, theory has been quick to move into a *post?*colonial era. Attention has shifted from the study of the colonial process as a struggle over geographical territory, and has instead turned inwards. An internal analysis of the discourse itself examines how geography has transformed itself into a spatial language where contested space is internal/psychological (Keith and Pile). The internalization of the discourse has led towards an analysis of the psychological effects of colonialism on identity--a psychology of the self/a politics of identity (Keith and Pile, hooks,

⁸ As a Rotinohsyonni example, I would like to include *Basic Call to Consciousness*, (1978) edited by Akwesasne Notes. Part history, part documentary, part prophecy, *Basic Call...* is an important text that documents the Rotinohsyonni's attempt to raise global awareness of the colonial process in Canada. It documents Rotinohsyonni activism from Deskaheh's appeal to the League of Nations in 1923, to the attendance and participation of the Rotinohsyonni delegation at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, 1977.

Spivak, Bhabha, Slemon, Gilroy, Sioui).

The recognition of oppression as lived experience unaffected by theoretical advances, has led to a more active form of resistance personified by cultural workers such as hooks, Spivak, Bhabha, Slemon, and Gilroy. As they make space for the previously marginalized voice, pushing for new pedagogies, accessible theory, and resistance to colonial domination, these “third world” theorists enjoy a high profile in *post?*colonial discourse.

Lesser known, but no less determined are the Aboriginal cultural workers/theorists/historians/art historians/ and curators who are working in what I see as a parallel manner to their “third world” counterparts above. Georges E. Sioui, Oren Lyons, Louis Karoniaktajeh Hall, Jolene Rickard, Brian Maracle, Wilf Peltier, Rick Hill, Melanie Printup Hope, Bill Powless, the four artists interviewed, and others are working from the so-called “fourth world” in an anti-colonial way.

Georges E. Sioui’s *For an Amerindian Autohistory*, leads the way towards establishing the basis for an auto-historical method respective of Amerindian philosophical values. Oren Lyons, Louis Karoniaktajeh Hall, and *Basic Call to Consciousness* relate a political history of the Rotinonhsyonni, demonstrating an uninterrupted sovereignty and an

argument for the recognition of Rotinonhsyonni self-determination.

Self Determination is interpreted here as political intent and as personal imperative. Self Determination is interpreted as both governance by one's own government, and, having the power to determine one's sense of self or identity--to Self Determine. In this writing it is the personal aspect of self determination that I am concerning myself with. Building on the anti-colonial and reconstitutive efforts of many Rotinonhsyonni artists and writers, I am looking specifically at the work of the four Rotinonhsyonni artists I have interviewed, in light of the past, and with a view to the future.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter 1 is a personal account of how I came to be concerned with identity issues. I think of this as the initial venturing out into the waterway, testing the water tightness of my canoe. In Chapter 2, centre/margin dichotomies are broken up into interstitial spaces to make room for those who find themselves "in between". The current pulls strong through here, one must be swift and precise with the paddle. Chapter 3 delves into philosophical underpinnings in a comparative analysis between Rotinonhsyonni and non-Rotinonhsyonni *ways of seeing*. This section poses

the greatest threat, the river narrows and shoreline speeds by. A choice must be made quickly. The portage is well worn and the path is a good one. One may find their way around the fast moving water to safely rejoin the river, only to find the current has changed directions. You are now in chapter 4 and the reversal is confusing, downright unnatural, and yet you must continue. As you struggle upstream, you see yourself coming towards you and you go right by. You know you are you, and you resist. Paddling upstream makes you strong and you see there are others. The river widens again and you can see that there are many vessels. Together/apart, you navigate parallel courses.

Methodology

In large part, this thesis is an investigation of my own identity. Identity as a discourse is hotly contested in general, but to be specific I am concentrating here on Rotinohsyonni identity and culture. As a way of building community, I will discuss contemporary⁹ examples of cultural

⁹ I think of the term *contemporary* broadly to refer to Aboriginal cultural work produced since World War II. Although in the context of this thesis *contemporary* refers to "recent times", the period since the mid-sixties witnessing the emergence of "Woodlands", "Inuit", and "Northwest coast" art production. For me, "Contemporary Aboriginal Art" includes any work produced by a self-identified Aboriginal artist regardless of the materials or cultural referents in the work itself.

production by artists who are also Rotinonhsyonni, living in an urban setting, and in some way dealing with issues of identity or place in their work (whether overtly or covertly). This writing is a combination of biography, ethnography, and cultural theory, as it traces the formation of Rotinonhsyonni identity in a collective and individual sense. It is also auto-biographical as it simultaneously defines my own individual sense of Rotinonhsyonniness.

Current trends in *post?colonial* discourse emphasize the personal/subjective approach (hooks 1990, Spivak 1990, Bhabha). I will be utilizing some of the methods of Aboriginal artists and writers such as: Georges Sioui, Gerald Alfred, Beth Brant, Brian Maracle, Patricia Monture-Angus, and Louis Koriakajeh Hall.¹⁰ Writing from a subjective vantage point attempts to present the viewer/reader with the opportunity to derive her/his own interpretation--a position of power--through an evaluative and critical framework put in place by the artist/author. This does not in any way intend to displace the viewer/reader's own interpretation, but seeks only to offer one view from one "place" as additional information with the goal of enhanced

¹⁰ Gerald R Alfred. *Heeding the Voices of our Ancestors: Kahnawake Mohawk Politics and the Rise of Native Nationalism*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1995.; Georges E. Sioui. *For an Amerindian Autohistory: An Essay on the Foundation of a Social Ethic*. Trans. Sheila Fischman. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992.; Brian Maracle. *Back on the Rez: Finding the Way Home*. Toronto: Penguin Books, 1996.; Patricia Monture-Angus. *Thunder in my Soul: A Mohawk Woman Speaks*. Halifax: Fernwood, 1995.; Louis Koriakajeh Hall. *Rebuilding the Iroquois Confederacy*. (s.l., s.n.) 1980?-1985?.

communication. I offer some interpretive tools that some may find helpful, while others may dismiss this methodological (and ideological) approach altogether. Nevertheless, I feel it is my responsibility to both provide “a way in” and to remain far enough removed that the viewer/reader finds comfort in their freedom to make their own choices. I am attempting to negate the implied “authority” of the singular voice¹¹. I think my own subjectivity, in combination with the interviews, provides a group subjectivity that both speaks to our commonalities as well as addresses our difference.

This explanation of my methodological process will begin to explain the ideological aspects I see operating behind the structural and stylistic/aesthetic choices I have made. However, at times it is difficult to explain the reasoning behind structural/stylistic/aesthetic decisions without going into philosophical ideas. It may also be confusing to separate the reasoning from the result, and then attempt to analyze them independently. For this reason, these elements are often blended in the hope that they will interact with the text in a supportive way while communicating ideas beyond the limits of the written words.

As previously mentioned, this approach *is* also an ideological one. As I

¹¹ The singular voice has historically been that of expert authority--the esteemed objective academic. The anti-colonial approach I am using builds on feminist, *post?*colonial, Aboriginal ideologies, and oral traditions which will be used to contrast non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal ideological structures.

learn more about “Onkwehonweness”--Onkwehonwe political models, theories about the place of “self” in the world (“a part of”, rather than “apart from”), and a sense of responsibility for the impact we have on the earth through a respect for all forms of life--it becomes increasingly necessary to at least attempt to implement some of these ideas. One way to do this is to demonstrate these ideas through the writing of this thesis. Rather than simply describing or “telling about” these ideological concepts, I hope to be able to demonstrate some of these ideas through the way this paper is constructed. In this way, the communication of these complex ideas will be enhanced, executed in such a manner so as not to detract from the power of this “other” way of communicating or *Being*.

This chosen path references and re-implements a vital principal communicated in an official manner between the Kanyen’kehaka and the Dutch in the mid-16th century. The Kahswenta¹² or Two-Row Wampum belt commemorates the meeting of these two worlds and sets out the terms of future

¹² I will be discussing interpretations and use of the Kahswenta throughout this thesis, and in great detail in chapter three. Further references to the Kahswenta can be found in: Gerald Alfred, 103, 185; Basic Call to Consciousness, 89; Howard R. Berman, 135; Brenda Katlatont Gabriel-Doxator, et al., 50-54; Louis Karoniaktajeh Hall, 9, 23; A. C. Hamilton, 6; Richard Hill, 166; Tom Hill and Paul Williams, 7-9; Oren Lyons, 1992: 40-41, 1988: 19; Bruce Hill et al., 56; Brian Maracle, 52; Grand Chief Michael Mitchell, 109-110, 116; Jolene Rickard, 16; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 78; Sylvia O’Meara (1996), 16; Sylvia O’Meara and Douglas A. West, 64.

relationships between the host culture and their guests. The Kahswenta are wampum belts (there are at least four Kahswenta belts still in existence today, *Council Fire* 8) consisting of two purple beaded *parallel* lines that run the length of the belt on a white background. The purple parallel lines represent two vessels travelling side by side down a river. These lines are kept separate by the three white lines which represent the values of peace, kindness, and respect. Neither vessel is to influence the path of the other and they are to travel peacefully down the river in relative harmony.

"...THESE BELTS WERE GIVEN TO THE ALGONQUIN BY THE IROQUOIS AS A SIGN OF FRIENDSHIP AND ALLIANCE. THE BELTS WERE USED TO REPRESENT THE TWO VESSELS TRAVELLING SIDE BY SIDE DOWN A RIVER. THE BELTS WERE KEPT SEPARATE BY THE THREE WHITE LINES WHICH REPRESENT THE VALUES OF PEACE, KINDNESS, AND RESPECT. NEITHER VESSEL IS TO INFLUENCE THE PATH OF THE OTHER AND THEY ARE TO TRAVEL PEACEFULLY DOWN THE RIVER IN RELATIVE HARMONY."

History Lesson- Identifying the Gap

Recently (c. 1492), many “truths” have been ascertained about the peoples of Turtle Island. These “truths” were constructed by the Other peoples that came to Turtle Island. They saw that it was necessary to conceive of the original inhabitants (the Onkwehonwe) in such a way that it became obvious that it was necessary to show the original inhabitants (the Onkwehonwe) the “right” way. It was considered the divine obligation of the Others to attempt to bridge the gap between their civilization and the “primitive worlds of the

savage”.

Unfortunately, colonial relations dictated that the gap could never be breached and in fact, that it had to be widened. Over the years, the chasm between the *Other* and the *Onkwehonwe* has widened. This thesis examines some of the many “objects” that have been tossed into the abyss¹³ and which have prevented the two sides from coming together. I see the “abyss” as a metaphor for the misunderstanding that has occurred between Aboriginal Peoples and other peoples.

¹³ As a literal example of this *abyss*, there is a story about the writer, James Houston (who is credited with the invention of the Inuit art market) and how he fostered early interest in Inuit sculpture by determining which sculptures were of acceptable “quality” (as dictated by an alien aesthetic standard). Not wanting to offend by turning down the work of young sculptors (and possibly future great artists), he paid them for their sculptures and then under cover of darkness took the large quantity of these “inferior” works, packed them up on a sled and carted them out to a crevasse in the sea ice that he knew about. Houston then tossed the bulk of the sculptures into the crack in the ice, save for a few that he “couldn’t bear to part with.” In an interview on CBC radio after relating this story, he wondered if he had actually disposed of great works of art that today would be of great monetary value. (Houston, James. Interview. Hour Two Weekday Morning. By Peter Gzowski. CBC Radio, Toronto. Oct. 1995.)

This is one of Norval Morrisseau's only overtly political paintings. Titled, *Landrights*, this painting depicts an Anishnaabe person and "white-men" (one of the "white-men" is wearing a hard hat and is probably a logger and/or miner), attempting to converse. The lines of communication leave the Anishnaabe speaker and inhabit the space all around the white-men, but those words (and/or thoughts) never make contact with them. This is a poignant example from the perspective of the Anishnaabe that the efforts are being made to communicate Aboriginal rights (the painting is titled *Landrights*), but those efforts are not being recognized. Either the "white-men" are not able to hear the words, or they choose not to.

Chapter 1 - Setting out from the Shore

As the central question in this thesis asks, “what is Rotinonhsyonni?” My approach involves myself as a Rotinonhsyonni person, and the four other Rotinonhsyonni artists (Patricia Deadman, David Kanatawakhon Maracle, Shelley Niro, and Jeffrey Thomas) in an investigation of both our commonalities and differences--as Rotinonhsyonni, as urban, as artists--towards some broad notion of *Rotinonhsyonniness*. With this objective in mind, I would like to take this opportunity to provide some background information on myself, and explain how and why I chose to write about identity. As Shelley Niro says: I always try to go back to the very basic lesson of [Rotinonhsyonni] independence which is 'you start with yourself' (interview, 30 Dec. 1995).

Radical Subjectivity

My childhood to early adolescent years were spent in the town of Fort Erie (strategically located where Lake Erie joins the Niagara River), near the U.S. border.

I haven't always thought about identity. But after much self-reflection I am able to point to those instances in my life that have led to

this result: Oka¹⁴; the constant questioning of identity/nationality (a pastime in Canada) enacted through the question "Where are you from?"; an increased awareness of the historical relationship between Canada and the First Nations resulting in present day situations; and finally, an increased awareness of the implications and perpetuation of stereotypes and their resulting misconceptions. In the following narrative I will touch on these factors, putting them into a personal context that provides the foundation for my subjective viewpoint and my methodological approach.

As a Kanyen'kehaka person (who is also a lot of other things¹⁵), this identity question has been a *major* issue¹⁶ at least since the Oka crisis in 1990. That event was a catalyst for Aboriginal Peoples in Canada and

¹⁴ Oka refers to the conflict in 1990 between the Kanyen'kehaka of Kanesatake and the town of Oka over their plans to expand the local golf course, violating a Kanyen'kehaka cemetery. The Kanyen'kehaka blocked this action with a barricade and the situation escalated into a 78 day stand-off between the Kanyen'kehaka and the Canadian military.

¹⁵ By blood, I am also French. The nature of this inquiry (this thesis) is articulated through a naming process that seems to privilege Rotinohsyonni over French. This is not the case. Rather, I am attempting to achieve a synthesis of the multifarious elements that constitute my sense of self. It is through Rotinohsyonni ideology that I can realize a sense of wholeness--a whole comprised of two distinct parts which are necessary to each other. The Rotinohsyonni worldview allows for seemingly contradictory or oppositional elements to coexist in a non-confrontational manner. Historically, the European worldview has sought to interfere--through all forms of colonialism--with the Onkwehonwe. It is not my intent to repeat or invert this historical domination and negation of one worldview with the imposition of another. Rather, I see the opportunity for the celebration of two distinct worldviews. My concentration on (what from the outside seems to be one view) my Rotinohsyonni identity allows for the existence of the European and actually embraces it within a symbiotic notion of self. There are at least two symbolic representations of this in Rotinohsyonni culture; one is a circle, with a vertical line down the middle; the other is the *Kahswenta*.

¹⁶ That is not to say that previous to Oka my "Mohawk-ness" was a minor issue, but rather, that the Oka events made this part of my identity a *profound* issue.

around the world--uniting the various groups around the single issue of the dominating societies' aggression directed at Onkwehonwe peoples. That summer mobilized hundreds and thousands of people into action and awareness. Many travelled to Oka to offer their support in a direct way, and many did what they could from their own places. The "Mohawk Summer of 1990" altered forever the way non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal peoples in Canada would relate. The reactions ranged from overt and blatant racism, to a genuine concern and effort to forge some new understanding. While many of those negative feelings and good intentions have faded over the last few years, the most persistent outcome of that summer is the level of awareness that has been generated--a tangible Onkwehonwe presence that states, "We are here."

Since 1990, that emotion has been articulated in many ways; it has manifested itself boldly in the warnings from Aboriginal leaders--stressing that the time is now (or else) to recognize Aboriginal rights--and there has been the broad internalization of something a little more subtle but nonetheless powerful. That awareness of "self" as something that could no longer be denied (and I mean that both in the internal and external sense), has been for myself and many other Aboriginal people, a type of "wake up call."

The OKA crisis--otherwise known as the Mohawk rebellion, or the Kanehsatake resistance, depending on what side of the "conceptual barricade" you are on--was for me and many others an important

catalyst. The crisis challenged me to increase my level of awareness with regard to Aboriginal issues (especially Mohawk/French issues) just as it united Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal supporters around the world.

In 1990 I was in my final year of a diploma in Fine Arts. I was beginning to explore my cultural heritage, tentatively. I put a lot of pressure on myself, questioning my interest, my desire to know more, and my right to learn about my "Rotinohshyonniness". Oka forced me to deal with these issues and I began to assert this "new" identity.

Previous to the summer of 1990, I was engaged in a process of forming questions--questions about my father, my mother, my "Indian status", myself. I had been able to live most of my life unconcerned with the nature of my heritage,¹⁷ but the events at Kanehsatake that summer of 1990 raised questions that demanded answers.

As the result of the union between my Mohawk father and my French mother, I--the product of this relationship--am finding the simple nature of this fact increasingly problematic. In a contemporary Canadian context--when hyphenated identities and multicultural ideals are being problematized, when Quebec and Kanyen'kehaka struggles for sovereignty are played off against each other, when the personal is political--it becomes increasingly difficult to define a harmonious definition of one's self.

¹⁷ I should make it clear here, that this was an ambivalent lack of concern.

Kanyen'kehaka-French-Canadian; Nationalisms that in themselves are ravaged with antagonisms. But taken together, joined/separated by the h-y-p-h-e-n (Seth), the construct Kanyen'kehaka-French-Canadian represents a cacophony of voices--an anxious harmony at best, a destructive discord at worst. To be implicated in any one of these entities one must assume the controversy and the internal dissent characteristic of each. For the Kanyen'kehaka, one must navigate the effects of a colonial history, and the factionalization of the people resulting from imposed governments, religion, and languages. For the French, language has become the inspiration for nationhood; and the Canadian must somehow embrace the multiplicity of multiculturalism while attempting to reconcile a colonial past...and present.

What is *meant* by Kanyen'kehaka-French-Canadian? Barthes may say, what is being signified by the signifiers kanyen'kehaka, french, and canadian is by no means a complete representation or sign. In this case, an identity/sign is being signified through the use of nationalities/signifiers. Why is it that there is a tendency to identify one's self in this manner? What is it that is being signed when people define themselves according to national or ethnic origins? Goldie (1987) describes this as the "Quaker-Oats-box view of the sign":

You begin with the picture of the person on the box, who is holding a box with a picture of the same person holding a box with a picture of the same person holding a box, and so on. The root image cannot exist, for there must always be another image on the box being held, no matter

how small it gets. In the same way, each signifier can only refer to another signifier. There might be an implied signified, but it is unreachable. (1987: 68)

In my visual (and written) work there are several paradigms which I claim to be operating against--various modes of mis-representation that are employed by the dominating society in order to maintain a social hierarchy that increases the distance between the *privileged* and the *marginalized*. For the most part, the means by which these paradigms provide stimulus for my visual production is that they stand in opposition to the process of identity formation--as mis-representations they are barriers that must be deconstructed. My artwork is not just an overt attack or reaction to a specific paradigm or stereotype, but it is a process of reclaiming a sense of self. In my visual work I feel I can chip away at the layers of ready-made representations and uncover a sense of self--a *Rotinonhsyonniness*.

But, the very nature of this type of investigation is in itself a paradox, because not only is it impossible to discover that which is being signified--because the sign defies signification and the signifiers always misdirect you--but because identity is a dynamic assemblage. Identity is always in flux. At one moment cyclist-student-artist-Aboriginal-male-housepainter may be an adequate self-conceptualization but at another kanyen'kehaka-french-smalltown-amiable-skinny-canadian may be a more appropriate self-definition. More than just the context of the situation dictates the definition. And, regardless of how comprehensive

the attempt to identify is, something will always be left out and something extraneous may be present. Is there a middle ground between essentialism and bland homogenization?

Joe series #1-3: revolutionary, traitor, loyalist, 1991

Throughout my life this process of self-identification and self-realization has meant that I have had very different responses to questions pertaining to my ethnic origins. Some of my replies to the question, "What's your nationality?" were as follows: "Canadian"; "French-Indian" (slurred to sound like French-Canadian); French (with the "Canadian" understood, but if this required further definition then I would use French-Canadian); it was often assumed that I was Italian (sometimes I would let this go unchallenged); Mohawk-French-Canadian, Mohawk-French; Mohawk; Iroquoian; and finally Kanyen'kehaka. As you can see, even when this naming process includes only ethnic or national categories, there has been a great deal of substitution, addition, and subtraction of

certain elements. Especially important is the switching or privileging of certain elements over others, as this is indicative of a process of denial, awareness, and pride.

When I think back, this painting, from my *"Joe series, 1991"* is a visual metaphor for this process of denial, awareness, and pride; where "Joe" or Thayendanegea or Joseph Brant depending on which account of his life you read or have heard, is presented as either a loyalist, a revolutionary, or a traitor. In Canadian history, Brant is regarded as a great hero, "The most important Indian of his time," who "influenced the history of Canada as much as any man of his(sic) day" (qtd. in Greenfield 5). Not only is this a slanted depiction of Brant's role during those times, but Brant is lionized as a hero in the western tradition of individualism, standing

apart from and above “his people.” While I think it may be partly true that Brant was a bit of a rogue, this type of portrayal never considers how Brant was thought of by his own people; nor does it recognize the important role that women exercised in the decision making processes of the Rotinonhsyonni; it takes patriarchy for granted assuming that all cultures operate in a similar manner.

Tom Hill--Six Nations band member, artist, curator, and art historian--provides another perspective on Brant: “Arrogant, noble, principled, devout, courageous and legendary, a warrior and a sellout...” (33). These are the sort of contradictions--arrogant, noble, sellout?--that I, as a Kanyen’kehaka person, have had to deal with. At a time when I was searching for positive Kanyen’kehaka role models, Brant stood out through the popular portrayals of him as a “great Mohawk warrior chief” (see Fraser, Graymont, and Kelsay) although he was never a chief in the traditional hereditary sense.¹⁸ I too fantasized about one day being a great Mohawk leader. Pride. Then I heard another story, “Brant was a no-good thief, he sold Six-Nations territory to his white friends against the wishes of his people, and he never even lived on the reserve”.¹⁹

18 Joseph Brant was never a condeoled chief of the Confederacy; history has mistakenly given him the title as chief probably because of his prominent role as a warrior and an accomplished diplomat. It is believed that Brant had earned the interim title of war-chief during the Revolutionary War simply because of the strength of his personality and his experience in war. (Tom Hill 35)

19 It is true that Brant preferred to live in his mansion in Burlington (who wouldn't) although he had temporarily lived on the reserve.

Awareness/Denial/Rejection

For myself this meant that I had to deal with a fact of my existence that had previously been easier to ignore (ie. less troublesome). As a person of both French and Kanyen'kehaka ancestry, growing up in the municipality of Fort Erie meant that those elements of one's identity that were not outwardly discernable, were definitely things that one didn't offer up for outside evaluation. Like most young people, I just wanted to fit in. Since my fair skin didn't betray me as someone who was visually different, and therefore someone who *was* different, I was able to live among my peers as an equal, nothing more, nothing less--all of us together in a blissful same-ness²⁰.

As a child, I did not understand the significance of ethnic origins. These things seemed more important to others than myself. It wasn't until the act--a raised eyebrow and a demand for more information--was repeated several times that I began to realize there was something more to this than I had imagined. Whenever someone asked *that question*--the "So, where are you from?" question, they were never satisfied with "Canada" as a response (nobody is *from* Canada). When I was pressed to give my next reply, "French-Indian", and the person asking was able to decipher "Indian" from my purposely mumbled response, I knew I was in real trouble. Nobody was ever really interested in the French component

²⁰ Fort Erie at that time was almost exclusively, a fair-skinned community of 24,000.

of my identity. I also noticed the same disinterested “Oh yeah...that’s nice.” reaction was applied to my friends of euro-ancestry when they identified themselves as Hungarian, or Scottish-Irish, or whatever. I can only speculate now, as to why “Indian” provoked such an intense curiosity.

When I think back on some of those occasions I recall the patronizing pats on the head (...*good, little Indian...*), the surprised looks (...*I thought he was Italian...*), and the hostile disbelief.

Life was much simpler then, as a child. Actions and attitudes were exposed and raw on the surface. *Differences* were settled with strong words and little fists, out by the monkey bars. Pre-pubescent ideas about difference had to be tried out and reinscribed. Those that were considered different had much to learn about their difference, and there was no shortage of willing instructors. Those were indelible lessons we learned out there on the *playgrounds*. Life was simpler then, you could see and feel the *fear* of difference; and if you were lucky, you could escape drawing any attention to those things about yourself that you couldn’t hide, that you had learned made *you* different.

Some (de)Formative Experiences

Since these early times I have learned to embrace, cherish, and be proud of my difference. I now study, deconstruct, and analyze all I can

about this difference. This led me to choose to do a Master of Arts in Canadian Studies- Northern and Native Studies rather than a Master of Fine Arts because I felt I needed to investigate the issue of my identity (and collective Onkwehonwe identity) to further understand both my personal questions, and my general interest in Aboriginal issues. I also felt that there would be support for this type of inquiry because there were Aboriginal faculty members who I believed could relate to these issues. And, if I was going to be taught about Aboriginal peoples for a change, where better than in the Northern and Native Studies program would I find the information I was seeking.

My experiences as a Bachelor of Fine Arts undergraduate at the University of Windsor were a factor in my decision. Throughout most of my undergraduate degree I had to search out information on Aboriginal Peoples and Aboriginal artists myself because there were no courses that dealt with this material. For example, I took a Canadian Art History course, which never featured an Aboriginal artist. Also, in the school calendar there were some courses listed that looked promising, but year after year they were "not offered".

Finally, in my final semester at the University of Windsor, I noticed that a History course (*Minorities in Canadian History- Native Peoples in Canada*) was being offered as well as an Anthropology course on Indigenous peoples and global development. I registered in both even though I no longer needed them towards my degree. I enjoyed the Anthropology course and the opportunity to learn about Indigenous

peoples in other parts of the world, but to my dismay the course I was really excited about--the "Native Peoples in Canada", history course--turned out to be a real disappointment. To be more to the point, it was a very unpleasant experience.

I attended the first few classes ready to be bombarded with information about Onkwehonwe peoples and their contributions to the history of Canada. Instead, I was fed a steady diet of British, French, and Dutch colonial exploration, "first" settlement, and their interactions with the 'sauvages' they encountered. By the third week my patience was waning; as was the attendance of Aboriginal students to the class. By my estimation there were approximately nine Aboriginal students who had started out the course (an 'overwhelming minority' for a class of about 40), by the third week the number had dwindled down to two, one other Aboriginal person and myself.

Finally one afternoon, after the instructor had digressed into a lengthy account of the British Royalty of the day, I could bear it no longer and I raised my hand. I tried my best to contain my anger and managed to ask the question (in a half seething/half blurted manner), "Excuse me sir, I was just wondering what it was that the 'Indians' were doing all this time?" This did manage to bring the topic of discussion back to this side of the Atlantic, although I wasn't exactly caressed with appreciation for my dedication to the course outline either. I elected to keep my mouth shut for the remainder of the class. I was only mildly glowing when I went to speak to the instructor afterwards.

My now conciliatory approach earned me the distinction of being told by the professor (a professor of *His stories*, to be exact) that I've, "done well for my people" (meaning, "...it's really amazing that even though you are an "Indian" you have made it this far with your education and you are even able to speak with me in an intelligent and rational manner!"). We parted ways. After dropping the course to an audit (so that my grade point average wouldn't suffer the consequences of my outspokenness) I attended a few more classes thinking I would act as a historical watchdog of sorts. I had originally taken the course thinking it would be a boon for information. I stopped attending after I found it repeatedly drained me.

Raven meets Lady Washington

In addition to these early experiences of self-identifying, and the struggle to find out more about what it meant to be *Indian* I have always found my skin colour to be an issue--especially for others--whenever I claimed my Indianness. This has been the case for both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal peoples. Recently, I was reminded of the enormity of this issue--its tenacity and its threat²¹.

I was doing some research work for the Canadian Museum of Civilization on an upcoming exhibit for the First Peoples Hall when I was

²¹ I have realized that people are comfortable with categories and if presented with something (or someone) that cannot be neatly placed in an assigned box, fear takes hold--the unknown. Indians are (supposed to be) dark brown.

presented with an opportunity to go for a ride in the sleek black and red watercraft that I had been eyeing wantonly for a couple of weeks. The Haida canoe was docked along the Ottawa River in front of the Museum, so that museum goers could admire its elegant lines and brightly coloured painted designs. Museum goers were limited to rides in a replica voyageur canoe, paddling it around the river and back to the dock, only to once again admire the Haida canoe. Many pairs of eyes had boarded that boat, but not many bodies; now I was going to have my chance.

The Museum was putting a pilot video together to raise money for an upcoming Imax film which they wanted to produce. The sleek canoe was co-starring alongside a replica of an early trading vessel--the Lady Washington--which was standing in as a French trading ship. The ship, the canoe, and a volunteer crew of paddler/actors were to be filmed doing various re-enactments of an "authentic" historic event. Graciously, I accepted the opportunity to paddle the Haida canoe around, checking both my excitement and my fear. I was pleased with my good fortune, but I had never paddled a 52 foot Haida canoe before.

Our paddling was to be led by a group of Tsimshian performers who provided (*much needed*) rhythmic accompaniment in an attempt to keep the precious painted paddles from suffering the results of an off-beat stroke. The dance troupe also provided most of the elements of the costumes we were to don. The Hollywood atmosphere in the dressing room that day was shot through with exclamations and assertions of

authenticity. There was no limit to the lengths the museum staff would go to ensure “strictly authentic representation”. Adidas shorts were concealed with lengths of burlap, safety pinned around the waist. Thick black long haired wigs, were placed on short brown haired heads, and “muskrat pelts” made of synthetic fun-fur were used to cover unsightly T-shirt tan lines.

“Egyptian Dark” and “Medium Tan” body paint was zealously applied to bodies that were not of the desired “authentic Haida skin colour”. The streaky application of the body paint rendered the *unauthentic* body parts of the *not tanned enough* paddlers, in a tonal range more reminiscent of plywood panelling than the copper toned epidermis of museum administration fantasy.

I narrowly escaped my own Egyptian Dark treatment. After what I thought was a discreet placing of myself at maximum distance in the room from the application of the liquid tan, one of the soppy sponge wielding assistants cornered me with a “You’re avoiding me.” Confronted and trapped, I refused to have the body paint applied to my skin, “No thanks” I said, “I’m happy with the skin I’m in.”

Peeling the Layers

Through this self-reflective process I have also deconstructed an understanding of how and why the subject of identity--my identity--has evolved through various stages of ignorance, ambivalence, denial, rejection, acceptance, awareness, and renewal. This process is part of

the approach taken in this thesis, where acceptance, awareness and renewal lead to analysis (chapter 2), comparison (chapter 3), and resistance (chapter 4).

Chapter 2 - Heading into the Current

Identity as a Discourse

Identity is something that is constructed--something that is built up over time both from the outside and from the inside. Identity is a building up of layers. As the layers become thicker (building outward and inward), they come more clearly into focus. The layers are textured, and a variety of colours can be discerned, muted at first but then distinct shapes come into view. There are words there, they form a text. That text can be read as truth or fiction, it may actually be a little of both.

How do we create an oppositional worldview, a consciousness, an identity, a standpoint that exists not only as that struggle which also opposes dehumanization but as that movement which enables creative, expansive self-actualization? Opposition is not enough. In that vacant space after one has resisted there is still the necessity to become--to make oneself anew. (hooks, 1990 15)

The academic debates surrounding identity constitute an elusive discourse--precisely because identity issues affect everyone but those effects differ with each individual due to power relationships between race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, physical ability, class, and level of awareness of these issues in relation to one's self--thus, the reason for a plethora of identity politics based

on either (or a combination of) cultural, feminist, liberal, postcolonial, or anti-colonial theoretical frameworks (to name a few). The lack of common ground among identity theorists is one reason the discourse is shaped in this ‘amoeba-like’ (discursive) way. Because there are many varieties of identity politics, there is not just one single unifying theoretical framework from which to approach identity issues, nor, I would argue, should there be.

Focusing on a discussion of Rotinonhsyonni identity this chapter will address the question of identity in three ways: by looking at how identity is approached through various theoretical frameworks; analyzing different definitions/conceptions of identity; and finally, by providing excerpts from my interviews with Patricia Deadman, David Kanatawakhon Maracle, Shelly Niro, and Jeff Thomas. Throughout, I will be providing my own insights and observations. As I have already stated, these issues include me, therefore *I* have included me in my approach to this thesis.

By analyzing the formative (additive) or destructive (reductive) processes that entail a conceptualization of one’s self and starting from the premise that Western/non-Aboriginal notions have been more limited (and limiting in the colonial sense) than Rotinonhsyonni, we can examine the imposition of Western ideas on Rotinonhsyonni peoples, acceptance of those ideas and also, sites of

resistance. In recent years, sites of resistance to colonial impositions have become increasingly politicized (in a theoretical and practical way). So much so, that to be engaged in this discourse--Identity politics--one must reconcile the stigmatization that comes with speaking for or from the 'margins'--the politics of identity--and/or the resentment of esoteric language and theoretical concerns that are viewed as being out of touch with the people they concern. As Jeff Thomas put it, "I don't think people are sitting around the fire discussing identity politics".²²

More often than not, the politics of identity are battles waged in academic journals and the hallowed halls of universities rather than at street level where these experiences are lived everyday. The "site of contestation" becomes the argument for inclusion in a *post?*colonial discourse that is unknown to those who are to supposedly benefit from colonialism's demise. Criticisms have been levelled at the academe when it is seen as acting only on a theoretical level and only for those involved in the discourse (ie. the career advancement of those who stand to profit from their academic expertise).²³ To ensure that theory

²² Jeff Thomas, from a talk by Gerald McMaster and Jeff Thomas on the occasion of the opening of an exhibition of Thomas' photographs at the Ottawa Art Gallery, July 12, 1996.

²³ Before it was released, *The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* suffered just this sort of criticism. Aboriginal involvement in the Commission had decreased throughout the process and there was general concern that the 1.5 million words contained therein would have no real effect towards improving the living conditions of the people under its study (*Ottawa Citizen*, Nov. 16, 1996).

maintains some relation to the subject, the test of credibility and responsibility is a valid one. This is especially true when these theories concern 'lived oppression' such as the effects of colonialism on the Aboriginal peoples of Turtle Island.²⁴

With this in mind I would like to present a brief summary/analysis of some of the current discourses in an attempt to frame my approach to Rotinohsyonni identity. For my purposes, it is important to look briefly at some of the various forms of colonialism because the politics of identity are implicated within these paradigms. Control over Rotinohsyonni identity is affected by (post/neo)colonial politics.

*Post?*colonial theorists problematize identity in an increasingly smaller world where power struggles rage between 'ethnicities', on a supposedly level playing field. Neo-colonialism (more of an attitude than a particular body of knowledge) disregards/ignores colonialism as an identity determining factor. This gives the impression that to work with issues of colonialism places one hopelessly in the past and that efforts to correct past injustices are both attempts at revisionist history and an illegitimate basis for 'special rights' to correct these

²⁴ The dialectic between theory and lived experience which I have just set up, places me in an uncomfortable position. For me, the success of this writing is dependent on the level of synthesis achieved between my academic education and my lived experiences.

past wrongdoings²⁵. Anti-colonial theorists/activists see colonialism and its lasting effects as the major obstacle which has to be overcome for the 'colonized' to attain an equal footing in our contemporary world.

Borrowing the 'post' from postmodernism, *post?*colonialism is spawned from postmodernism and shares some basic assumptions and contradictions. Hutcheon articulates a complicity in the relationship between postmodernism and post-colonialism:

After modernism's ahistorical rejection of the burden of the past, postmodern[ism] has sought self-consciously (and often parodically) to reconstruct its relationship to what came before; similarly after that imposition of an imperial culture and that truncated indigenous history which colonialism has meant to many nations, post-colonial[ism is] ...also negotiating (often parodically) the once tyrannical weight of colonial history.... (Hutcheon 131)

Most prominently, I find these theoretical frameworks to be problematic for their false claims to be *beyond* modernism and colonialism respectively. Claims to being beyond colonialism--*post?*colonialism--hit closer to home. As Aboriginal artist, Joane Cardinal-Schubert has said, "When colonialism is

²⁵ One example of this may be the characterization of the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. The Commission provided a comprehensive study of Aboriginal history in Canada, and views the present day situation of Aboriginal Peoples as the product of that history. The Commission has made 404 recommendations towards solving these problems. Some see the recommendations to set up a third level of government (a First Nations parliament) and to hand over more control over resources as perpetuating discrimination by privileging some with "special rights". Some critics of the *Commission* also claim these recommendations separate people on the basis of race, and therefore set up a system of "reverse discrimination".

over, we'll let you know".²⁶ Claims that we are now beyond colonialism show utter disregard for the contemporary realities of Indigenous peoples around the world.

Some would argue that a *post?* colonial viewpoint is nothing short of neo-colonialism: Neocolonialism lives, in the boardrooms, classrooms, art galleries, theatres, cinemas, and of course the museums and public amusement parks. Wherever the "Native" is revisited, reinvented, reinscribed, or recouped, *there* is neocolonialism. (Todd 303). Colonialism is not over; and it won't just fade away. It takes an anti-colonial effort to re-introduce philosophies and values which have long been suppressed.

bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (New York: Bantam, 1992), 100.

bell hooks is one of the most prominent "marginal voices" calling for an end to all forms of colonial domination. One of her apparent strategies is to overwhelm attempts at colonial domination with radical subjectivity. Her essay, "The Politics of Radical Black Subjectivity" is taken here as one model for this

²⁶ Artist's talk, Fanshawe College, 1989.

investigation/presentation of radical Rotinonhsyonni subjectivity.²⁷

Surely our desire for radical social change is intimately linked with the desire to experience pleasure, erotic fulfilment, and a host of other passions. Then, on the flip side, there are many individuals with race, gender, and class privilege who are longing to see the kind of revolutionary change that will end domination and oppression even though their lives would be completely and utterly transformed. The shared space of 'yearning' opens up the possibility of common ground where all these differences might meet and engage one another. (hooks, 1990 13)

The writings of bell hooks provide one recent example of an alternative to the colonial status quo. The Kahswenta is an historical example from

two canoes/vessels travelling parallel paths

Kahswenta
Wampum Belt

Rotinonhsyonni culture which offers a pre-colonial alternative as an outline for equitable co-habitation. The spaces separating the parallel (lines) discourses represent peace, kindness, and respect. When I use hooks as one model for an anti-colonial theoretical framework, I am building on the parallels I see in our relationship to colonialism while recognizing at the same time the differences between these experiences.

This is the path I must journey in this attempt to seek

²⁷ This is not to suggest that there is not a parallel paradigm instigated by Rotinonhsyonni cultural workers themselves (the four artists interviewed are proof of that); the strategy here is to examine the breadth of identity politics discourse, and find the *parallels* between different subjectivities.

out ‘polyphonic commonalities’ (hooks).

While there are parallels in the struggle for control over personal identity among all peoples not included in the dominating society, I will be focusing my attention on Rotinonhsyonni peoples as distinct from other ‘marginalized’ groups. It is necessary to make this distinction because there have been many pressures to group ‘oppressed’²⁸ peoples of all varieties, cultures, and situations together as one monolithic entity. Some of these pressures are internal, where resisting groups join together to combat common enemies. But more objectionable is pressure exerted externally by the dominating society in an effort to constrain and contain resistance (take for example, *oppressive* language).

To further clarify my use of non-Rotinonhsyonni theorists, my purpose is to expand on my anti-colonial theoretical framework, to find a speech in this language (and a method in this culture) from which I can interpret (in my own individual way) the responses of the interviewees and include my own thoughts on the topic of Rotinonhsyonni subjectivity. As hooks says, “Of course we must enter this new discursive field recognizing from the onset that our speech will be

²⁸ From this point forward I will substitute the word *resisting* where it would be more common to use the word “oppressed”. Resisting implies agency rather than passivity-- “Please stop oppressing me” as opposed to “I resist your attempts to oppress me”. We need an anti-colonial vocabulary.

‘troubled,’ that there exists no ready-made ‘common language.’ . . . we are challenged to celebrate the polyphonic nature of critical discourse” (qtd. in *Socialist Review*. 18). And, as June Jordan reminds us: “Partnership in misery does not necessarily provide for partnership for change: When we get the monsters off our backs all of us may want to run in very different directions” (qtd. in Tessman 55).

Defining Identity

Efforts to seek out a definition of identity can be/are somewhat of a paradoxical enterprise because identity *must* mean so many different things. In a Rotinonhsyonni context, identity is a difficult thing to define because this process involves the articulation of constantly changing difference (or uniqueness). This is contrary to Occidental paradigms where elements are reduced to tinier and more readily identifiable bits--as in the applied sciences--*identifying*. Non-Rotinonhsyonni notions of identity are often constructed along lines of sameness (rather than individuality/distinctness/difference/group identity/group of individuals).

The following, are selections from *Webster's* (College Edition) definition of identity:

1. the state or fact of remaining the same one, as under varying aspects

or conditions.

5. the sense of self providing sameness and continuity in personality over time.
6. exact likeness in nature or qualities: an identity of interests.
7. an insistence or point of sameness or likeness.

Webster's definition states that identity is dependent on sameness and a static composition that maintains this sameness. Following this logic, one can establish categories for the grouping of individuals of similar or like qualities, thus establishing group identity. The irony in this reasoning is that in practice, groups are formed by their differences. I think of this in art theory terms as 'negative space'.

A necessary part of belonging to a group is that likeness is formed in opposition to difference. In a North American context, "minorities" group together in urban, ethnic, enclaves for safety and comfort (which paradoxically, breeds suspicion and contempt for such 'ghettoes' amongst the dominating society). Why do, "birds of a feather flock together?" Identity theorists may even *agree* that it is fear of difference that binds groups of likeness together

(outside pressure from the negative space compresses the difference into the positive space).

I think this ‘positive/negative space’, art theory fundamental is applicable to identity discourse in the following way: when studied from the outside (from the negative space) the subject is objectified. However, when the subject is both the source and the creator of information/dialogue, we have “radical subjectivity” (hooks 1992). *Post?*colonialism and identity theory have attempted to address this inside/outside dichotomy by making this object/subject positioning explicit--a hyper-emphasis on *place*--the subject place of the author/the place of the subject. I think of this as a strategy to allow for the object/subject-ification of the “minority voice”²⁹ by “non-minority” theorists. Theorists, artists, and cultural workers resisting hegemony are forced/expected to write about *their* place, to make explicit their difference (they are then easily categorized and can be accorded the appropriate degree of authenticity by the dominating society).³⁰ Those who are part of the hegemony are for the most

²⁹ The label *minority* can be considered a strategy to subjugate resisting voices--voices from the margins. Its use is also inaccurate as it refers to the “of colour” population of the world which is actually a great majority.

³⁰ In a conversation with Jeff Thomas about this subject in relation to artmaking, he related how his early photographs were often of urban street scenes in Buffalo N.Y. , and how this body of work has never been accepted, whereas work containing obvious signs of “Indianness” such as his Powwow photos have been embraced by curators and critics alike.

part free from this burden. In practice, for non-Aboriginal writers/critics who are commenting on Aboriginal artworks, this works as a statement or disclaimer about the author's inability to authoritatively comment on the cultural significance of the Aboriginal artist's work, followed by analysis based on those stated biases. Surprisingly (or not), there is still a tendency to mistrust radical subjectivity, opting instead for a presumed outside (ie. detached) objectivity.

Hybridity

Identity discourse has a set of terms which are used and understood to mean specific things by those, and for those involved in the discourse. It is well known that disciplines have a specific terminology (pessimistically known as a *jargon*) that facilitates communication for those working in the discipline and which also serves to separate the specific knowledge claims of the discipline from other fields of knowledge by establishing a language boundary. In Identity theory one of those often used terms is *hybrid* (Ashcroft et al.; Bhabha, 1995; Young).

Hybrid, is used to refer to individuals who are the products of mixed couples. Hybrid individuals then, are those who are biologically comprised of more than one racial type. The term refers to both people and to cultures which

are mixed as a result of the colonial process.³¹

At its simplest, hybridity, however, implies a disruption and forcing together of any unlike living things, grafting a vine or a rose onto a different root stock, *making difference into sameness*. Hybridity is a making one of two distinct things, so that it becomes impossible for the eye to detect the hybridity of a geranium or a rose. Nevertheless, the rose exists, like the vine, only insofar as it is grafted onto the different stock. Neglect to prune either, and the plant eventually reverts to its original state. In the nineteenth century, we have seen that a common analogous argument was made that the descendants of mixed-race unions would eventually relapse to one of the original races, thus characterizing miscegenation as temporary in its effects as well as unnatural in its very nature. *Hybridization can also consist of the forcing of a single entity into two or more parts, a severing of a single object into two, turning sameness into difference...* (R.J.C. Young 26, my emphasis)

Within this passage are two conflicting ideas born out of the distinct notion that there can never be a harmonious co-existence of multiple parts. Differences are either made into sameness--a denial of heterogeneity--or the sameness is made into difference--difference is incommensurable. Within the notion of hybridity we have difference and sameness but never wholeness made up of distinct parts. The grafting of a vine or a rose onto a different root stock effectively erases the biological origins of the distinct parts: "Hybridity is a making one of two distinct things, so that it becomes impossible for the eye to

³¹ This I have noticed is largely dependent on skin colour commonly associated with particular racial groups--a person of Scottish-Irish descent would rarely be referred to as hybrid whereas persons of "Indian"- western European descent are commonly referred to as hybrid.

detect the hybridity of a geranium or a rose". In human terms, this is a wholeness that calls for the assimilation of difference.

Today, the concept of hybridity seems to suggest that one is blessed with the fortune of being able to have more than one vantage point or way of seeing the world (since, it is assumed, the hybrid person can draw upon at least two worldviews). Hybridity has not always been considered an advantage. In the context of the Indian, "hybrid" is the antiseptic progeny of the term halfbreed. Halfbreed, a term which generally referred to the offspring of unions between non-Indians and Indians, became the descriptive term for a distinct cultural group today known as the Métis³² (Driben, Campbell, Berry). The situation of the Métis and other 'mixed races' is exemplary of the confusion, resent, or fear of miscegenation between cultural groups in general:

Miscegenation seems to be an inevitable consequence of the meeting of races and nationalities. Despite the fears and warnings of the Jeremiahs, hybrids are everywhere. Fortunately, most people of mixed blood are able to identify themselves with, and are accepted by, one or the other of the racial groups from which they have sprung. Thus, the American mulatto thinks of himself as a Negro and is accepted by other Negroes as

³² Métis with a capital 'M' refers specifically to the descendants of the Red River settlement, while métis with a small 'm' is sometimes used to refer to people of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal origins who don't identify with a specific Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal group (Brown 136). The constitutional amendments in 1982 broadened the definition of Aboriginal to include the Inuit and the Métis (Miller 239), but these changes were not reflected in the *Indian Act*. For more information on the history and origin of the Métis see, Peterson and Brown, eds. *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America*; J. R. Miller, 1991 125-135; and Antoine Lussier, "The Métis".

one of themselves. But here and there we find a pathetic folk of mixed ancestry who never quite know where they belong. There are Eurasians in the Far East, Anglo-Indians in India, Cape Coloured and Afro-Asians in South Africa, Jamaica Whites in Jamaica, and Indo-Europeans in Indonesia. Elsewhere we find Bovianders, Lobos, Caboslos, Cafusos, Moplahs, Moriscos, Cholos and countless others. These are raceless people, neither fish nor fowl, neither white, nor black, nor red, nor brown. They bear a heavy cross. (Berry, 1963 preface, vii).

The Métis represent a conundrum for racial taxonomy. The categorizing and cataloguing of racial differences led to the establishment of artificial racial archetypes. The Métis and other *hybrids* represented people that sprang from more than one categorization. As with the rose and the geranium, the still held view is that the sum of 1(race) + 1(race) = <2 or perhaps more mathematically correct, the product of a mixed union .5 + .5 = <1. The sum of two parts, adds up to a degenerated combination of those two parts. Berry reiterates: “Most of us...have the good fortune to be identified with, and accepted by, one of the major racial groups. Not so with these “marginal” folk. They are neither fish nor fowl... [t]hey are not quite anything entirely (30).

$$.5 + .5 = <1$$

The Métis are in a confusing place, they undoubtedly are a People with a legitimate claim to distinct status as different from the non-Indian and the Indian population in Canada, but with an important qualifier. Since the

disadvantaged social position of the “halfbreed” was similar to that of the Indian (Driben), they shared a similar place on the margins of the history of Canada³³, and yet they are not included within the terms of the *Indian Act* (a blessing maybe). The *Act* derives its limited definition of “Indian” based on blood quantum, a taxonomy inherited from biological science and a system designed to eventually eliminate government responsibility for persons defined as Indians as fewer and fewer would meet the blood quantum requirements.³⁴

The Métis are Métis. They are not *halfbreeds* or *hybrids*. Métis is an identity, just as Rotinonhsyonni is an identity. While hybridity may be a part of the process involved, it cannot be an identity in itself because this always results in fracture. “We as Métis people, recognize the fact that we are the product of two cultures. Therefore, we are not “White”, nor are we “Indian”--we are Métis and request to be regarded as such” (Lussier 51).

My personal view is shaped by my understanding of how it is that two or more “races” can coexist within a single person in a complementary way. The source of this idea is an ancient one from within a Rotinonhsyonni world view.

³³ Literally, “The Roadside Allowance People” as Maria Campbell titled her recent text on the history of the Métis.

³⁴ Ironically however, the reserve system has counteracted the integration of Aboriginal Peoples with the general population. The isolation of Aboriginal peoples on reserves, after decades of population decline, has actually led to an increase in the Aboriginal population.

In a conversation with David Kanatawakhon Maracle, he explained his understanding of the Rotinohsyonni worldview through the visual metaphor of a “circle with a line down the middle”. The circle is consistent with other uses of the metaphor and refers to natural processes--life continuum, the earth’s cycles, and holism--and a variety of other meanings not useful to go into detail about here, but the “line down the middle” is another concept that deserves what elaboration I can provide.

What I find most illuminating, is Kanatawakhon Maracle’s choice of words--‘*line down the middle*’ rather than ‘split in half’. This is significant because I think it is another example of syntax learned through cultural attitudes (which are also learned). ‘Line down the middle’ does not imply separation to the degree that ‘split in half’ does. This conceptual framework allows for multiple components/elements/(identities) to exist together,

constituting something that is (whole-ly) *different than it was without the various elements* (I am trying to resist the strong temptation to use the word ‘whole’ because I think that in binary thinking that could inversely imply that without all the elements the subject would be ‘not whole’). This idea has profound effects for how I think of my own identity (as *hybridized*, or as Rotinonhsyonni, or as Rotinonhsyonni *and* French), and of the various elements themselves, that make up my own sense of self. It is a strategy and strength that I am attempting to utilize. This allows me to approach the subject in personal and intuitive ways from this dynamic and shifting place as artist, as Rotinonhsyonni, as academic, as an individual.

"quantum theory" author's sketch book, 1992.

This sketch makes explicit the division, the categorization, the hierarchical organization, and mathematical equations that are all a part of one way (a confusing and fractionalizing way) of conceiving of identity.

Spatial Theory- The importance of *place*

The domain of postmodern theory has led to distraction and identification of difference; yet, acceptance of the self and the other remains a territorial dialogue. (Betty Julian 50)

Colonial thinking is structured around a syntax based on geography. Colonial imposition reaches beyond horizons and seeks to colonize from the inside out--through control over self identity. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the terminology, the syntax of *post?*-colonialism is dependent on geographical/spatial terms in order to articulate supposed freedom from colonial domination/demarcation: centre/margin, inside/outside, interstitial, liminal, between, border, inter/intra, fringe, side, edge, intermediate, periphery, frontier, outskirts, perimeter, boundary. I am arguing that this geo-spatial language is left over from the colonial era which was by nature, preoccupied with concepts of space (the acquisition of it, that is). Geographical colonialism is implicitly related to the neo-colonial contestation over ownership of identity that is the core of a *post?* colonial theoretical framework. Following the 'closing of the West' when there was no more land to acquire, the colonial effort switched from surveying territory for homesteading to determining the biological bases--the genetic boundaries--of 'Indian' identity. How much freedom from

colonialism do Aboriginal peoples have when we are still forced to dissect and compartmentalize ourselves into manageable (Indian Affairs-administratable) tracts?

For Keith and Pile spatial metaphors are an essential part of identity discourse. They see 'spatiality' as a recognition of the contested, distinct, irreconcilable nature of space; noting that space is no longer "passive, fixed, undialectical"³⁵ (5). They praise the radical credentials of bell hooks (from their position as white men), which I am positing as exemplary of the consistent and current theme among identity theorists to cite contemporary/contested/identity space (their claimed theoretical space) as a site for resistance:

Our living depends on our ability to conceptualize alternatives, often impoverished. Theorizing about this experience aesthetically, critically is an agenda for radical cultural practice. For me this space of radical openness is a margin--a profound edge. Locating oneself there is difficult yet necessary. It is not a 'safe' place. One is always at risk. One needs a community of resistance. (hooks 1990: 149, qtd. in Keith and Pile 5)

My criticism (hooks excluded) is twofold: first, that identity discourse is overly fascinated and drawn to "sites of resistance" because of romantic

³⁵ This also, is a good example of postcolonial denial. When considering the relationship between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal in a colonial context, it is hard to imagine *space* as ever being "passive, fixed, [and] undialectical".

involvement with the notion of struggle; and second, that the rhetoric of resistance (as used in *post?*colonial identity discourse), is more accurately descriptive of the way in which the discourse has been discursively shaped--to exclude access and maintain hegemonic domination³⁶.

Spatiality, or identity discourse in spatial terms, is problematic in relation to Rotinonhsyonni identity issues in three ways: first, it assumes separation of the various elements constituting a sense of self; second, this notion of separation in spatiality is derived from diaspora--separation/dispersal from a traditional homeland--a term that negates the specificity of the word related to Jewish experience and which is not adequately representative of Rotinonhsyonni experience; third, the assumption of separation is paired with a preoccupation with the notion of hybridity--an in between state that is offered no chance for re-constitution because of the infatuation with struggle/oppression ('sites of resistance'). Not only is it an imposition to be positioned as an 'other' in this discourse, but the normalization of the struggle is self-replicating and seeks to contain difference/depth of identity in recognizable static components. This is contrary to my idea of Rotinonhsyonnniness where a sense of self is

³⁶ I feel that hooks has been implicated within a discourse that is ever increasingly, and unnecessarily convoluted. Ironically, she is cited as a model but rather than disempower control/authority of the discourse through accessible language (as hooks uses), Keith and Pile up the ante.

founded on uniqueness and individuality.

In identity discourse, space and place play themselves out in a variety of ways--the place of resistance; locating one's place; space as metaphor; and the theoretical space/place. Aside from the ethereal place of metaphorical spatiality, there is lived space. The meta or metaphorical concepts of space used to discuss theoretical aspects affecting identity approach the limits of their usefulness when discussing identity, and the actual contested space³⁷ that is the physical place of the Onkwehonwe in Canada.

Rotinonsyonni Place/Space

For most Aboriginal peoples, place is an extremely important factor for the conceptualization of one's identity and/or sense of community or group identity. Often the notion of space for Onkwehonwe is a dialogical relationship between reserve and urban/non-reserve. This binary plays itself out in the form of a seemingly innocent question, "Where are you from?"

For myself, the question, "Where are you from?" can be answered in different ways, but this depends on the context of the situation and who is asking. Depending on who is asking, the question can be interpreted in

³⁷ i.e. Landclaims.

different ways, and is often intended so. “Where are you from?” implies not only “Where did you grow up?” or “Where did you come from last?”, but is an attempt to place you in a particular familial and/or ‘National’/ethnic category. For example, if the question is posed by a fellow Onkwehonwe person, it can be interpreted as an attempt to place you in relation to them--perhaps even in a kinship relation, or a “radical contextualization” if you will. However, if the question is coming from a non-Aboriginal person whom you’ve just identified yourself as an ‘Indian’ to, the question comes loaded with tests of authenticity. I have witnessed this actualized in “interesting” ways.

In my interview with Jeff Thomas I asked him about a curious phenomenon I noticed while researching biographical information on him:

“...one thing [I noticed] ...looking through your file is your listed as being born in Six Nations, born in Buffalo, and born in Toronto.”

J.T.: “Where did it say I was born in Toronto?”

I don’t remember it was in one of these articles. [laughing] Is that the age-old question, “Where are you from?” kind of interpreted differently?

J.T.: Yeah. I really see myself as politically, culturally, spiritually, as being from Six Nations. I wasn’t born there. I think a lot of people just

assume that I'm from Six Nations. And I've said before, I've seen that, where I've said that I was born in Buffalo and I look and I see in the article that I was born in Six Nations. And I think it makes it [me] more legitimate in a sense, like "yeah, he was born on the reserve."... But, you know, that's what gets you going in Canada. Born in Buffalo, New York? Okay. Doesn't have that same ring to it.

Part of the confusion about identifying yourself to others as an Onkwehonwe person lies in your own interpretations of their reasons for asking. Part of the confusion about Thomas' birthplace among the various reviewers and curators of Thomas' work lie in the assumptions or intentions behind *placing* his birth in various locales. As mentioned above, Thomas' birth is placed at: the Six Nations reserve (R. Reid 1985, Tom Hill 1985, Lynn Hill 29)³⁸, Toronto (Duguay 1991), and he is also stated in an ambiguous way to *be from* Six Nations (McMaster 1996; Thunder Bay Art Gallery, (June) 1985).

As Thomas also suggests, saying you were born on a reserve "makes *it* [him] more legitimate", where "it" represents claims to 'Indian' identity (my emphasis). And, I would argue, that in the context of the different writings on Thomas' work, Thomas' legitimate right to make photographs about 'Indians'

³⁸ Lynn Hill states that Thomas 'grew up' in Buffalo (26) but later places his birth at Six Nations.

is also either authenticated or questioned.

Jeff Thomas himself states he was born in Buffalo:

What I generally say [when asked, "Where am I from?"] is that my family's from Six Nations, and that I was born in Buffalo, New York. I went through a period where I would much rather say that I was born in Six Nations; it would have been a lot easier, but, you know, you have to be realistic.

Thomas' work is often posed as a challenge to stereotypical representations of Aboriginal peoples (L. Hill 26; McMaster, 1996; R. Reid). In an art world hypersensitive to misrepresentation and appropriation, inaccuracies as to Thomas' birthplace both avoid the problematics of urban-Indian identity and add to the confusion surrounding the opposition generated between reserve and urban. While Thomas' multiple birthplaces might possibly be the result of carelessness or avoidance on the part of the writers/curators, the question of where one originates is fraught with competing notions of authenticity and illegitimacy.

My personal experience time and time again has reinforced the notion that to be a 'city-Indian' is considered to be alienated from Onkwehonwe culture; just as to be from a reserve, is to be thought of as analogous to a life steeped in Onkwehonwe traditions. This is not necessarily the case for either situation.

I find these ideas especially alarming considering a majority of Onkwehonwe now live in urban centres³⁹. Denying legitimacy to urban Indian reality is *one* way to get rid of the Indian problem. This idea also negates the possibility of reconciling Onkwehonwe cultural beliefs and practices within lived urban or suburban reality. I am convinced that my interpretations are based on more than my own self-consciousness and are in fact rooted in our preconceptions about what 'Indians' should be like and where they (should) come from. My concern for Onkwehonwe identity causes me to question the implications of these ideas on efforts of cultural sustenance and renewal on a personal and on a community level.

Rotinonhsyonni views

My view of Rotinonhsyonnniness does not fit well into an identity politics articulated in Black diasporic terms--an identity discourse characterizing "the new ethnicities". Although the concepts and emotions of diaspora are in some

³⁹ Depending on sources and how they were tabulated, the urban Onkwehonwe population may be as high as 74%. The Department of Indian Affairs *registered Indian* population projection for 1996 claims only 42.9% of registered Indians live off-reserve. The Department also shows a total of 620,170 registered Indians for 1996. These numbers do not include the many non-status and Metis who do not qualify as Indians by the departments limited definition. Estimates of the Onkwehonwe population including non-status and Metis surpass 1 million, most of whom live off reserve since they are not entitled to reserve lands. These more inclusive numbers support an off-reserve Onkwehonwe population estimate as high as 74%.

ways similar to the identity confusion experienced by those who have ‘migrated’ from reserve to city, there is no ‘motherland’ to reference and most Rotinonhsyonni probably wouldn’t agree with being described as ‘ethnic’; and most certainly not *new*. Rather, my argument is that Rotinonhsyonniness is rooted in ancient traditions adapted to contemporary realities, and is conceived of in ‘national’ terms--individual Rotinonhsyonni nations are sovereign nations (Alfred).

In this way my concept of Rotinonhsyonniness avoids essentialism through a consistent and multi-layered dynamism. I believe that for Rotinonhsyonni there is not an archetype to strive for. I feel Rotinonhsyonni identity is formulated upon individual manifestations of individuality. There is a great deal of support built into Rotinonhsyonni culture that fosters a strong sense of individualism--an individualism that is not based on competition but an individualism that makes one *a part of* rather than *apart from*.

A PART/APART

Therefore, individualism in the Rotinonhsyonni context refers to a sense of self, nurtured and reaffirmed through various cultural mechanisms and a

syntax of interaction that build and reinforce a confidence in one's unique qualities and abilities.

Following are excerpts from some of the interviews that I think support and expand upon some of the determinations I've made so far.

Shelley Niro:

...[W]e were always told too that the Iroquois were independent thinkers, and the whole society was based on everyone having their own mind, their own thoughts, and then everyone could come together and bring their own thought...everybody had to consent to what was going to happen.

I always try to go back to the very basic lesson of Iroquois independence which is 'you start with yourself.' (30 Dec. 1995)

Patricia Deadman:

Well, I kind of reflect back to a recent experience; I was talking to [name] and she was trying to define me, because I said to her...I don't want to be labelled as "Pat the Native artist". That's like saying Pat the local artist, or whatever. Just doing the stereotypes. Well, that was really a big problem, because she couldn't get past the fact that "well yeah, but you ARE Native." She actually went to the extent of actually getting out her pen and drawing little boxes of how she saw me ... she proceeded to draw this linear rectangle and make little boxes, and counted the fourth one over and said "well, this is Pat, and this little box here is Native" and I go "well, that would be right." [laughter] But that's only one department. What are the rest of those [boxes]? I think if you are dealing with just that little box, then I think you have a problem. Because a person isn't just one dimensional. There's a lot of things that

make up a person, and I think when it comes to self-identity you have to get beyond that one little box and try to define what else is in the other boxes before you can make a conclusion. (7 Jan. 1996)

David Kanatawakhon Maracle:

I think part of the individuality...if you are a true individual, then you constantly change.

For me, difference is a very important feature as to how I get along with people. I need to know how they're different from me, so I usually introduce myself by my Nationality; and who I am as a physical entity as opposed to a social one.

I think people have to have a really good sense of who they are and I think that symbols--[Rotinonhsyonni] design, that sort of stuff--gives people a base to work from in order to be a cultural people who are individuals and have a strong sense of individualism...

So I think part of that whole movement is to be seen, to be visible. To let people know that, yes, you're out there. "I am here and I am a special individual. I'm a specific sort of individual."

I'm inclined to think that's an important part of Aboriginal culture, I guess. The thing is that we, we're members and participants of a culture that quite often was very individualistic. Not to the point that you could do whatever you damn well pleased but the thing is that everybody had an identity. (9 Dec. 1995)

From my interpretation of the interviews, David Kanatawakhon Maracle put forward the strongest verbal articulation of Rotinonhsyonniness. When I

say this I have no intention of establishing a scale or test of Rotinohsyonniness. Rather, I would like to recognize and affirm that Rotinohsyonni means something different to each of us and that it is absolutely necessary (and asserted) that the power to do so remain with each and every one of us. We are all Rotinohsyonni. We are all different. We express this in different ways. Kanatawakhon Maracle was especially proficient at explaining his thoughts in a verbal way.

Kanatawakhon Maracle was able to verbally express how he sees himself as a Rotinohsyonni person, while the others (myself included) are more dependent on visual symbols/identifiers for our expression of what we each individually feel Rotinohsyonni is in relation to each of us. This I feel is what Kanatawakhon Maracle means when he says "Western culture is visual culture..." (9 Dec. 1995). Because to a great degree I live within "Western" culture and have been educated with words and art according to Western paradigms, I hesitate to elaborate on his words further. I think it is significant though, that Kanatawakhon Maracle is the only person/artist interviewed who does not have an interest in participating in an art world as defined by non-Aboriginal peoples.

If being an artist is career oriented, then no, I am not an artist. If being an artist is having a sense of design and expression, then I

would be inclined to say that I probably come a little closer to the mark. It literally depends on how you define artist. I never particularly like to think of art as a career....I think even for the artist, if you use your craft to feed yourself the question then becomes; are you still an artist? I think for many Native people, both are the same; art is a talent/art is an ability. Like an ability to hunt, an ability to fish, an ability to make baskets or moccasins or anything. It is an important part of your survival. (9 Dec. 1995)

Also, I think it is significant that Kanatawakhon Maracle is the only fluent speaker of Kanyen'keha language of all of us. This I believe enables him to draw on oral traditions, but more importantly to compare the two languages/worldviews against each other and develop for himself, in a profound way a sense of where there are contradictions, similarities, or confusions between each.

The artists also place varying degrees of importance on their own visual work for communicating concepts of identity. David Kanatawakhon Maracle's interview was conducted almost totally independent of his artwork. We only looked at some of his paintings, after the interview, and at my request. He didn't feel the need to represent himself that way.⁴⁰ All of my other interviews were somehow mediated through the artist's work.

Jeff Thomas' interview started out with his artwork present. We looked

⁴⁰ As he says himself, he *really* likes to talk. He has in fact, made a career out of it.

at the work, discussing it and addressing specific prepared questions that I threw in wherever I thought they fit into the general conversation. He tended to use his photos as reference points and illustrations for his thoughts. The bulk of Thomas' work represents Onkwehonwe people in and about the sphere of the Powwow.

My interview with Shelley Niro was conducted in her home in Brantford. We did most of the interview without looking directly at artwork save for a few catalogue illustrations. This was partly because I was pretty familiar with her photos, paintings, installations, and films already so that we were able to discuss her thoughts on identity issues without the work having to be right there. After the interview we did go to her studio where she showed me some of her recent work and other earlier pieces that were there. Shelley's work too, is very much engaged in a dialogue of representation dealing with stereotypes, cultural, and gender issues. Many of these ideas, are very effectively communicated through these works to the degree that they seem to be more worked out in their visual as opposed to their oral forms.

My interview with Patricia Deadman was conducted over the phone, meaning there was no artwork present that we could both refer to and see at the same time (which made it more difficult to communicate our individual

approaches to identity). Curiously though, Deadman was also the only one to send me a series of original photographs to use as illustrations. This I interpret as her attempt to provide through her artwork that which she had difficulty speaking. Most eloquently I think, in terms of expressing or questioning identity formation is a self portrait photograph of her's that communicates the significance of **SELF DETERMINATION.**

This analysis of identity--considered in the context of this thesis--assumes that identity means something different to each of the Rotinonhsyonni artists included in this study (and to each and every Rotinonhsyonni person). The privilege/power of self-identification (self determination) remains with the individual. Their self inclusion within the category of Rotinonhsyonni is different than the anthropological delineation. Where the anthropological seeks to classify and define as a means of claiming particular knowledge about a particular group, the Rotinonhsyonni conception expands outwards and seeks to provide for the inclusion of any variety of self-conceptualizations. For example, the practice of adoption among the Rotinonhsyonni is well documented. Individuals from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures could/would be adopted into Rotinonhsyonni society⁴¹. Unfortunately an ahistorical perspective on this ideal would preclude consideration of the lasting

⁴¹ Accounts differ as to limits on citizenship, and rights of adopted persons. Louis Hall saw adoption of individuals and whole nations into the confederacy as the real intentions of the Great Law (it should be noted though that his views were probably reinforced by his desire to see all of the Indian Nations of Turtle Island united in one confederacy in order to fight colonial impositions). Alfred takes a different view, arguing that the 'closed' Kahnawake band membership policy is an assertion of Kahnawake Mohawk sovereignty. He sees outside intervention in the area of band membership as an infringement of the principals of the Kahswenta. However, this view overlooks the imposition of the Indian Act as the origin of 'limits' for 'Indian' identity. It is true that limited resources make it almost impossible for communities to maintain the more open membership policies which both Hall and Alfred agree are contained in the Great Law but the Kahnawake blood quantum policy is viewed by many as a severe case of Indian Act indoctrination (see Alfred, Hall). It is well documented though that adoption was a widespread practice among the Rotinonhsyonni. As a large scale example the remnants of the Huron confederacy (c. 1650) and the Tuscarora (c. 1722) were absorbed into the Rotinonhsyonni.

effects of colonial domination. It is very difficult to maintain such an open-door policy when reserves have such limited land base and financial resources.

To many (non-Rotinonhsyonni), an open and inclusive citizenship policy seems to be a confusing arrangement. Canadians are indeed confused by the intentions of government regulated multiculturalism and the realities of multiculturalism--many people of many different cultures living together. Non-Rotinonhsyonni conceptions of identity are often based on narrow definitions and do not allow for multifarious realizations of identity (a pluralistic conception of Canadian). Part of this confusion lies in the Canadian habit of hyphenating the identities of immigrant Canadians. I think this hyphenation (ie. Chinese-Canadian) demonstrates that not only are earlier immigrated Canadians reluctant to view more recent immigrants as "Canadian"⁴² (in some broad definition), but also, for the recent immigrant, the concept of "Canadian" is then a homogenized one that does not include them; even worse, to call oneself "Canadian" is a form of erasure. I think this is the result of persistent notions of "Canadianness" being based on ethnicity and skin colour that hasn't fully embraced the reality of the diversity of the population of

⁴² What I mean is that Canadians have a tendency to self identify in a hyphenated way, or, for the purposes of this argument, I am saying that ethnic labels are applied to *new* Canadians whether they are amenable to that or not.

Canada. To be “Canadian” *still* denotes a racial type⁴³. I have indulged in this limited idea of Canadianness in order to contrast this with my understanding of a broadly defined Rotinonhsyonniness.

The notion of “Rotinonhsyonniness” is thought of by most non-Rotinonhsyonni as one that is based on race. The *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* refutes race based notions of identity:

We believe strongly that membership in Aboriginal nations should *not* be defined by race. Aboriginal nations are political communities, often comprising people of mixed background and heritage. Their bonds are those of culture and identity, not blood. Their unity comes from a shared history and their strong sense of themselves as peoples. (*People to people, nation to nation* 26)

The salience of race as an identifying element has been a fairly recent development (Alfred 173). The increasing salience of race has been largely due to the indoctrination of the *Indian Act* and a pragmatic need to limit ‘band’ membership. Clifton offers an earlier conceptualization of identity based on factors other than race:

Originally, no North American society subscribed to the idea of biological determination of identity or behaviour. Indeed, the most common identity question asked of strangers was not, ‘What nation do you belong to?’ or ‘Of what race are you?’ Instead, when confronting unknown people they typically asked, ‘What language do you speak?’ They were disinterested in skin colour, the standard Euro-American sign of racial identity. On the contrary, they stressed as criteria of group membership

⁴³ Ask anyone who doesn’t fit this racial type how often they are asked, “Where are you from?”

learned aspects of human nature; language, culturally appropriate behaviour, social affiliation and loyalty... . However, modern Indians--who are all of composite Native and Euro-American biological ancestry, and who have long absorbed much Euro-American cultural knowledge--think differently. Today, most use the standard American or Canadian principals of assigning group identity, which are determined by blood. (Clifton, 1989 11, qtd in Alfred 173-4)

From my perspective, Rotinonhsyonniness is culture based--the language one speaks, the beliefs one maintains, the values one upholds, the foods one eats, all these things make a person Rotinonhsyonni (in the broadest interpretation). This therefore has the advantage of being an inclusively generated form of group identification. This group identification is such that rather than relinquishing individual identity for a strong group identification, individual identity is highly valued and even reinforced through various cultural factors:

In Iroquoian tradition no two people in the same village had the same name, so as a result everybody had a different name. You had 1500 people, you had 1500 different names and the way the [Kanyen'keha] language is, it's quite easy to do that. As a result, a name is a moniker for distinction. It indicates a very specific person and whoever you are is a reflection of that name. (*Kanatawakhon* 9 Dec. 1995)

As *Kanatawakhon* points out, naming is a powerful tool for the realization of a specific identity. Because we are often dependent upon words

to identify ourselves, the origins of those words is of paramount importance. “David Maracle” are the English words *Kanatawakhon* must use to operate within the dominating culture. In effect, the words “David Maracle” act as a cloak imposed by the dominating culture as a means of negating Kanatawakhon’s Kanyen’kehaka name and his Rotinonhsyonni identity--his radical Rotinonhsyonni subjectivity.

Elder Wilf Peltier said, “Naming is creation”, an observation that demonstrates an awareness of the power resident in the naming process (Sept. 19, 1995). As I understand, he was referring to the phenomenon, the mental process of seeing something and giving it a name. It is through the process of naming that the object (or place, or people) is established in relation to ourselves; and in this way it/they becomes *known* to us.

We have only to look at any map of Canada (Kanata) to see how naming is closely associated with the colonial process of land appropriation:

to know is to (dis)possess.

Aboriginal place names dot the landscape, but is this a recognition of occupation since time immemorial, or, more cynically, are these place names trophies of colonial dispossession? Perhaps these markers, attesting to the

presence-- the pre-existence--of the Onkwehonwe, merely represent a nostalgia for days (“unfortunately/inevitably”) gone past. More probable though, is that Aboriginal place names are never really given a second thought--Toronto⁴⁴ is to London is to Ottawa⁴⁵ is to Paris⁴⁶.

Naming is not only creation, it is also negation. Naming has been one of the single most powerful weapons in the arsenal of colonialism. In the year 1492, Christopher Columbus named the peoples greeting him from the shores of Turtle Island, “Indians”, and it stuck. Not for a moment do I want to dwell in the past⁴⁷ but these “facts” have had a profound effect on the self-conceptualizations of Aboriginal Peoples on Turtle Island. The Other has always attempted to define (and contain) us by their own criteria and for their own purposes, as was seen necessary for the advancement of “civilization” (and healthy real estate markets).

Kanata

⁴⁴ In the Kanyen'keha language “Toronto” (roughly translated) means “the place where the log is in the water” (Kanatawakhon).

⁴⁵ Derived from *Odawa*, an Algonkian nation, and situated on unceded Odawa territory.

⁴⁶ London and Paris being an example of the tendency to transfer the old world to the “new world” (or perhaps just a lack of imagination).

⁴⁷ This is another tool of colonialism. The notion that Aboriginal (or any oppressed voice) must always revert to past wrongs to comment on contemporary reality is one that is used against Aboriginal Peoples to say that they are still living in the past and are therefore out of touch with their own contemporary reality.

In (K)ana(t)a, the imposition of legislation such as the *Indian Act* has had, and continues to have, a destructive impact on the Peoples it seeks to define/confine. Through the colonial processes of land appropriation, cultural genocide, and control over the identification of all “recognized” Aboriginal Peoples--assigning us numbers for “administrative purposes” (I am, *Indian #2540169201*)--the Canadian government has been largely successful in their project to alter how we think of ourselves; in essence, how we identify. The indoctrination of the concepts of “Status” and “non-Status” have had negative consequences for the Onkwehonwe, effectively dividing the people along many fronts.

Defining the Circle, Maintaining a Balance

In conducting the interviews and going over the tapes a consistent theme began to take shape. All of the interviewees related (in their unique way) the importance of maintaining control over how they identify. That it was in fact only yourself that could do this and that absolute freedom in this area was essential.

For me, this pattern fits in with the principals transmitted by the Kahswenta, and which are also reinforced by cultural means to provide the

understanding that *self determination* is paramount.

How has this look at various methods/theories of identity and identity politics assisted us in our examination of Rotinonhsyonniness?

We have examined *post?*colonial theory, and its subset, identity theory which claim to have (created/allowed) relinquished space for the previously unheard (silenced) voice. We recognize (cynically perhaps) that any attempt to create space for the *subaltern* may be the result of a theoretical bankruptcy (or, as my colleague Kiera Ladner is fond of saying, a “paradigm paralysis”) on the part of the academe⁴⁸ and the resulting need to inject some heterogeneity into a stultifying homogeneity. Whatever the intentions, the results are as yet inconclusive; Spivak questions, “Can the subaltern speak?” (1995) while Jimmy Durham reminds us:

It must be admitted from the outset that Native Americans are peoples about whom we can have nothing to say that is not fatally contaminated by Eurocentric patterns of thinking. The vast bodies of “objective” data, scientific or literary, that purports to evidence indigenous Americans almost invariably constitutes a mirrored reflection of our own psychic demons instead. For “knowledge” is a matter of interpretation, which is in turn a property of the subject who assumes it, not of the object itself. (qtd in Robert Houle. “Sovereignty over Subjectivity” 28)

We have unpacked some terminology used in identity discourse, the

⁴⁸ And, I am also claiming (optimistically perhaps) that this influx of previously excluded voices is resulting in an exchange that goes beyond the reinvigoration of an ailing academic project.

concepts contained therein, how these shape the discourse, and in turn, how these concepts play themselves out in terms of Rotinonhsyonni identity formation. We have concluded with a view to Rotinonhsyonniness as conceived by living, breathing, Rotinonhsyonni persons (in keeping with the radical Rotinonhsyonni subjectivity I am striving for). This chapter has raised the question as to whether or not there can be an *appropriate* application of cultural assumptions, and, in turn has introduced another worldview with a different set of assumptions and an altogether different perspective.

Chapter 3- Portaging the Rapids

World views- the Kahswenta, and Linear Perspective

The previous chapter was an examination of different paradigms utilized in politics of identity discourse and some of the individual responses of the interviewees and myself as to our conceptions of Rotinohsyonniness. In this chapter, I will concentrate on analysis of cultural assumptions or paradigms involved in the process of defining identity (although the focus has shifted from an internal/personal process of definition to an external/cultural one). Underlying this investigation are my concerns for conceptions of Rotinohsyonniness and how impositions on, or misunderstandings of Rotinohsyonni values embodied in the Kahswenta may be compromised by outside values.

Where the last chapter analyzed identity discourse from varying points of view, this chapter will begin to analyze the origins of those points of view themselves. I would like to take a deeper look into some of the foundational structures informing different cultural approaches to identity formation. For practical reasons, this panoramic view is narrowed to an investigation of the conventions of linear perspective and how these may have led to misinterpretations of the Kahswenta.

I am putting forth the *Kahswenta* and *linear perspective* as symbols of two different cultures--Rotinonhsyonni and Occidental cultures, respectively. The *Kahswenta*, and *linear perspective*, as two distinct symbols of what has come to be characterized as *worldviews* offer an opportunity to reconstruct the two different cultural vantage points.

Focusing on what I see as the most profound differences between these two cultures, I am thinking about worldviews as *ways in which we*⁴⁹ *view the world*. I will discuss the invention and use of *linear perspective* as a point of departure for an Occidental view and then illuminate Rotinonhsyonni protocols and symbols for this discussion of two methods of representing (and conceptualizing our “selves” in) the world. By looking at these incommensurate or *divergent* worldviews I hope to put forward a “perspective” that in some way offers hope to bring the two closer together (in a parallel way) while recognizing and valuing their distinctness, and their right to be separate.

⁴⁹ By *we* I mean those of us living in this contemporary world who have been exposed to an Occidental way of seeing, and perhaps an alternate way as well.

Occidental “views”

In this examination of the results of the imposition of one knowledge system over another, I would like to put forth two questions: What effect could linear perspective have had on the understanding of the Kahswenta? What would be the result of a combination of different ways of knowing, each weighted with equal authority?

The Kahswenta is to be taken merely as the physical manifestation of an ideology. I wish to apply the same reasoning to the use of linear perspective because, as I will argue, I believe it has become much more than an illustrative device for rendering an illusion of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface, and has in fact come to symbolize a way of being in the world that contravenes the basic tenets of the Kahswenta and in fact makes this other *way*--of being, of knowing--an impossibility.

The compilation of legends, fables, [and] quotations ...was a basic structure of knowing during the Renaissance, when no distinction was made between observation (that which one had seen for oneself), documentation (that which had been seen and commented on by others), and fable (that which had been imagined by oneself or others). (Foucault, 1970 39-40)

The gap between what is recognized as an Onkwehonwe way of knowing and the modern Occidental way has not always been a wide chasm. The

combination of different sources of knowledge incorporating oral and empirical data offers hope for a renewal of faith in former methodologies. The pre-Renaissance period allowed for knowledge construction on a broader basis than the dictates of scientific methods.

The Renaissance led to the development of new ways of representing the world. The conventions of linear perspective applied mathematics, geometry, and reason to visual representation. With the invention of a formulaic, reproducible method of depicting the world all other means were *rendered* obsolete.

A convincing perspective image is based on what we expect a *realistic* representation to look like. Without the conventions of perspective, we would not make many basic assumptions--such as expecting images to diminish in size as they recede. Linear perspective is equated with realism. An important aspect of this realistic representation is the actual *use* of perspective--to the degree that we are not convinced of a picture's realism unless it conforms to the rules of perspective.

Pre-Renaissance artists made pictorial representations that were flat or used stacking of images/objects to give the picture some depth. My assumption here is that methods of perspective have altered the way we see, to the degree

that, we have internalized basic assumptions about how we see.

If this is the case, then *how* do we see?

The chemical process of converting the light entering our eyes and reflecting on our retinas into a mental picture is an internal one--it happens within our brains. Following this idea, one can reason that seeing is not only different to each and every individual, but also, that the mental interpretation of seeing is influenced by our thinking processes. In Occidental culture, vision is often considered to be the primary sense (Foucault, Kanatawakhon). What we see inside our heads is not the same as the external reality. What one person sees is not the same as another. It is impossible for more than one person to see exactly the same thing in the same way (Peltier). The interpretation and organization of visual data entering the eyes is affected by internal conceptual methods of processing that stimuli. Hence, ways of seeing/thinking are not only learned, but often what is seen is also taken as irrefutable truth (*reality*). This provides a self legitimating, closed system of

truth.⁵⁰

When considering these perspectival assumptions it is easy to see the difficulties between linear perspective as a method of representation, and the *reality* which it intends to represent. Nevertheless, linear perspective has become so much a part of the Occidental psyche that it is difficult to even imagine a seeing process that challenges these assumptions.

The Parallel Argument

In 1525, Dürer defined parallels as lines which “continue at all times equidistant from each other” but then goes on to contradict this statement.

With a drawing of parallel lines drawn with the aid of a plumb, he shows the

⁵⁰ A modern day example is the use of photography and video as evidence in court cases, or when providing “proof” of natural phenomena (storms, floods, tornadoes, etc.) Although, these technologies are increasingly called into question as newer digital technologies become more accessible offering the potential for manipulation of photographic and video images to the degree that these former means of “proof” may now be considered unreliable.

inevitable convergence of the lines at the centre of the earth due to gravitational forces on the plumb. True parallels would be impossible to draw freehand so an artist would use a plumb to draw them. Dürer's demonstration that even this method results in convergence of the lines, renders the *concept* of parallels illogical (Strauss 42).

Durer's view:

My interpretation:

Kahswenta wampum belts

“Perspective is the site of the legislation of seeing...” (Elkins 80). As the rules of linear perspective became further refined through the workings of Filippo Brunelleschi, Leon Battista Alberti, Viator, and Albrecht Dürer, the status of artists was directly related to their mastery of the rules (Cole, Ivins). Before the Renaissance, artists occupied the lower rungs of the occupational hierarchy, but as art became more and more infused with mathematics, philosophy, and science, its status rose accordingly. As more elaborate forms of perspective were formulated (two and three point perspective) the authority of the representations was further entrenched; to the degree that these methods of representing the world not only dominated European art till the twentieth century but did in fact alter the way people interpreted the world through their eyes.

Observation from the seventeenth century onwards was a knowledge based on perception, furnished with a series of systematically negative conditions. Hearsay was excluded, as were taste and smell, because of their lack of certainty and the difficulty of rendering exact expressions in words; the fairly self-evident distinctions; which left sight with an almost exclusive privilege, being the sense by which *proof* was to be both perceived and established. ... Observation therefore assumed its powers through a visibility freed from all other sensory burdens... . (Foucault as quoted by Hooper-Greenhill 138, my emphasis)

Linear perspective provides a unique and suitable explanation for

contravention or misunderstandings of the Kahswenta not only because of the effect perspective had on viewing the world but also because the formalization of perspective methods occurred during the colonial period in North America. Alberti's *Della pittura libri tre* written in 1435-1436 was followed by Viator's *De artificiali perspectiva* (1505) and later Dürer's, *Unterweysung der Messung* of 1525 (Ivins 14). The Kahswenta was first presented to the Dutch c.1650. Perspective was still new enough at this time that this can be "seen" as an interesting *coincidental*⁵¹ relationship. Perspective was established enough by this time that most Europeans would have been exposed to it as a form of representation (if even only through maps such as the "Ptolemaic" world map of 1486) (Cole 13).

The influence of perspectival conventions informing a way of placing oneself in the world, and possibly fueling a desire for exploration, would also obstruct an understanding (and create disdain) for ideologies based on ways of knowing perceived as inferior to the "new" viewpoints embodied in linear perspective. Elkin's comment on perspective as "the site of the legislation of seeing" can be interpreted literally, where the rules for a way of seeing also

⁵¹ I think there may be some debate as to whether perspective as a way of depicting landscape--to contain territories within picture frames--has a *coincidental* relationship with colonial expansion in the "New World"--the desire to acquire, to extend the empire beyond the vanishing point so to speak. The representational conquering of pictorial space lends itself to the physical exploration and domination of the previously unimaginable/unobtainable.

structure a way of interpreting the world beyond the visual.

Where the parallels of the Kahswenta get crossed, is not necessarily at the point of interaction between two cultures but further on--*towards the vanishing point*--where the meanings of the Kahswenta are further removed from the culture that produced it.

Rotinonhsyonni ideology is expressed, in large part, in the Kayenerekowa⁵². Part of these values are embodied in the Kahswenta; especially those concerning the acceptance of other viewpoints and ideologies (as long as they did not impose themselves on Rotinonhsyonni ways).

Rotinonhsyonni views

There are many symbols employed in Rotinonhsyonni culture which can be used to explain a Rotinonhsyonni point of view, I will touch on some of the most telling examples and then proceed to a more in depth explanation of the symbolism contained in the Kahswenta. First and foremost has to be the notion of the circle. The Circle Council wampum, the Cycle of Ceremonies, the circle dance, the circle (with a line down the middle world view), the circle of relationships to all living things, are all persistent symbols and metaphors in Rotinonhsyonni culture.

⁵² The Great Law, or the constitution of the Rotinonhsyonni Confederacy.

Circle Council Wampum

The government of the Confederacy is symbolized by the Circle wampum, an entwined circle of pure white wampum (the colour denoting peace and purity), with fifty strings stretching from its edges toward its centre. The strings symbolize the fifty Chiefs, and [the circle] the binding manner in which they are brought together around a central fire. The circle is an emblem of the unbroken continuity of the law. (*Council Fire* 5)⁵⁴

The Rotinohsyonni conception of the importance of metaphor is especially relevant to interpretations of the Kahswenta: as Speck observed, “[a]lways we have the symbols of practice and the practice of symbols, a rubric of Indian culture in the east” (36).

Symbols are employed throughout Rotinohsyonni culture. The depth of meaning, the variety, and persistence of these symbols throughout the centuries

⁵⁴ The one pendant longer than the others represents Hononwiyendeh, the seventh Onondaga chief who served as wampum keeper for the Confederacy (*Canada’s Visual History*, N.F.B., 1994).

demonstrates a deep commitment to this type of expression. I would like to take a brief look at a few more of the most prominent symbols as a way of establishing the sincerity of--and the investment in--the Kahswenta.

The longhouse can be used as a demonstration of the depth to which symbols and metaphors are incorporated into the Rotinonhsyonni mindset. The longhouse acts as symbol, metaphor, and shelter; it serves all of these purposes at once and neither of them alone. Through the form of the longhouse the Rotinonhsyonni relationship with the land is expressed beyond the philosophical--related to and affected by the topography of the lived space. The lateral distribution of the Rotinonhsyonni--across what is now New York state--was reflected in the social and political organization of the Rotinonhsyonni Confederacy. In this way, the lived space reflected the social/philosophical/ideological/cultural one (Gabriel Doxtator 2-14, Kimm, Lyons).

The Peacemaker unified the nations of the Confederacy into one nation under an ideology that was complex but whose symbols were easy to grasp. The longhouse, which had been a dwelling in which extended families resided, became the symbol of a nation: the sky was compared to its roof; the earth was like its floor; and the fires burning inside were like the nations stretching east to west. (Lyons 38)

The longhouse "...serves as a metaphor for the multinational confederacy that extended from east to west across what is now New York State" (*The Six Nations of New York.*, p. viii.). In English, the translation of Rotinonhsyonni is "*the people of the longhouse*" or "*the people who build the long houses*". The longhouse metaphor was applied as a protocol for international relations. The Kanyen'kehaka and the Shenekehaka (Seneca) are also known as the Eastern Door and Western Door to the Confederacy, respectively. The proper way to enter the longhouse is through the east door or the west door; the proper way to enter into relations with the Rotinonhsyonni Confederacy is through the Kanyen'kehaka or the Shenekehaka, it is through them that any foreign nation has to pass in order to join or have any other dealings with the rest of the Confederacy (Gabriel-Doxtater 13, Lyons).

Thus, the metaphor of the longhouse is employed to explain how other nations could join with the Confederacy. When another Nation is accepted into

the Confederacy such as the Tuscarora were (c.1722), it is called “extending the rafters”. In other words, the metaphorical longhouse is simply made a little longer (Kanatawakhon).

The geographical distribution of the Rotinonhsyonni also represents the lateral political organization of the League. Power was divided equally among the member Nations of the League, this was in contrast to the hierarchical mindset that was exemplified in the institutions of the Occidental peoples.

The non-hierarchical relationship of the Rotinonhsyonni is contained in the Kayenerekowa and is also expressed in the Thanks Giving Address, or the *Ohenton Karihwaterhkwen* (“the words before all else”). The *Ohenton Karihwaterhkwen* outlines the relationship to all living things and is to be recited at the beginning and conclusion of all gatherings in order to remind people to be thankful for all of life’s creations and to bring the people together as one mind. The phrase *Etho niyohtonhak ne onkwa’nikònra* (“Now our minds are one”) is repeated after each section of the *Ohenton Karihwaterhkwen* which pays respect to all the different categories of life on “our Mother the earth”. The underlying ethic is that humans are but a part of the larger processes of the planet/cosmos and we must therefore be mindful of our respective place within this ideology (Kanatawakhon; Six Nations Indian Museum).

Another commonly used metaphor represents the Great Peace (as set out in the Kayenerekowa) as a Great White Pine, or, Great Tree of Peace. The symbol of a giant pine tree represents the Rotinonhsyonni Confederacy and acts as a metaphor of the Great Peace. The Great Tree of Peace was planted by the Peacemaker (Tekonawitha). The tree had enormous roots that extended for great distances in all directions, this was so that other Nations could follow these roots to the source and come under the protection of the Great Tree (the Rotinonhsyonni Confederacy).

The Peacemaker's vision extended to all the peoples of the earth then known to him. He erected a symbolic tree that has come to be called the Great Tree of Peace. This tree was intended to symbolize the law [Kayenerekowa] and would be visible from a great distance to all nations. Under the great long leaves of this tree (the Great Law of Peace) people would find protection from arbitrary violence. The Great Law of Peace was to be international in character. If a people were invaded the nations were to gather together to provide a show of force to dissuade the invader and to urge that the dispute be taken to a council where the injuries that had caused the dispute could be discussed and an amicable settlement could be reached. (Lyons, 1992 37)

Consistent with the Kahswenta and the Tree symbol are their use as metaphor for political, cultural, and personal protocols of interaction. The modern day usage of the Kahswenta is more often applied in a strict political sense⁵⁵, as is the case when the symbology of the Kahswenta is used to explain

⁵⁵ Although this may be the result of political usage of these metaphors being documented as they occur in the Canadian court systems during treaty claims and constitutional debates, whereas the day to day implementation of these

the Nation to Nation relationships Aboriginal Nations maintained with each other and with landing European Nations.

Where most Native communities seek redress in the reform of Canadian constitutional law, [many Rotinonhsyonni]...seek to restructure the relationship in a more essential way through the creation of a truly confederal Canada and the re-implementation of a Native-Canada relationship based on the principals of the *Kahswentha*--the Two-Row Wampum, embodying the ideal of mutual respect for the cultural and political autonomy of each society... . (Alfred 185)

While Alfred is explaining an interpretation of the *Kahswenta* for political applications on a Nation to Nation basis, I am making the parallel argument that the *Kahswenta* also provides a guideline for interaction between individuals (which in turn reinforces Rotinonhsyonni specific conceptions of individuality as explained in the previous chapter). Similar to our earlier discussion of the importance of language in identity formation (chapter two), the *Kahswenta* provides a guideline which both structures/reinforces identity and protects one's conceptualization. The *Kahswenta* acts as a protocol of interaction between entities/individuals. To further emphasize the application of the *Kahswenta* on political, cultural, and personal levels, following are some interpretations of the *Kahswenta* as they appear in a variety of contexts:

when the Dutch came, the first treaty (or agreement) which we made with a European power was the Two Row Treaty (sic) in which we clarified our position--that we are a distinct, free and sovereign people. The Dutch accepted that agreement. (*Basic Call* 89)

ideals goes undocumented.

One of the earliest treaties (sic) is known as the Two-Row Wampum. The "Two-Row" is made from wampum--purple and white beads made from clam shells that are strung together in a wide belt. Two parallel lines run the length of the white belt. One line represents the Iroquois, the other, the Europeans. The belt signifies that our two peoples will travel the river of life separately, the Iroquois in their canoes, the Europeans in their boats. The agreement provides that both peoples will stay in their own vessels and neither side shall interfere with the course or progress of the other. Contained within this treaty (sic) of friendship and mutual non-interference is the recognition, among other things, of Indian immunity from European taxation. (Brian Maracle 52)

One of the first treaties (sic) made on this continent was called the Two-Row Wampum in 1699 (sic) between the Six Nations Iroquois and the Dutch Crown. It consisted of two strings of purple beads on a white background; one dark string signifying the European nation and their affairs and the other representing the Iroquois nation (sic). Wampum was usually used to seal relationships and to mark historic events. The two rows of dark beads signified a shared promise that each would never interfere in the affairs of the other.

When the British absorbed the Dutch presence in North America, it also assumed the commitment to adhere to the Two-Row Wampum. ...Such treaties (sic) would be "polished" from time to time, to update the agreement and to renew the commitment. (Hamilton 6)

When the Haudenosaunee first came into contact with the European nations, treaties (sic) of peace and friendship were made. Each was symbolized by the Gus-Wen-Teh or Two Row Wampum. There is a bed of white wampum which symbolizes the purity of the agreement. There are two rows of purple, and those two rows have the spirit of your ancestors and mine. There are three beads of wampum separating the two rows and they symbolize peace, friendship and respect.

These two rows will symbolize two paths or two vessels, travelling down the rivers together. One, a birch bark canoe, will be for the Indian people, their laws, their customs, and their ways. We shall each travel the river together, side by side, but in our own boat. Neither of us will try to steer the other's vessel. (Haudenosaunee Confederacy, in Mitchell 109-110)

From the earliest peaceful encounter, Haudenosaunee relations with European nations were defined by principals memorialized in the Guswenta, or Two-Row Wampum, said to record the original treaty (sic) with the Dutch. Guswenta is a long beaded belt of white wampum with two parallel lines of purple along its length. The lines symbolize the distinct identity of the two peoples and a mutual engagement to coexist in peace without interference in the affairs of the other. (Berman 135)

The impact of the hegemonic, ideologic "West" on indigenous people can be understood in a number of ways. The Haudenosaunee created the Two Row Wampum in the 1600s, actually an agreement that became prophetic, in this case a warning, a way of thinking about our relationship to the ideological "West" based on actual experience between the Dutch and the Iroquois. (Rickard 16)

"Our Creator has made rivers," they said, "lakes and big waters. Our brother the white man has made a boat to travel on these waters. The two parties will each put their boats parallel to each other. The white man's boat will be on the left, and the Indian's boat will be on the right. Each party will put his laws and religion into his boat. We have different laws and religion and from this time on they will be separated. The white man's boat will carry his laws and religion, and the Indian's boat will carry Indian laws and religion." (Rotinonhsyonni oral tradition, in Lyons 40-41)

For the most part, the symbology of the Kahswenta is usually explained in texts dealing with the political relationship between the Canadian and/or U.S. governments and Aboriginal peoples on Turtle Island; such is the case for *Basic Call*, Hamilton, Mitchell, Berman, and Lyons. Maracle's invocation is similarly inclined but more specifically focused as the counterpoint to the Canadian government's attempts to levy income taxes on currently tax free

Aboriginal peoples living and working on reserves. Rickard's citation of the Kahswenta is perhaps the most unorthodox. She is an artist and not a politician. Her interpretation of the Kahswenta's origins posits the Kahswenta as prophecy--foreshadowing the impositions of the "West" on Rotinonhsyonni ways.

Impositions

The circle vs. the square.

Did Europeans *see* differently than Onkwehonwe? Is it possible to reconstruct a way of seeing that is not infected by linear perspective? If it were possible to unlearn perspective, would the Kahswenta suddenly assume a more profound position as a guideline for peaceful cohabitation on Turtle Island?

If we get our awareness of parallelism through touch, as by running our fingers along a simple moulding, there is no question of the sensuous return that parallel lines do not meet. If, however, we get our awareness of parallelism through sight, as when we look down a long colonnade, there is no doubt about the sensuous return that parallel lines do converge and will meet if they are far enough extended. (Ivins 8)

If awareness of parallelism is obtained through the theory and methods of perspective, then we see a world that must conform to the formulas derived to contain it: as Ivins' notes, it was in the "... seventeenth century... that a mathematician adopted convergence at infinity as the basis of a definition of parallel lines (8).

Does the definition of parallel, then also mean convergence at infinity?

Is this what the Indians were thinking?

schematic for parallel thinking

(two overlapping ellipses, or two parallel rings?)

Why accept convergence as scientific fact, when conversely, it is *known* that parallel lines do not converge? For example, take Ivins' illustration, as one

proceeds to walk along the colonnade, it will soon become apparent that the *illusion of convergence, contradicts the “reality”*⁵⁶. In other words, what is seen when looking down the colonnade, the “sensuous return” as Ivins puts it, contradicts what is *known*. Even as it is generally known that parallel by definition means two lines equidistant from one another to infinity, science and perspective conventions tell us that the concept of parallel is an impossibility. I think of this as the parallel paradox.

So how does this apparent contradiction manifest itself today? How is it relevant?

The relevance of visual conventions to this discussion is that these ways of seeing do in fact alter the way “self” is conceived in relation to the world. This reasoning can be applied philosophically to demonstrate the internalization of scientific method through perspective as well as the contradiction of these ideas with those embodied within the Kahswenta.

The first point I would like to make is that perspectival conventions as a means of depicting the world today are all pervasive, to the degree that any other means of representation is considered a departure from *reality*--naive, primitive, or fantasy. The second point is that perspective has been

⁵⁶ The reality provided to us by sense of sight, touch, and closer inspection.

internalized by many as a method of representation, and *seeing*, even today. This manifests itself in the conceptualization of the world as external to ourselves, and the ordering of our universe in relative importance to us spatially. As objects recede into the distance so to does their perceived influence on us decline (they become marginalized). The vanishing point is beyond conception.

Imagine the interpretation of the Kahswenta in two different ways; from a Rotinohsyonni viewpoint and from the viewpoint of linear perspective, now begin to understand how there may have been a misunderstanding of the Kahswenta on the part of the Europeans. The Europeans interpreted the ideas contained in the belt as finite; just as the physical representation of these ideas--the belt itself--has a beginning and an end so too would any agreement entered into. In addition, as I have already established, viewed from a non-Onkwehonwe *perspective*, the two parallel rows of the Kahswenta were most likely imagined to be converging at some point (in the future).

Consider, if you will, the occurrence of the *grid* throughout history and in contemporary life as an Occidental means of relating to the world: the cartographic grid of the medieval mapmakers, the perspective grid of Alberti, the archeological grid, the division of land into parcels, the roadway grid

system,⁵⁷ and the electronic grid--the method of computers rendering images in pixels (tiny squares).

The pervasiveness of the grid in North America with the intersection of perpendicular lines has become a standard, a rule, a law. Roads criss-cross the continent becoming more intricate as they define the byways and highways of urban living. In archeology, the grid is applied to the land where *discoveries* are unearthed. Precise measurements are achieved by further dividing the grid into uniform segments.⁵⁸ The grid has been employed by surveyors to divide the lands of Turtle Island into saleable parcels, to analyze its treasures--to render the land and the cultural materials contained within, obtainable. Perception, mediated by the grid--by perspective--is linked to the purposes of analysis, evaluation, and commodity:

[a]t the beginning of the Renaissance, measurement was still vague... . The development of perspective in the painting of the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries is one indication of a more calculating approach to the measurement of space, which is then combined with an aesthetics of proportion.

The gaze of the fifteenth century Florentine was one that was skilled in visual measurement and the exact estimation of quantity, weight, and scale. (Hooper-Greenhill 42)

⁵⁷ Roads are also interesting considering the Kahswenta. We have a habit of painting parallel lines down the centre of them, which paradoxically is symbolic of traffic regulations forbidding us to cross these lines (in order to pass).

⁵⁸ In this way knowledge is extracted from the land. What is taken is then possessed; knowledge is power.

[L]ooking...was constituted as a detailed and specific skill. Thus the viewing subject was calculating, interpreting, estimating, and verbalising. (Hooper-Greenhill 43)

Peace, Kindness, Respect

When representation (and/or seeing) is made to conform to a prescribed set of rules (such as in linear perspective) to the degree that the only place the representation can exist, is in the representation; we then paradoxically, make claims of scientific accuracy. The assumptions unchallenged, exist all around us. Virtually all visual representation today is mediated through a camera (video or other) which uses a single lens to record its view of the outside world; much like the “singular eye” used in earlier viewing devices. It is however, well known that humans have *two* eyes. Many even consider it to be a serious disability to have vision in only one eye, and yet there is widespread acceptance of the world represented through monocular devices. In order to see clearly, should not *both eyes* be open? Why not consider the symbolic meaning of theories and treaties along with their practical or political meaning?

To acknowledge Linear Perspective as a mathematical/geometric formula applied as a theory and method of rendering the world through its monocular illusion, is to understand a truly *ingenuous* apparatus which purports to

organize and rationalize nature by its artificial means. Any apparatus and method, however persuasive, must also be looked at critically. To reinvest in the symbolism of the Kahswenta, is to re-invest in seeing with both eyes open. Surely, these perspectives combined offer a totality of viewing which is not only more “*realistic*” but inclusive as well.

In recalling some of the principals of our Onkwehonwe and pre-Rennaisance ancestors, a more complete understanding of the intentions of historic agreements such as the Kahswenta can be regained. From these viewpoints, a critical look at so much of what is taken for granted in terms of how we view the world can be achieved.

The Kahswenta (and by extension, the Kayenerekowa/Rotinonhsyonni culture) still have credence today. For our purposes here--to further the discussion of colonial impositions on identity conceptions--the Kahswenta is particularly influential as it provides guidelines for cohabitation, guidelines which sorely need to be re-implemented. Revitalization of the Kahswenta would have a positive effect on all peoples. Rotinonhsyonni in particular, would finally be recognized by the diversity, individuality, and creativity which we have always maintained.

Chapter 4- Paddling Upstream

Frontispiece illustration from George Catlin's, *North American Indians*... The caption reads, "The Author painting a Chief at the base of the Rocky Mountains." This drawing represents an early example of the problematics in the following discussion over control of Onkwehonwe images and identity.

Resistance and Survival

Art, in the American Indian world view today, is being used in ways that question the very foundation of Western thinking. Native artists are radically altering the non-Indians' perception of Native Americans and the way they perceive themselves as contemporary people living in the 20th century, into what the American Indian was before Columbus: not a regression back to a perceived primitivism and stone aged mentality, but ahead to what they take to be a superior and more human value system... The trend is once again toward developing an art that serves the needs of Indian societies and education, and not just bourgeois institutions (and ideology). (Young Man 1988: 28)

How do we reclaim our culture [our identity] when so many collusions, confusions, collections, and corrections exist?
(Marie Ann-Hart Baker 300)

Any genuine culture--if it is a living, breathing culture--involves evolution and change. And the moment that we think that our culture is in the past, back in that museum case, we're in for it. That's not where our culture is. It's happening here, as we look ...or participate in [a variety of] activities. (Tom Hill, NMAI website)

In a context of cultural survival and resistance, this chapter looks at how four Rotinonhsyonni artists are dealing with the colonial past and present. This history and its heirs must negotiate each others competing notions of fact and fiction, real and imaginary, necessity and desire. Faced with these challenges how do Rotinonhsyonni artists resist, and, exist?

Through a closer examination of selected works by Patricia Deadman, David Kanatawakhon Maracle, Shelley Niro, and Jeffrey Thomas one can see how (or if?) the construction or continuation of a sense of personal identity (or

a continuation of collective identity) is carried out through their creative production. This analysis is also interspersed with the thoughts and feelings of the artists as pulled from written artist statements as well as the interviews and conversations I have had with them since December 1995.

My purpose here in taking a closer look at the artwork is to realize a communal expression of Rotinonhsyonnniness, (if possible) rather than formalize a Rotinonhsyonni *oeuvre*. Since it is not my intention to fabricate a Rotinonhsyonni art history or a formal Rotinonhsyonni art analysis, my interpretation of the artists' works, will be directed towards support of my arguments.

I am interested in the commonalities--the shared concerns, the communal references--as well as the unique qualities and the apparent contradictions inherent in the works and thoughts of each artist. Although I recognize and affirm that the artists are very different from each other, I nevertheless expect the works and thoughts to elicit some form of collective Rotinonhsyonnniness.⁵⁹ The collective that is the subject of this study is recognized to be historically and politically constituted by external forces just as my own agenda shapes my interpretations and conclusions. Noting these

⁵⁹ As I have tried to establish throughout this thesis when I refer to a group sense of identity, such as a collective Rotinonhsyonnniness, I mean a collective of individuals--individuals as explained in chapter 2.

weaknesses, I will endeavour to explore what I see as a pluralistic sense of Rotinonhsyonniness.

I envision the four artists being discussed here, as engaged in an ongoing process of resistance. Resistance against the hegemonic forces of collecting institutions, academic authorities (anthropologists, archaeologists, art historians, curators), and governments which attempt to control and define notions of Indian and Indian Art.

Despite historians' tendency to produce an image of the Amerindian that serves the interests of colonialist societies, Amerindian ideology has lost nothing of its essence... proof that [North] America has never had and never will have any lasting spiritual culture other than its Native one... . Most ironically, the Iroquois nation, which has most often served as a pretext for whites to denigrate the Aboriginal population, is now recognized even internationally as one of the most vibrant Amerindian cultures in the Americas. (Sioui 59)

Rotinonhsyonni artists continue to battle these outside determinations and impositions. The battlefield is fraught with mines and pitfalls, Cowboys and "Indians". It is difficult to find a safe and secure place to stand. At the moment you relax, thinking you are settled on terra firma, the terrain shifts and new maps must be drawn up. It may be safer to leave the land altogether; to ply the waterway, leading where *it* wants to, to navigate your canoe within this nurturing stream which acts with equal forces upon the paddles and oars of all who enter.

What is there to resist?

[Contemporary Aboriginal] artists reconstruct earlier appearances and earlier activities now lost--exposing the works to anthropologists' criticism of their accuracy. Indian artists have often internalized the exoticism, the interest in "tradition" so strongly manifested by their non-Indian contacts. After all, this antiquarian, sentimental interest in obsolete customs, ancient objects, and surviving fragments of old systems of belief and behaviour is seen as an important aspect of Indian identity as seen by the larger society and thus, inevitably, as seen by many Indians. (Sturtevant 42)

Following this pattern of reasoning we can ascertain several destructive ideas:

- Indian interest in own culture is spawned by non-Indians
- Interest in Indian culture serves no function because the culture is *obsolete*
- Indians are conforming to non-Indian stereotypes of themselves (just like a non-Indian to say that)
- Indians have no control/agency of their own (as if still in a primitive state of being, with no thoughts of their own--an imitative "aping" state).
- It is up to the anthropologist (or art critic/historian/curator) to determine the inaccuracies in the Indian's own representations
- Indians are blamed for losing their culture and then the culture they have is criticized as inauthentic or degenerate or derivative

These ideas and more are the core issues that operate to confuse one who is trying to situate themselves as Onkwehonwe, and as a participant and producer of “culture”. In order to EXIST, Onkwehonwe must RESIST. Resistance implies agency as opposed to passive victimization, for this reason I will concentrate on responses, rebuttals, and refusals of some of the above (Sturtevant’s) contentions.

As a People who have been the subject of study for over 500 years, this quote is but a miniscule example from an enormous amount of published material which attempts to name, define, classify, and represent Onkwehonwe, often in opposition to Onkwehonwe themselves.⁶⁰

The debates concerning Aboriginal identity in relation to Aboriginal art have a long and sordid past.⁶¹ The fact that artistic expression by Aboriginal peoples is inextricably linked to expressions of Aboriginal identity is rarely disputed. It is the nature of the link and its resultant manifestations that give rise to questions about the nature of Aboriginal art and Aboriginal identity themselves.

⁶⁰ The text quoted is from an essay by Sturtevant in Edwin L. Wade’s, *The Arts of the North American Indian*. The reason this publication and essay are centred out is simply because this text was *coincidentally*, the first text I purchased to learn about Aboriginal art.

⁶¹ see Tom Hill, *Beyond History*.; Lynn Hill, *AlterNative*.; Deborah Doxtator, *Fluffs and Feathers*; Viviane Gray.

For the purposes of this chapter and to maintain a level of consistency with the others, the following examination of the creativity of the four artists who are the subjects of this study is not one that seeks to define (in a contained/limited sense) a model of Rotinonhsyonnniness. I am aware that any movement towards *a definition*, is in itself a process that limits and contains; although, as I have argued throughout, the *container* in this case is the individual and as much as possible their own definition/self-conceptualization. I am citing these four artists, as individuals representative of their own distinctive views concerning this central question: What is Rotinonhsyonni?

Patricia Deadman

I started going to PowWows and I kind of connected, and my work went off from there, and then my trend of thinking kind of expanded from one theory to the next. It has kind of come around the full circle again, back to the question of, identity... . (7 Jan. 1996)

Patricia Deadman works out of Woodstock, Ontario primarily as a photographer. Her work consists of photos that demonstrate a relationship to land and a commitment to the social-political issues affecting Onkwehonwe in

Canada. "Deadman deconstructs and breaks down her images to capture those "little" things that we may have missed or taken for granted. ...[She] reinterprets the sublime landscape and captures her emotional response to its grandeur" (L. Hill 16).

These concerns and more find their way into her ironically titled, *Serve Series* (1994): "[t]he images and text Deadman has selected...question the meanings behind familiar words and images. ...In *conserve* Deadman's image is one of a pseudo-natural landscape" (L. Hill 16-17).

The potency of this image derives from the association of Aboriginal peoples with the environmental movement. This was facilitated by the idea that

Aboriginal peoples have always had a close relationship with nature--as in "the children of nature".

During the seventies, the mainstream environmental movement motivated governments to set aside "nature areas" in an effort to assuage the fears of a more pollution aware public (rem. "Give a Hoot, Don't Pollute!"). The "Indian" became a symbol and a warning for "Whites" to stop the destruction of the environment. The weeping Indian image was used to represent both a lost relationship to Nature and a reminder that change must occur lest the environment go the way of the Indian/apparition.

Poster ad for 1972, "Keep America Beautiful" campaign.

⁶² The image comes from a 1972 television and poster ad campaign for Keep America Beautiful Inc. (Berkhofer 136). I vividly recall the television ad that depicted an Indian on horseback coming up to a cliff overlooking an interstate highway. As he gazes across the vista, his view is obstructed by the rushing traffic and the roadside litter it generates. The camera closes in on the Indian's face. A tear rolls down his cheek.

In another photo in the *Serve* series, Deadman takes a stab at the stereotypical view held by some, that reserves all contain teepees as the preferred form of accommodation of “reserve Indians”. When looking closely at the photo, one might ponder the absence of a garage style teepee to house the conspicuously present, Chevy Celebrity. By including the car, Deadman does not allow the viewer to slip into some romantic fantasy about the past, instead we are presented with the teepee icon in the context of the modern

day Pow Wow. The Pow Wow can be viewed as one example of the continuation and adaptation of traditions to suit contemporary needs.

In *preserve*, Deadman challenges the notion of the salvage paradigm as it operates through the natural history collections of museums and the intentions of

these collections to somehow represent living (or formerly living, now extinct) creatures. The salvage paradigm refers specifically to the museum collecting era that was witness to the severe effects of colonialism and the rush to acquire (by whatever means) the “last vestiges” of Aboriginal cultures, and

sometimes the people themselves.⁶³

⁶³ This brings to mind the story of Ishi, “the last of the Yaki”:

In 1911, in California, a lone Native appeared out of the wilderness in Oroville, the last member of his tribe known to exist. Ishi, the so-called last of the Yaki, was more or less adopted by a museum at the University of California where the anthropologist Alfred Kroeber worked with him to reconstruct the culture of his people. Like [James Fenimore] Cooper’s fictional Indian, Ishi became a public symbol of “the last Indian”. His death in 1916 represented for many Americans the demise of an entire race. (Francis 38)
For more, see also the made for television film, *The Last of His Tribe*, starring Graham Greene.

Deserve, comments on the indoctrination of Christian religions by some Aboriginal peoples, the incorporation of the binaries of good/evil, and the “Protestant work ethic”. I was kind of raised rightist, that's why I have the image of “deserve” on there... it's an enhanced *deserve*, you know. It's like, well, if you work at it, well, then you just get what you might deserve, you know. If not, well then you just might get what you *deserve* (7 Jan. 1996).

I believe this also refers to possession and loss in the context of colonial land dispossession; for example, colonists *deserved* the lands they desired (manifest destiny) and Indians *deserved* their fate (as punishment for being soul-less savages). To deserve is to come to be rightfully worthy of, to be

fairly entitled to, or to be able to claim rightfully by virtue of actions done or qualities displayed. To the utmost for all its worth" (Deadman qtd. in L. Hill 17). Lynn Hill continues, "In *deserve* the image portrays a shadow play of two bodies, one gives and the other, deservedly, receives" (17). For me, this also brings to mind the term "Indian giver", the term's colloquial meaning as someone who gives and then wishes to take back, takes on new significance when thought of as a non-Aboriginal rationalization of First Nations land claims.

Last in this series is the photo titled *self-serve*:

I don't know if you're familiar with my [Serve series]...? The piece for me kind of works on different levels. One being, of course, the immediate response of what the actual definitions [of the superimposed words] mean, and then how people interpret that because they always have their own image of what a word means. Then of course my response to that is how it's being

read, and how I kind of perceive that. Then you can start reading

them together, and it just becomes like, just different levels, and for me, it's about power and control and accountability and responsibility and how we treat the environment and how we interact, and it's about the self, and how all of these questions kind of combine and there is no real definitive answer to it. It's just a series of questions because I don't think there is a definite answer...

(7 Jan. 1996)

As Deadman states, her interests have revolved around the 'self' from more general (but alluding/referring to a specific Onkwehonwe historical context) concerns. *Self serve*, is a poignant example of this type of query. The relationship between text and image in this photo is very complex. The "SELF SERVE" of the service station is echoed by the superimposed text (the phrase is in fact repeated three times within the photo creating almost a refrain or a chant self serve, self serve, self serve...). While Deadman poses herself at the station, she doesn't seem to be there for the usual purpose. She is not in the act of refuelling her car so the pose and situation seem contrived, or purposeful.

This recalls Edward Curtis and the infamous staged poses he would set up as he sought to construct images that better reflected his own notions of "Indian-ness". By invoking a similar method, Deadman refutes these images (and all stereotypical constructions) in several ways. First, she is in control of

this image; *she* serves us her *self*. Second, she has chosen a situation that reflects everyday contemporary reality (Indians do drive cars, and those cars need gas) as opposed to Curtis' efforts to edit out any hint of contemporaneity (Francis 39-42). Third, Deadman's sweater reads, "*Indian* GENUINE PARTS AND SERVICE", formerly a brand of motorcycle and currently a clothing label, "Indian-genuine parts and service" is re-written through her reclamation and re-presentation to challenge misguided notions of authenticity. Lastly, and most importantly is the fact that self serve in the context of this self portrait evokes self determination on a personal level, but also acts as a guide for others and within the broader political notion of Rotinonhsyonni and Onkwehonwe independence.⁶⁴

David Kanatawakhon Maracle

Kanatawakhon reminds us that there is no word for art in Kanyen'keha, nor is there a word for culture, these things cannot be separated out and

⁶⁴ On another ironic level, the "Shell Helps" banner of the service station is hard to miss. Shell was a major corporate sponsor of the controversial *Spirit Sings* exhibition of 1988. At the same moment that they were funding an exhibition which sought to ensconce Aboriginal material culture as "Art", they were embroiled in a bitter land dispute with the Lubicon Cree over oil drilling rights (L. Hill 12). Is this a pointed reference then to Shell's impositions on Aboriginal sovereignty?

discussed even as elements of a more holistic notion of Rotinonhsyonniness. As the language itself is constructed, art/culture are also combined as integral aspects of a conceptual whole. The meaning of the closest word for “culture” in Kanyen’keha is “the way we do things” (conversations 3-5 Oct. 1997). Thus the “doing of culture” would have to include all aspects of everyday life as well as those rituals reserved for special occasions, illustrating that the notion of “culture” must include all of these things.

This conceptual whole is also a model for personal identity. An “individual” is comprised of any number of components in the dynamic and fluid boundaries constituting the *person* (the culture/language/worldview) of each and every individual. As an individual, Kanatawakhon practices the language/art-making/culture as an integrated activity. He envisions a lived space that reflects Kanyen’kehaka “culture” in every way possible. We talked about this idea, creating an imaginary space--a home--that reproduced these ideals:

DKM- A lot of Native homes are devoid of Native art. One thing I’ve often thought of doing that would be fun would be to work with a designer towards doing some sort of show where we would use the design work--the pattern of the design work--and apply it to everything; fabrics for upholstery, fabrics for clothing, ceramics for

the dishes.

GH- So you would like to see your paintings above a couch with the same pattern on it?

DKM- (laughs) Not necessarily, just so that the design work starts going back into what it was originally used for anyway-- it was decoration on clothing and utensils and that sort of stuff. If that kind of stuff became more affordable and available to Iroquoian people, I think people would start to identify more specifically with what is specifically them.

GH- That somehow your household objects reflect...

DKM- Who you are as a person, and your cultural background and stuff. I think people have to have a really good sense of who they are and I think that symbols--design that sort of stuff-- gives people a base to work from. In order to be a cultural people who are individuals and have a strong sense of individualism, they still have to have a base that they are working from.

...For me, this is probably why I deal with design work and stuff because it is something that literally everyone should have access to. It supports my whole idea and philosophy about public acquisition and public access to symbols and design and meaning.
(9 Dec. 1995)

For the most part, Kanatawakhon's use of Rotinohsyonni design is as he describes. The designs sometimes find themselves replicated within his Kanyen'keha language learning materials, and he has done several paintings which adorn the walls of his home. Although he has not yet achieved the total immersion of the type we discussed during the interview, the idea is not lost. Still, his attitudes towards his creative output stand apart from those of the other three artists.

He does not actively try to exhibit his work as "Art" and he is not particularly concerned with having his work appreciated in this way; for example, in his own words: [f]or a Native person who is an artist to come along, if they want someone to appreciate what they've done, they have to do it in a fashion that people understand it. I don't give a shit. This stuff hangs on my wall because I like it and it means something to me. I look at it and I see symbols. I see story in it. If people ask me, I will tell them what

the story is. If people show an interest in it, I will explain it to them. But most of the time I don't care, because I did it for myself, I didn't do it for them. When people care enough to say, "Can you do something like that for me? Could you create something for me, using your talent?" I'll say, "Sure, why not." (9 Dec. 1995)

Kanatawakhon's views on

stereotypes are equally revelatory. He is absolutely unconcerned about the negative attitudes of others, as long as they do not attempt to force their views upon him. His resistance to external intervention is explained in one way, through the Kahswenta: We do have to respect each other's definition of what art is; the same as we have to respect each other's definition of democracy, and politics, and morals, and mores, and all that sort of stuff. I think when it comes to something like the Kahswenta, that can fit very well into what Native people choose to decide is art, it has to be based upon a Native definition (9 Dec. 1995).

Is Kanatawakhon's integration of Rotinonhsyonni symbology into his occupational and everyday life an example of nostalgia for, as Sturtevant says,

“obsolete customs”? Or, does Kanatawakhon’s expression and integration of Rotinonhsyonni design demonstrate adaptation, continuation, and currency?

Jeffrey Thomas

“My biggest message... is to tell Native people they can control their own image--and finally get the vision that we see of ourselves.”
(Thomas qtd. in Duguay)

As you may recall, Thomas is often interpreted as one who explodes stereotypes and demystifies the ‘Indian’: “...Thomas challenges and deconstructs the “Curtis-ized” images of the First Nations male as well as symbols of “Indian-ness” in the exploration of his metropolis” (L. Hill 26); “Thomas shows us the modern Indian: not the Indian of Western imagination, nor the ironic Indian, but the Indian of everyday life” (McMaster, 1996).⁶⁵

Curiously, both Thomas and Deadman (and to a lesser extent, Shelley Niro as well) have made a substantial number of photographs of Pow Wow dancers. I say *curiously* because they are both aware of the notion of the Pow Wow as a stereotypically “Indian” activity--a pan-Indian “celebration” that generates tourist dollars for local craft vendors--yet they are willing to work with

⁶⁵ See also, *Powwow Images...*, 1985; Reid, 1985.

these very “loaded” images. This is especially true for Thomas who has exhibited shows based solely on Pow Wow photos (*Pow Wow Images...*, Thunder Bay Art Gallery, 1985).

The reason why I began with the traditional [Pow Wow] dancer was because a lot of the stereotypes were derived from the image of the traditional dancer--the beads, the feathers, the warrior and the paint. It was an image that was abused by photographers, stereotyped to the Hollywood image. (Thpmas qtd. in L. Hill, *AlterNative*. 26)

As Thomas explains, his dancer photos come out of his interest in refuting already existing stereotypes. He is “taking back” these images and providing us with reworked examples of Indian identity, or as he terms it, “moving towards a reasonable symbolism” (26).

The above diptych, titled, *Returning the Gaze* (1990) illustrates this point: the dancer (Joseph Crowe) is shown in street clothes and then while dancing (indoors with the indoor lights in view). The modern clothes situate the image in contemporary times and provide a context for Joseph Crowe beyond the dancing moment captured on film. The title and intensity of Crowe's eyes looking back at us through the camera effectively reverses "the gaze". We as viewers become the subject; our subjectifying gaze is reflected back at us. We can then reflect upon our relationship with the subject.

Thomas develops an ongoing relationship with the dancers he photographs. He goes beyond the camera, and interacts with the subject; he gets to know them. In this way his subjects avoid being objectified. Thomas includes them as people rather than cardboard cut-outs. He shows the character of the dancers by depicting them in their environments, including personal objects not directly related to what we think of when we project an image for ourselves of a Pow Wow dancer.

Plenty Chief (1985)

In *Plenty Chief*, the image only includes half of the dancer's body, as if we are to piece together the rest of his identity from visual clues included in the photo. The truck, licence plate, chair, and open suitcase provide information situating this individual in a way that a straight on portrait never could.

Thomas has developed this idea to another level, building on the notion of working towards a more complete communication of his subject's sense of identity. Thomas has begun (unconsciously?) to string together a self-portrait. In this body of work he photographs persons whom he has an intimate

relationship with--members of his immediate family. This relationship with the subject--literally through genetics, and socially through the intimacy of familial relations--begins to betray the identity of the photographer.

Over a number of years, Thomas has photographed his son, Bear. As one looks over the series of photos, Bear literally grows before our eyes. Bear becomes a symbol of hope. A complex narrative is formed as we see Bear in a variety of ironic compositions.

In the diptych, *Moving Towards a Reasonable Symbolism* we see Bear's face close up in sharp focus while the narrow depth of field renders the background into fuzzy shapes. The next photo pulls back and blurs Bear's face while the background comes into focus. Bear is looking into a storefront window. There are mannequins modelling various items of clothing but our attention is drawn to the one in the centre wearing a cowboy hat and handkerchief--cowboy style. From all the options in the window, we wonder how Bear would choose to dress. Would he choose the construction hat, the apron, the raincoat, the cowboy hat, or perhaps, a combination? Given the choice what identity will he assume?

The narrative continues, the setting is urban/industrial. Bear is posed in a t-shirt which reads "Founder of the New World".

I find myself asking if this phrase refers to Bear himself, as that symbol of hope--a next generation to build the world in their own image rather than one dictated by others. The important thing is that as we look at these photos, we can see identities being formed and re-formed, and we can believe that it is possible.

Shelley Niro

When I started looking at Indian art, the majority of the artists were men and they were looking for heroes and warriors. I started thinking about image-making and representation of women. There were very few women artists and the representation of women that they were portraying were powwow images. That imagery was fairy tale like. If we as Indian people are trying to destroy the noble warrior image then we must start portraying the world the way we see and experience it. (Niro, artist statement, *Watchful Eyes*. 29)

On both a formal and ideological level Niro offers a sense of synthesis. For the artists in this group it is Niro's artwork that combines photography and Rotinonhsyonni design work in one. On the ideological level, she too is

concerned with stereotypical images. Her deconstruction is directed at images which purport to represent her, as “Indian”, and as woman. Her photography debunks stereotypes in a way that manipulates the misconceptions of the viewer. She twists and folds the stereotypes until they are no longer recognizable as stereotypical images and begin to take on a life of their own. The viewer is challenged by the “truth value” of the representations, which are further sanctioned by the photographic medium. Niro creates for her family members and herself, fantasy identities as alternates to what is dictated by mainstream culture.

Mohawks in Beehives, 1991

How often does a society dictate to us what niche do we fill and how appropriately are we filling that gap. The MIB's (also known as

Mohawks in Beehives) are being outrageously flirtatious with the camera. They are in a world quite foreign to the world in which they live and know. The make-up, the beehive hairdos and the dangly glittery jewellery lets them lose their sense of self and the roles they have been practising for all their lives. (Niro artist's statement, 1991)

Niro presents us with images of women (in this case her sisters) armed for battle. In ...*Beehives* this armament is a parodic costuming, consisting of fantasy and gaudy jewellery. The viewer is challenged by the strength of character exhibited in their brave use of "feminine camp". The humour in the work allows a tension release; we laugh... nervously perhaps. As they choose to explore self definitions, these women are powerful, they are even rebellious.

Niro's Mother relaxes on the trunk of a Dodge Rebel SST.

The Rebel, 1991

In many of Niro's photos Rotinonhsyonni design work is present. The designs wrap around the photos, framing the work. They provide Rotinonhsyonni specific signifiers which also act to frame the subjects within the

culture of the Rotinonhsyonni; as if to say, these alternate identities can be explored in any direction but they are always bracketed by this specific culture.

I asked Niro, with all this identity exploration that she does; how does she identify herself?

I think I identify with myself as being an Iroquois person, because I'm with my family, you know, my brother and sisters and all that, and they're Iroquois people... (Dec. 1995).

This brings to mind the way Jeff Thomas provides his view of Rotinonhsyonni identity through the photographs of his son and extended family. Although Niro sometimes includes herself in her photo-constructions, she visualizes a sense of Rotinonhsyonniness through her family members as well. We see them as empowered women who are obviously participants in a society beyond the borders of the reserve and not restricted to a narrowly defined set of cultural referents.

The Iroquois is a Highly Developed Matriarchal Society, 1991

The Iroquois is a Highly Developed Matriarchal Society is a play on anthropological notions. It is one of those sentences that I have heard all my life. I wanted to make fun of the acceptance of what other people say about the society that I come from. Since I come from a reserve where domestic violence is high, I wanted to ask, "If we are a matriarchal society why does all this violence happen? Why doesn't anyone put a stop to it and really make our society a matriarchal society?" (Niro artist statement, *Watchful Eyes*. 29)

Where Niro's work differs from the others is that she focuses her critique on the portrayal and position of women in contemporary Rotinonhsyonni and non-Rotinonhsyonni societies. Through work such as *...Matriarchal Society*, she acknowledges the problems with the indoctrination of patriarchal values as they affect the leadership roles of

Rotinonhsyonni women. These photos capture Niro's Mother under a hair dryer dome. This domestic, cosmetic activity is transformed when we consider Niro's Mother as Matriarch. The dryer dome takes on regal associations and relates also to the celestial domes framing the photos. This is a Matriarch caught in a candid moment, the situation could be embarrassing but Niro's Mother (while maybe caught off-guard) is obviously comfortable with Shelley's empowering/loving gaze. These photos begin to challenge the incongruence between notions of "traditional" gender relations in contrast with present day realities.

Niro's work approaches the subject of Rotinonhsyonni identity from a female perspective. Her use of three generations of Kanyen'kehaka women from within her own family circle communicates a sense of strength, continuation, and a respect for origins that ensures there will be future Rotinonhsyonni; defining their place in the world, on their own terms.

If Indians in the late twentieth century are recognized predominantly in the category of "identity politics," isn't that solely a "western" reflection? Doesn't Shelly Niro's *Mohawks in Beehives* (1992) call for an understanding of the contemporary role of women, having come from a matrilineal society that believes life began on earth because of a woman called Skywoman? (Rickard 18)

The Circle as a Spiral

Back to the original question: What is Rotinohsyonni? Again, no easy answer is apparent. As an expression of “culture” and of “self”, the artists may be viewed as engaged in a process of resistance. This may in fact be true for Patricia Deadman, Shelley Niro, and Jeffrey Thomas but less so for David Kanatawakhon Maracle. Where Deadman, Niro, and Thomas confront stereotypical notions of Indian head on, Kanatawakhon takes a decidedly non-participatory approach (a passive resistance maybe). This may in large part be due to the differences in medium and subject matter chosen by the four artists. Thomas, Niro, and Deadman are all photographers who by the nature of their medium are directly involved in the processes of representation. Each works from their own perspective.

As photographers, they are all acutely aware of the power of (mis)representation and sometimes choose to respond to historical depictions (i.e. Edward Curtis) in a direct way. This is especially the case for Jeffrey Thomas whose work with archival collections has fostered his interest in, and knowledge of the photographic record in Canada.⁶⁶

Kanatawakhon’s indifference to stereotypes may be because his artwork

⁶⁶ See for example the catalogue, *Aboriginal Portraits, from the National Archives*, guest curated by Thomas (1996).

does not directly confront misrepresentation and acts in itself as a Rotinonhsyonni signification.

I think you really have to be aware of who you are. And, I think being aware of who you are, should be and has to be constant work. You should always be questioning your own existence. How can you appreciate something if you always take it for granted? In order to appreciate yourself and your craft, your tradition, your background, your history, and your people, you constantly have to be thinking about it. You constantly have to be looking at it, questioning it. In order for a person to be a real artist--to be true to their craft--they have to be constantly questioning, they have to be looking and trying to figure out who they are. (Kanatawakhon, 9 Dec. 1995)

These artists resist being boxed in by prevailing misconceptions; each expressing identity issues in their own way. This expression is an assertion of identity, and a proclamation of survival. The cultural expression of these four artists ensures continuation into the future as younger artists are inspired by their work and begin to produce their own representations: Deadman's resistance equates with self-determination; Kanatawakhon through the cultural specificity of the design work (and the production of Kanyen'keha language materials); Thomas, a response to historical portraiture and re-assertion of

control over imaging, empowering the subjects as well; Niro, as a woman reasserting the role of Rotinohsyonni women as leaders and re-establishing control over depictions of self, and by extension women in general.

Onkwehonwe such as these four, living within the lands now known as Canada continue to maintain the presence and adeptness to tell their own stories. This collective strength is held by each individual subscribing to some form of (self-determined) Onkwehonwe identity and is in different ways, reflected and reinforced through the products of Aboriginal cultural workers in the Arts generally. The cultural production of Patricia Deadman, David Kanatawakhon Maracle, Shelley Niro, and Jeffrey Thomas are but a few examples of this vital voice.

When Aboriginal languages start to accompany art, that's an additional statement being made as well--the language being used is part of the presentation. One of the things we have to watch though, is that in the move to appeal to the majority culture we're constantly using *their* language and *their* icons of expression in order to make *our* point. In many cases, what we are inevitably doing is giving more credibility to their culture than we are giving to ours, because we're using their culture as the medium of expression.

I think it's time we started turning things around. We start using our own culture as the medium of expression. We start using

our own languages as the medium of expression. The thing is that they're not stupid. They can learn to understand us just as easily as we have learned to understand them. I think that really needs to be looked at. (Kanatawakhon 9 Dec. 1995)

Chief giving George Catlin a lesson in Representation, the author, 1997

Conclusion- Refining Our Skills

The Question

What is Rotinonhsyonni? as a problem has been the motivation for this thesis. I have approached this problem from a: personal position (chapter 1); a theoretical position, problematizing some *post?*colonial assumptions (chapter 2); an analysis of different cultural world views or “ways of seeing” (chapter 3); and a look at artists who constitute what I see as a community of resistance (chapter 4). While it has not been my objective to arrive at a definitive answer to the question, What is Rotinonhsyonni? Some important distinctions have been ascertained.

Rotinonhsyonniness remains an ethereal concept, anchored by traditional beliefs and practices which continue to this day. The keys are in the culture. The symbols discussed are minute details from a culture that has developed for thousands of years (and continues to develop). Nonetheless, they remain as significant signposts for Rotinonhsyonni like myself who are only approaching the “edge of the woods”.

The salience of the Kahswenta is palpable. Many Rotinonhsyonni are aware of it as it appears in a wide variety of situations. But most noticeably is the strong sense of personal/individual identity that comes through when talking

to Rotinonhsyonni.

Jeff Thomas recently remarked that he is happy to have something such as the Kahswenta to provide him with a sense of identity within the confines of the city. He feels his “canoe” acts as a buffer between his *self* and the environment that sometimes seems to want to submerge it. He can travel in this river (the urban environment) feeling secure about the space that is maintained between self and others (22 Nov. 1997).

For myself, the Kahswenta has been an empowering and liberating concept/metaphor. Its simple message has facilitated an exploration of personal identity that has lead me in new and exciting directions. It, the symbol of the Kahswenta (and its meaning) have permeated all facets of my life.

On this metaphorical river, I travel a parallel journey with my partner, Sue-Ellen, where we struggle to maintain our distinctness--our unique qualities--remembering that this distance is to be created by the values of peace, kindness, and respect. We have in fact taken this quite literally, to the degree that we decided to metaphorically travel a journey together “as long as the river flows” (to put it one way). This involved a public ceremony incorporating a ten metre long Kahswenta belt. We “travelled” down the two rows (one of us on

each) as a declaration and life long pledge to each other.

The Kahswenta has also affected our artist careers. As a performance art project we inhabit characters or personas that reflect impositions on our personal sense of identity. Sue-Ellen is “Venus” (after Botticelli’s “icon of femininity”) and I become “Joe Brant”, modelled after the various biographies and portrayals of Joseph Brant (rem. revolutionary, traitor, loyalist). The performance then involves maintaining a precarious balance on the “two rows” while exchanging various objects which represent stereotypical notions of “woman” and “Indian”. These impositions on our respective notions of identity--as woman, and as Rotinohsyonni--are manifest in the many pink plastic girl toys, and multi-coloured plastic Indians which we exchange between

us while attempting to stay in our “canoes”. By the end of our trading, each of us ends up with the offending objects of the other. Not content with these representations either, we turn to the audience. All of the objects are then given away to audience members (who, either out of politeness or suspended criticality, are almost always happy to receive). Divulged of our burdens we celebrate, then ritually re-roll the Kahswenta and exit the space, knowing all too well that somewhere upstream we will have to purge similar objects again.

This particular journey (the thesis) and the performance which embodies elements which are disentangled in the thesis have been witness to the incorporation of the Kahswenta’s ideals almost to the point of obsession; an obsession however, fuelled in large part by a growing *public* interest in this work. The performance art piece has since its development in 1996, been performed in post Velvet Revolution Prague, as *Scene/Seen with both eyes open*, in colonial Hong Kong, as *Canada:Made in China*, and most recently in Ottawa as, *po-co haunt(s)us*. Each time the performance has met its audience, different receptions/critiques of the piece have spurred on subsequent developments in the presentation of the work.

In Prague, the audience related to the romanticization of the “Indian” through the plastic objects we traded. Some members of the audience even

experienced floods of euphoric nostalgia upon receiving their plastic Indian toys. Although, on the other hand, many had no relationship to the “Venus” role which Sue-Ellen was inhabiting. For the formerly communist capital of the Czech Republic, the idea of a woman making a public statement against demeaning and sexist stereotypes, was simply “too emancipated”.

Others were distracted by the “richness” displayed in the objects we traded. Much of these plastic souvenirs are considered luxury items in a country that is in the early stages of developing a capitalist consumer economy.⁶⁷

The performance in Hong Kong took into consideration an understanding of this territory’s imminent handover “back” to China.⁶⁸ We were particularly interested in this transaction as it related to British colonialism in Canada. For example, why was this 99 year lease/agreement with China being honoured, when many treaties and agreements with Aboriginal peoples in Canada have never been honoured?⁶⁹ Would the situation be different if there were one billion Onkwehonwe to back it up? We went to Hong Kong to

⁶⁷ Ironically, many of our objects were purchased in Prague at the local *K-mart*.

⁶⁸ We performed twice at the Fringe Club, in Hong Kong Central during the month of March 1997, only a few months before the July 1st handover date.

⁶⁹ Not the least to mention of which is the Kahswenta.

investigate these questions and to symbolically offer the Kahswenta, (as Venus and Joe) to the Chinese and British governments as a process for a peaceful transition.

Venus and Joe paddling their canoe in Hong Kong harbour.

The reception to the performance, and its applicability in the various countries we have had the opportunity to perform in, indicate to us the communicative power of the Kahswenta. Through this process of sharing the values embodied in the Kahswenta we are ensuring it remains in our own consciousness as well as other's.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Sue-Ellen and I can never forget the values of the Kahswenta as we have the symbol permanently placed between the layers of our skin. In the place where many couples have a wedding ring to symbolize their union, the two of us sport "two-row tattoos".

The Kahswenta remains (permanently, in our case) a remarkably eloquent guide. Its “simple” ideals can only be achieved through constant and mutual negotiation in good faith and mediated by the values of peace, kindness, and respect.

J.T.- I've actually used that metaphor before. ...I think that I've always seen it as two parallel worlds. And I thought my work should reflect that... . So, in a Two-Row Wampum you have a continuous space there between the two cultures, and when you re-invent that for today, well we are in that culture now, so at some point they come together, and I think that's what's interesting is to think about at what point do they come together. And I prefer to see it as a search for a nexus, in a sense. ...So when we get farther down the line at some point, it seems that they get closer and closer together.

G.H.- I've always tried... chosen lately to think of it as those intersections being things that should be there, in a tradition of Mohawk bridge-building, [let's] say--bridges between cultures--but as long as they're by choice. So as long as those intersections aren't imposed on you, then sure, why can't there be crossover between those parallel lines? Why can't they converge and go apart when they want to? (13 Dec. 1995)

Appendix 1**Interview with Patricia Deadman****By Telephone: January 7, 1996**

Greg: So, if we just want to jump right in ... with both feet.

Patricia: Okay. [laughs] So what do you want to know?

GH: I don't know...

PD: But were afraid to ask...

GH: But were afraid to ask... I guess first of all I could just ask you how long you've been an artist.

PD: Good God!

GH: Whatever you think that is, or...

PD: Well, gee, I don't know. It's a pretty loaded question even at that. [laughs]

GH: Hmmm.

PD: Well, I guess, probably ever since I could draw.

GH: Right.

PD: I've been drawing ever since I could hold a pencil, really. I been doing ... I would do pictures in church when I was little ... because I didn't want to go to Sunday School. [laughs]

GH: [laughs]

PD: So, my dad brought me pencils and paper and I would sit in church and rather than go to Sunday School, just sit and draw until the service was over. [laughs]

GH: So as long as you were quiet.

PD: Yeah.

GH: Not causing problems.

PD: So, I don't know, um...

GH: You went to Fanshawe [College] and you went to [the University of] Windsor?

PD: Yup. So I guess seriously, yes, since school really. I took, art all through high school so by grade twelve, all I was taking was art courses, (and) a math and an English by grade twelve, so...

GH: Oh, well, okay

PD: [laughs]

- GH: So you had pretty much decided...
- PD: Yeah.
- GH: ...that that was something you wanted to do, when you were in high school.
- PD: Yup. So I think Fanshawe [College] was actually pretty good, really, because it did expose you to all the different mediums. It did do that, and, I guess after that I just went to [the University of] Windsor.
- GH: Mmm Hum. What do you think Fanshawe ... I have some experience there too, what do you think it did beyond exposing you to different mediums? Or did it? [laughs]
- PD: Um, well I think, I think it did. I think by the third year, of course you were doing your own stuff, it was a time that you just kind of explored your own thing, and whether it was successful or not, that was okay...
- GH: Um Hum...
- PD: It just kind of gave you a, I guess, a hint of what you really wanted to do, whether you wanted to pursue it or not, or what you kind of wanted to, you know, figure out what you wanted to be. I don't know...
- GH: Well, I don't know what kind of work you were doing in Fanshawe. Was it similar to what you are doing right now?
- PD: Actually, no. It changed quite a bit. I think at the time I kind of got caught up, it was like the eighties, the late eighties, there was a lot of, I don't know, politics going on in London itself, and in, in culture as well, and I think what really kind of hit me off was the fact that, when you came to studying art history in college I mean you kind of stopped at Morrisseau and that would be the extent of Native art history and it's like, well thirty years in between there's like what's in between, uh, so that's when I delved into the whole native thing, to find out what other native artists were doing, what they were commenting on, and so I kind of got wrapped up into things like culture shock, and the whole urbanization thing, and I did a lot of reading and that sort of stuff, and so my work kind of tended to be about that but it didn't really work for me cause basically it wasn't my experiences that I was commenting on. So, I don't think that it was that strong. So I basically had to find something that did relate to me, and it wasn't until Windsor that I kind of explored this idea a little bit further, and, I started going to PowWows and I kind of connected, and my work went off from there, and then my trend of thinking kind of expanded from one theory to the next. And so it has kind of come around the full circle again, back to the question of, identity and what that means and all that sort of stuff. It wasn't until recently that, I was in the show at the Forest City (Gallery) and I was asked to do it because they were kind of dealing with the issue of cultural displacement and I had never really thought about it before in that context, and it's like, well, well, what does that mean, [laughs] you know? And I think from there I just started asking a lot of self-imposed questions, and I think that's how my *Serve series*... I don't know if you're familiar with my five Duratrans? Well they take the word "conserve", "reserve", "preserve"...
- GH: Oh yes, I like that piece.

- PD: ..."self-serve" and, dealing with all that, and now it's gone a step further and it's just dealing with, basically, self-serve and what that means, and...
- GH: That, that's tied into, like, the political thing, and self-government and all that as well? Or...
- PD: Well, it is and it isn't. It's not, you know, a really blatant statement, but I think it's all in there because, the piece for me kind of works on different levels. One being, of course, the immediate response of what the actual definitions mean, and then how people interpret that because they always have their own image of what a word means, and, and then of course my response to that is how it's being read, and how I kind of perceive that, and then you can start reading them like together, and it just becomes like, just different levels, and for me, it's about power and control and accountability and responsibility and how we treat the environment and how we interact, and it's about the self, and how all of these questions kind of combine and there is no real definitive answer to it. It's just a series of questions because I don't think there is no definite answer... and, but I think it's more of an awareness thing, and it's a kind of a subtle thing, but I think it's a piece you have to kind of spend time with anyway, which I kind of like, cause I really don't like really LOUD pieces, it's like in your face, politics. I can read that in the paper so why would I [laughs] make art...
- GH: Yeah... you don't want to get close to... to making things that ...
- PD: Well, when you're doing that you're making political statements and, I mean, there's nothing wrong with that, and I respect people who can do that because, I mean, it's an understanding that I probably don't, uh, won't say that I don't have, but, it's probably closer to themselves than it is to me. I would hope so, anyway, that it's more of a personal experience, whereas my work is really about personal experience ...
- GH: Um Hum.
- PD: I think what makes (it) kind of, well, I don't know, receptive is that it touches on just human qualities in general, and I think these qualities and emotions that we all share at some point, give someone relationship to, so that the viewer can somehow connect. That's been, always kind of like, an ongoing thing with me as well, but it's kind of not devoid of a certain culture, but it kind of, hopefully, encompasses many, so that it does cross the different borders.
- GH: What do you think of viewers that might say, to do work that is so personal is being political?
- PD: Yeah, well that's always been another argument, you know. I kind of rate that one up there with "well, what is art?", you know. Well, it's the same old questions again. And, sure, it's a political statement, going back through anything you do is political and it's always based on somebody else's values or beliefs, or it's always measured by some sort of standard, and ...
- GH: ... if it contradicts someone else's standard in some way, I guess... they label it political.
- PD: Yeah exactly. And I guess that is why I have a problem with the labels and the categorizing of the age old question of what is Native art? And, what is the Native artist? I think the argument's been flogged to death for the last 20 years, you know. It's like, let's get on with it, you know. It's my attitude, I guess, toward

art making.

GH: But still those categories are hard to ... I mean in some way they always come up again. You can't ignore them?

PD: Sure they are. I mean, just recently somebody had commented on, well, what are these Native artists doing anyway? They're trying to do conceptual art, you know. Native people are supposed to be so spiritually and environmentally in tune that they're supposed to comment on the land, in that sense and that's it. Well, just a minute here. [laughs] It's like, first of all, you can't say that about me because you don't know me to begin with. My background is European. I'm probably more European than anything else, you know. That's how I was raised, I went to school, I studied conceptual art, I understand art (history) and where it's coming from. So why wouldn't I use this kind of thought process in my artmaking? Just because I'm Native, you know. What has that cultural reference to do with my thought processes? I mean, you're comparing apples and oranges, really, in my eyes. [laughs] But there is a bridge there, and I think that's important, and I think I try to address that in my pieces.

GH: That argument, too, seems to be a double-edged sword when that comes up when an issue of appropriation is raised, and then someone throws it back on the Aboriginal artist and says, "well, how can you use anything that has a hint of Western in it" or whatever you want to call it, because as a native person, uh, so,... in one way, to resist a category you're expected to resist a category, but on the other hand you're expected to stay within one. So, it's a catch 22 situation in a way.

PD: and, uh, I kind of like to tell someone to not take it so seriously, you know. Humour has always been one of those inherent qualities, you know, however subtle it may be. And, so I guess something like in my images like *Self Serve*, you know the whole appropriation of Indian (T-shirt?) thing in itself goes beyond anything for a cheap laugh right. Cause there's a lot of connotations that are connected to that, and I think that some of my other work, like my *Teepee Wrap Tree series*, it's taking, kind of the Western, you know, things of what we do to the land, on the other hand, using the symbol of the teepee and what it represents in the history of that, and I think there's a lot of different levels that that can be read on. So I don't know whether people want to, when they actually view the work, actually think about the same things that I do. But I guess if it just presents some of the awareness that there is that bridge there and there's nothing saying that you can't cross over, and back and forth, you know, cause that's just ridiculous.

GH: So, do you see yourself then as... is one of your motivations then to build bridges, to open lines of communication?

PD: Well, I think that's a whole process or part of artmaking, really. What is art? I don't know whether I consciously do that, because I don't think about "gee, I'm going to get up today and I'm going to bridge the gap" ... I don't think in that way, you know.

GH: Then is that something that comes about because, in one way, well, I find this maybe for myself; that the more I learn about one culture I find, in some ways you're attempting to balance what you know about one thing and what you know about another, and that struggle in itself kind of explains or opens up one for the other thing, so there's a bridge-building process going on there.

PD: Well, I think it's inevitable, really, because once you start this process, and keep

looking through it, obviously you're going to come across things that you never thought of before, or considered, and I think at some point you have to deal with it.

GH: Well, one of those things you mentioned earlier, identity then, when did that self-awareness, or when did that become an issue?

PD: Oh, I think probably when it first became apparent, when I went to apply for my status card, it's like "what's a status card?" right.

GH: How old were you then?

PD: I was about 21, actually. And then of course going to London ... growing up in Woodstock and being raised, it's kind of a small community, so you just kind of go about your business and do whatever, but going to London, the big city [laughs], I really hadn't noticed little subtleties before, like well, nobody's going to sit beside you on the bus. Why is that? You know. This whole thing becomes an awareness thing, you know, because people always assume that, "oh well, you look Native, so you must be from the reserve". You know, the reserve being right there, and they do have quite a large Native population. But to me I never really saw myself as really being Native. I mean I know am, you know, but I really didn't know what that meant. I still don't know what that means! [laughs] But, it's just kind of different. We had a kind of a motto at work, you know. If something didn't go right, or something--a behaviour thing happened or whatever or something that we just didn't approve of--we made a running joke of it, because it's like we're NATIVE! You know ...

GH: ...so, other people would make a joke out of that?

PD: No, like it was a personal joke. We would ourselves initiate that, like if it's because of Satan then it's obviously because we're Native, right, you know. [laughs] So it became an ongoing thing because we would pick up on these subtleties that I really hadn't paid much attention to before, and, I don't know ...

GH: Where do you think those come from?

PD: Oh, who knows? [laughs]

GH: I've thought about that myself, and I wonder...

PD: I don't know whether it stems from paranoia, or... [laughs] or whether it's valid, or whether it's because I'm tall, or is it because I'm Native, or what, you know. I don't know. It's just human behaviour, I guess. People are asking questions about what they don't know.

GH: Some of what you're describing about 'Indian identity' ... is that a problematic thing that you've dealt with in your work, maybe on an overt level? Or is it more hidden in there?

PD: Oh, I think that it's definitely not blatant. But, yeah, it's definitely in there, cause that's partly what makes me ME, I guess. And I think that's part of the whole artmaking process ... and you have to be like me ... kind of like an exploration of the self, and it's not like how others perceive you, such as maybe like the MEDIA, you know. Field days ... I just laughed when, you know, they had the lpperwash thing going on ... "those rebels..."

- GH: Yeah, we've heard it before... .
- PD: But it's always been there and, we obviously know they're not accurate portrayals, and, you know, the whole kind of vague detail basically of who we are ... we can either get caught up in the hype, you know. You can play that role, if you want to, or you could be yourself! So I think that that's always been important for me, and that's always kind of in the back of my mind, too, with some of the artists who I look at. I really don't have a favourite artist or whatever that I kind of look up to, but I do kind of tend towards Gerhard Richter; I like his work.
- GH: Rick who?
- PD: Gerhard Richter. Have you heard of him?
- GH: Okay, yeah.
- PD: I kind of like one of the quotes that he had said about "If I see nothing I can do nothing, and I know nothing" and the whole idea of "I know nothing" has become such a statement that I would just like to get at that point to 'know nothing.'
- GH: Right. Well, to be unassuming about everything. Or is that what you mean?
- PD: Yeah. Cause, I, I don't know, a different, I don't know it's a different mindset or some kind of space, but, I don't know [laughs] ... I do not know.
- GH: Well, so, Gerhard Richter is he pretty much your only influence, or are you looking at the Native art scene and seeing what's going on and ...
- PD: Well, I think you have to be aware of what is going on, not only in the art scene, but what's going on elsewhere in the world. It's like, all these influences, you know. You turn on your T.V. and you get pictures from across the world. That always blows me away, you know, and knowing what's happening. I think it's such a great time right now that we live in because technology is just, bang, everything is right there for you. So I think you have to be aware. Of course, understanding is another thing! You just can't go and make statements just because you [think you] know something: "well, what are you saying about it?" I think that's where I find a lot of artwork kind of falls dead: "well, yes, we know this is happening, but what?" So what, you know.
- GH: So, people pull things from that grab-bag of the media or whatever, and there's sort of uninformed comments on things... in a lot of cases...
- PD: Well, I don't know if they're uninformed ... I can't speak for anybody else, but, I mean, like you have to, it goes back to an issue that I think [art] has to be some sort of personal experience to have any relevance ...
- GH: What's your relation to that, then? Is that a question you would put to another person? Like, if someone did a portrayal of a disaster in Bangladesh, and they were obviously not from that place, or whatever, or maybe they were, but the question that would come to mind would be "what is that person's relationship to that disaster?"
- PD: Well, I would kind of wonder why, why is this event significant to you. Because for me it would probably have a totally different, meaning, which is good because, again, it is creating an awareness, and I am not saying there is anything wrong

with that, but for me, I always kind of wonder, in the back of my mind, well, why if you are taking this disaster, or whatever, why is this so important; and something else over here not so important, not significant? Why does something monumental happen to be so significant that it is thrown in my face, where something of everyday happenings isn't as significant, you know what I am saying? It's kind of like... "well, where's the balance?", and that whole relationship of where we put our values and that. So, I don't know. I guess that's why I take some of these everyday things and kind of make them significant because I think that everyday things are often taken for granted, and why is that? Why ... I could probably go out and do a whole series of paintings on Bosnia, or whatever, but why would I do that? [laughs] I guess I have to know, kind of, the reason, and ...

GH: So, something beyond... I mean it's important for you to...

PD: I can take the event at face value, and then put my own interpretations on it, and I think that's what a lot of people do, but I then think that that leads to a lot of misconceptions and this is how all the kind of "isms" kind of take place, because there isn't an understanding.

GH: All right. What about if you had to use categories to describe your work. A category like traditional, or contemporary, or craft, or spiritual, or would you use a combination of those?

PD: Well, I probably really wouldn't.

GH: Right. You really resist categorizing.

PD: Yeah, I really do, because I think it just kind of perpetuates a lot of things. Why can't art just be called art, you know, "art on the wall?" [laughs] But I guess it makes history a lot easier to comprehend. So I guess there's a lot of going back to, I guess the human qualities which, in my work, like the *Fuzzy Trees*. That's a lot of basically emotional, so I don't know whether you'd call it a personal experience or a spiritual thing ... I don't know, but it's awareness of the senses, which everybody has, and I just like to use them once in a while...

GH: Where others choose maybe to ignore that.

PD: Yeah, but that's okay, because they're doing something else, which is fine, so...

GH: Well, what about what seems to be happening--this is my interpretation--one thing I guess I'm trying to get around is that distinction that is so often made between "traditional"--something that is categorized as being traditional, and contemporary, and how those are made to be an oppositional sort of...

PD: Yeah, because I think traditional is contemporary and vice versa, you know. Because somebody is like non-traditional, take Alex Janvier for example, whose pieces are very traditional...just gorgeous. But they're as contemporary as anybody else. You know what I mean?

GH: Well, he did call himself the "first Indian modernist".

PD: Yeah.

GH: Well, that does raise the question of Morrisseau and the Woodlands school, which is called "traditional" art now, even though Morrisseau pretty much invented it himself, what, 30 years ago, using acrylic paint. So, where are those distinctions

coming from?

- PD: Well, you could always just say it's also original. Cause, I mean, the Haida art is definitely, like West-coast art, is definitely different than Woodland, and Woodland is different than Plains. You know, the history goes on. We're talking about history, you know, and the cultural background, so I guess that's where it falls into a category that is easy to recognize, as opposed to contemporary artists who are using the non-traditional materials, I guess if you want to get technical about it, and are using technology as a vehicle.
- GH: So, do you think that is the distinction in itself. Is it materials?
- PD: It may well be. It may be one aspect that separates the two, because I don't think the issues that are being addressed in the categories are any more different, or one is more important than the other, you know what I mean? They're both relevant and they're both of the time, so I just don't ...
- GH: Well, do you think there's an Iroquoian art, traditional or contemporary? We have the Woodland school, we have a recognizable West Coast art, I'm just wondering if there's an Iroquoian one?
- PD: I don't know. That would be really hard to say. I never really thought about it before, but again I think it's just a matter of how the public or the art critic or whoever has to have that category to nail something in, but for me I don't know...
- GH: Well I guess categories are suspicious in that it seems like they're just convenient tools for marketing.
- PD: And again, we all know how marketable one school is over the other, you know. And again who sells what prints, and it always goes back into the bottom line of the dollar again, you know, of consumerism. I don't know. I've always had that problem too, kind of like the argument of what is 'fine' art vs. commercial art, the distinction there. And again, it's kind of the same argument, it's all for distinction, I guess, to qualify a person of what they actually do, but I think once you kind of get caught up in that mode, it's like there is no room for growth or change and that always kind of scares me because if that doesn't happen then everything becomes stagnant and then nothing is learned or gained or whatever. So, that's always kind of scary. So, I don't know whether there, there probably, for sense of argument, there probably is a definite Iroquoian category, but I don't think I want to define it.
- GH: Yeah, it's not something that you concern yourself with.
- PD: No. And I don't really know ... I'd probably have to think about that [laughs] before I comment on it any further.
- GH: That's fine. But your experiences at Fanshawe or at Windsor; did you ever run into an occasion where you felt like it was something assumed--that you were making "Native art"?
- PD: Well, I think what I found most amusing about assumptions was the fact that when I WAS doing research for Native art, I mean of course having nothing being written on it you have to really search for these things as you know, and all of a sudden, well hey, Pat's Native, she suddenly becomes the expert on Native art. It's like, well, let me tell you, you know. So I think there's always that catch. I don't know.

- GH: Well, I had a negative experience there where I became the "appropriation guy", which was not a comfortable place to be, but ... again, at Fanshawe and Windsor you mentioned ... I mean I found a real lack of support or materials or knowledge from the faculty in anything that had to do with Aboriginal work.
- PD: Definitely. But again, I don't know whether that ... but I think it may be the time that we're in as well, because Morrisseau has only been, Expo 67, that's only like 30 years. That's not a very long time for history. I mean I think now you're being recognized by national critics and the exposure is now coming due to our predecessors of the last generation who opened the doors for younger (Native) artists, and to the mainstream (if you want another term) art world. So I think, I don't know whether traditionally again, whether it being an oral background, whether things did not have to be written down, or whatever, is part of that, but I think it's probably ... I don't know if it will probably take another generation to get a library of Native art ... I don't know. The writers seem to be doing well. [laughs] But yeah, it's totally non-existent, and I think one way again to help eliminate that problem is just getting the artists in there ... it's like they're always full of visiting artists, or some prominent artist to come in and talk, well you know ...
- GH: How about a job or something, you mean?
- PD: Yeah, a job, or whatever. Just having that influence there. I think it is very important because, I mean the education system, in general, not just in the art, is totally lacking Native representations, and then of course self government and bla bla bla... [laughs]
- GH: Yeah, it becomes a big political argument. Yeah, I don't really want to go that way so much...
- PD: Because I have a strong opinion on employment equity, which kind of blows that theory out of the water anyway, so [laughs] because, again, it comes back down to with equity, I don't care who you are, you have to be qualified, and if you're not qualified well just never mind. My argument has always been, well why should Native people have to lower standards to supply qualified people, and I see that happening everywhere, in all the social programs in the levels of government, there's a lot of unqualified people who are there, but they're there just because they are Native, and in my view that's not right. They should be there because they are qualified, and it's a bonus that they ARE Native. But, I think again that'll come in time, because ... cuts to education doesn't help, but people aren't being educated now. I mean there's more numbers now than there was 30 years ago, so... It's still progress.
- GH: Yeah. I guess that's more of a supply and demand thing, hopefully. How about traditional Iroquoian beliefs; is that something that is important to you, or that you think affects your work?
- PD: I don't think it's prominent in my work. It's not that it's not important. I think in time it's one of those things that will probably become apparent, but for right now it's kind of on the backburner. I think it's kind of a lack of understanding, or knowledge basically. Like I really... DON'T HAVE ANY! [laughs]
- GH: Do you mean that hasn't been your experience.
- PD: I realize people will use imagery of the glyphs, right, and they probably have an understanding of that, and I think that's great, but for me to use the image of whatever, you know, it really doesn't have much relevance to tie in with

traditional beliefs. I mean, I will use icons, maybe like I do use the teepee, but I use that in a different sense.

- GH: Yeah, that's sort of a parody--a satirical look at what the viewers' expectations would be. So you do feel more, you're more ready to comment on stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples in your work? Cause those things are maybe in your experience as an urban Aboriginal person?
- PD: Yeah, probably. Because I just think that while people assume a lot of things about you when in fact it's totally untrue, and I think I can find humour in that, rather than becoming angry about it because there's no sense in that. And again, I think if it just makes us stop and think, it's like, "oh! oh yeah!" [laughs] That's another person who may not throw off with a comment without thinking next time, you know. And there's a lot of de-mything to be done [laughs], you know, not that that's a big, huge, concern [in my work].
- GH: Yeah, it doesn't seem to be something that you're working with in a direct way, anyway...
- PD: Yeah, it's there, if you look for it, but at the same time there's other things that I feel are more important, for me, anyway. And I guess that's the subtlety of the senses and I kind of, kind of carry that vein and that whole element of time in my work, and I'm kind of working with that.
- GH: Hmmm. The element of time, in what way?
- PD: Well, in the sense that, well, I guess it's been consistent throughout my work, even with the Powwow series. It started with that one moment, where we're dealing with that fluidity of movement, what that experience does in that time frame for you, you know, and its dealing with the senses and so it becomes this abstract image of something else. That's why it's not a realistic portrayal of a dancer because that's not what it's about ... it's about capturing that one moment, right, and I've been carrying that time element throughout my pieces, and whether it be a realistic portrayal, like my *Path* series, like my [shrub] series that was dealing with another concept of time, of a journey, and you're trying to view what's in front of you, what's behind you, what's beside you, and that whole element of the introduction ...
- [tape side ends here]
- PD: ... the physical but more or less an emotional response in that time frame. It's kind of hard to describe, because it's so internal, I guess, but ...
- GH: Well, it's kind of curious that your main medium is photography, something that deals in fractions of seconds, and then what you do is blur it and give it a sense of a much longer transition of time, so what's curious about it is that you're working with a medium that deals in fractions of a second but you're talking about a much more realistic sense of time.
- PD: Well, I think that's always [laughter] you're home and you're sitting down [laughter]
- GH: ... and I've gotcha! [laughter]
- PD: And, no, but I think that it's interesting because I guess photography has that sense of being that one moment, but I think that's how we respond too, really, but

we just don't know it. Because it's like you may look at something, but you don't really look at it, and it kind of has that ability for that look on the peripheral, you know. It's like you know something is there but you're not quite sure what it is. You kind of have an idea, and you think you know what it is, but are you really sure of what it is? And within that split second you have to make that decision, whether it's consciously or not, and I think that's how I've been kind of working, definitely with the *Fuzzy Tree* series, because it's about that sensibility of being within the land and being aware of what is around you, and I think that's always kind of been an ongoing theme in the work.

GH: Were those photographs done in and around Woodstock, or was that from Banff?

PD: No... the fuzzy trees?

GH: Yeah.

PD: Yeah. They're in Banff, in and around Banff.

GH: So does that give you a heightened awareness because those are new surroundings?

PD: Well, I think that to a degree because of where you are, and the whole idea of the history of the area in itself ... the whole grandeur and how it's been depicted through time as well. I mean, it's been a myth as well, and my commentary on that has been .. one piece ... a couple of pieces deal with that ... I guess it's with the experience of the land ... it's like when tourist buses come, a whole load of tourists come, they get out, take their pictures, are there 20 minutes, get back on the bus and go. And this is their experience of the land. And I always find that so absurd, because when they go home they say "well this is a picture of the Bow River," right, and like "I was there!" right? But that's not an experience. It is in a sense, but it's not the same sense of actually sitting on the ground and ...

GH: Well, it's sort of more related to collecting... you're just taking snapshots of different places so that you can create this kind of... you're staking claims, almost.

PD: Exactly, and I think that's how *Ice Views* came, for example, my book series. It's exactly that. My comment for that series was basically that we all are a tourist at some point and we love to collect things and we're just little materialistic maniacs when it comes to travel, because we have to bring SOMETHING back, we have to bring a t-shirt back for your brother, whatever. We fill photo albums with pictures and stuff, and it's always something that you have to hang on to, something that ... it's almost like a validation of where you've been.

GH: Something that represents your experience for others to see, I guess.

PD: It's all bringing back that tangible object, and everything is so precious, so that's why you have the small detailing in that, and the books themselves are fragile, and again that's a commentary on the land and man, and that relationship. Who actually does have the power here? So, it's ... it kind of again works on different levels for me, but it ...

GH: Okay. Well, you said, uh, men and power. So, I'd like to ask you then, how much does being a woman and being aware of maybe a more matriarchal way of being, and then what we're faced with in the sort of Patriarchal society that we all live in ... are those issues that inform your work?

- PD: Well, I don't know. It comes back to being yourself again, for me. I was kind of raised rightist, that's why I have the image of "deserve" on there, because if you don't do it for yourself nobody's going to do it for you, so whether you're man or woman, to me it really doesn't matter because, like, it's yourself again and if you don't get off your butt and do it, well, you ain't gonna get it done. [laughs]
- GH: Yup. Some people call that the Protestant work ethic. [laughter]
- PD: Well, it's an enhanced *deserve*, you know. It's like, well, if you work at it, well, then you just get what you might deserve, you know. If not, well then you just might get what you *deserve*. So, it's kind of tongue-in-cheek, but you know, I kind of think it's a tired argument again. I don't know. I don't like feminist categories...
- GH: I was going to ask you if there was some hesitance in being categorized as 'feminist' because that seems to be an uncomfortable fit for a lot of Aboriginal women, actually ...
- PD: Well, I think that the radical 60s did a lot for the feminist movement, you know. But I really appreciate the work that came out of that. I mean, you have big name artists like Judy Chicago doing these wonderful things, sculptures, and they're her. They're just great, you know, but you know the whole response to the history of not only art but of "mankind", you know, I think that's kind of like a Western philosophy, but I don't know.
- GH: Well, again it also seems to be something that's sort of inescapable.
- PD: Yeah, you can't deny it, right? It might be nice to be born an "it", and then you wouldn't have to worry about categories, but...
- GH: There's still the category of "it," I guess, which is even more uncomfortable.
- PD: Really screw things up! Again, it's not a big priority on my list, though. I don't really make conscious decisions about maybe how some of the people would react, again for others, again, it is a big issue. I mean that's great - they can deal with it, but for me ... I'm not really addressing that.
- GH: Well, I guess what I'm getting at is the whole idea of self-identity and how we, as individuals, identify ourselves, and when you think of that, even to yourself, you invariably have to use some kinds of categories or something when your self-conceptualization consists of certain elements and how ... so I'm going to ask you, I mean, since you're saying that your work is self-referential, and it seems that you feel quite comfortable with that, so how do you, or how would you, identify yourself?
- PD: Well, I kind of reflect back to a recent experience; I was talking to [name] and she was trying to define me, because I said to her "I'm gonna do your promotion of my show, and you can speak to me about it, but I don't want to be labelled as "Pat the Native artist". That's like saying Pat the local artist, or whatever. Just doing the stereotypes. Well, that was really a big problem, because she couldn't get past the fact that "well yeah, but you ARE Native." She actually went to the extent of actually getting out her pen and drawing little boxes of how she saw me ... she proceeded to draw this linear rectangle and make little boxes, and counted the fourth one over and said "well, this is Pat, and this little box here is Native" and I go "well, that would be right." [laughter] But that's only one department. What are the rest of those [boxes]? I think if you are dealing with

just that little box, then I think you have a problem. Because a person isn't just one dimensional. There's a lot of things that make up a person, and I think when it comes to self-identity you have to get beyond that one little box and try to define what else is in the other boxes before you can make a conclusion. And, it's like, yes I can live with "Pat the Native Artist" because yes, I am Native, and yes, I am an artist, but there is nothing saying "Pat, the Woodstock Artist" or "Pat, whatever, whatever, whatever." Because those are categories, but I think at some point you're going to have to define that entirety, and I think that's probably the whole question on everybody's mind today. What is self-identity?

GH: I don't know. It seems to me that it's not so much of an issue for a lot of people, depending on how you're viewed by other people. Like you were saying, and the same sort of thing has come up with other people I've talked to, that identity did not become an issue with you until you moved to the city, until other people were looking at you and seeing something different.

PD: I think it's personal because with my background there is a lot of questions for me to be answered, you know. Because, like, I don't have a Native past, but I do have somewhere. Somewhere there's a family, you know. And so then you bring up the whole questions that adopted people ask and I think that's valid, and they need to make whole. The questions that you ask about adoption are different than the ones you ask about being Native, but it all makes up the self, so, I don't know. I think that a lot of people dealing with identity simply in a broad sense because multiculturalism in the last few years has taken such a prevalence I guess in the social circles about being, well who exactly are you? And, what is your background? I know a lot of artists are dealing with family histories and, you know, that whole *self*, so it's not just a Native thing, I don't think, what's happening, it's just, again, that I just happen to be Native. So I guess that whole idea of cultural displacement in society is just another broad term to kind of just define, social values, and find out where you fit into those standards, whatever they may be and how you define them, because for, how you interpret them because obviously there's shifting class perceptions.

GH: Did you say that you were adopted?

PD: Yeah.

GH: Okay. I wasn't aware of that.

PD: Yeah. I was adopted around thirteen months, so I was raised in a non-native family, so I'm different things. My daddy was very English, so, and my mom, she is actually from Sarnia of all places, but yeah, she defines herself as being Canadian, whatever that means. [laughs]

GH: That's the eternal question.

PD: So, it's like when people say, well gee, you have Western influences, well YEAH, YEAH! But for the first 13 months of my life, you know, are unaccountable for, but, you know, I was actually born on the reserve, and my mother was this, so I do have a little knowledge of what Native means, and of course I can't deny who I am, and I'm just fortunate enough to LOOK Native as well. [laughs] It's kind of interesting in that sense too, cause I have friends who are even half and who don't look Native, but have that, I guess I don't know whether you would call it a benefit, but actually listening to other people's comments about Native people not realizing that, yes, they are Native as well. So, I guess it comes back to, well, the whole "self-serve" of: what is Native? Who is Native? What does it mean to

be Native? How Native are you? And I guess it's through the documentation of events and the happenings, I guess, between Native and the European cultures that kind of have influenced the present times, and the individual, so I guess it comes back to the feelings of ambiguity, of not really knowing the family or having a past history because there's always those questions, and I think people who are adopted have these same questions that I do, because they are all unanswerable questions, and these old questions that I ask myself are thrown out to that. But I think the acceptance of all of these past experiences that are both personal and global, really, that I guess contribute to these human qualities that I was talking about before, that we all share at some point. And I guess it's back to the individual and about the issues of power and control, and who is over who, and man vs. nature, and bla bla bla, and all of these other issues and at what point do we take control over our actions in order to, I guess, survive, and I guess that's a lot of the underlying currents that are in the work, so I don't know. There's always a certain degree of dislocation or distraction but, it's always a process, I guess, when it comes back to that. It's kind of like a natural kind of searching, questioning I guess, where it comes back to saying that "I know nothing" it becomes relevant, you know. I don't know whether this is making sense or not. I must be just rambling. [laughs]

GH: No, no, no. I'm just listening very intently. [pause] Well, the whole issue of looking Native ... that ... I guess it's how we're viewed by other people, and that works for you or against you, it seems, in certain ways.

PD: And like you can kind of have, it's kind of like how I view my own life, I guess. It's like, gee I could have fun with this, you know, and like, make these absurd comments, and hopefully maybe get people to react and realize that gee, not all Native people are from the reserve and have traditional values. We all have our own personal histories, and we are all as valid as everybody else's, right? And, so to try and categorize certain ... that's what I mean, like, well, how would I categorize my work, well I don't really think there is a category yet, for my work.

GH: Well, great!

PD: I guess that's always been problematic, but ...

GH: For yourself, and...

PD: Yeah, yeah. I don't know.

GH: Well, how much do you think looking Native works for you?

PD: Well, I don't know how I would want to take that, either. I have no choice in the matter to begin with, but ..

GH: Yeah, that's true...

PD: I guess, you know, somebody also said to me one time that, you know, well, you have the best of both worlds. Well, I really don't. Sometimes I don't have enough of one and not enough of the other, you know? So, it really puts to mind a benchmark, you know, because you don't know enough of one ... I just know enough to be dangerous! [laughs]

GH: That's a good place to be. I find myself in this situation too, where I feel like I'm a middle person, or sitting on the cultural fence, or the way to look at it positively is that in some ways you can be a mediator, if that's what you want to, or a bridge-

builder, because certain doors will be open for whatever reason and that's something that we can choose to utilize or not.

PD: Well, it's not like I don't ... I tend [words unintelligible]

GH: I can barely hear you right now, actually. Sorry.

PD: It's not like I set myself up for a certain position as being a mediator or whatever, because I don't see that as a role ...

GH: That's not your mission...

PD: No. I guess as an artist it's like I say, going back to the personal experiences that I would hope would be kind of the basis in all art-making, and that's, I guess, getting to the root of the process, and whatever the event of the day is, whatever catches my eye I can comment on that, or would like to comment on that, you know. I guess there's always people who will kind of always look for more, look for something that isn't there, you know, and I think that's part of the problem, which is, or maybe it isn't a problem, I don't know. Because if you're always looking or questioning something, well then, that's great. And I was kind of interested to hear what other people see or kind of interpret in the work because it would be totally off-base...

GH: When others interpret your work?

PD: Yeah. But it made me stop and think again, it's like "oh, yeah, well this is cool, I can see that." [laughs] And I think if that kind of relationship is happening within the art, I think that's great.

GH: All right. [pause] I think we're getting to that point--I know nothing. [laughs]

PD: I know nothing.

GH: Okay. Well ...

PD: Cause I know it's pretty hard to, I guess, kind of define certain areas and kind of tie in and fit it, but if it doesn't fit you can't, it's like I just don't worry about it, you know. It's not meant to be, so. Like... so? So it's different.

GH: I guess... one thing that seemed to be a big issue a little while ago was the whole idea, I guess again this is others categorizing Aboriginal artists as aboriginal artists first ... I mean, is that something that you really try to resist. Like, you mentioned, I guess you mentioned your friend in that show, but it's something that, it keeps coming around, I guess.

PD: Well, yeah, if I keep doing images of teepees, sure, it'll come around. [laughs] But ...

GH: Does that mean you're going to try and make work that doesn't have any clues to any Aboriginality of any sort?

PD: No. I don't think that that's a concern, not a concern at all. What happens, happens. If I happen to use images of whatever, that's fine. It's always like a play on words, or a play on images, but I think what's kind of unique about some of my pieces is that they are kind of devoid of any cultural reference, and I guess that's why it works on different levels as well, because it kind of goes beyond that one

thing...

GH: So I guess it leaves them... so you play with ambiguity; you leave [your work] open for interpretation?

PD: Yeah, well yeah. I think there always has to be that certain degree, because ... I guess interpretation is open to everybody, right?

GH: Right. And you wouldn't want to take that away.

PD: No, and ... I guess it's definitely intentional, same as it's a conscious decision TO use a teepee image or NOT to use a teepee image, or whatever. So, yeah, like with the *ServeSeries*. It's dealing ... there's a lot of Native undercurrents in the work as we can conceive, like, how would you read 'reserve' and 'conserve' together ... that sort of thing happening. But then, for me, it's like well what does the word 'reserve' mean to me, you know. And then it goes on into a series of questions. So I guess that's why a person has to plan to spend time, and kind of think about the work. You have to spend time to think about them, well then that's great, I mean if your just kind of saying "look at the pictures", like teepees, I would just say, oh yeah, well, that's fine too because that's what you recognize, but it goes way beyond the surface. It has to be open to interpretation.

GH: All right. I guess we're getting close to the end of this interrogation. Do you think there's such a thing as an Iroquoian absolutism or an Aboriginal essentialism? Some pure sense of "Indianness"?

PD: Oh, boy! [laughs]

GH: I don't know. I guess that's a ... well, it's a loaded question, I'll admit.

PD: Well there's your thesis right there, one question! [laughs] Wow!

GH: I guess what I'm getting at is that I think some people have an idea ... there are internalized stereotypes of what it means to be Tuscaroran or Mohawk or Iroquoian, and Aboriginal people themselves have fallen into that, and hold to that, sometimes?

PD: I think it's easier to play the game, but you kind of have to know the rules first, and in a lot of cases the rules aren't defined. So, geez, I don't know. I REALLY don't know.

GH: Yeah. It's a really ... it's a big one, but ...

PD: I guess it comes back to defining "Indian" and defining "art", right? [laughs]

GH: That's right. Or defining Canadian. And I guess what I'm doing is, through the process of looking for some answers, different things will come up. And so through talking to you and talking to David Kanatawakhon Maracle, Jeff Thomas and Shelley Niro, I mean everyone has their individual perspective on all these things, and I guess my argument is that that should be okay, and historically it hasn't been. And I guess it's just as simple as that.

PD: Well, I mean, I would probably agree with something like that, I guess, by virtue of gene pool, you know. I have, you know, I love who I am and I am being defined as Indian as defined by Europeans many hundreds of years ago. But then again I guess you have to go back technically and kind of define that, what that

actually means, and I really don't think that can be really done. Personally. And I guess in what context that means today, I have no idea, really.

GH: Or do you? Do you have a really solid idea of what that means today in feeling a certain level of comfort with who you are, as you are, how you are?

PD: Yeah, I think, you know, personally, yes, I mean I can't speak for anybody else, it's like, yeah I definitely know who I am and what, well what my experiences and my upbringing, you know, and the values that have been instilled in me, and I guess you kind of have to define, well, where do those values come from, and then you talk about, I guess, the whole, you have to kind of define the whole Western culture, and kind of where that comes from, and you know, get into what socialism is, what democracy is, and you have to kind of ... everything ... it's a snowball effect, and how that affects one person, and I just think that's an impossibility, and then to have some sort of categories that define, you know, absolute Indianness, well, you know, I don't believe...

GH: It's almost a dangerous kind of thing to try and do.

PD: Yeah. It's pretty scary. [laughs]

GH: Well, I mean especially in the context of genetic science and ideas of racial purity and all that kind of stuff.

PD: I guess you probably have to go again on the perception of ... well basically on the perceptions of others. Again, you kind of have to define that scale, but I really wouldn't want to do that, and ...

GH: So you wouldn't want to be defined by perceptions of others ...

PD: Yeah, cause it's like there's so much more ambiguity within that round than you have within your own personal makeup, that there's obviously questions that I have about myself, so how would anybody else decide that if I don't know. I'm not saying that I don't know, because the discussions that are concrete for me and, like I said, going back before, like, I knew who my mother was, Indian, and bla bla bla. And, you have to talk about everything else to define that, and put it in some sort of context, and therefore you again are debunking the stereotypes which is basically what the art does, so, you know ... I don't know.

GH: Is that a ... I guess you sort of said that maybe that is a future project to look into that more, that history, that your mother was Native and what does that mean? I guess find a clan or any of that stuff. So is that something that you see maybe in the future into looking into more?

PD: Well probably, because ... well, maybe, I don't know. These are questions like any adoptee I think more or less ... curiosity and anxiety and you know, all that other stuff that comes with that, you know. But in the meantime you still know who you are and what makes you tick right? There's always questions about ... I'm sure people don't sit down and kind of explore the self and kind of rationalize what they do everyday, or why they do the things that they do, but maybe they should, I don't know. [laughter]

GH: I think you're probably right. Some people should do that. Okay, I think I've grilled you enough.

PD: Now that you know that "I know nothing..." [laughs]
[tape ends]

Appendix 2

David Kanatawakhon Maracle Interview
Dec. 9, 1995

DKM: My whole sense of who I am has become much more, I suppose, specific since I left the reserve. I think I'm a lot more aware now of who I am as a specific cultural individual. When I was living at the reserve you're just like everybody else living there. Everybody is Mohawk and your all surrounded by Mohawks, so being Mohawk is not as specific a thing in an everyday sort of concept/construct. Yet I find that here in the city I'm very much aware of being a Mohawk, all the time. It's just that it's one aspect of who I am and it just always seems to be right there, and I back it up with my language and my ideas/notions of what I know; and I think in a lot of cases, in contrast to those people around me. Because I see people doing things and hear people saying things and I constantly find myself thinking, 'you know that would not fall within the cultural lines that I grew up understanding or believing; or have, I suppose in a lot of cases led myself to understand and believe. Because you do a lot of...I think you spend a lot of time looking at aspects of your beliefs, how you were raised, what you were doing, things like that. Sometimes I'm inclined to think that maybe we actually construct a difference where there may not necessarily be a difference at all. And part of that constructed difference is simply to separate ourselves and to identify ourselves as something identifiable.

GH: Or as being unique in some way or another.

DKM: Yeah, and I find too that as it becomes more pronounced--if your dealing with say, stereotypical physical appearance...well, for me I'm more often mistaken as Hispanic than probably anything else and so it becomes that much more important to really be somebody. So therefore I choose to be a member of my own specific cultural group, and I choose to be very good at it, or whatever I presume "being good at it" is.

GH: So, on the reserve, since you are talking about visible differences, you would more or less blend in on the reserve so that doesn't become an issue, but in the city people point you out and ask where you're from?

DKM: Yeah, at home I'm just another Indian. I'm just the guy who lives down the road, up the road, on the hill, or whatever. Here, more so here in the city too I think, there's a greater possibility of being ignored, of not being seen. At home everybody knew who you were, but here they don't so there's a greater possibility of not being seen, here in the city than there ever was at home. So I think part of that whole movement is to be seen, to be visible. To let people know that, yes, you're out there. "I am here and I am a special individual. I'm a specific sort of individual." I'm inclined to think that's an important part of Aboriginal culture, I guess. The thing is that we, we're members and participants of a culture that quite often was very individualistic. Not to the point that you could do whatever you damn well pleased but the thing is that everybody had an identity. In Iroquoian tradition no two people in the same village had the same name, so as a result everybody had a different name. You had 1500 people, you had 1500 different names and the way (the Mohawk) language is, it's quite easy to do that. As a result a name is a moniker for distinction. It indicates a very specific

person and whoever you are is a reflection of that name.

The more we participate in Western culture... and practically all of us have English names. I mean how many Davids are in the world? Thousands and thousands and thousands, so the thing is that for me, being *Kanatawakhon*, there are only, as far as I know, only two *Kanatawakhons* in the world. I'm the only one I know. I've only heard that there was another person with the same name. But the other person I know of who has that name is Cayuga and they are called by the Cayuga pronunciation of the same name. I am therefore an individual. By my name, I am very specifically an individual.

The thing is that people don't necessarily know that when they first see you, or even when they find out what your doing. Part of that whole push towards being individual is tied into doing something that is very individualistic. I find Native people who start their own businesses and for years and years and years will work at a business where basically they're the only employee, they become involved in all sorts of economic enterprises where it's themselves and maybe one or two other people, but whatever their producing is a very distinct reflection of who they are as an individual. Whether it's silverwork, or if it's beadwork, or if it's moccasins or paintings or whatever; whatever they choose to do, they choose to do it very individualistically.

I think there is a fair amount of people taking liberties with the medium, with the symbols. They have a sense of what the design is, or know what the design is and yet they will twist it and they will turn it, they will individualize it. So that when people look at it they say, 'Oh that's so-and-so's work' because you can see (the individual's influence in) it then.

One of the things that strikes me is that with Native people that seems to be much more pronounced and with a much smaller population than you find with amongst the Western peoples. There are millions and millions of them and yet the distinctive artists or the distinctive individuals are very few. Within Iroquoian society we have lots and lots of people with distinction (chuckles). We have a lot of people that are involved within very specific sort of things that really set themselves apart.

GH: Yeah, and all that occurring within what is termed "traditional".

DKM: Yeah, within a traditional framework.

GH: The outside viewpoint seems to be, or tends to homogenize everybody. If you're a stonecarver or if you're doing beadwork or whatever, the anthropological view is that there are very strict guidelines and patterns that you do in design work.

DKM: We use a base of design. I think most of us who are involved in anything that deals with design symbols take the symbol and just alter it a little bit in order to make our presentation. Where you have a symbol, or it coincides with other symbols; basically you create a sort of story. People can see that when they look at your stuff. They see something that is very distinctly a reflection of an individual. I think part of the individuality...if you are a true individual, then you constantly change. So what happens is there is a thread of similarity that seems to follow all the way through, and yet people are constantly changing, doing something new.

Or, at the same time there is the reality of being an individual as well, you need to be able to feed yourself. You need to be able to clothe yourself and house yourself as well, so you find something that works. You stick with that.

My mother makes moccasins. She does a very good job at making moccasins and sells lots of them. But she also carries a certain amount of tourist junk--that nickel and dime stuff you know, 2 bucks, five bucks, or whatever, because the moccasins are thirty-five, forty-five, fifty dollars a pair.

GH: Does she sell at Pow Wows?

DKM: Oh God yeah! And you know, they're happy. She's traded for that, she's traded for ribbon shirts, ribbon dresses, and leather boots. One thing or another. There's things that she works at that she likes to do and then there's the stuff that you kind of continue to do in order to make money. And I think that you find that a lot of Native people who are artists, or who are involved in some sort of art; you know you have the stone carvers--the people working with the stone or the wood or the bone or the clay or whatever. There is a certain amount of stuff that people end up making that is *purely for sale* and then there is other stuff that they make that they *will* sell. I think that is a very big difference, in a lot of cases, with Native people.

There's a pragmatism about one's craft. There's a whole sense of 'practicalness' about what you're doing. Whatever you're good at has to meet the two *ends*. It has to be able to deal with the physical and spiritual aspect of who you are as an individual. When I did those paintings I have in the living room, I got the board and I figured out what I wanted it to look like and I kind of messed around with what kind of colours I would use. I only had house paint (dog barking)... I picked out the house paint--it's on chipboard--and I kind of figured out what I wanted it to look like. I made them primarily to hang in the house to cover up wall space. I find that when I was putting them together I figured out exactly what I wanted them to mean, what I wanted them to say.

GH: Yeah, I wanted to ask you about the designs in there. We had talked about it a little a while ago--you were explaining the curlicues, male and female. There is all that symbology. How many people using...I mean is there a general awareness of the symbology that goes with the design?

DKM: I think a fair number... I've met people at Six Nations who do beadwork and things like that, creating the designs for clothing, for ceremonial dress, that sort of thing; they seem to be quite aware of what the symbols are for. I mean when you have a symbol that curls down--a symbol with a slant that has the curl above the straight part. That's the life symbol. You reverse it and turn the curl down and it's a death symbol. You have the dome symbols, mountain symbols, tree symbols. You can practically create a picture out of these things when you're doing them.

GH: Can you tell a story too?

DKM: I don't think it's possible. I think you can potentially create a story segment. I don't know if you can... . No there is not enough morphology in the design.

GH: Is it a tool for transmitting culture? Is it something that continues cultural awareness or value?

DKM: I think so, I think it's on the increase. We went through this whole business in the sixties and seventies where everybody was Indian and there was all this Indian stuff. I find now with the increased Pow Wow--many Iroquoian peoples see the occurrence of the Pow Wow as a totally foreign element and they also see it encroaching heavily within Iroquoian territories. Because a lot of Iroquoian peoples still don't, or still simply consider themselves to be "Indians"; and Pow Wow is "Indian", so everybody says "lets go to the Pow Wow" and you end up with these ribbon shirts all over that are a Pow Wow phenomenon; you get the "four colours" that's a Pow Wow phenomenon.

GH: It's becoming a thing unto it's self.

DKM: It's a cultural thing unto itself and as a result more Iroquoians say, "Yes we're a distinct people. We're not part, we are not a member of this "Pow Wow". We can take part but we're not an active member of Pow Wow because Pow Wow is not a part of our culture. We have a very distinct culture. I think as a result that you will find more Iroquoians zeroing in on the very... . They're starting to and wanting to and trying to learn more and more about what makes them distinctly Iroquoian; as opposed to Algonkian... or anybody else who is part of the whole phenomenon.

GH: How much of that awareness is a result of recent political things like Oka--something that mobilized a lot of people to think about their place. For myself being Mohawk-French I had to look into the history of how this was happening. Why was this happening? What is my place in this, and I'm still working on that. Do you see that (Oka) as something that mobilized people on-reserve and/or off-reserve.

DKM: I think it's made people more politically aware. But I don't think it's had any real reflection on let's say, cultural symbology. The thing is, it has put people more in tune with say the Great Law--the constitution of the Iroquois people--which is an important part of who we are; and, I suppose the symbols that go along with that, you know the political symbols and that sort of thing; as any sort of reflection on the culture--any real physical effect/reflection on the culture, I am not inclined to think so.

It may influence people who are involved in painting. It may influence people who are involved in writing. If you start looking at the arts, the people who express themselves most avidly in their work, when it comes to political issues, are going to be the artists--the painters, and anyone associated with drawing or caricature, and the writers. I don't think the beadwork and all the rest of that stuff is being affected. It's not as if your suddenly seeing Oka symbols on Iroquoian pottery. It's not occurring. It's just not happening.

There's something about certain items that are produced--they have remained separate. Others have simply absorbed the whole thing. Somebody could do a painting and you can see an expression of attitude regarding the whole Oka situation. But it's kind of hard to do that with a piece of beadwork, or a piece of pottery, or bonework, or even stonework. The thing is these are new areas. The stonework is very very new. Twenty-five years ago Iroquoian stonework for the most part didn't even exist. It's a very new medium. The revival of pottery and that sort of thing is also a very new medium so people are less inclined to use it in a political way. It's still basically in the revival stage, they're trying to incorporate symbols that already exist into something that's identifiable as a specific cultural image. Whereas painting has been around for a long time and Iroquoians have been writing for a long time too. Even Pauline Johnson's writing was quite often a political cry, probably more so than most people would like to even think. She was writing things to polite, well meaning Victorian folks who were practically doing everything they could to destroy Aboriginal cultures in the Americas. She's creating wonderful little visions for them, to give them a cultural taste. But at the same time when you look at that stuff she's saying some pretty angry things.

GH: Which is part of the romantic view--the Noble Savage. It's a romantic struggle.

DKM: I don't think you find very many Iroquoians involved in painting prior to the sixties, that I know of. There's getting to be more and more people using that medium because it's a visual medium. One of the things that I've become very aware of is that Western culture is a very visual culture. Everything is visual. I couldn't think

of a better place for the sort of racism that exists in North America to exist other than among the Western cultures of North America. Everything is *visual* you know, white, black, yellow, red. It's a very visual society that we're dealing with. When your trying to make a point with a visual society, you have to use a visual effect; that means your paintings--the stuff that you can basically put in their face so that they have no choice but to see it and be aware.

Right now I suppose some of the most resounding statements to be made within Native art, are probably through painting, through film, through video, stuff that's purely visual. Other things like carving stone have really maintained a more substantial cultural [role] because it's not as easily dispersed. A stone carving can say some pretty amazing things but once it's purchased by an individual, it no longer exists...really...in reality. If you buy a one-of-a-kind something and take it into your house, it no longer says anything (to the public). Sometimes I'm inclined to think that it's so easy to mute a painting or a carving because once it's purchased, if it's a one-of-a-kind thing, it's taken out of circulation, and, you've silenced it. There is nothing more quiet than some of the paintings done by the Great Masters because they've been purchased for millions of dollars and they're now hidden away so they don't say anything to the world anymore.

GH: So your saying once you take the work out of public view, it no longer has an audience?

DKM: Yes. Personally I'm inclined to support 'public art' rather than 'private art'. I'll go to K-mart (laughs) and get a pretty picture. I always buy prints because I know that there are thousands of prints. I have no real interest in buying *an original*. Because the thing for me, to buy an original is to take it out of circulation. The paintings I did in the other room, I did them for myself and I like them and other people came along and say "well those are nice" etc. etc. What I think then is well, why not mass-produce them? I have absolutely no qualms about mass-producing them because if you are mass-producing them, everybody has access. Then more people can take that sort of design work and incorporate it into the public-sphere--the public environment. Then everybody can see it as opposed to one person. Because, I think if your trying to make a political statement, if your trying to say something using art, it says nothing when it's in a private home, it says everything when it's a public work. But I think traditionally if your looking at design work, Iroquoian design work was always a public thing. People wore it on their clothing all the time. Therefore if everybody has access to the same designs, everybody is aware of what the designs represent. They see the design as an indication of themselves--themselves as a people. The sort of design that occurs amongst Iroquoian people says to the whole world, these are Iroquoian People.

GH: That gets back to what you were talking about with individuality. You're raising a lot of different issues--the value of the art object itself--for you, there's value in the idea behind it it seems, rather than the object itself. There's also that contradiction between a Western materialist idea of selling something for a lot of money and what I think your talking about--making something for yourself or your individuality, for transmitting an idea.

DKM: One of the things that I find, when people do stuff like this of a public nature there is less of a possibility to be, I suppose, self serving financially. The thing is that your not dealing with so many people. If somebody comes in and says "I'll give you ten-thousand dollars for that painting on the wall". I'll say "Sure, here". Because I know damn well I can make another one just like it. I have no qualms about doing that. It's not so much that the design work and the things I do...sure it's an expression of myself but I also

know that if I have said it once, I can say it again. If I've expressed it once I can express it again. I don't limit my expression to the point where you know...this is the first and the last time I can ever say this thing and now it's gone.

For me, this is probably why I deal with design work and stuff because it is something that literally everyone should have access to. It supports my whole idea and philosophy about public acquisition and public access to symbols and design and meaning. We may not interpret it all identically the same way, but we all have the same sort of idea as to what that symbol means. We all look at an Iroquoian symbol and we may not express what it means the same way, but we all have the general idea. The funny thing is, I've read articles where people say, "Design work is not art". These are usually the sort of people who support, from my point of the view, the type of art that is worth millions of dollars and is hidden away and silenced. Rubens produces a wonderful painting; who cares? If I don't have access to it then it doesn't mean anything to me. If all of Michelangelo's stuff was bought up and hidden away in private homes and museums, it no longer means anything to me. Whatever he had to say, it no longer means anything to me because I have no access to it, it's commodity. I know that some of our own people, they become involved in commodity and you can make a very good living off that sort of thing. But I'm inclined to think that that is an aspect of the pragmatism of Iroquoian culture. One thinks, "here's something that I'm capable of doing and I can use it to support myself in lieu of hunting, fishing, planting a garden, walking high-steel, or whatever. This is just another way of looking after myself and maintaining my own individuality, my own independence, and my own sense of self-worth." If that means becoming involved in the whole economic aspect of art, then I guess that's what happens. People seem to have absolutely no qualms about doing that. What Native people did was considered "primitive" art. No it's not, Native work is not "primitive art". If they (non-Aboriginal artists) were going to do anything themselves they would never dirty their hands and produce "primitive" art; although some of them got smart later on and realized that the stuff sold and became involved in producing "Primitive Art". The unfortunate aspect of this was that any talent for cultural expression was overridden or quashed by the whole acculturating process--Native people don't produce art, they do designs. Their work was considered primitive art or that it had some sort of ritualistic significance. In order for a Native person to do art they had to be doing it like Europeans. As time went on people started to produce stuff that was a little bit more and more...I think a lot of it started when our own people started looking at themselves more as *people*; looking at their own traditions and their own mythology and their own stories, and then started to reproduce those things.

GH: Even within the cultural production that is described as "traditional" you're saying there is a lot of internal force that dictates the way things like, a shirt is cut. Does this give the impression that things are not evolving; that things have to be done a certain way; that Aboriginal cultures are static?

DKM: I think to a degree that's one of the things that's bound to happen, even with the stone. You can go into any shop and see Iroquoian stonework and it all looks the same. It looks the same so that it is identifiable. But for some people, I guess they've zeroed in on what is cash and have not gone beyond that--to a point where a basement full of Chinese migrant workers could be producing the same stuff in downtown Toronto. A lot of the beadwork coming into the country right now is, *coming in to the country*.

GH: From China?

DKM: Not being produced here. Native people are dealing with a commodity

oriented society. As a result, I think in a lot of cases the artwork that is being produced *by* Native people, is not being produced *for* Native people. One of the amusing things I find about Indian art is that Indians can't afford it. So what do we do, we have K-Mart art in our house, we have prints, we have pictures--velvet matadors and stuff like that. That's the sort of stuff that Native people--if their going to use decoration--inevitably end up having, because we have you know, quite seriously, commoditized our art.

GH: Still it seems though, in terms of things that you would wear, like a pair of moccasins or something...and this is a generalization...but that an Aboriginal person would look at that, and because of an awareness of how it was constructed, would be more willing to shell out fifty bucks for a nice pair of moccasins?

DKM: No, they'd go home and make their own (laughs).
A lot of Native homes are devoid of Native art.
One thing I've often thought of doing that would be fun would be to work with a designer towards doing some sort of show where we would use the design work--the pattern of the design work--and apply it to everything; fabrics for upholstery, fabrics for clothing, ceramics for the dishes.

GH: So you would like to see your paintings above a couch with the same pattern on it?

DKM: (laughs) Not necessarily, just so that the design work starts going back into what it was originally used for anyway--it was decoration on clothing and utensils and that sort of stuff. If that kind of stuff became more affordable and available to Iroquoian people, I think people would start to identify more specifically with what is specifically them. One of the things I see happening with Native art in the country is that it does seem that we are quite inadvertently doing to ourselves what the white man already thinks of us--Indians are Indians are Indians. We are creating an Indian art.

GH: We're giving them what they want.

DKM: Yeah, we're giving them what they want. We are producing what they want. Rather than extending our self identity through our art we are simply extending a generic description and definition of who we are, not for our benefit, but for the benefit of the buying public. A stone whether it is an Iroquoian or a Mic Mac or a Haida or whoever, who creates this painting, the painting is not sold with the moniker so-and-so Mohawk artist, so-and-so Mic Mac artist, it is so-and-so Indian artist.

GH: I think that (Aboriginal) artists...certainly (Aboriginal) artists who have gone through the institution and are educated in Western art history, who are looking back into their specific Aboriginal cultures and are trying to achieve a synthesis between the two, are looked at as individuals. Not so much as we were previously discussing--individualism in the Iroquoian tradition--but in a Western tradition of individualism where it's assumed that you are the artist and therefore the bearer of a unique creative response to the world, one that can never be duplicated.

[end of side A]

GH: What you're talking about--putting Iroquoian design on household objects--more so things that you wouldn't expect to see the designs on, such as a couch or a

lamp shade...

DKM: It's not so much blatant in your face stuff, it's more so that it's *there*.

GH: That somehow your household objects reflect...

DKM: Who you are as a person, and your cultural background and stuff. I think people have to have a really good sense of who they are and I think that symbols-- design that sort of stuff-- gives people a base to work from. In order to be a cultural people who are individuals and have a strong sense of individualism, they still have to have a base that they are working from.

GH: That's what binds them together then as a collective of individuals.

DKM: If you have a hundred Iroquoian artists involved in one thing or another and they all have the same understanding or they all have a created understanding of what the symbols and the designs mean even if their going off and doing all sorts of different things, to me they are very credible. But if they are ignorant of their own traditional art background, their own traditional design, then to me they're just another artist who happens to be Iroquoian. There is a very big difference between an Iroquoian artist and an artist who happens to be Iroquoian.

GH: It's interesting that...I hate using these words...in the "contemporary" art scene there was a refusal of that label--being called an "Indian artist". People like Joane Cardinal-Schubert were saying things like "I'm not an Indian artist, I am an artist who happens to be Indian". This is a different angle on what you were saying but they were rejecting being viewed as an Indian first.

DKM: I think in a lot of cases getting back to what we were talking about earlier and the whole primitive art thing. People find out "oh he's an Indian artist" and they right away presume that they do such and such of a thing. It's like when somebody says, "oh, oh your an Indian?.. Do you know anybody that can make me a leather jacket?" Jesus man! I mean, no. *Piss off!*
Yes, you do get those stereotypes and you have Native people trying to get away from that, but there are two sides to every stereotype. When (an Aboriginal artist) is talking to a White person they want to be known as an artist who happens to be an Indian or an Indian artist. But the reality is when it comes to dealing with their own people, what they specifically want to be is a Native artist, not an artist who happens to be Native. In order for them to be considered credible with their own people, their own people have to see them as an extension of Aboriginal culture, as a participant in their own culture. Right now we have a lot of "artists" who are "Indians". They are not doing anything that reflects or promotes their own culture. They're simply doing artwork; if there is nothing identifiable, if there is nothing distinct about who they are, *if there is no individuality*.

The really scary thing about a Native person doing art, or an artist who is an Indian is that they just become lost in that whole mish-mash of outside. They're just another artist, you know, they're a white artist, they're a black artist, they're a Chinese artist, they're a Japanese artist, they're an Indian artist. Who cares? They can all paint just like Michelangelo. They can all paint whatever is required of them in expressing themselves. What they do is they end up doing their art in a fashion that reflects Western culture and doesn't reflect their own tradition. They become generic.

GH: For you, I know that you're more involved, as far as cultural survival, in language and promoting the Mohawk language and making sure that's around for a while

yet; is that because you see that as the thing most threatened right now?

DKM: Yes, most definitely. No language no culture. Once the language is gone the intrinsic aspects of who we are as a people--the something that really sets us apart and identifies us as a people--ceases to exist; then it doesn't matter who we are. For some Native people that's the best of both worlds, that's the best possible thing that could happen because there is this notion that is "as soon as you're not different then everybody will like you." Well I know a lot of people who speak English and are still treated like dirt because their skin is not white. I know a lot of people with white skin who are treated like dirt because they don't have the right accent; they don't come from the right part of town; they come from the same amount of money. I think it's a cheap approach to those people trying to find themselves because they don't really have to work at it then. I think you really have to be aware of who you are. And, I think being of aware of who you are, should be and has to be constant work. You should always be questioning your own existence. How can you appreciate something if you always take it for granted? In order to appreciate yourself and your craft, your tradition, your background, your history, and your people, you constantly have to be thinking about it. You constantly have to be looking at it, questioning it. In order for a person to be a real artist--to be true to their craft they have to be constantly questioning, they have to be looking and trying to figure out who they are.

One of the unfortunate things about "Native art" is that it's been reduced to *beads, feathers, and leather*. That's unfortunate, for example as my Mother says "it would be so nice if we could sell moccasins without beads on them" because putting beads on moccasins is a lot of bother. We were talking about this and mum says "you know if you don't put beads on it, white people won't buy it because then they're not Indian moccasins".

GH: They don't have the same market value?

DKM: Yeah. It is as if as a Native person unless you put beads on it, it's not immediately seen as Native. Ok, if it's not leather, beads, or feathers then it's not Indian. If your working for their benefit, then you do the leather, beads, and feathers. If your working for your own benefit then any medium works, and Native people will appreciate that.

GH: I don't know how long you would consider yourself being an artist because as far as I know you aren't really concerned with establishing yourself as an "artist" in the sense of making a professional career out of it.

DKM: If being an artist is career oriented, then no I am not an artist. If being an artist is having a sense of design and expression, then I would be inclined to say that I probably come a little closer to the mark. It literally depends on how you define artist. I never particularly like to think of art as a career. But I think a lot of people who involve themselves in a form of art like the stone carvers--you know you get a big chunk of rock and you hack it up and eventually you end up with something that is beautiful that you can sell for five-thousand dollars. Out of all those little chunks you can produce a hundred additional things that sell for ten dollars each, that will put food on the table and feed the dog. So I think even for the artist, if you use your craft to feed yourself the question then becomes; are you still an artist? I think for many Native people, both are the same; art is a talent/art is an ability. Like an ability to hunt, an ability to fish, an ability to make baskets or moccasins or anything. It is an important part of your survival. Therefore if you produce beautiful pieces of work you would also produce a lot of extra stuff.

GH: According to your definition of an artist, how would you consider yourself?

DKM: I could probably use what I know how to do to feed myself. In fact I have, I have done paintings so I could buy groceries. I can produce stuff to decorate my own home if that's what I choose to do; and I produce stuff for presents and if people choose to keep the stuff long enough, when I'm eventually dead maybe it will be worth something.

GH: That's another system.

DKM: That's a completely different sort of thing. I would say that probably I fall within that realm. I think an awful lot of Native people do, quite naturally. Not in a stereotypical sort of way, you're dealing with a culture that prides itself on personal ability. If we are within the depths of our own philosophy, and our own beliefs, and our own dogmas, we seem to have a greater appreciation for a person's abilities. If people become very good at what they do then people appreciate their craft; and if it happens to be painting, or stone carving, or carpentry, it's all the same sort of thing, it all becomes a type of art. It depends whose definition of art you're dealing with. Is it an Iroquoian definition of art? Or is it the Western definition of art? I think if it is an Iroquoian definition of art, you will find that many Iroquoian people fit that.

GH: So that sense of being "successful" in an Iroquoian sense comes more from peer recognition, that your creating beautiful things. Rather than from getting an M.F.A.-- going through an institution, or being collected by the National gallery, etc. I wonder, for yourself we talked about Iroquoian identity, Mohawk identity as being something that was sort of understood if you're in a reserve setting but in the city it becomes an issue. How important is that to you?

DKM: To be a Mohawk?

GH: And to express that.

DKM: Oh it's very important. I've caught myself doing it every time I meet somebody new. Somewhere down the line, I do let them know exactly what my cultural background is. Who I am as a person as an individual, stuff like that; maybe not to the extent that I find White people doing it all the time. The most they're going to get out of me is some pleasantries and probably I will tell them my linguistic cultural definition. They never ask that so I will tell them. I also know that you have to be a very good friend before I start telling you too much information. It is almost as if they...at home we say, "It's almost as if they wear themselves on their shirtsleeve." Here I am, and there is nothing mystical about them, nothing individual about them because they seem to recite all of the same information. It's like a formula.

GH: So a person in a situation like myself who doesn't look distinctly "Aboriginal", because there is not that instant recognition that becomes somewhat more of a problematic thing...in say, how do you identify yourself?

DKM: There's things that can throw you off. I spent all evening one time chatting with this guy because I would have sworn he was Native. He looked so stereotypically Native. He was actually some very eastern European, from around Hungary or somewhere like that. Hungarians do look very different from other Europeans anyway. Another fellow in my class who is in Hamilton who I thought was a Native person, turns out he's a Polynesian-Asian mix. He just looks so Native right down to the skin colour, shape, face, the whole bit. I find in those sorts of

situations when you meet people; for me knowing who I am talking to is very important. I need to recognize who I am talking to. For me, difference is a very important feature as to how I get along with people. I need to know how they're different from me, so I usually introduce myself by my Nationality; and who I am as a physical entity as opposed to a social one. Therefore doing a lot of stuff that reflects that--being at the university working on the Language (Mohawk)--I do feel it's very important and it's something that I enjoy doing. I think myself, to a degree, I'm pretty good at it.

GH: We may have covered this but, if you had to categorize the kind of artwork that you do would you categorize it as being, traditional, contemporary, craft, political, spiritual, or any of the above?

DKM: I'd say it was contemporary. Primarily because I want it to be contemporary. We can look at people's chunks of busted up pottery from five-hundred years ago, or stuff from several centuries ago, or stuff from the last century, or stuff from a decade ago and aspects of these designs have a tendency to show up and come through. I would say that the sort of design work that I do is very contemporary, because I want it to be contemporary. I want it to be--like the language--I want it to be on everybody's lips. I want it to be visible to everybody so that they know what it is and who it is.

GH: So you mean contemporary in the sense that it was created recently, but also in the sense that it's alive?

DKM: Yeah. Contemporary in the sense that it is an ongoing thing--it is contemporaneous with the point in time in which we are. Like moccasins, you know, moccasins have changed over the centuries I'm sure, I mean these ones have an inner soled lining. [chuckles]

GH: Polypropylene fleece. [chuckle]
One thing I'm looking at is the *Kahswenta*. I'm trying to draw parallels between those parallel lines and look at where there are intersections between Iroquoian philosophy and Western notions of what art is. Where do you see, in a positive sense, crossover or borrowing?

DKM: The *Kahswenta* the belt--basically our canoe, your canoe. Never the two shall meet; that's why they're parallel. Separated by the three rows, friendship, peace... (I can never remember the third one)... friendship, peace, and spirituality.

GH: That's very much a political symbol?

DKM: If you consider that each way is the way people do things. If your looking at the realm of art, there's the way Western culture does art and there's the *definition*. I think it has a lot to do with definition. I don't think it's a matter of, only Indians can do Indian art and only Whites can do White art. I think it's a matter of definition. We do have to respect each other's definition of what art is; the same as we have to respect each other's definition of democracy, and politics, and morals, and mores and all that sort of stuff. I think when it comes to something like the *Kahswenta*, that can fit very well into what Native people choose to decide is art, it has to be based upon a Native definition. For a White person to come in and say "Oh! this is art", yeah right. There is a thesis written by a woman here, she has since passed away, a few years ago. I took a course from her about twelve years ago, and I dropped the course because I found I was constantly at odds with

what she was saying. She was trying to create a European definition of what Iroquoian art was--using the stone carving and the pottery, all the really contemporaneous sort of things. I found myself constantly at odds with that, because this is *art*, but not by a European definition. This is what Iroquoians consider to be art. If we choose to think of the designs and the symbols as an integral part of our artistic expression, then those things are art. In Western culture they may not be that at all. Western culture has really gone beyond a certain point where their symbols are not specific anymore and are not intrinsic to their clothing designs. They have become a very generic society; horribly visually oriented and a very generic society.

GH: Appropriating things without the meaning attached?

DKM: Oh constantly, it's the whole expression of European culture, language, everything.

GH: Visual colonization.

DKM: Very. We have to be the ones who decide what is art within our cultural realm. With the *Kahswenta* that's exactly what it is--what they think is art is what they think is art, what we think is art is what we think is art. We have to respect that and if we can't respect it, then the belt falls down.

GH: What about the idea of there being an Aboriginal essentialism?

DKM: I think it's bullshit, because you're dealing with too many cultures and that for me falls into the whole system of...

GH: Well, an Iroquoian essentialism then, to be more specific. I see it as a tool that's used to tell people that they aren't "authentic" representatives of their own culture. [DKM laughs]

DKM: I don't like that sort of stuff at all. It actually runs counter to Iroquoian philosophy, because it is interference. You do not have the right to interfere in another person's life. You do not have the right to tell another person how to live their life. That whole sort of thing runs completely counter to Iroquoian culture. When an Iroquoian person says something negative in reference to another Iroquoian, what they are doing is something that is very *non-Iroquoian*.

GH: You can use the Two-Row wampum as a metaphor for that.

DKM: Yes, that's probably where it would most fit. The whole notion of the *Kahswenta* was for noninterference--your boat/our boat; your system/our system. They do not meet, therefore we do not interfere.

GH: I see it as co-habitation--there is enough room in this river for all of our boats and we're not to interfere with another.

DKM: What you like to do, and what I like to do are typical of who we are as individuals. But there is no reason that I have to insist that you do what I do, or, that I should think that my mode of life, my way of existence is somehow superior to yours. If it was good for you to be doing it, you would already be doing it.

GH: What other core Iroquoian philosophical beliefs are there, that you think can be expressed visually?

- DKM: There's always the circle. There's the two halves of existence--the positive/the negative; the male/the female. The world is gendered, everything is defined by gender.
- GH: Would you agree that the non-Iroquoian view of those binaries tends to cast them as opposites, while an Iroquoian view is more of a dualist approach?
- DKM: Iroquoian is very dualist; actually that is one of the things I was telling my Mohawk language students. Within the Mohawk language, there are no opposites--you have something that is hot, the opposite of hot is not cold; the opposite of hot is...*not hot*. So something either is, or is not. Cold is a state unto itself. In order to have oppositions...
- GH: Good/Evil?
- DKM: There is no intrinsic good, and no intrinsic evil within the language. You basically have the *iyó* and the *aksen* of existence. The *iyó* is positive and the *aksen* is negative; but the thing is that it's all relative to the situation. The same with hot and cold, you might think it's cold, and here, I might think it's hot. It's relative to our own situation--how we're dressed, what we consider to be a comfortable temperature. There are too many variables. So within the construct of Iroquoian culture there are no absolutes--either it exists as such, or it doesn't exist as such.
- GH: Is that where a strong sense of personal identity comes from then, because within the way the language and the culture is structured, there is a recognized sense that each individual sees things differently. Like you're saying, it's relative to who you are, so when you start thinking in that pattern you almost can't help but to have a strong self-conceptualization.
- DKM: Children are taught from very, very early to see themselves as individuals; to be aware and responsible.
- GH: It's culturally reinforced?
- DKM: Yeah, you have to always be responsible for your beliefs. You have to always be responsible for your actions. Therefore this whole notion of "relativism"--how you view the world as relative to your own situation, what you see, how you see it, what you feel about it, what you want to do, etc., etc; at all times you have to take responsibility for it. In a society that chooses to be non-interfering, you basically...when learning to deal with *truth*, which linguistically has the same root as experience...you experience something, therefore it is true, but the truth is relative, relative to your experience. If I have seen a ghost, then to me a ghost is true, but if you have never seen a ghost, then to you, it is not true. Truth is not an intrinsic thing, it is simply an experiential situation that we find ourselves in. Therefore if we are representing it I suppose within art...
- GH: That has radical implications for History too--history as one person's *truth*.
- DKM: Versions. You find within Iroquoian culture so many versions. One of the things [Iroquoian Peoples] have been trying to do lately (and as far as I'm concerned the jury should still be out on this one) is deciding which is the most reliable version of the *Great Law* and everything that goes along with it. What we're doing is we're inadvertently creating a standard where there was no standard before. We're creating a point of reference from which everything else will be judged and we've never had to deal with that before. I have a problem with that sort of thing because I think it's going to interfere with the whole cultural

process--the way in which we view the world. We're inadvertently altering our world view, we're trying to create a "Bible".

GH: It goes against the notion of a culture that evolves and changes with the traditions and with contemporary reality or needs.

DKM: And we have to be so careful with that sort of thing, that's the part that I suppose is really hard to avoid. The discussion over what is the most appropriate or the "right" version. Discussions over the best version of the *Great Law*, deals with the English version of the *Great Law* and does not seem to be reflective of the Iroquoian version. More and more Iroquoians are bilingual right now anyway, or monolingual, and if they're monolingual it's usually only in English. What's happening is they're speaking English more and more. Their whole mental framework is altering towards Anglo culture--English culture--and of course that's when you start pulling in these absolutisms--these intrinsic points of reference and we start losing the relative aspect of our own culture. We're inadvertently destroying our own selves. (laughs) Which is maybe part of the whole process, there's always people who constantly fight against cultural change, and there are always people who support it.

GH: Those are the push and pulls I guess.

DKM: The only problem I have with it is that the changes are brought about in a way that we are giving in or giving over. We are altering our culture to match up with a "greater" culture, rather than maintaining our own integrity. We are losing our own cultural integrity, we're sacrificing it to become more and more a part of the mainstream, in the way that a native artist wants to be an artist who is Native, not a Native artist. They sacrifice their own cultural integrity in order to be accepted by everybody.

DKM: The people that I'm really after I suppose are my own. I want Mohawk people to appreciate what I'm doing, that's the goal.

GH: It's peer recognition?

DKM: Yeah, because being recognized by my own people is much more important to me than being recognized by these people; because these people don't really understand who I am, they're operating from a completely different paradigm.

GH: In a sense, that would validate what your doing here; is that more of an urgent thing because you feel out of place in the city?

DKM: I don't really feel out of place here, that's really funny...

GH: This is where you need to be?

DKM: Yeah, this is where I am right now. If you're going to go hunting moose, your going to have to go out in the swamp. You're not going to find a moose in the desert and you're not going to find a moose in downtown Toronto (well maybe not). You have to go where you need to be in order to accomplish what you're doing, right now. I can do more work here in the sort of environment I need to do it, more so than back on the reserve because it becomes so easy to fall back onto the sorts of things you were doing before...you disappear.

GH: What I find curious is that so much (cultural) work is being done in urban centres but the recognition and the validation is being sought from the reserves...there

are a lot of urban Aboriginal people, I think I saw a statistic as high as 74% but certainly it's way over 50%.

DKM: But you know it's really funny because our attitude towards "urban Indians"...I don't associate that much with urban Indians here, because I find that over the years the urban Indians that I have met, they're not any different than my neighbours here. They're not culturally different. Many of them don't seem to express any interest in their own reserve background, their own nationality, their own language. So I find that even though 50% of the Mohawk population may be living in the cities, the people who I truly need to validate what I'm doing, are back on the reserve. To me, that still is where the culture is, it's not with the urban Indian because the urban Indian, like myself, has adapted to Western culture to accomplish their own ends; whether it is to have a reliable job to feed your family or it is to be in a secure working situation to accomplish what you really want to do.

GH: From my view, and I'm wondering if you would agree...that reserves are becoming more important as cultural centres, as points of reference for urban peoples, if you choose to take an interest in your culture? I still feel a lot of apprehension (myself) about approaching an elder to discuss Mohawk traditions. I think that is something that I put on myself because I've taken on a lot of these outside views or notions of authenticity. Or, how much "right" do I have to look into these things?

DKM: I think maybe because I'm involved with language and I'm involved with people on Six Nations, Tyendinega, and other reserves I usually am less inclined to be apprehensive I suppose. This is what I do and like it, don't like it, it's up to you. I want the validation from them but I'm going to do it on my terms. To do it on their terms is to deny myself; who I am. I need the validation based upon their recognition of who I am as an individual, not on my ability to do what they want. That is the biggest problem, because we are becoming an acculturated people and the parameters that we place our own people in--we create all these weird and wonderful parameters that our people have to fit it into. People say "Oh you're not Indian enough. You live in the city, you're not Indian". We do that constantly and it's unfortunate. Even at the reserve level, I listen to my father say, "Oh..he's not Indian". I say, "What do you mean he's not Indian?" "Well his great-grandfather was a Dutchman." Jesus man, that's just dumb.

[End of Tape 1]

DKM: The thing is your dealing with a whole culture that creates these definitions and that everybody follows the same thing, everybody believes the same thing. We live in a culture that has millions and millions of people who have all been taught to believe the same thing. I mean, all these people believe that man has landed on the moon... "really, were you there?"

GH: Different Elders have said, "Well, I did that years ago. I've been going to the moon for years!" (laughs)

DKM: Who's right? It's not a matter of right or wrong. For many Aboriginal cultures it isn't a matter of right or wrong, it is simply a...situation.

GH: Is there any hope then for cultures that believe in non-interference to survive, as opposed to cultures that believe in their superiority over everyone else?

DKM: I hate to be pessimistic about the whole thing but I think what's happening is that

most of the cultures that have a philosophy of non-interference are minority cultures. Those minority cultures are constantly being compromised. As they become more and more compromised their credibility wanes and eventually they end up doing the same damn thing. This process is expediated by language--by language change. If you have a country with ten minority languages and then they adopt one universal language (which is usually English or some other European language), in order to get anywhere or to be accepted, you have to be able to use the universal language. Eventually people start leaving their own language and culture behind more and more. After a while they become products of the universal system.

This is basically the same with Native artists. One of the few Native artists in this country who actually doesn't speak English is Allen Sapp. The funny thing is that his painting style is reminiscent of the European because he painted from what he had seen pictures of. The beauty of his work is that he's not painting fat, white women on horses. He's painting things about his childhood, his memories about what it was like growing up. He's not suddenly decided to branch out and paint political statements, because everything he paints is a political statement.

Everything he paints is a reflection of what it was...or even how it is--how he sees it as a non-English speaking Cree person. That's the beauty of his stuff. If we had more Native artists who were in that category, I think we would have a beautiful expression to offer the rest of the world.

However, the majority of our artists in this country who are Native people, are very fluently Anglophone. So quite often in making a political statement they're not necessarily making it from a Native perspective--from an Aboriginal linguistic perspective--they're making it from a Westernized perspective because who's their audience? Not normally are they Native people.

GH: Audience is a huge factor I think.

DKM: If I create something and the audience doesn't know what I've done, then there's no impact on the audience. The stuff hanging in my living room...I don't know how many White people have been through this house...and most of them have all looked at that stuff and they have never, there is the occasional exception but the majority of them never comment on it. They just look at it, I'm not sure if they even see it.

GH: Even people who are interested in art in general? You only get a comment on it from people who have some kind of relation to it by being interested in art or by being Aboriginal or both?

DKM: If anybody comes by who is involved in visual expression, "expressive art" and stuff like that, they'll look at it and if they don't comment on it usually what they're thinking is... "designs". Designs like what you put on T-shirts and stuff I guess. Usually when you tell them very specifically that it's Iroquoian designs, most of the time you don't get a lot of interest shown because it's not saying anything that they can necessarily understand. If you interpret it for them, it can make a difference but it still doesn't make a big difference because it's not something that they have any political awareness of and so it's just, "stuff".

GH: "Stuff" that has a bit of a story or meaning to it, but not necessarily to their own life.

DKM: It really depends too, upon the person and their ability to appreciate art by any person other than themselves. I find that there's a real egocentrism in art.

GH: Yeah, I think that's taught.

DKM: Quite often people really don't see what it is because it doesn't reflect their idea of what art is.

GH: So it's not valid.

DKM: For a Native person who is an artist to come along, if they want someone to appreciate what they've done, they have to do it in a fashion that people understand it. I don't give a shit. This stuff hangs on my wall because I like it and it means something to me. I look at it and I see symbols. I see story in it. If people ask me, I will tell them what the story is. If people show an interest in it, I will explain it to them. But most of the time I don't care, because I did it for myself, I didn't do it for them. When people care enough to say, "Can you do something like that for me? Could you create something for me, using your talent?" I'll say, "Sure, why not." If they don't understand it or appreciate it, it's not my problem...it's theirs. If they come in the house saying, "Oh I'm an artist. I'm in the artist program" and they don't see it, then I'm curious about the sort of arts program they're in.

GH: You can assume that they're probably a product of what unfortunately is a typical art school tradition that teaches the Western art traditions and takes a very limited look at what other cultures call art. But I think that is changing a little bit.

GH: It [your work] is not overtly political?

DKM: No, it's just there and it says things...to me it does anyway.

GH: Well that's political in itself, just the idea that Native people are still around is political.

DKM: That I suppose is why I would love to see this stuff turned into contemporary, everyday objects. So that (the designs) are on dishes, clothing and on upholstery work and stuff. People who see it may not be aware specifically what it represents. Sometimes people can see something, and when you finally tell them, "Well this is what this means". All of a sudden they become very much aware of where they've seen the stuff everywhere. All of a sudden it becomes very important.

GH: Ok, so you don't see there being a risk of things being mass produced and trivialized to a point where they don't make any sense?

DKM: No, I think when stuff is mass produced it can become trivialized but it becomes meaningless when people are no longer allowed the opportunity to understand what it means. When people stop telling people what it is--what it means, what that symbol is... I have a whole roomful of students and when I draw a circle on the board, I say, "This is the life symbol. It's a circle...divide the circle in half... This is one of the most important symbols of Iroquoian philosophy. The left the right; the appropriate, the inappropriate, the good the bad, whatever you want to call it. Divide it again. This is the symbol for the four corners of the earth."

GH: That's an Iroquoian symbol as well--divided in four?

DKM: Yeah, we use the sacred circle probably more than anything else. I don't know how old that particular symbol is, but it does show up from time to time. One of the things I always liked, when you look at beadwork or some of the old

stuff, a flower is determined by it's shape not by it's colour. So you'll get flowers from people who do beadwork with some of the most bizarre colours. Pictures of birds--what is a bird? A bird is wings, a tail, and a beak. That's basically, a bird. It doesn't even have to look like an identifiable bird. It's the wings and the tail and the beak that create "bird-ness". Therefore the fact that it happens to be green or purple doesn't matter. We view things by shape, or by what constitutes...

GH: What makes it unique--no other animals have beaks?

DKM: What makes it individualized. It's like for example, the English (universal) symbol that is a stick person and you get one with a closed triangle on the bottom--male/female. For other groups it's the use of the phallus that usually determines the male/female-ness. Many people are not terribly concerned about colour. One of the things I've noticed, when a kid has a picture or an outline of a bird and a box of crayons...children don't care what colour a bird is, adults care what colour a bird is. The child goes through a whole system of culturization. They're told, "That's the wrong colour. You can't make a bird purple." "Why not?" "Because there's no purple birds." "Why not? There should be purple birds. If there are no purple birds out there, then there are purple birds here." Children see shape long before they see colour.

DKM: What I'd like to do with the design work...I could make it any colour it needs to be or any colour I want it to be. The colours I chose simply had to do with the colour of the paint I had at the time.

GH: Still, it is a very sensitive use of colour...

DKM: One of the things that is typical of Iroquoian use of colour is the notion of light and dark--you always have a light colour up against a dark colour, so there's always a contrast between light and dark and that's an important part of the design. There has to be a light on dark or vice-versa...

GH: There has to be a formal balance?

DKM: Yes, there has to be this notion of light and dark, balancing out and even. I always consider how people dress, people always dress themselves in light and dark.

GH: Can I ask, why Joseph Brant? [pointing to an illustration on the wall]

DKM: Mostly for the costuming....I think he's a rat.

GH: Something that seems common now, in a lot of art by Native people that's being shown in the galleries now, are responses/reactions to stereotypes. So it seems, and I'm making a generalization, that urban or Aboriginal peoples that are educated in the institutions, who live in urban centres tend to deal with misrepresentations or stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples in their artwork. Those seem to be the first things that are reacted to just because those are the things that are most prevalent here (in the city, as opposed to the reserve). So you yourself have never felt a need to react or respond to those stereotypes?

DKM: No. I think because I recognize them as stereotypes.

GH: So they don't affect you personally?

DKM: No, I think because I'm not afraid of them compromising what I think.

GH: So you have nothing to fear from them?

DKM: No. I don't know, it depends on what you consider to be fear I guess. I know the difference, I see something and it's silly, so I just leave it.

GH: How about, how that informs how others see you?

DKM: Well it depends, if they strike me as being harmless enough I'll just let them live their lives. If they're in a situation where I think they should know better, then I'll tell them.

I've never been terribly inclined to collect stuff just because it was worth something.

GH: That raises another issue, the contradiction between art that was created to last forever and art that was created to be used for a limited time.

DKM: If it is possible for a Native group to conduct a very serious religious ceremony using a pop can with tiny stones in it because they don't have a rattle for the time, then what it's saying is that the ritual is important, the accoutrements aren't. So how you deal with the accoutrements--with the rattle, the dance sticks and all that sort of stuff-- actually, in the long run gives the user much more flexibility. When you look at say, a contemporary hockey stick--a hockey stick has been reduced to a very specific design. Western cultures says, "This is a hockey stick" and it never goes beyond that, other than some transformations. But traditionally, if you look at people's throwing sticks or say hockey sticks if they were used three-hundred years ago, they would be painted, they would have beadwork, they would have feathers, they might even be a different shape. People used a lot more expression, there was more artistic license taken with even how people dressed themselves. There was, "This is the cut of the cloth" and "This is what we've done to it." This sort of tradition does follow on that sort of line [evolutions in contemporary art].

DKM: I like stuff that has a sense of humour.

GH: There's been a lot of discussion about that (humour) being a traditional Native thing--having a sense of humour all the time, this ironic wit...and the trickster character is always thrown into that.

DKM: Yeah, that whole way of looking at things, I guess.

GH: Do you think that comes from language? If you have a knowledge of one language (other than English) and you look at English, you look at English in a different way, the words seem funny in a way?

DKM: I find that Native people play with English more than White people do. They use it differently, as a sense of humour--double talk, dirty talk, a whole variety of things. People are constantly saying one thing, knowing it means something different; or taking your words and twisting them. That sort of thing happens in Mohawk to a degree, because there's some pretty sensitive vocabulary where you can say one thing and with a very slight differentiation you can have something completely different. *Ohnsontyatontanihon* or *Ohnsontyatonihon* means something different, one means "all stiffened up", the other means, "to get an erection".

GH: I think intonation is something that also changes how English is interpreted, but in

Mohawk it's slightly different?

DKM: You have to rearrange your vocabulary. There is no intonation, the stress and accent on words is set so there is only one way to say it. We rely heavily on word movement, reorganizing words and stuff. I find that a lot of Native people who speak English still don't use the intonation patterns that Anglophones would use, and often make up for it with word usage. There is a tendency to use vocabulary in a way where people will emphasize it differently, or very deadpan like make a statement. Everyone knows what they have said so that you don't have to rely on intonation, but you rely on using English differently to get the same effect.

GH: Do you think that is part of the reason why those Mohawk people that were recognized as being such wonderful orators in the English language? Was that partly because they had to say a lot more words to get the same ideas across?

DKM: Yeah, I think English is a very wordy language. Mohawk vocabulary is very long but English is very wordy. Your dealing with a shortage of pronouns, a lack of indicators in the language and you have to substitute with actual vocabulary. Whereas in Mohawk it's quite often done with just an additional sound or a different marker on your word and it completely alters what you are saying. A lot of times people throw in little things called intensifiers that slightly alter what you've said; for example in Mohawk, *Rontonhas* "He's lazy" or, *Ronitonhas* "He's a lazy shit!" You toss in those sorts of things to provide additional expression in lieu of using intonation and additional vocabulary. Everybody knows more or less what it means or how it's being used, and quite often it garners laughter...

GH: A lot of (Aboriginal) art being shown now in galleries uses text. As another communicating factor to transmit Mohawk beliefs, is that useful, is that something you see yourself doing maybe?

DKM: Language is really a unique sort of element because first of all most non-Native people are not aware of Aboriginal languages.

GH: That they still exist?

DKM: As if we were speaking English before the White people showed up. There's this idea that all Indians speak English or if they don't speak English, they don't speak a written language. They don't speak a language that's written or anything, it's just all these unintelligible sounds and (the thought is) hopefully someday they'll learn English.

When Aboriginal languages start to accompany art, that's an additional statement being made as well--the language being used is part of the presentation. One of the things we have to watch though, is that in the move to appeal to the majority culture we're constantly using *their* language and *their* icons of expression in order to make *our* point. In many cases, what we are inevitably doing is giving more credibility to their culture than we are giving to ours, because we're using their culture as the medium of expression.

I think it's time we started turning things around; we start using our own culture as the medium of expression; we start using our own languages as the medium of expression. The thing is that they're not stupid. They can learn to understand us just as easily as we have learned to understand them. I think that really needs to be looked at.

GH: And understand us on our own terms.

End

Appendix 3

Interview with Shelley Niro

December 30, 1995

Shelley: Artists?

Greg: Yeah.

SN: You are looking for artists who are sort of dealing with-- people who are combining contemporary and traditional?

GH: Well, I'm trying not to make a big distinction between "contemporary" and "traditional". I think that's what museums and art galleries do. They send artists that are sort of educated in Western institutions at university and whatever, their work goes into galleries and anybody who's doing the... curators... what people like to call craft, their work ends up in museums. I guess even, just recently, if you made it known that you are a Native person and doing art work then you're work got sent to the museum. It's only been in the last twenty years or so, maybe a little less than that that Native artists started getting into the National Gallery... and other galleries...

SN: Maybe not even twenty years... Wasn't Carl Beam the first piece?

GH: First piece they've bought, I guess, and that was '86, pretty scary. Ten years.

SN: Even the Museum of Contemporary Photography. They had a show there called Bow (?). Did you see that show?

GH: No.

SN: It was quite a beautiful show--big pieces all over the place, the Native representation was Carl Beam you know Carl Beam's work, they had ...

GH: Just tiny small ones?

SN: Just little dinky things. And I thought, "well talk about tokenism."

GH: Have you ever felt that you were included in a token way in shows?

SN: Sometimes, but the only time... I was in the *Female Imaginary* show, that was kind of tokenistic. That was really weird. I felt so weird being in that show.

GH: Yeah. I was actually... I was there. I guess that's... how do you feel about that sort of 'fit', about being included in things that deal with feminism?

SN: I don't mind because I think if I started out...[subject change to art catalogue showing Carl Beam's work] see this piece here... that's probably the size it was too.

GH: You have to have a magnifying glass next to it. [laughs]

- SN: And I thought what a joke. A lot of these, Arnaud Mauggs which is this piece here, (looking at catalogue) it took up a wall a huge, huge wall. And the Carl Beams...
- GH: That's a nice catalogue. So there was a lot of money in that show.
- SN: Vicki Henry was there; they bought those pieces from her for like \$350 each, so it just comes off really cheap looking...
- GH: Vicki Henry from Ottawa?
- SN: Yeah.
- GH: She did her thesis... her Masters degree at Carleton. I was looking at her thesis. *Autobiography in First Nations Art*. She talks about you too I guess, and Carl Beam and Robert Houle, and Gerald McMaster. Well, I guess we can just kind of go through these questions a little bit, if you would like. The first one is:, how long have you been an artist?
- SN: Selling artist? [laughs]
- GH: Well, whatever your idea of an artist is.
- SN: I think I've always been an artist. I was always doing stuff... but I never had the courage to say I was an artist...
- GH: It is a big statement, right? I'm an "artist".
- SN: Yeah. I didn't start saying I was an artist until I was about... 35.
- GH: After other people told you you were an artist all your life.
- SN: I think... I never took art in high school, and I never really went along with institutional-type taught art. But I kind of did it on the side too. My parents would always give me learn-to-draw sets and stuff like that, you know, so. In that way it was kind of like 'doing it'...
- GH: So they were feeding it...
- SN: They were feeding it, and... but I wasn't necessarily saying "well, I want to be an artist." And I didn't want to... I just thought that at some point, like, you have to live, you have to go through life with your eyes open and I just felt propelled to take high-school art or do that sort of thing. And I also would continue to do painting even as a teenager and stuff and even when I got married and had kids and stuff, but I never started saying "I'm an artist." Cause it felt like blaagh! Gross! [laughs]
- GH: Yeah. It has a real egotistical connotation to it. I guess you don't, sort of, hold yourself out as a person, this great person, who creates things ...
- SN: Yeah, that's right, cause as soon as you say, "I'm an artist", 'artist' is attached to whatever you do then it's like you are almost put in the same category as a priest or something, sort of being the all-knowing. But then I just got older and thought well it's the only thing I can do, it's the only thing I've ever done.
- GH: Did you grow up on the reserve?

- SN: Yeah.
- GH: I'm interested in one thing, among others, and that is the beadwork patterns and the design patterns... where do you... do you remember that from... growing up?
- SN: Yeah. See we were not brought up in a Longhouse. But at the same time we were brought up with all the stuff around us. If my dad wanted to get a special gift made for somebody, he would get somebody like I knew this old, old woman and he would go and buy beadwork from her and her eyes were like completely... she was almost blind and she would have to bead like this. [Shelley demonstrating] And there always seemed to be designs around some place and it was like, I don't know, newspapers you would get or, but there were always these elements around some place and... they just seemed to be there. The designs themselves were always a little weird to me, a little strange, but they were always like really intriguing to me too.
- GH: So did you learn what a lot of the shapes are and what they mean?
- SN: Yeah. My dad would always say, this is what this means, this is what this is about, you know. I probably did (in a really subconscious way), do it without really thinking about it.
- GH: So when you include it with your photographs, what are you thinking of when you choose to do that?
- SN: Well, for a long time I think we have been influenced by Sioux designs and how they have been accepted as *the design*, or the most beautiful kind of design work. The geometric design and how the shape means this and all this sort of thing, whereas the Iroquois design is a little bit more abstract, and is a bit of a... the shapes are rounder, they're more organic, they're... I think they're pretty expressive, and if you even go looking at writers, their writing is very much like that too. It's a little abstract, a little bit romanticized...
- GH: So are you looking at it for its formal qualities like the curlicues and all that, or... like I asked Dave Maracle if it was possible to tell a story with the design and he didn't really think so.
- SN: No?
- GH: And I don't know enough about it, but he explained some of the things he was using, the Celestial Tree, the death and life symbols, which way the curlicue goes, things like that, but those are very much signifiers of Iroquoianess, and I'm thinking by including them with the photos that that really is a fairly strong statement of at least the knowledge that you have or of interest or whatever [in things Iroquoian]. I'm wondering if you are consciously doing that as well to say "hey these are beautiful, we don't have to look at Sioux design." Is that one aspect of it maybe?
- SN: I think it can be many, many aspects, and I don't think it's... as you're working with your stuff you say "this is really beautiful and this is so weird" and... I don't know. It just sort of triggers a lot of, I won't say emotion because it's not. I think it's something else other than emotion. It's almost like you're trying to trigger an historical memory. You're really trying to... make links with the past, and trying to do it such a way that it's not a commodity, cause I don't want to commodify those designs to make it so obvious that it's Iroquois, that people think, "this is

good stuff, cause look how Iroquois it is." So...

- GH: Okay. And then on that note, do you feel sort of a pressure, then? I think... I've been told in school, when I made it more of an issue that I'm Mohawk and I'm French and I started doing work that dealt with these issues, I had a prof. tell me that one of my paintings didn't look "Indian" enough. Is that something that you're concerned with? The expectations people have when you say "I'm a Native artist" and they expect you to do work that somehow makes that obvious?
- SN: No, I think... when I used to do a lot of work before I had any kind of... like, you know when you're a young artist you're dealing with subject matter that you know well, you know. And that work turns out to look like poster art. It's like you're rehashing and rehashing stuff that you've seen, and even though you're trying to be innovative and creative and stuff, it's still like work that's gone through that whole process of you trying to make it your own. I think that at some point you have to go through that, unless you're so insightful that you know you don't have to. But... I don't know... I don't know how... I don't think I've ever...
- GH: Do you think that part of that process of trying to make work that is your own and not rehashing something is part of having a strong sense of who you are as a person, and when you are younger you don't really have all of that figured out?
- SN: Well, I went to OCA, I purposefully did not make 'Indian art.' [laughs] [conversation with daughter left out here] I wanted to prove to myself that I could make work that had no cultural significance to it, that my work could be accepted based on what I was doing, and I didn't want to make work that people would say "oh, it's Indian art. It's the flavour of the month sort of thing." So I purposely didn't do that.
- GH: So what did you do then in trying to avoid that. You were doing paintings then?
- SN: Paintings, sculpture. I didn't do any photography at OCA at all. [doorbell] Oh, it's my brother...
- GH: Yeah. One thing I'm trying to do is... I'm having a problem, or I'm finding it difficult to draw on my limited knowledge of Iroquoian philosophy and compare that to Western philosophy which I also have a limited knowledge of. Just the whole idea of individualism in artists-being separate from things, the idea of materialism, of collecting objects and how museums came about... some of that stuff would fit in, religion... it's a huge topic.
- SN: I've just been skimming through this book, but it's about how Native women, and how their place has been shown in history and this is really interesting because it talks about how they had used a woman to be sort of a go-between the tribes and the settlements, and as the guy was writing it down, what do they call it the master-narrator, he writes it down in such a way that he takes away the power of Native women, and then as it goes on, to take the power away from Native men they have to take the power away from Native women, and once they take the power away from Native women, they therefore can take the power away from Native men, and it's all through written narrative, and it's so interesting because just the way they say how the women were, they were looked at as being equals in society, and there was... nobody was dominant over the other, one sex against the other, and they shared this structure, so then it just becomes very obvious about how they write about things, so the structure starts being taken away from them...

- GH: And that [book] traces it through writing? Through the writing of history?
- SN: Yeah. I've been... I'm just beginning... I think "ah! So that's how they did it!"
- GH: Yeah it makes sense. That's the thing, it's such a huge, huge topic, and I'm trying to come at it... I'm trying to use some pretty basic metaphors, like the *Kahswentah*, the Two-Row Wampum, as an example of the Iroquoian idea of living together, but not influencing one another's way of life, and how that is totally misunderstood by non-Aboriginal people, about how just as a basic philosophy how that's really resulted in a very different way of being in the world and all that. That, and... just whatever I can draw on to sort of point out the differences, and how the differences in world views, and... so I'm trying to find out how artists like yourself maybe work with those things in their work, and how that comes out, and if it does.
- SN: See we were always told too that the Iroquois were independent thinkers, and the whole society was based on everyone having their own mind, their own thoughts, and then everyone could come together and bring their own thought, and therefore it wasn't necessarily a dictatorship, but everybody had to consent to what was going to happen. I think that, as time went on, what I really want to work on when I'm at Western is, I mentioned it to you before, about when the Iroquois or the Mohawks came from New York state to Brantford, and who came? And what was life like when they got here? Did their leaders come with them or did the leaders stay behind and once they got here did they have to re-establish leaders and who chose who?
- GH: So a real history of the area I guess, all of what's happened.
- SN: Yeah, and I think it's going to be like total dysfunction, you know, cause it's evident to this day that there's really no leadership and a lot of that leadership is based on aggression and...
- GH: Selfish thinking...
- SN: Yeah. That's what it sort of comes off as. I could be wrong.
- GH: I don't know too much about the internal politics except I know that they're not good! Is that one reason why you left the reserve?
- SN: Well, I grew up there. It's not a very interesting place. [laughs] There's not a lot to do, and I think it must be one of the reasons why I never really thought of it as important enough to go back, cause it's just kind of frustrating now.
- GH: Your brother... is he...
- SN: He's on the reserve.
- GH: So he's decided to fight it out.
- SN: Yeah. He gets himself into trouble.
- GH: Is he on the council?
- SN: No. He just says "Whoa! What's going on here?" that sort of thing. And then he can... he'll... he's not a lawyer or anything, but he can read these things and sort of tell them "well, what you're doing is not really right you know. If you look here

this is what you're supposed to be doing."

GH: Is he involved with the Longhouse at all?

SN: He goes to a Longhouse.

GH: More and more that's becoming an issue. I guess the Longhouse is getting stronger. Is that something that you go to once in a while?

SN: No. I don't really have any interest in it. I think, too, it becomes a struggle because certain people feel they have certain rights over you because they are inherently born into something, you were never a part of it, and therefore they think they're more 'Indian' than you are, and I figure "I don't think so. Just because you know something I don't, that doesn't necessarily mean I'd rather..." I don't know. Life's too short. I have paintings to paint.

GH: Yeah. Those are issues that I'm working with myself is that whole idea of percentages and that sort of a... how Native people have become indoctrinated with the, I guess a lot of it comes from the *Indian Act*, the idea that you have to a certain percentage to be Indian. But a lot of it comes, too, from growing up on reserve, growing off, you know, I mean "apple-Indian" or whatever.

SN: But that just goes back to 'sticks and stones' types of things, and if people can have power over you by saying "you don't qualify," you know, then they'll use it. Certain people will use those tactics, and... I don't know.

GH: But for yourself that hasn't been an issue that you, I mean as far as personal identity in saying... well I guess I should ask you how you identify yourself?

SN: As an Indian, as an Iroquois...

GH: I guess. I guess it depends on the context. Who's asking, right?

SN: No, I don't know. I think I identify with myself as being an Iroquois person, because I'm with my family, you know, my brother and sisters and all that, and they're Iroquois people, you know...

GH: If they are, I must be!

SN: Yeah. I figured, it's not the sort of thing where we all meet at one point and go "hoya hoyo hoyo", you know. And a lot of my friends are Iroquois. [laughs] Sounds crazy, eh? My friends are Iroquois, my dad, you know, my husband's Italian! [laughs] But, I don't know. I add it on. I live here, and read these books and I think it depends on... see it comes down to the ratio of how much Indian blood you have in you. If Indians decided we don't care about that, we don't care how much blood you have, we want everybody to be Indian who wants to be Indian, saying you have Indian blood in there some place, they could overpower the government like that! You know. But for some reason they can't see it that way.

GH: Yeah. That would be interesting.

SN: I think it depends on where you place yourself, you know.

GH: Okay. That reminds me... so, as far as being included in shows that deal with Iroquoian identity and maybe... do you think that you're somewhat pigeon-

holed? Into being an Aboriginal artist before anything else?

SN: Being placed with other Iroquois artists?

GH: Or just by being viewed by curators or whatever as an Aboriginal first and then as a woman artist, as a photographer?

SN: Well, I've been in shows that were basically non-Aboriginal, and I've been in shows that were mostly, I should say, the majority was Indian art. And I find the strongest shows for myself are the ones that are Indian art because of the issues that are being dealt with, because you can look at the work and appreciate the process, the thought process behind what you're looking at. And I like to think that the work that's there was brought there for the energy that it's creating.

GH: So do you think also that, in showing it with other Iroquoian artists, that there is a certain level of understanding that you can kind of take for granted.

SN: I don't think you're taking it for granted. I think you're appreciating, you're coming together based on heritage and it's a much different feeling than if you're there as "artists".

GH: There's a different kind of focus. What are some of the reasons that you felt you had to go back to school to an institution *now*? Your career is sort of moving along nicely, it seems.

SN: Well, the last three or four years I have been producing, producing, producing, producing. And it got to a point that I was almost producing without thinking about it. and I started feeling like "what am I doing" you know. "What the hell am I doing," cause here I am... sometimes I'd finish a piece of work and it would go out the door, without [me] really having time to reflect on what I was doing or reflect on having the piece around me, and it seems that I'd do that and then I'd go on to the next piece. So I started feeling pretty, I guess it would be superficial. What I was doing wasn't really something that was coming out of me, it was sort of bouncing off of me. So I thought that going back to school, I hope that it works out the way I want it to. Going back and taking the time, and really thinking about what I'm doing, and I start seeing if the direction I was going in is the direction that I want to be in. Or something that I haven't thought about hopefully that I'll start thinking about it, it will give me the time to think about it.

GH: So this is a real self-reflective kind of time? A more... just a slow-down to think about a lot of different things?

SN: Yes. It's a real huge luxury. A luxury because I'm actually giving myself two years to think about a lot more than what I was doing. I hope it comes out that way.

GH: So do you expect your work to change a lot then after this?

SN: No, I don't expect it to change. I just want to appreciate what I'm doing. I just got to the point where I stopped appreciating what I was doing. I felt like (pants)... running...

GH: Just part of a machine, I guess... I've had the luxury of being in school for a long time, and not being in the real world. I look forward to being out, but... Then... I have a studio. I want to start producing. I have lots of ideas piling up. A log jam of stuff.

- SN: You know Ryan Rice? I should give you his number. He's in Montreal, and he's the one who did the *Nation to Nation* show. But he's a Mohawk as well from Kahnawake, I think. Did you see that show that CBC put on last summer with Greg Staats and Patricia Deadman and Mary Anne Barkhouse?
- GH: No, I didn't.
- SN: I can lend you that tape. It talks about a lot of these issues that you're...
- GH: I'd love to look at it.
- SN: Barkhouse is in there... and a bunch of the NIIPA people. It's a video on photographers.
- GH: Is that the lead-in to the catalogue? The big book that they put out?
- SN: No. Do they have a big book put out?
- GH: I know they've been trying to do it for a few years.
- SN: No, this particular film was shot last, oh maybe four years ago and it's just... they finally got it done so it looks kind of funny. We're all so young looking. Young and thin. I was so skinny four years ago. [laughs]
- GH: The next thing I was going to ask you, I guess... we probably covered it pretty much, but what does Mohawk mean to you, or Iroquoian?
- SN: Well, Mohawk and Iroquoian? I think it's a... I became really more aware... well, not more aware but it sort of became more important to me to say I was an Iroquoian artist especially after the *Land, Spirit, Power* exhibition where there were no Iroquoian artists, and I thought why weren't there any, you know. There could have been one.
- GH: Yeah, really. That's quite an oversight. Something I hadn't actually thought of before. I was just so happy to see that show there...
- SN: So it... I don't know why there weren't any. Did you see? Yeah, you must have seen *Land, Spirit, Power*. I think it had really nice abstract qualities to the show, but I just think if there was one Iroquoian artist it would have meant more to me.
- GH: Do you think that is maybe because people just look at Indian artists as "Indian artists" right now, and that would mean that curators and institutions haven't started to think of okay we can have a Micmac show, we can have an Iroquoian show, we can have a Sioux show, a Cree show, whatever... people haven't really come to the awareness that there are very different traditions that people might be drawing on? There's a lot more?
- SN: I think the Iroquois sensibility is much more... like it's pretty strong. Like they're really... the statements that are made are much more in your face. I think it must irritate a lot of people, that kind of forcefulness is right there. Like my friend Dan. Do you know Dan Moses at all?
- GH: Daniel David Moses? I probably just shook his hand [laughs] when he was at Western or something.
- SN: He's an Iroquois playwright from Toronto, and we have this discussion quite a bit

about how the Ojibway and the Cree are sort of the vanguard of the Toronto art scene, you know, and it's kind of... I don't know if it's consumerism, but there's a kind of flo... [whispers]... I can't say that on the tape.

GH: That's okay. I don't have to use it all...

SN: But there's kind of a flowery portrayal, or there's this bed of roses feel to it, eh? And it's all... people confuse being Iroquois with being Ojibway, cause they'll say "what does the Trickster mean to you?"

GH: Oh, yeah!

SN: And you kind of go "what?!" Like you don't know what they're talking about...

GH: Yeah, the Trickster is something that's definitely locked on to. Definitely. And applied to everybody.

SN: And it's fed. The community feeds on it. I think they like it because it has this kind of approachable feel to it. Those Iroquois...

GH: I guess that also leads into humour. And how the Trickster and how it's thought that Native artists and playwrights are so good with this humour, this kind of satire and stuff. And I know that you get talked about that way a lot. How do you feel about that?

SN: Well, it gets kind of frustrating at times, like you know, "I'm not funny!" you know. [laughs]

GH: Well, sometimes you want to be serious, I guess, right. And...

SN: Yeah. Especially if you're showing people serious work and they're laughing their heads off, that's not funny. [laughs] So that gets a little frustrating. And then sometimes people only know the funny stuff, and that's all they want to see. I had a guy who was doing his PhD on Indian humour from B.C. Do you know him - Alan Ryan. So he was doing his doctorate on Indian humour, and he only wanted to see my funny work. And I think...

[end of side 1]

SN: ... and her question was well... "I don't think this piece is funny. Is there any reason why you're not doing humorous work any more?" [laughs] In life there's more than just humour. There's life, you know. Life isn't always funny.

GH: What did that piece deal with?

SN: It was the same piece that was in Agnes Etherington, "*Are You My Sister?*"

GH: That was a series of photographs... yeah, okay. I saw your work at the London Regional too. Something I read by a writer said that that series of photographs was a narrative journey of a woman travelling from the reserve into the city. Does that also have autobiographical kind of...?

SN: Well, I like to think that every time I do a piece there's a bit of autobiography in that because I don't want to make stuff up, because I think if you want it to be sincere there has to be an element of truth there some place. You don't necessarily have to say "this is my life" you know, but somewhere, it's there some

place. And this story is about trying to find heaven on earth, more or less, and so with the paintings of landscape in the background interspersed with the photos of the city life, you have to deal with the city to live, I think, and in some cases you choose to. Cause I remember living on the reserve, our big day was to come to Brantford, you know. That was probably like 40 minutes in the car. But once you get here you're confronted with all these rules of institution and, you know, you can only park here between the hours of... and you have all these grids to work with. And then when you're living in the city situation... you always want to be back... you always want to get back to that kind of idealistic life some place... "if only I could..."

GH: Yeah. There's always that romantic image.

SN: Then on the other hand, if you never get there you still have the sky you can work with. So I don't know if it answers your question...

GH: Well, I'm just wondering... one thing I'm interested in too is how, if different artists see a sharp contrast between an Iroquoian way of life and the kind of life that they live in the city, and how you sort of balance those two different things?

SN: I've been giving this a lot of thought too because, if you look at Longhouses, they're basically like apartment buildings and if they're placed in such a way that it would be a town it would be like a small city, you know. You've got to have somebody specializing in something, and somebody else specializing in something else. So, by living in a city like Brantford you're really extending that notion of Longhouse and, I think, living on the reserve especially, when people are separated, I think it's pretty unnatural.

GH: Okay. So in one way you can look at this as being even closer to an idea of living in a community.

SN: Provided you have a community within the city.

GH: And that's just tough to do, because there's so many people.

SN: Yeah. And I think, too, living in a city like Brantford, that a lot of Indian people still live on the reserve for their social life. They don't depend on the city for any kind of group function, which I think is too bad because if the Indians in Brantford got together they could more or less design a school.

GH: Is there a friendship centre in Brantford?

SN: Yeah.

GH: Is it very active?

SN: I don't think it's very effective. I think that it could be more effective, but right now they're sort of looking for ways of staying in business, and economic gain, all that sort of thing...

GH: I guess it must also be hard to do things in the city when the reserve is so close... you can't really have a PowWow...

SN: You could. You could if the dynamics were a little bit more... perked up. But I think because it is so close people just go back and, you know, PowWowin' and come back. Which I think is too bad, because you could really do a lot in town.

- GH: Maybe that's what you should do next. Start an Iroquois club, or something. Or a school. When you said school, did you mean a school of painting?
- SN: That would be great, eh? But I guess I'm thinking of a school - like a grade school.
- GH: So do you think there could be an *Iroquois style* then?
- SN: Of teaching, or what?
- GH: Of expression, of painting, of art?
- SN: Yeah, I think so. But it has to... I think right now everybody's learning how to put the paint on the board, you know. I think, if anything, writing is probably more advanced than the art, the art end of it.
- GH: Why do you think that is? When you think of writing are you thinking of Beth Brant and Daniel David Moses, like those people have more established careers, I guess?
- SN: I think it's... they're probably more consistent, eh?
- GH: It's an older tradition.
- SN: Going back to Pauline Johnson. Or you can go WAY back, to the orators, you know, like there was an oral history, and everything was said, and you hear stories about people being able to get up and welcome people and they would stay for like two hours at a time, but at the same time the listeners... they probably weren't bored, you know. It was probably just the way they did things, and so you have that whole oral tradition right there, right from the very beginning, and it's a... I think it was passed through writing.
- GH: Yeah. That's another thing that's talked about in literary theory--how oral literature, how that influences writing, the whole rejection of a linear story line, the narrative voice... All of those things seem to go against what traditional non-aboriginal, I guess, writing style is, or ways of expressing yourself. You're not supposed to speak from your subjective position and all that, even though that is becoming post-modernism and new literary feminist theory and a lot of different schools of thought are starting to open that up a bit. I wonder how much that's meant for art work, I guess, where people are speaking from their own place more?
- SN: I remember growing up on the reserve, and a lot of the art work that we were exposed to, even though it wasn't like a huge painting or drawing, like there weren't any of these types of people around, but I remember seeing some art work by somebody who was supposed to have been this painter on the reserve, and they were watercolours, and the watercolours were... even though there was detail and stuff, they were very static. But it seemed like the traditional type of drawing and painting, but I think it was really kind of more English than anything...
- GH: Someone who had learned how to paint in school or something, or at least learned how to paint by looking at Western artists or non-aboriginal artists?
- SN: To me, if you could get proportions right, then like "wow, you're an artist!" [Laughs]

Even though the stuff you looked at was, you know, not very pleasant to look at, it was still kind of "well, the legs, if the legs look like legs" then I was impressed. But it wasn't really...

GH: Is that why you're doing photography?

SN: I think so.

GH: You don't have to draw so much?

SN: I really wanted to learn how to draw and paint, because I thought if I can't learn how to draw I'll never be satisfied with myself.

GH:enough to call yourself an artist...

SN: Like at OCA... we'd be there drawing. I had a teacher there come by me and he'd go... [makes a face] he goes "None of my Indian students know how to draw." [laughs] But it's true, all our drawings were like...

GH: Little squiggles? Were you doing Woodland school paintings, like it was innate?

SN: No. I was trying to fight the Woodland stuff, but I just couldn't get the form, and just never mastered the drawing, I've never been a master drawer.

GH: Well, I don't think that has a lot to do with being an artist.

SN: No. Now I know that. But it was like "if only I could draw," you know.

GH: It seems to be the first step. Once you pass that you can do something. You can call yourself an artist and go on...

SN: But I know what a fantastic drawing looks like. I could never even get close to saying, well, that doesn't even look fantastic. It doesn't even look great. More like... blllllgh! I don't know if I'm being a very good help...

GH: No, you are...

SN: ...in the interview...

GH: Interview, schminterview. It's good just to talk to you, actually. It's been great having met a lot of people working in the area, so it's good to... I'm really happy I met Jeff Thomas. I'm looking forward to meeting Patricia Deadman...

SN: Jeff Thomas really surprised me.

GH: Why?

SN: You always hear about Jeff Thomas, and it's like oooh, so intimidating you know, and once I got to know him he was like the least intimidating person around.

GH: He's a very nice guy. I hope I can talk to him some more. He seems really interesting.

SN: You met with Patricia this morning?

GH: No, I still haven't actually called her. I have to. I'm being a bit lazy I guess. It's

holiday time, and I think I'll just have to come back out here in a couple weeks to talk to GH Staats and Patricia Deadman.

One thing I asked Dave Maracle was, if he had to categorize what he did, would he call it traditional, or contemporary, or craft, or political, or spiritual...

SN:or all of the above?

GH: Yeah, or all of the above.

SN: Yeah. I used to try and deal with using traditional symbols in my work because I felt that if I am making an attempt to make it look like it's Iroquois work and was using that sort of as my cultural signifier, to say, this is Iroquois.

GH: Here's an obviously recognizable piece of Iroquois...

SN: Yeah. I should use the really basic simple but nonetheless authentic design, and then as I started working along I thought, cause I'm always... even though today you don't see much evidence of people acknowledging each other for having minds of their own, people really want to say "think like me." I always try to go back to the very basic lesson of Iroquois independence which is 'you start with yourself.' So when I was thinking about that as I make my designs, at one time the traditional designs were quite contemporary... I think people get confused about traditional... they want traditional. To them tradition doesn't move or budge or grow, but I think tradition is more than just something... than trying to keep it static. It's sort of encompassing everything about your culture and your life, and saying "well, I like this part of my life, therefore I will try to keep this in my life. I will try to make it better and hopefully it will enrich people around me as well." And I think that's where the traditional part comes in. So once you start going through that process of thinking what's traditional, what's contemporary, the symbols at one time were contemporary. Somebody had to sit down and say "I've designed this to symbolize this." You know, it has to mean something. But then, I think you're kind of responsible to create your own symbols. So, once I came to that decision it just totally freed me right up to create my own design.

GH: Do you feel you need some sort of approval to do that?

SN: No.

GH: Or peer recognition? If...

SN: You mean to sort of go off on my own and make my own stuff up?

GH: Yeah, partly.

SN: I don't think so because I'm doing it in a respectful way. I'm not doing it to say I'm going to trash anything, everything Iroquois. I'm not out to trash anything. I'm out to be expressive for myself, and hopefully by me being expressive for myself I hope that other people sort of can see the expression in it and like it.

GH: Dave Maracle talked about a strong sense of individualism that comes from the Iroquoian tradition, where everybody has a different name... and names actually mean something. Everything is reaffirming your individuality, like you, that you are a special individual, a specific person, which goes right along with what you're talking about. Being able to... that designs aren't static, that they should change, that you should have the freedom to sort of reinvent your own. The whole idea of what Iroquoian means is also... that's what I'm trying to say, is that that should

be... something that isn't static, that you can call it traditional or contemporary, you can call yourself Mohawk or not, and that should be okay. You shouldn't have labels imposed on you, one way or another. But that's not what happens in the art world when you start putting your work out there.

- SN: At that point you should be secure enough that you shouldn't care, you know. Or you do care, but if you've gone through the process of thinking about what you're doing, and if you've done a piece and you've thought out as much as you can about it, then it's sort of on its own. It sort of has its own life at that point.
- GH: I guess I can't help but think of the history, though. Of being excluded from galleries and things, and that maybe that's a bit of a privileged situation that we have now, to be able, to even begin to think about saying that. That it's something we don't have to be concerned with, if we are concerned about having a career where we can possibly get enough money from it to live.
- SN: I've been thinking about this too. It's always nice to have your work hanging up in a gallery and stuff, but at the same time I think, maybe I want to start slowing down a bit. I think that to get your work into schools or even into places where a lot of Indian people will be travelling through because a lot of them don't go to museums or galleries, only a certain kind of person goes there, you know. But to have a situation where you could approach schools and say, you know, you want to bring art work in. I think it would be a real nice thing to have kids see art work, especially if it is Iroquois-based art, put it in Iroquois schools.
- GH: So you would like to have your work and the work that other people do more accessible to people so that it doesn't just end up hanging in a museum or locked away somewhere. It is a very elite group that goes and sees these things, and they don't really have any relevance to it.
- SN: Yeah, I think it's kind of like, the ideal thing you know. You make a piece of work and it gets shown in a gallery, it's like what everyone kind of aims for, isn't it?
- GH: Well, I don't know. Is that what you aim for?
- SN: I don't really 'aim' for it... like...
- GH: It just happens...
- SN: Yeah. I guess at one point I aimed for it, you know, and now it's like "oh!" [laughs] But I think, like the Woodland Centre's probably as close to getting work out to the community as it gets, cause they have kids brought in and...
- GH: I felt really good about getting some work in there. You feel like finally you're speaking to an Aboriginal audience. It changes how you think about your work because all of a sudden it's being seen by an audience that understands it a little bit more, and might have some different thoughts on it. Like I really worried about people getting upset with the...
- SN: ... The Kahstoweh? [laughs]
- GH: Yeah, and the Warrior flag.
- SN: But they didn't, eh?
- GH: I didn't get too much feedback on it, but showing it in different places, mostly the

people that looked at the work were laughing.

SN: But they recognized it?

GH: Um, hmm.

SN: Good. I did this other piece. It was a teepee, and the teepee was made out of bingo cards and around the teepee I had this indoor/outdoor carpeting, it was brown on the inside and green on the outside, but then I had this white picket fence made out of cigarette cartons, and in the back I had dresses made out of pull tabs, and then I had a buffalo made out of pull tabs too. And so it was all about gambling and cigarette selling, and people trying to make a living, or scrounge up some kind of monetary thing in place of food to relieve really quick.

GH: Get rich quick scheme, kind of thing.

SN: So I had this piece up in Buffalo, and I thought "oh, somebody's going to yell at me for trying to think who the hell do I think I am for..."

GH: ...portraying it this way...

SN: Yeah. Kinda making fun of people that do this, but really what they're trying to do is better their lives, but, so I kind of put it up with trepidation: "oh, maybe I've gone too far." But at the opening I was walking around and these two little old Indian women were standing there, and they were laughing, and they said "did you do this piece?" and I said "yeah." "Oh, it's a good one!" [laughs]

GH: Great! So you felt it was okay.

SN: Yeah. Cause I was kind of hitting thin ice here. Kind of putting myself on a pedestal, saying "tut, tut." Did we get off topic?

GH: No, not at all. I'm just trying to... usually I just talk and then I look at these questions to see if I'm missing anything... um, another thing with the whole metaphor of the Two Row Wampum, and having two parallel lines, when you think about your work do you think about that as a crossover, or an intersection, or one thing I like to say since there is a Mohawk tradition of building bridges. Would you think of your artwork as a bridge between cultures, or...

SN: I guess because my circle is so small, like as far as my family and friends go, that when I create work I more or less do it for that circle. If I'm doing something I'm usually looking towards my family, so that would be my sisters and my brother. I kind of don't go beyond that that much, so I don't know if it's building bridges...

GH: You don't think it's really that open to...

SN: Well, I like to think that... I don't like to think it's like narrow, or small, but I'm just sort of directing it towards them, and then I think that if I can put a lot of thought and feeling into what I'm doing that it sort of becomes universal. I don't know if it works that way, or...

GH: ...that there are commonalities between everybody... that in some way anybody can relate to what's going on, in your photos or in your work.

SN: I think one of the best examples of sort of getting beyond that was actually doing the film. Cause then I had to really think of a much larger audience than just

doing something for...

GH: And the film's been very well received...

SN: Yeah.

GH: And you're working on the next one...

SN: Um, hmm.

GH: What about using your family... in all your photos and everything? I know when I got a camera, the reason I wanted a camera was so I would never have to be in the pictures. Was that part of it?

SN: Kind of. Well, I didn't really use my family a lot because I wanted them to be part of the work too. I just almost finished a video using my brother. I should show you the video, but... I like using them because I work so much doing other stuff that I don't see them too much. If I can be with them and work on something then it becomes fun and it becomes more meaningful for me, you know, and I get the chance to see them, and that sort of becomes sort of a balance here.

GH: So it's a way of building... of being a family.

SN: Business and pleasure.

GH: Yeah, business and pleasure. It looks like you have a good time, anyway, I mean that film looked like a lot of fun.

SN: Yeah we didn't talk for months after.

GH: Started with a whisper and ended with a...

SN: A Kapow! [laughs] It was pretty intense at times, cause I promised them a certain amount of pay, and then as time went on they got less and less pay, and then at the same time the newspaper printed that I got this grant for \$10,000, and it's like "she got all this money and she's only giving us THIS much?" [laughs]

GH: It must be hard to balance then, since you're the director and the artist and your family... someone could look at your family as if you're exploiting your family.

SN: Maybe.

GH: I'm not saying that, but... And I think I have some ideas on how you do avoid that, from what you're talking about. What do you think?

SN: About exploiting them?

GH: About how you work, like you already said how you're working/using your family as a way of building on the family, being together... what else is in there? I guess when it comes to getting, in your artist's career, when it comes to getting recognition, do you see, maybe, your sisters getting recognized as great actors?

SN: I guess so.

GH: Maybe, or like I mean what will they get out of it? Will they just enjoy seeing the finished product?

- SN: Well, I like to think I'm making them part of history.
- GH: They're being immortalized...? I mean, have you done self-portraits? Like the waitress painting? That's you being the waitress?
- SN: Yes, a few years ago. Quite a few. The series that was at the [London} Regional. It was self portraits.
- GH: Okay, so there's... all right.
- SN: They participate and I think they have a good time, and... I don't know.
- GH: I guess there's a couple of other things we can talk about. That whole idea of traditional work, and we talked about the design work and all that, but what other traditional, like you said you were not really active in the Longhouse, but are there other traditional things that are important to you, like do you try to live the "good life" and all that? Like Handsome Lake or something like that?
- SN: No. I don't think so. I think about the closest thing I can do in that regard is by trying to look at my work, by trying to read, by trying to get other perspectives, other points of view, and not necessarily sticking with the Iroquoian point of view. It's really trying to keep my mind open, which sometimes gets really hard, you know. Especially when you get into institutions and...
- GH: Starting with Derrida?
- SN: Derrida yes! And then you can challenge the people you're reading and you can challenge the people who are trying to get you to read the stuff and start challenging the philosophy--Western European philosophy.
- GH: Right. That raises a big question. Because of Western European philosophy it's... there are libraries full of it. It's such a huge, huge well-documented thing, but the way it's taught, and the way I come across it is it's always very Eurocentrically focused. It doesn't look at other cultural beliefs, so when you say challenge it, don't you find it difficult to speak from the Iroquoian perspective, or do you think that's what you're doing when you say challenge it?
- SN: Well, we're reading about Plato. And Mark Cheetham, do you know Mark Cheetham?
- GH: Um hmm.
- SN: So he was saying how Plato was the first guy to come up with this idea that the sun was the light, and to get knowledge you have to see the light. Referring to knowledge and just sort of being aware of that. It kind of aggravates me that someone in that position can say something like that because, talking about Plato and how he travelled to different countries and, you know, wouldn't he sort of pick those ideas up in Oriental philosophies?
- GH: Yeah. There's an assumption that there's this pure rational thought that comes from one area, and that everything is inferior to that.
- SN: Right. And I'm doing this essay on displacement so this morning I was just sort of whizzing through the Creation story, and the version I was reading talked about how a tree was pulled out but in its place was planted another tree, and from the

tree, this tree, were the blossoms, the cherry blossoms are the ones that emitted light for the people to see. And I thought, well, surely these two people, they didn't meet Plato too? And they became known as the Orbs, or the Sun People, you know.

GH: Yeah. There are many examples. So did you raise your hand in class and say "hold on..."

SN: I said "um, didn't Plato go to the Orient?" and he goes "Nopel" [laughs] But that's just the way he is. He's the expert in this stuff.

GH: He's an authority.

SN: ...*the* authority. And I thought "oh, okay." But just the fact that this is the way it is, no other thought existed before this guy came along, and that's the way it is. And it discredits anybody with any kind of philosophy at all.

GH: It can be so naïve to think that. So when you're teaching, do you try to give different perspectives on things?

SN: I try to listen to what they're trying to tell me, and...

GH: ...the students?

SN: Yeah. And I find that sometimes it's really hard because, first of all they're pretty intimidated to just speaking, so what they're trying to say to me I have to really try to listen to what they're REALLY trying to say. And then, it all comes down to being respectful, seeing if I'm hearing what they're trying to tell me. In those cases it gets a little hard.

GH: So you don't try to... it's not so much that you're trying to impart your superior knowledge and all that stuff on "uninformed students". You're letting them discover their own path, I guess?

SN: Yeah. I think I'm really trying to hear what they're trying to tell me, and see where they're trying to go with it, and sometimes they really do want advice or opinion, or all that other stuff. And then I can say "well, why don't you try this." Cause most of the time they just sort of want me to be a sounding board for them.

GH: Right. Now... could I ask you about stereotypes, I guess. I guess we talked about that too.

SN: Stereotypes in which way?

GH: Well, I think stereotypes work in all ways, right? That Native people have their own stereotypes about how they're supposed to and what they're supposed to be, and that non-Native people have their ideas of what Native people are supposed to be too. So, do you consciously react to stereotypes in your artwork?

SN: I used to. I think that's where all the humorous stuff came from. I was sort of reacting to the Noble savage and the Indian woman, how she's sort of depicted as being very subservient and kind of no thoughts of her own and that sort of thing.

GH: When viewers see your sister in a Star Trek costume...

SN: That was me! [laughing]

GH: I was trying to remember...

SN: The final frontier...

GH: That people laugh at that? And maybe that isn't supposed to be funny? Like, I don't know, are you a big Star Trek fan?

SN: I used to be. In the 70s I think. Not now, though.

GH: It could just be a case of that's something that you really like and you go to Star Trek conventions all the time, and you're really serious about wanting to show people that this is one of your interests?

SN: No, I don't think so. [laughing]

GH: But I guess people, the assumption is that it's funny because Indians aren't supposed to be going off into space. Although they do now, because the new Star Trek has a Native person. I don't watch it often but it's good to know there is a Warrior out there... I think. And, Graham Greene's been doing some cheesy space shows.

SN: He's into everything, eh?

GH: He really is, yeah.

SN: I think that's kind of a sign of the times, isn't it? They can't find any other Indian.

GH: There are no... there's only a few Indians left and thank goodness one of them's an actor. Well, I guess I'm pretty much done running through these questions. Is there anything that you wanted to talk about?

SN: So, when you put this together, you're going to say this is what Iroquois artists think, or how are you going to construct this?

GH: I guess what I'm doing...

[end of tape]

Appendix 4

Interview with Jeff Thomas

December 13, 1995

- Jeff: What I started doing, basically when I started photographing the PowWow dancer, I started out in black and white and then I found that it was difficult to do that without including the colour because it is an integral part of their presence, their persona. So I started these colour portraits of the dancers.
- Greg: Now did you... this isn't done on site, right?
- JT: Yeah.
- GH: Is it? Because the background looks...
- JT: It was done at the Convention Centre in Winnipeg.
- GH: I was going to ask you about that [the colour], because in one of the articles that I looked at you stated very clearly that you only used black and white, and that you saw colour as a barrier to getting into the photograph. So it's an interesting kind of development, I guess.
- JT: Initially I just did black and white, because what I wanted to do was to... I was more interested, I think, to identify the perceptions of a particular type of icon, to do it in an abstract manner, in a sense to go beyond the daily perceptions that people would have from watching t.v. or movies. You always see it in the media and Hollywood or whatever, so what I wanted to do was to draw out the essential parts of the dancer and in order to do that I had to work in black and white, and then I found after a while that it wasn't being fair to them, to the dancers themselves, to do just black and white. I began to see that there was a need to include colour, and basically what I do is some sort of a portrait of the dancer, in colour it's a full-length (artist colour) shot, like here, and with this one I have a photograph of this one where I focus in on this part here. On the next photograph I focus in on his face, but it's the same perspective as there. And of course some dancers ... these are the only photographs I took of him that are in colour. So what I also do is I respond individually to the dancer. So for some I will do a longer series, some of them I'll do in colour and black and white, an extensive part of them as well as the dancing sequences.
- GH: You're responding to them according to their own wishes?
- JT: No, to how I react to them when I see... what I see as being important, or what draws me to them. Sometimes it's the colour itself, sometimes it's a lot of other things, but generally it's just a presence that I see in a [word], so for this guy here, this is how it would look...
- GH: So it would be a diptych.
- JT: The other thing, too, is because this is an ongoing project, I see this man somewhere along, somewhere in the next few years I'll pick it up again and start photographing more extensively in black and white to complete this series.

GH: So it's almost like an ongoing relationship then? You might see him again. You know him by name and look forward to seeing him again.

JT: Yeah. I never see it as being complete. The interest is always there, so I leave it open... Here's another. One of the interesting things that I find about, you know, I didn't begin taking photographs just because I was in love with photography. I began taking photographs because my first love was historical imagery, and I wanted to know more about it. It raised a lot of questions for me, so I thought... the dialogue was limited in terms of interpreting historical imagery. A lot has been said already, and how much more can you add to it? So the logical progression seemed to me was to become a photographer in order to expand, or add something to what was being spoken about.

When I started photographing the PowWow dancer. One of the things I responded to was the limited view within the historic photographs. Most of the time when you look at them all of this is discarded, the immediate environment of the dancer. And to me that is the most important, the most interesting part of who they are, the relationship to that PowWow environment. So what I did is I started photographing them, and I didn't discard any details from their environment. Including, one of the interesting responses that I always get is, "you know, it's too bad that, like this one, that the number is there", but for me it's a perfect vehicle for maintaining a relevance for the photograph in terms of it being a contemporary view. And certainly, I didn't ask that guy to pose that way, but you know what's really interesting about these guys is the sense of power that comes from the PowWow environment, that the clothing, that the artifact has, the drum, the people watching them. And that goes back in time to the original Warrior societies. So that's what really ... I think the draw for me is that PowWow ... is how an understanding of where you come from and a practice of that history gives you that sense, that bearing in the world, that pride, that attitude, and when you look at an urban environment, and you look at Native people in an urban environment, most of the time you find that missing. So it raises questions about environment which is fundamental to who we are. It's exploration of that environment. Here it's stopped, in terms of the dominant culture looking at us. It stopped with this image; it didn't expand beyond that. So when you analyze that you realize that the focus for us, then, or for me is to go beyond that, to start attacking or exploring the world that lies beyond that view, which is where these photographs come into play. It's not like the urban work is a series unto itself; it's in a relationship to this much larger idea of exploration. That's why I was saying that this idea of politics of cultural identity, and confronting and deconstructing, and reassessing history and all of that ... it's a lot more than that. Because it seems like those sorts of views come to some sort of end, or almost a dead end, and to me there really has to be a sense of exploration. Having the ability to view these different segments of the world that we are part of, which includes the PowWow, which includes the urban, which includes the reserve, which includes the archives, which includes the art gallery, the university, all these things come into play. And to me that's what should be replanted in the work. So, these projects begin to come together and, like I was saying at the Ottawa Art Gallery, next year when I bring all these different parts together to form this idea and try and project it. And like the review in Fuse magazine is interesting and it really propels me because when I realize is what they need to do is see the completed picture. The photographs that were in "AlterNative" were just a segment of the work that I'm doing and...

GH: Were they mostly PowWow images?

JT: No. They were... one was of a dancer, the metamorphosis of a dancer, another was a juxtaposition of a photograph of my brother with the welder's mask on,

against a photograph of an Iroquois warrior, in old Montreal, part of another statue. And that's the one that she was referring to in that article. I'll pull it out... it's going to be up at the CMCP in April. I'll pull it out and you can see it... you'll know what she's talking about in that.

- GH: One thing that I wanted to ask... so, from what you were just saying about place and about environment, about urban and reserve, and the archives and everywhere, is it, would it be fair to say, or is this a correct way to put it, that you're positioning, you're making the viewer aware by positioning Aboriginal peoples in all these different settings, you are making people aware that they are here, and here and here and here and here? That we are really here, and can be welders or PowWow dancers, or archivists, it's pretty much unlimited.
- JT: I think that's a definitive word, unlimited. And I think that, also looking at the opposite side of that, we've been limited in terms of how we've been projected to the public and then you think about the residential schools and things like that ... they've all been so repressive and I think that's what I... you're right... that that's what I want to project, is a sense of... and what I was saying about exploration, is we have the ability now to do that, and maybe everybody doesn't agree with the way that we're doing it, BUT, and you think about, in relationship with relatively to where we're at and our history... it's only been the last 30 or 40 years at the most where we've begun to look at the art as a form of expression, at least in the Western tradition of arts, and only within the last 10 to 12 years that photography has come onto the scene. So this is really in its infancy stages of exploration. But, it's beginning to happen. And I think what I want to do is I want to project that sense that this is a, you know, there's a heaviness of having to deal with politics, but there's also a certain joy in being able to do this. And, I'm thinking back to our relatives, our relations, our ancestors, who didn't have that opportunity. Now that we have it, we damn well better use it.
- GH: It's our obligation.
- JT: And to set the tone, I don't want my work to be viewed by Native students somewhere as really oppressive work. I want there to be this sense of empowerment and joy of looking at the world. It doesn't always have to be this negative.
- GH: And that comes through in the faces and the presence of the dancers. And that can be done in the urban centre as well. This guy... I've never seen an outfit like this before.
- JT: Yeah. I saw him at a PowWow at Sioux Valley in Manitoba. I was with a friend, and I asked him "what does this guy represent?" And they didn't know. So they went over and they asked these old guys, and they said that they really didn't know. They thought that it was similar to something like a ghost dancer, or something like that. Which they didn't elaborate on and I didn't really ask. But he was very unique. And then I asked him in a letter, cause most of... well they all wear bustles on their back, he doesn't wear one... and I asked him why he didn't wear one and he said that he really didn't have an answer, which is an emotional thing that he felt. This is how he wanted, how he needed to present himself, and that's all that he knew.
- GH: It's beautiful.
- JT: Yeah. Quite a powerful dancer too. One of those guys that, once he got dancing, you really saw this joy coming out. I have one of him dancing. Here's

another one. See, like this guy here. I photographed him over a period of about 5 years and this was him in about 1982 or 83 and then I photographed him in about 1985 I think that was, and...

GH: Where was this PowWow?

JT: That's at Six Nations; that's what there are.

GH: The Grand River Powwow?

JT: Yeah.

GH: What year was this?

JT: I'm pretty sure that this was 1982 or 1983. Probably '82. And I think this was '84. He created a lot of controversy at this PowWow because he came back the second day and he had painted the whole American Flag on his face, and I photographed that, I did a portrait of him like that, but a lot of the vets there didn't like that he had done that. So I asked him, I said "why did you do that?" He said "I just saw it in a dream the night before," before he got there. So when he got to the PowWow.

GH: He had to do it.

JT: It wasn't out of disrespect for anybody, it was just his feelings. And this is the original photograph that I took of him in 1980. It was either 1981 or 82 because these were around the same period of time, but this was the first PowWow that I really began to photograph at. He came over to where I was standing with my camera, and he came to like within 10 feet of me. It almost seemed like he paused and he danced in front of me for a short period of time. And that's the photograph that came out of that. And that's really the photograph that drew me into the PowWow. Because there was something unmistakable about what was happening here, there was something that was authentic about it. I think a lot of people think of PowWows as kind of unauthentic, it's like done for tourists or whatever, it's really a creation that came out of Hollywood, rather than out of thousands of years of cultural progression. So to see that face there at that moment told me that this was something I had to pursue.

GH: I think PowWow has become, I mean as much as it is a pan-Indian type of activity, it has become something unto itself. I mean, I think anywhere where people can, where there is this kind of sense of empowerment and... just the exchange between people and linking up with your friends, really. It has become something more than just a Hollywood dance, that's for sure.

JT: Well, you know for the Native community it always has been. When you think about it, it began out of the northern plains, part of the Sundance gatherings that were going on, and it was these communities coming together in the summer for celebrations. And when you're at a PowWow, and you're there and you watch these people, this is just a part of their life. This is just another segment of who they are. And there isn't all the politics going on, you know, is this appropriated, are we reinforcing the stereotype whatever. This is just people who are there, participating for them in real life. And I think I respond to it in the same sense. In this view there's something very real here about the continuity of tradition and a lot of things have changed, yes they are there performing just as they are there competing for money. But who doesn't have to make a living in the modern world? These people do it, and all these other things come into it as well.

- GH: Well, even just the expense of travelling to a PowWow, I mean... I don't have a problem with that. It's great. I think that they're great.
- JT: So there's a lot of work like this in here. This is this guy as well. So you can see how much he actually transforms over the years. That's why it's an ongoing project. Now I saw him at a PowWow last year, I think at Kahnawake, and I didn't get a chance to talk to him, but now he's this really big--he's filled out, and so I'm going to photograph him next summer to add to this series.
- GH: What about all the different dances and things? Is it important to you to educate the viewer about different dancing styles, just the context of the PowWow itself?
- JT: Not initially. For me what I was doing was trying to figure out the framework for approaching the PowWow in a relevant and respectful way. And not to come into it and look at it for... and to draw from it and sell photographs. Cause these will sell. I could go out and promote the Hell out of these photographs, if I want to, but I refuse to do that. I don't sell them, generally. What I do is they usually find their way into exhibitions. So for me it has always been this sense of trying to figure out a way to approach the subject matter and what I'm finding now is... I photographed a PowWow in Bismark last summer, and it kind of brought to conclusion, this sort of theoretical framework that I had been building up, approaching the PowWow. I think the next phase when I begin is going to be based more on gathering information--like to sit down and talk about all of these parts that make up their outfit. This guy's Menominee from Wisconsin so it's interesting to think about where his style came from--why it's different from somebody from the northern plains, things like that. It's obvious that, like the floral beadwork and the headpiece up here, and some of the silver work here comes from that Woodland tradition. And his style is also unique. So, the next segment of this work will go into more descriptive material of them. It's interesting because, approaching this work I've seen it as a lifetime's work, in a sense. And each decade or each section takes on new significance. What I'll also begin doing is photographing out in Alberta and making a connection between the Indian cowboy and the PowWow. And take it in the historical sense of the influence that the horse had on Aboriginal culture in the 17th century, and bring in a contemporary focus to that. So, it just keeps on growing every year, and as I mature, different things come out of that.
- GH: I guess that raises two questions: are you going to start to put text into the photos? Like right in? Little arrow pointers, this comes from a West-coast tradition, you can see the amalgamation in the sash of Iroquoian beadwork and Dene or whatever. So I'm wondering how you'll put that educational aspect in there. The other question is: do you travel the PowWow circuit in the summer?
- JT: I don't travel it. I haven't yet. Well, I travelled out to Bismark and photographed the PowWow out there, but I haven't wanted to get into that. Because I don't see myself as a documentary photographer, in that sense, or a photo journalist, digging in there for all of this material. What I've been trying to do is to maintain a distance in a sense, to observe and then to kind of come into it, respond to it quickly, and then move out of it, to keep my view fresh, I suppose. Because I'm looking for a certain stylized image onto the PowWow. So I don't find that... it hasn't pushed me in that direction--following it throughout the summer, creating a documentary of the PowWow. Maybe at some point I will. Maybe it's building up to that. It could be. But I think to your other question, is a lot of the dancers that I've talked to, a lot of them have talked about, they've wanted to do books on the PowWow and have descriptive material and to talk about different parts

of their outfits and different parts of the dances and things like that. So I think at some point I am moving in that direction of the writing, the photographs so that that can be done. But of course then you're talking about another segment or use of this work, where for me it's talking about identity and urban issues and things like that. Why there's a lack of monuments to Aboriginal people, the question of the Sundance, of the warrior, all of that. And then there's the other educational part of it. I was talking to a man from South Dakota a few months ago, and I'm gonna send him some slides of these photographs, and he wants to use them on the reserve down there in the classes that they teach. So...

GH: That idea of urban and the PowWow circuit as a thing in itself... do you think maybe it's more responsible to your, and I can relate to this in a way, I think, a sense of place where a city, an urban city, that this is my place? I have a responsibility to make this a comfortable place for myself and for other people? That by, when the PowWow, say, comes here to Nepean Tent and Trailer park, or to Six Nations, or wherever, those are places where I would feel comfortable going, in a way, whereas I might not feel the same way travelling the whole PowWow trail and being an observer rather than a participant. And that's the logical kind of view that's being expressed, I think.

JT: I'm not sure if it's moving into more descriptive recording of events. That's the danger of all of these things, are you becoming an anthropologist? But I think that, in dealing with urban realities, there's like a Museum of Civilization, there's a National Archives that houses all this historical material. And like these paintings here, done by Karl Bodmer in 1833 and 1834 along the Missouri River, I grew up seeing these images here and there, and to me what I always wanted to know is "how do they connect to me" as an Indian, as living in an urban area, as a survivor of that era, what's the connection there? And that's what's interesting, and just like with the PowWow itself. It's not so much that I want to glorify the PowWow, but like these images here, there's a dialogue there, that's waiting to be discovered, and it talks about a lot of things that haven't been talked about before, like museum practice, we didn't collect those artifacts, that are in the museums now, but they're there, and if we begin to look at them, what begins to emerge from that. That's what I want to find, is that gateway from the past to the present that hasn't been spoken about, and that really gives you in an urban reality, a way of dealing with this reality and saying that there's something here, there's a reason for me to live here. Should I be on the reserve? No. I'm here. So how do you make that worth living. And I think that's what happens a lot of times when you hear about the suicides that happen in Native communities and things like that, is that sort of question that's missing, or the procedure or the movement towards answering that question, which is what I think provides that spark for life, those issues, because all of that meaning, and it drives you crazy, and you want to answer it and you find a way to answer it. You start digging into archives and museums and reading books and going to school and discussing these things. Certainly I don't have the answers to the PowWow, what it means and all this. I'm just learning that, I'm almost 40 now, I'm just beginning to understand it. And it has taken that long because nobody else is doing it. It's like when I was in school at the University of Buffalo in 1973 those things weren't being discussed. It was the larger issues of strip mining, out west, and the politics of Wounded Knee, and all of this. Well there was a whole other reality that was going on there and people weren't talking about it. So, I decided to begin exploring that and to find that gateway. So I guess that's .. it's all up for... I don't have any answers. Maybe at some point I'll be following the PowWow throughout the summer, I'm sure that I will, just to add that other element to this ongoing process.

GH: Part of your exploration then?

- JT: Yeah. You see when I was out in... here are some of the photographs that I took out in Bismark this summer. And I was photographing another dancer, and this guy walked by, and I caught him out of the corner of my eye and he had such a sense of movement and when he walked by this kinetic flow of artifact and man and being in Bismark and all of this.
- GH: All those little dots on the arrows...
- JT: Well when he walked and it was moving, it was almost all virtually in black and white. And I just picked up and I followed him, and I went up to him and I said "can I photograph you?" So, what was important about this was, and what's always interesting, is where that moment happens when you begin to take the photographs, and here it worked out perfectly because, not only is the number here as a signifier to contemporary reality where you don't drift off into this kind of historical romantic gaze of the past. In this shot, look at back here, with the portable toilets. I'm not sure if he'd appreciate seeing those in a portrait of himself. He would probably not have those there, and maybe the viewer wouldn't as well. But for me, as the recorder of this man, it's significant.
- GH: Yeah, those are important locating devices that make sure that this *can't* be misused in a romantic kind of way, a romantic idealist kind of way.
- JT: And that's the subtlety that I love, not being able to do that. This draws you in, but all of a sudden this raises questions about why are they there? Where is this man? All of these different things that are going on. And that's what I really appreciate, the subtleness that can come out of these photographs.
- GH: That's the Mutual of Omaha Buffalo.
- JT: Yeah. And see, what I do a lot of times is I'll move in closer. One of the things that comes out of historical imagery is a photograph like this, but seen from a greater distance where you, that distance really talks about the void between White culture and Native culture, like you can only get so close to the Indian. So what I find and what I respond to, is I say, I move right in, next to the guy to photograph him, and at this level, I also have to be talking to him. So we're standing there talking about stuff, he's telling me jokes, he said 'well what do you think about my friend's necklace, he said they had matching ones so he thought that that was really, really cute in a way. So, he was able to talk about it in that sense, so after he said that, I focused in on the eagle head and I responded to what he had to say.
- GH: Yeah. And that is very much a step beyond what you see in a Curtis photo. Not only is there that distance, it also tends to, by having the human small in the landscape, it tends to... this relationship between the landscape and the objects or the people in it become part of the landscape, so there's that sort of aspect to it too. And this very much speaks of an intimate relationship.
- JT: So, we talked for about 15 minutes, and he also told me something that... his group travels around the country and they also travel in Europe and that... and they've been asked to go to Japan, and he made some reference there to going to Japan and having the Japanese copy their beadwork designs and then marketing them themselves. So, he's almost talking about copyright issues, in going to Japan. And he said it in kind of a funny, anecdotal way, but it packed a wallop in the sense of "yes," and also my responsibility as photographer of not taking advantage of these photographs and going out and next thing you know

you see them on a calendar. So the movement with the dancer continues through these photographs here.

- GH: This was another thing I wanted to ask you about. Are these partial shots, where you focus in on just a part of the costume, because they are more formal, because they are not so much about portraiture, but... I guess I'm just thinking about where the person is taken out... I'm just wondering if that is a concern, or what...
- JT: Well, what I do there, is I respond to museum practice, and when you see an exhibition in a museum, first of all you'd be confronted by a glass case, there's a distance there, there's a distance because you're wondering about if these people sold these things, under what conditions did they have to sell their personal belongings. And what I want to do, is really I see that, this is a series that can't be broken up, because when it is broken up, that's where that can come into it. Once again, another objectification of Aboriginal art forms. So what's important is to see those photographs as a series in relationship to the whole man. So you go almost through a narrative, and... he was quite surprised when I said "would you mind turning around so that I can photograph your bustle" and he was quite pleased to do it. He said "oh really?" like nobody had ever done that before. Meanwhile, about 30 feet away, there was another (photographer). There was a white guy who was photographing Indians, and you could see that he was coming up behind them and just kinda taking snapshots of their bustles and everything, and I saw this guy as probably writing an article for some Indian hobbyist magazine about Indian bustles. And these guys didn't even know he was there? So...
- GH: So he was kinda coming in, just stealing images, and you have to be really suspicious of that.
- JT: So I photographed the bustle because there isn't really any other way to photograph it without seeing him. So, you have to see the whole series in that way, of seeing the portraits of him, this is what he's wearing on his back...
- GH: This is his car, he's from North Dakota... you do get a larger sense even just from what you would get just seeing the overall portrait.
- JT: So, in that sense I find it very difficult to say, for an exhibition say, well we want one of your PowWow photographs. It's hard to do that because you have to see it in total context. I'll do this guy the same way. I'll photograph him here, and then we'll go through a whole sequence of his outfit, and that's what makes up this point of view of the dancer. One of the interesting things that, in Bismark, what I began doing... the reason that I went there is because I heard that they had a big parade that started on the capital grounds and went down to the convention centre. So what I wanted to do was photograph the parade, so this will be another part of the sequence on him. And some of the photographs that I have actually show the state capital building in the background. So it's an interesting... it keeps it in context, once again, but it also shows a sense of continuity from the past... this is how it manifests itself in Bismark, North Dakota. They're not on horseback. They're not parading through the streets on horses, but they're all in their cars.
- GH: Will you be able to make it down to the Fort Erie PowWow?
- JT: No.

GH: For the Friendship Festival.

JT: I've heard about it, but maybe next summer, I might be getting down there.

GH: I'm just thinking, just imagining Buffalo, the city in the background, cause they do the PowWow down there by the river. That seems like it would be interesting for yourself and what you've been describing in your photos.

JT: This was another guy I was photographing down there and I generally start with a view like this. Then I'll go through a sequence of photographs showing him going through the transformation. These become quite beautiful in themselves when they're enlarged, and you begin to see the structure that he adds to this environment, just the grace and stuff that he goes through.

GH: Is this more recent work?

JT: This is all from last summer. That's when I had reached a point... like at this particular point, at this particular PowWow where all of the years I had been working on seemed to come together at this one particular PowWow, and I began doing the things that I'd always wanted to do.

GH: This is at Grand River again?

JT: No. This is in Bismark. So these are the different aspects. This is the tape holding the leggings on, and this is actually putting the bells on.

GH: This raises questions, if you're not used to it, like whoa, they use tape? Yeah. It goes a long way in exploding myths.

JT: Just like this one here...

GH: The basketball shoes... Yeah, that reminds me of the beaded Converse that were in the *Fluff and Feathers* show.

JT: Oh, right, yeah. Jeez, I'm missing a couple of photographs here. The photographs that I wanted to show for that one... his dance bustle was hanging on the back of his van and I photographed it, and what I was going to do was use it in relationship to those sneakers with lights on them... the connection between the dance bustle, the feathers, people...

GH: ...and then the shoes. Yeah, that's great.

JT: So I went through a whole sequence with him, and what's interesting about this photograph was generally this is what you just see in a photograph, like a Curtis photograph, you see that aspect. And what's so incredibly interesting about doing this work is that if I was to take that Curtis photograph, like in 1926 or 1907, whenever it was, this is what I would have photographed. That's what would have been interesting. And I get a chance here to actually explore that area of... this is what we would have seen of Curtis, but this is what I wanted to see, as a Native person looking at this work. And I get the chance to do it. That's what's so exciting about it.

GH: The Curtis is just a very small part of the whole reality.

JT: And you see that's where you have to be descriptive, you have to talk about it,

because people just won't get it. At least most of the time people won't get it. So I just... this a kinda, not a strong one but... it's just of him with the bustle, and of course, the other photographs that I wanted to show you I don't have, actually show the bustle on the side of the van, which in itself is quite beautiful. And then just another towards the end here, another site shot, I have. Then what I did to finish it off is I photographed him and his wife and his daughter in a colour portrait against the backdrop of the van [words illegible], so that I'll complete this series. There'll be a colour photograph. He's kinda beaming, overlooking his daughter who is quite beautiful and his wife over here, and they're all dressed for the PowWow, so, it kind of brings back that contemporary focus to the family travelling together...

GH: Yeah, and you also have the black and white with all the documentary context that goes along with that, and then the family portrait in colour, more fuller, more holistic, kind of a sense that everything is there, the family is there, the colour is there.

JT: The kind of photograph they might take of themselves if they were to do one. And then, taking this body of work, what I began doing was figuring out how these things juxtapose with my own reality, and so I began working with this. Now, with this particular photograph I juxtaposed this one with a different one, but just to give you an idea, this is how I begin dealing with the urban environment, and the way the Indian is remembered by the dominant society. Also, too, what the historical photograph really does represent is this; there's not much difference between the two.

GH: No. And I would imagine that often the carvings would sometimes come directly from early photographs, if they were done earlier.

JT: This photograph is right down here, it's at the department of justice on Wellington Street, and on the left side of the building, the west entry way, there's this Indian up above the doorway. And I did a whole sequence of photographs of this particular piece because right beneath it is carved in stone "Justice"... speaks for itself.

GH: And I hadn't seen this one.

JT: It's really obscure, unless you walk down that little side street. You know where the Supreme Court building is, right?

[end of side one]

GH: So this is what you're going to be showing in the Ottawa show?

JT: A lot of it is.

GH: And a lot of it is this juxtaposition between...

JT: Well, that's what I have to work out, yeah. What I'm going to be doing is using some historical, like Edward Curtis, the original photogravures that the archives has, setting up the image of the past, and then what I'll do is go through the sequence of PowWow photographs in response to that to that particular photograph of Curtis. And, like the one of the man braiding his hair in front of the mirror, in front of the car, maybe what I'll do is juxtapose that with the photograph of Curtis, I'll just... a facial portrait of a particular person, and then build up a dialogue after that. I have basic ideas of how I want to structure it but it's a site-

specific installation. So I'm going to go in there and respond to the space and create the exhibition and doing that in response to the space. So in the main gallery area, what I want to do is I want to actually construct an image of an earthlodge from the Northern Plains and use that as a central focus in the exhibition; I will build the exhibition around this earthlodge, and the next gallery, what I will use is a bus shelter as the central focus of the space, and then I'll use, like where they have the posters and that, I'll make colour enlargements and put it in those areas where the maps are, the bus shelter maps, and things like that, and then each view from the bus shelter will be different sequences of, like, churches and photographs of my son that I have done in urban different places, maybe on the back side there will be another series of PowWow photographs. So each one will give you a different feel. Because, really, I think what it is, it's my personal view of the things that, what occurs to you when you're standing in a bus stop waiting for the bus to come, wherever you're going. For me a lot of times I was thinking about historical things. I was thinking about the way life was a long time ago and I'm thinking about what I'm facing today, going back and forth to the reserve. There would be that image, the words I would hear from the old people on the reserve, and then Sunday night going back to Buffalo and having to re-integrate myself to Buffalo. And then my friends saying, well why are you sounding so funny today, JT?

GH: Yeah, you'd pick up the accent while you were on the reserve.

JT: I'd pick up the accent when I was on the reserve, and I'd go to reserve, and I'd hear my Buffalo-Italian accent coming out and it sounds so odd, talking to the old people there, so I think that's what should come out in an exhibition, and it's not like this heavy-handed politics, it's just... this is life, this is how it is. I'm sorry that it doesn't conform to what people want to think Indian life should be, or was, or whatever. This is just the way it is. That's what I want to be able to reflect. And then people looking at, they can identify with the bus shelter, then maybe after seeing the first section with all this type of imagery going on, they get to the next one and this looks familiar. I stand at a bush shelter, waiting for a bus. So does this guy. These are the things that he happens to think about while he's standing there. So I think in a sense, in a very subtle way it begins to break down those barriers. And I think that's what the responsibility is for us, for Native people to look at ourselves realistically. And it's for non-Native people, as well, to look at us realistically. Because it is true that along the line we have appropriated the stereotype to a certain degree. And that's what has to be called into question, I think.

GH: Yeah. I'm struggling with that one. I mean in one sense that is someone's reality, and it's just as valid as any other person's, and the more amount of Native people like that, that have control over how they present themselves, or the things I want to talk about, the images they put forth if they are visual artists, the things they write about if they are writers, are what makes space for people to live in any of those ways they see fit. So, sure I think there is an appropriation of the stereotypes, there is an internalization of stereotypes, but I think there's room for that.

JT: Oh, yeah. I just think the danger is, when you are talking about urban issues... I'm fortunate that, well my parents split up, but out of that unfortunate aspect came the reality of living with my grandmother, and through my grandmother I travelled to the reserve, I mean I did it with my parents before, but it was a very different experience. On the other side of the family there was a lot of drinking and that, but when I went back with my grandmother there was none of that. And all I heard was about being Mohawk, speaking Mohawk, and this real sense

of history. And I think that, what I'm concerned about, are Native kids that grow up in the city that don't have that chance, and that they're fed, like if you watch *Star Trek, The Next Generation*, they find a colony of Indians out on this planet in the year 2200 and they're still dealing with the same issues out there, and they're still talking in the same kind of weird-sounding language that is mumbo-jumbo. It's the same view of Indians in the future that's being perpetuated by something on t.v. You watch any of these shows, even like this one... *Sea Quest*... it's the same thing in there. They all... that one with Chuck Norris...

GH: ... it's overwhelming. You don't have anything to counter that with. Then all you have to believe about what it is to be Indian are those negative stereotypes.

JT: And we have to question that. And there are certain things that we draw from this reality that are true. There are certain things that we need to call into question. But we have to be able to talk about them. We have to be responsible to those people, to those children who are coming up with that. That won't have something to counter that with. And so that's what I feel my job is, and that's why it's important to look at the PowWow, because we have to be able to look at it in a relevant way. There is something here, the feathers the paint, the dramatic thing that's going on, that's important. And it provokes us to think about history, about where they come from, why... but it's also to talk about these other issues as well. There has to be that balance that's coming out of it.

GH: I have some general questions, too, if you want to run through those.

JT: Alright.

GH: Are you done talking about your work?

JT: Oh, yeah.

GH: Specific things?

JT: I think so. I think I've pretty well gone through everything. I'll just pull some of these out.

GH: These are different.

JT: This is along Queen Street in Toronto. Queen and Bathurst. And I was walking... this is a side street, just off side of Queen Street, and over here on this side of the photograph were a bunch of Indian men, street guys, that were sleeping out there. There was... car seats that they were sleeping on. And I wanted a way to symbolize that without intruding on their world.

GH: Well, that's tree's a good example.

JT: Yeah. Something that talks about that. And it also makes a statement too about, in general, about the way society treats the natural world. So that's, I think, the other exercise in this work, is how do you address those issues without intruding on, or else having to make it so obvious.

JT: Like that photograph up there, the pawnshop is on Main Street in Winnipeg. And that's the strip where all the Indian bars are, the pawnshops, and all that. I wanted to represent that, in a way, without having to identify a Native person. That guy isn't Native, but a Native person looking at it could say "yeah, it could be an Indian up there," and the Museum of Man and Nature is about three

blocks away from there, on Main Street, where all these wonderful artifacts are housed, and I wanted a way to talk about that, about the distance between those people on the street and what's in the museum, and so that's what the diptych came from. A way of talking about that. Of moving right from the street into this other aspect of culture. This photograph right here is from the Kensington Market in Toronto. It's more documentary, but it's also something that I like to do. And there's a lot of elements in here. This should be... It'll be a larger photograph at some point so you'll be able to see this woman right here, it's a *Star Wars* apron that she has on, but there's always these cultural elements here that are very interesting in the sense in the Kensington Market, at this one place all these people come together without really thinking about race. They're there to buy food, but you have all these different people from different parts of the world, and they seem to work very well down there. It's only what happens on the outside of that...

- GH: The market is a hub of activity for sure. There are a lot of different cultures represented there. There's nothing recognizably Indian in this photograph, and that's one thing that comes as an issue once you're involved in this dialogue, where you're reacting to how peoples are represented, and you're reacting to stereotypes. Is it difficult to get out of... to not have anything recognizably Indian in the photographs?
- JT: No, it's very easy to do that. Because I think what we're talking about is an opinion. When you get down to actually talking about real issues, other issues, that are just as important as cultural identity issues, it comes down to having a voice, and once you begin developing that voice, what comes out of it? This does. Being able to look at other parts of society that have nothing to do with you being Indian. I would much rather be able to do work like this than have to deal with identity issues. But there's a responsibility to do that, so this is how I go about doing it with the PowWow imagery, but I like looking at these other aspects of urban culture and at some point that's what I want to do, is actually move into this area and do more work like this. What I'm going to do, is I'm thinking of doing something along Bank Street, of the different small shops and restaurants along Bank Street, and go in and talk to the people and get portraits of them and their places of business. But this is what I really like to do, and there's a real sense of freedom in doing it, it's like there's not this constant self-analysis and...
- GH: Do you think that collecting institutions and galleries have advanced that far, where... it still seems that we're very much at a point in time when, if you identify as an Indian artist you're expected to do, something that is somehow Indian work? I remember a time when I made this an issue in my own work in school, and I had one of my professors tell me... well he asked me "what are you doing? This doesn't look Indian. There's nothing Indian in this painting." And I was shocked from that point on. So still, the question is... there is more of an awareness of Aboriginal art and what is going on and the issues in general, and the galleries and museums are showing that kind of work but, I don't know, you might feel something different about it, but I don't feel myself that they're ready to show work just for its own validity as being aesthetic work, like any other artist might do.
- JT: Yeah. That's a real touchy point for me because this is the work that I actually prefer to do. This is another one from the Kensington Market, and obviously this guy isn't Native. I've been trying to show this work, ever since I began taking photographs... you see when I first started taking photographs I didn't photograph PowWows or anything like that. It was all of the lower west-side of Buffalo. Street scenes. That's my first love. But, there's an expectation that, if

we're going to show your work we need something that's going to sell, that's going to draw people in. What's going to draw them in is the coloured PowWow photographs. If I was a white guy and I was doing this type of work, my profile would be much higher now than it is. I feel that I've been shortchanged because they don't take this work seriously, the PowWow work, and they don't take this work seriously for another reason, because it's not Indian enough.

GH: So, you're expected to do something else.

JT: Yeah. There was this *Aperture Magazine* that came out with an issue on Native photography, and *Aperture* is like the Holy Grail for photographers, that's where they want to be, but hardly anybody ever gets there. When they asked me to submit work for this particular issue I sent this body of work, and I sent the PowWow work, and I said "these are where some of the juxtapositions occur between the two bodies of work." All they took was the PowWow work, so I had to decide whether it was more important to have my work in *Aperture*--the PowWow series--or to make a statement, say "listen, unless you take both of them, forget it. I don't want to participate." In the end, I had to say that it was more important to be in *Aperture*, and hopefully that the people would see that work and it would raise interest in the other work. Hopefully. But, that's the balancing act that comes out of having to deal publicly with your work. This (other work) is what I love the most.

GH: Well, what I mean... in some sense we're engaged in a commercial enterprise, and it's what the customer wants, in one way. But in another way, artists assume that they have freedom to express what they want to express, and in this case that's not true. I mean...

JT: Well you see that's what makes the PowWow work that much more an exercise in dealing with its outlet, is that people are going to prefer to see this, so how do I make what I want to say about it come out in the request for it, like there has to be an edge for it. That's why the portable toilets in that photograph are so important, because, I do like doing this work and there's something interesting in it, and this is the work that's going to get out to the public, so how do I keep that edge in it, and that's the way that I do it, that's how I confront it. What I'm hoping is that, the longer I'm a photographer, this work will become valid. This work, people aren't ready for it yet. But when they are, then the profile of it will raise, and then people will begin to see the association between the two bodies of work. That may be 5 years, 10 years from now, but if I stick around long enough it'll happen. I actually quit photography for three years, because when I was in Toronto I was trying to make a go of it there, and I would go to some galleries, and they would say "some of this work is too abstract, you know, people won't get it." That's all they wanted to see was that type of work. And I really got pissed off, and I said "I won't do it anymore." So I quit. I moved to Winnipeg, and didn't take photographs for like three years.

GH: Yeah, well... I mean it's still an issue. So you resolved yourself to... I mean, it's an identity issue on another level, where you can react. You become part of that discourse of deconstructing stereotypes and all that kind of stuff, or you can take it one step further, to do what you want to do, free of all of that dialogue. I guess that's what I think the discourse at the time is-- that of responsible reading. No one should be forced to take on that (stereotypes).

JT: Well, it is a balancing act. There is a responsibility. Especially when you're in that first wave, in terms of photography. If you want to be a photographer and you want to be a Native person that's doing that, then, you know, you have to take

on the responsibility. I have to learn how to write, I've had to learn to acquire the knowledge to understand the historical text so that I can confront it. That's my responsibility as a Native person, and I think if you understand where you're coming from you understand that, whatever you do, you have a responsibility towards other people and their work. It's not... you can't live in an isolated world, so if you have the ability to do something like this, then you damn well better make sure that you are addressing issues that are important to your community. So you have to find a way of balancing that with also doing the things that are important to you on a personal level. And I think that's the quest, is how you bring all those things together, and like I said, I have been doing this... I started when I was about 26, and I'm 39 now and I'm just starting to get a grasp on it. I mean, I stopped doing it because I was too frustrated, and when I was in Winnipeg I photographed a PowWow there just before I left in 1990 and I was so close to the dancers it was almost like you could hear the feathers moving. You could hear the feathers, you could hear the leather, you could smell. You could see the intensity in their eyes, and I decided at that point that I was going to continue to pursue this work, because there was something there that was very real that wasn't coming out to the public.

GH: You had a connection there. And that's one thing I'd like to ask is... do you feel that you have the same connection to this? Have you been able to talk to the people in these photographs, and establish that same kind of dialogue, where you might go back... back to Buffalo or Toronto and see them again, and do that kind of thing.

JT: It's interesting. I really haven't felt that need to, like with the PowWow, to identify with these people that I photograph. I think that there is a certain alienation that I always felt in the city, and this is early work, like from the early 80s. What I wanted to do was to have that sense of moving through this environment without a real connection to it, of kind of displaced in a way. Alienated. But it's an interesting question because I think... now, for me to go back and do this type of work... like I was saying about working on Bank Street, photographing the different shops along the strip, there, I would actually go in and talk to the people, and pose them in front of their store front, and take a picture of it, gather information like where did they come from, how long have they lived in Canada, things like that. And create more of a document of that world.

GH: Now I was under the impression that this was a new way to work.

JT: No.

GH: No. Well, yeah, that makes more sense to me now. That you would attempt to build on that context and that dialogue between yourself and the subjects that you're photographing.

JT: Cause this is really not so much an observation... it's more a reflection of how I feel, and this guy just happened to be there and speak to those things that I feel, this Indian guy who's probably the only one within miles of this area, and especially from Six Nations. Who else can I identify with around there, and it happened to be with this guy, and there's that distance between here... like this construct of the Indian image that popular culture has perpetuated over the years, and here you are, kind of at a distance from all of it. It's like a popular imagery of Indians, so far removed from what I know and what I need to know about who I am or who I want to be or whatever. This represented that. So it became almost like a self portrait in a sense.

- GH: Okay. So you moved from this sense of alienation, to PowWows, to where you are now juxtaposing and getting back to this kind of work where, in an urban setting, nothing recognizably Indian, but with a self-confidence and an awareness of who you are without having to feel that you have to represent that in the photograph, so, it's more like you've arrived *here*.
- JT: Yeah. And that's what's so important about this exhibition next summer is that it's kind of like pulling all of this together, and then leaving it and moving on to something else. I'm really looking forward to that, and saying I did what I was supposed to do with this work, and I'll go out to Calgary and photograph Indian Cowboys and rodeos out there, and the PowWows out there as well, with the focus that I brought to this work last summer, and then I'll start photographing these other aspects of culture that have nothing to do with me at all other than they sell... I purchase things from these places. That's where they live.
- GH: It does have a lot to do with you.
- JT: Yeah, but not in that imposed way.
- GH: Alright. So... one thing in looking through your file is you're listed as being born in Six Nations, born in Buffalo and born in Toronto.
- JT: Where did it say I was born in Toronto?
- GH: I don't remember. It was in one of these articles. [laughs] Is that the age-old question: where are you from; kind of interpreted differently?
- JT: Yeah. I really see myself as politically, culturally, spiritually, being from Six Nations. I wasn't born there. I think a lot of people just assume that I'm from Six Nations. And I've said before, I've seen that, where I've said that I was born in Buffalo and I look and I see in the article that I was born in Six Nations. And I think it makes it more legitimate in a sense, like "yeah, he was born on the reserve." If you're born in the city...
- GH: Yeah. Like Tomson Highway, born on a trap line...
- JT: Yeah, exactly. How many times has he said that, and why does he say it with such emphasis?
- GH: ... born on a trapline in northern Manitoba...
- JT: Ah, gimme a break! But, you know, that's what gets you going in Canada. Born in Buffalo, New York? Okay. Doesn't have that same ring to it.
- GH: Does it also matter who's asking? I mean...
- JT: Well, I tell everybody the same thing.
- GH: Ok. But I mean, when an Aboriginal person asks you where you're from... that... That can mean three different things.
- JT: What I generally say is that my family's from Six Nations, and that I was born in Buffalo, New York. And I think when you ask... if I was to ask you where you are from and you say "Fort Erie" then my next question is "so where's your family from. And then you say that you identify with Six Nations, so I know a bit about your history, like for me I grew up in Buffalo, I can identify with that. People... I find

most of the time, I mean Buffalo has such a bad image anyways, oh yeah, it has... like "really, you grew up in Buffalo?" I mean I went through a period where I would much rather say that I was born in Six Nations; it would have been a lot easier, but, you know, you have to be realistic.

GH: Yeah, there's a certain amount of explanation that goes with either answer.

JT: Cause I never really even lived on the reserve for any prolonged period of time. My brother and I grew up in Buffalo. He's been living in Six Nations now for, maybe, ten years, and he's never left. So for me it's a good thing to know because I figure, well, I could have always moved there and probably made a go of it. I actually own land, and I was going to build a house, and all this. Go to the longhouse and learn the language, and do all these things, but I was in this car accident in 1979 and it completely changed my life, and so that's when I started taking photographs. After I got out of the hospital I used to go for long walks and what I did was, it got pretty boring after a while so I started taking my camera and taking photographs of the area that I was walking in. One thing led to another, and I started getting serious about it. It was interesting that here I had all this plan for this lifestyle, and it completely changed and I became a photographer.

GH: Those are the little 'curves' that we get 'thrown' I guess. And it's a good thing... . What about humour in your work? That's something that's talked about a lot.

JT: Like with Shelley Niro?

GH: Well, Shelley Niro for sure. But in one way, that is another stereotypical assumption, that well Aboriginal people are funny, that they can laugh at themselves. Do you see that as a factor at all?

JT: In how I approach my work? It's interesting. I never really thought about it until I was in Ruth's (Phillips) class in the last semester, and she asked me to come in and be a guest speaker, and one of the women who was in the class was presenting a paper on Shelley Niro, or doing a presentation on Shelley Niro. So of course that went first. They were talking and discussing the work, and talking about the humour in it. Then I went through my whole thing after that for the remainder of the class, and one of the women asked me afterwards, she said "you don't really have much humour in your work, do you?" And I said, "oh, oh!" I was really caught off guard because I had never really thought about it before. And I thought, well, no I guess there isn't a lot of humour in the things that I do. And I think there isn't because it's not that it's not there, or that I made a point of not having it there, it's just that I think I wanted to explore other issues that revolved around that, that really came from observation of these other parts of the modern world, and in the observation I didn't see myself as being humorous in that, because there was this sense of wanting to understand it, to understand the flow of urban life, and to be able to comment on it, so when I was sitting around with my camera, watching these things and thinking about them and taking photographs, I didn't see a lot of humour in that. And also too, I was very angry during that period of my life, for a lot of different personal reasons as well as having to be a photographer. And so I thought my work really reflected that sense of watching. And after that class, I thought "how does humour fit into my work, and will it?" And I found that when I was photographing one of the PowWow dancers one time what happened, last summer as well, is that with these guys they travel in groups, and a lot of times there's a bunch of young guys that travel with them, and there was one guy I was photographing in Winnipeg in 1990 and he had some teeth missing, and so I was photographing him and he

had this very dignified pose, and he wouldn't open his mouth. He was very, very strict. And these guys started teasing him, because I was moving around him...

GH: ... to get him to laugh...

JT: Yeah. And I was moving around him, and they were kind of laughing cause, like a fashion model I was a photographer, so they were saying these things, and he just started to laugh, crack a smile, and then I could see why he wasn't... cause as soon as he opened his mouth you could see the blank spots, and I photographed him just at that moment before he started to laugh. And the same thing happened last summer when I was photographing this one guy. People were around making comments and trying to get him to laugh... "Oh, you're going to break your camera, photographing him" and things like that, and I thought "next time I do this, I'm gonna photograph them. I'm just gonna do a quick sweep of the guys that are around, very quickly, instead of just concentrating, I'm gonna go click click click click, you know on the guys. Boy, that'd be good. And I think that's where I want to bring the humour in. Because it also speaks to the humanity as well. There's also this view, this dignified stance, but also on the periphery all these other things are happening there that are just as interesting. So, yeah, that's what I'm going to begin addressing.

GH: I think it takes a while to be able to laugh about some things, and to see humour in many different areas, but... there was the question...

JT: Yeah, I'm looking forward to it actually. Of being lighter in my approach to my work, and making it a lot more fun. But there is that responsibility of taking it seriously. I think I've done that, established that now.

GH: Yeah. I also don't think there's any need to sugar coat things for people in terms of if there are serious issues or something--that those need to be addressed and there shouldn't be an obligation put on the artist to sort of trivialize that in a way or make it funny so...

JT: ...that people will pay attention to it. They need to think about it. There is an attempt in there... later. I think it can work either way. One of the other things I was thinking too is I thought that Shelley and I should do an exhibition together and I made a proposal to the Carleton Art Gallery and so they're interested in doing that. So it's something that, once I clear this work up this summer, then I want to start work on having an exhibition there, possibly Shelley and I and GH Staats as an exhibition. I pitched it to Michael Bell, and what I pitched was this perspective, the second instalment of *Perspectives from Iroquoia*, with the inclusion of Shelley Niro and, so that's... what was interesting talking to you was, well I had that meeting just after we had spoken, and it was that idea of dealing with, of looking at our work not as a reflection of us as Indians, but as a reflection of the world that we confront, and that's what I'd like to have an exhibition on.

GH: Okay. I would like to talk to you some more about that later. Well, I have questions here that basically deal with identity things. But there's one more. You were talking about juxtaposing Curtis with some of your own work. So do you see, I mean there's this certain amount of assumed truth value because a photograph was thought to be a reflection of reality. Do you think there's a problem in trying to expose the stereotypes in Curtis's work with the same medium? I mean, is that what you're doing? You're taking photographs of your own work that have that same "truth value" and you're juxtaposing those with Curtis's?

- JT: Well, it's definitely a minefield, I'm moving into it, and I'm not really sure I know how I want to go about it. And I think it's been avoided, and that's what's intriguing to me. It's a minefield. That's why I want to do it. I don't look at Curtis as the enemy, as the man that had done wrong to Indian community. I think there's a valuable record there, and one that hasn't been explored fully. I think that, as a photographer who's Native that's the only history that I have as a photographer, is Curtis's work. So how do you respond to what he had done? And to me that's where the interest lies is in utilizing the same medium. Curtis came out of that pictorialist era, where they were more concerned with the *art* of photography. With Curtis it was interesting because he was also concerned with the art of the portrait, but also in documentation as well. His work is interesting and there's a certain amount of ambiguity there because on the one hand you get the sense of the documentation, but because of the framework of the pictorialist, there is also this fanciful, romantic kind of image. So what's really going on here? I don't think that's been talked about enough, so what I'm seeing, is I see a certain amount of truth that comes from the photograph, and by looking at the PowWow, this is the truth that I find within the framework of that icon--of that Indian image. And this is how it meshes with Curtis; it's not saying that Curtis was wrong in what he did, but lets take it as an exercise and to see how he moved from one to another and what comes out of that.
- GH: So it's kind of an initial step that you're building on? But you recognize it for its inaccuracies and how it's been misused, maybe?
- JT: I think the misuse comes in pop culture. It's not Curtis. I mean Curtis was very up front about why he photographed Indians in the way that he did. And when you understand the era that he came out of, you can understand why there was that desperate need to record the 'noble' aspects of Aboriginal culture. Because at that time they saw more of the negative aspects of civilization on Aboriginal people. They saw the displacement, they saw the alcoholism, they saw the loss of culture and what happens with that. Curtis wanted to ensure that a positive aspect of Aboriginal culture would be remembered photographically. So, in that sense, I think that he provided something that was very important. And when you look at his portfolios, one after another, all 20 of them, you see that he was also confronting his own perceptions of the Aboriginal community. The need to have that noble view, but also to have the one that was realistic, so that when you took away the cultural signifiers... people say that he carried around a truckload of artifacts and he put them on those people... but say that we dismiss looking at a portrait of a particular dancer, and once you take those away, what are you left with. You are left with a face of this person, whether it is a man or a woman or a child. And what do you read from that information? You read a hell of a lot. So really, everything else around that becomes superficial in a sense. What Curtis was really dealing with was the power that was generated from the face of that person, from the very essence of who they were. And I think that's what he captured. And it's only when popular culture rediscovered Edward S. Curtis, and began attributing all these other things to him, and taken in light of the fact of the Environmental movement and the Back-to-Earth movement, and Red Power, and all that stuff that was happening during that period of time it became a symbol for something completely different than what I think Curtis had intended. So for me the real battle ground is not with Edward S. Curtis, it's with popular culture, and the way they destroyed everything, and all mediums to really project that North American identity, that romantic identity of who Americans and Canadians really are. They're really good people at heart. They screwed the hell out of Indians, but you know, they're really all right.
- GH: Manifest destiny...

JT: Yeah, there was a good side to it. [laughter]

GH: White man's burden. Okay. We're doing this kind of in reverse, I guess, so I'll just try to pick up things that I don't think we've covered. Do you think there is something that could be termed an Iroquoian Absolutism? Or like a notion of authenticity, that some people strive for? Does it exist?

JT: Well, yeah, it exists. And there's all different forms of it. And we're constantly reinventing it. And certainly for my grandparents there was something that was absolute about an Iroquoian identity for them. And certainly it was important but it doesn't suit who I am...

[end of tape 1]

JT: ... that you don't really have the luxury of talking about your ideas without somebody ripping you off, or taking your idea and using it for an exhibition of their own? I find it's interesting sometimes to see that... I find it happening to hear in an article something that you had said to somebody else, which has happened.

GH: I guess I have this naïve assumption that this doesn't happen in the Indian art scene.

JT: It's really bad, and that's why I stay out of it, pretty much. The only time that I really am involved is through an exhibition. Other than that I prefer to stay on my own and not to talk to other artists. Some people I do, like Shelley Niro and I get along pretty well, and we're not intimidated by each other or whatever, we're both pretty young, and pretty sound in the directions that we're going...

GH: ... there's no threat of being too influenced by each other's work...

JT: If you know, too, I think the thing that's important--what I find is really important, is that sense of continually finding your own voice, and I think Aboriginal culture has done that all throughout its history. There's been enough clues left behind in order to perpetuate a constant re-evaluation. I think that's one of the important parts the historical photographs play. It doesn't give us answers. It doesn't give us a lot of information about the past, but it stimulates you enough to pursue, and to try and figure out how these things connect to you. I mean when I look at photographs of old Iroquoian leaders, like for this exhibition at the Archives there's a photograph that we're using of war veterans from the war of 1812, and they were photographed at Brantford, and there are three men, and within the studio there's a Union Jack on the side, and they're like 80 and 90 years old, and the photograph was taken, I think, in 1870. So you look at the faces of these men, and you really begin to realize that who you are as an Iroquoian person today and who they were is so different, yet there is a truth to who they are and how it connects to you today. There's just enough information there for me to know that these are my ancestors. I may even be related to one of them. That helps me to pursue beyond the periphery of who we're supposed to be, who people want us to be, and to challenge that. So does that answer that question?

GH: I think so. As far as traditional beliefs, are they important to you, or do they find their way into your work?

JT: Yeah, they do. A photographer like Greg Staats would. One series now that's

really popular is this *Requickening Address* that he does: where he actually uses-- I think it's the condolence ceremony-- in his work. So he makes an obvious connection to a formalized traditional aspect of Iroquoian culture. And I don't do that. I prefer my knowledge of those traditions, having seen them and participated in some of them at a certain point in my life, to know that they're there is enough for me, and what it does is it really gives me... that identity gives me the strength to explore beyond the borders of that smaller world, that I want to explore. I mean you think about explorers like Columbus and all these other guys. What gave them the strength to go out and travel across the oceans to look at these new worlds. Was there a Christianity? Was there a social structure? And I would like to think that, for me, on this side of the ocean the same thing that propels me is the knowledge of, myself, where I come from, and who I am, that's what does it. And I don't feel the need to actually show that in my work.

- GH: Well, that's the self-confidence that other people will express in different ways. For myself, as a person who is learning about those things, sometimes I feel an attraction to expressing, to using traditional imagery, such as the *Kahswenta* (the Two-Row Wampum) and other forms of Iroquoian designs that are out there.
- JT: We should have the right to do that. Sometimes having that knowledge and understanding of your traditional ways and aspects of it, you want to interpret it through your work cause you have a certain sense of pride in it. But I think that we have to be open to diversity, and if we can begin to do that, then I think we can put pressure on the dominant culture to accept that as well. That yes, some artists are going to deal in their work with those types of symbols and they have the right to do that, and they should. And if you want to go beyond that you should have an equal right to do that as well. And have it respected as being valid with who you are.
- GH: One thing, in the mentioning of the Two-Row Wampum, one thing I'm trying to do in writing this thesis is use the two rows--two distinct cultures travelling in parallel, not interfering with each other--as a metaphor for how the thesis is constructed, but also how that's being expressed? How are different Iroquoian artists expressing that in their work? And I think that comes through in different ways, this sort of sense of non-interference; you live your life the way you live it, and I just want the freedom to live mine the way I choose. So do you see that in your own work, or in general?
- JT: I've actually used that metaphor before. A long time ago I began to, not necessarily with the Two-Row Wampum belt. Certainly I was exposed to it at a young age, and I'm sure that had some basis for this, but I think that I've always seen it as two parallel worlds. And I thought my work should reflect that. Like the urban work in the PowWow series, in a sense is a direct outgrowth of that idea. So, in a Two-Row Wampum you have a continuous space there between the two cultures, and when you re-invent that for today, well we are in that culture now, so at some point they come together, and I think that's what's interesting is to think about at what point do they come together. And I prefer to see it as a search for a nexus, in a sense. Like with the historical photograph I don't look at it in a negative sense, but I think there's a place where my work as a photographer and the historical photograph come together at a certain area, and they begin to expand upon the historical limitation and the pop cultural limitations, and you begin to find this ground that's very unique to who you are today. And very satisfying. And that's what the search is for me. So certainly that image, that metaphor of the Wampum belt is important. So when we get farther down the line at some point, it seems that they get closer and closer together. Like those veterans of the war of 1812, certainly they were over here and these worlds

were... the borders were pretty defined then. Here today they're not. Because we're actually living in that world.

- GH: I've always tried... chosen lately to think of it as those intersections being things that should be there, in a tradition of Mohawk bridge-building, let's say? Bridges between cultures. But as long as they're by choice. So as long as those intersections aren't imposed on you, then sure, why can't there be crossover between those parallel lines? Why can't they converge and go apart when they want to?
- JT: Exactly. It's interesting because one of the things that I'm doing now, and I do this subconsciously in my exhibition (at least the support for this idea was the subconscious), is that I'm going to use a "hoarding wall" in my exhibition. Do you know what a hoarding wall is? It's a wall that surrounds construction sites.
- GH: ... people peek through the holes.
- JT: Some of them are very elaborate, some of them are just pieces of wood put up, but some of them look very nice and thousands of dollars go into them. What I wanted to do in my exhibition next summer is to use a hoarding wall as a threshold or a gateway from one gallery to the next, so people will come up to the wall and look through these things, and they will see photographs on the other side, and it'll stop them. Then they'll have to move around the wall... they're going to have to think about why...
- GH: ... construction.
- JT: Right! And somebody pointed out to me, they said "oh, yeah. So that's right. High-steel construction. Iron workers and that" and he said "and you being a photographer, your view is from the ground, but still that connection is there to that history." So, as a kid I used to hear stories all the time, and some of my relatives were and still are iron workers, but I'm not. But, this is how that Iroquoian history comes through in your work. I never realized it, but it was there. So the hoarding wall, in a sense, is my connection to that history of iron workers. There it is! So I thought "thanks a lot for pointing that out" because it's a hell of a strong symbol.
- GH: There are important links. Another thing I'm trying to get away from is the distinction that's made between traditional and contemporary. And I don't know if that's an issue in your work if people might, because you're photographing what's thought of as a traditional exercise in the PowWow imagery, if you're somehow thought of as a traditional Iroquoian photographer as opposed to a contemporary Iroquoian photographer. And what I'm trying to make an argument for is that contemporary means a lot of different things, it means all of that and more.
- JT: I find that, what's difficult is the distinction between being, of having my work looked at as a documentary photographer, which in a sense is traditional photography... or a traditional approach to representation... and the free-flowing nature that I feel is more indicative of my work, where I don't see myself as being that structured as providing a documentary of this world. And I find that, when someone asks me "what kind of photographer are you?" I find it very difficult to describe what kind I am, cause I love doing portraits, I love doing street scenes, I do appreciate aspects of documentation, the structure of it, ethnology, those types of things all come into play, but I'm not any one of those things, so what am I? I don't know, I really don't know. I'm hoping that this exhibition this summer will

help define that, cause Gerald McMaster is the co-curator for this exhibition, I'm hoping that he'll help me define that, cause really, what I think we're looking for is the new definition. And an appropriate one for someone who works... you see I work in the traditional way of being... of really setting my camera up and snapping a photograph. And this is the result of that. There's not a lot of manipulation that goes into... like a lot of photographers like to construct it. They use different mediums, they do a lot of different things. For me it's pretty straight forward, but it's in the intellectual process that I allow it to become creative in the juxtaposition of things. So in a sense, I have to deal with that. Am I this old, traditional type of photographer, or am I something else? Am I contemporary? And what does contemporary mean? Does it mean mixed media? Does it mean more of personal manipulation to reflect the personal opinion of something, rather than saying that's what that is, that's reality? So that's something that I've been trying to figure out, where exactly do I fit into that? But I think the bottom line for me is that it is a collection of images to deal with issues intellectually, and I think, with the exhibition next summer, I also want to have fun with it. And being able to create an environment... so that, once again...

GH: I know... you're expanding into another category there... which is important I think.

JT: So am I an installation artist now? I worked in theatre for a while, and certainly that influenced me in the sense of creating a set for the photographs. You go to an exhibition, and probably 99% of the time you're going to see a very linear layout of photographs on the wall, without much intervention. One of the things we're doing down here (at the National Archives) we don't have a lot of space for being creative. What we're doing is... the structure that we're using for the photographs... mounting multiple frames of one sequence, like three photographs on top of each other, we're making big enlargements and different things...

GH: This is the Archival show?

JT: Yeah. And my job in that show is really the installation and the creative aspect of laying the work out so it's not so didactic, so that there are sub-texts that are coming through and things like that in the exhibition. And I find that, with my own exhibition as well, that's what I'm looking forward to being able to do, to set up a viewing environment for my work that isn't so traditional and linear. Even artists that expand on that and are more artistic in their work in the sense of painting, like Shelley Niro does, or GH Staats and the assemblages that he creates, the presentation is still the same. It's like a sequence of photographs on the wall, so what I want to figure out to do is how do you create a circle in a traditionally square space so that I can mount my photographs so they're going in a circular fashion rather than in a square box? And, so for me I work from the basic traditional element of the photograph, I manipulate it, but the space is where the creativity really begins to take form.

GH: You've opened another can of worms there, with the circle. I mean, are you using the circle as a signifier, or as a rejection I guess, of that linear kind of installation, and square box spaces?

JT: Definitely. Of course you know there's that connection too, with Aboriginal people, of everything being in a circle. All the dances and everything being in that way. I just find boxes so boring. And I feel the need to make it more appealing to people. So I'm sure that a lot of it is based on those traditional values. I'm not sure how much, though.

- GH: Well, even if it's just an idea, I think that it's an idea that comes from another place, and it doesn't have to come pre-loaded with a bunch of philosophical belief, but in just coming from another place I think that's enough... it might make people think or challenge their assumptions that every room has to be a box. And just in doing that,... I think that could be a radical kind of act...
- JT: Well, I think there's a larger issue of society in general, where we've been fed this line of crap for so long that we don't question things. Certainly, having circular things within the gallery space, if it's a wall or whatever I decide to do, is to call that into question. Hopefully... we understand that it's generated from this Iroquoian perspective, but it goes into a much larger question, and I think problems that all people are facing, especially all artists, no matter who they are, with the funding cuts that are coming to arts organizations-- this real radical view that the politicians are taking now. Well, not radical, in a sense, but radical in how it's affecting people--making these indiscriminate cuts into all places in the arts and things like that. Well, we've come to just accept those things, and you have to raise your voice about these things, about the line that we're being constantly fed. So I'm hoping that having those types, that configuration in the exhibition space will speak to much larger issues than just my issues as an Iroquoian person...
- GH: So it's another subtle way of challenging, or offering another viewpoint.
- JT: I think that's what the bottom line is, you hope that people will recognize and respect your view as an Iroquoian person. But they also see that there's a universal aspect to what you're talking about--that people in general in society are oppressed. We just don't think about it that way. And there is a very strong elite in the country that prefers to keep this cultural void there. Because as long as there is that conflict there it deflects conflict from them. So you keep the masses fighting and hating each other. As long as they're doing that, we're safe in here. The bankers are safe. And that's what really annoys me.
- GH: A larger conspiracy. That's a pressing issue in Ontario now. Well, I'm starting to feel a bit drained now myself.
- JT: Okay. I'll just show you that one image, though, since you've read Fuse magazine. The one that they're talking about. I can't take it apart because it's sealed, but they were talking about this statue here? The Iroquoian warrior and Montreal. They didn't even talk about the photograph that I juxtaposed it with. All they saw was this, and even looking at this, how can you say through the deconstruction that this only seems to come back to reinforce the stereotype? This is totally beyond me, but obviously the politics of something else were more important. But this is of my brother.
- GH: I guess there's... I think a lot of writers, in seeking to get that critical viewpoint can be a little bit confusing, in just what critical means. You don't have to criticize.
- JT: I don't take it to heart any more, it's just interesting how people respond to things. But this is what they were talking about. And this is my brother. And this was photographed just outside his house at Six Nations.
- GH: Did you put arrows in his hand... or are those welding rods?
- JT: Yeah. These are arrows. These were all things that came out of his workshop. We were sitting around. I'd come back for a visit just after Oka had taken place.

We were talking about the Warrior Societies at Six Nations. And I said "let's make our own warrior." So we went through a whole sequence of... I photographed him standing outside there... with him kneeling on the ground... kneeling on the ground with the bandanna across his face and a baseball cap turned backwards, things like that. And we have four arrows here, and the one that's missing is the Mohawk's. I was thinking about how all this was happening and all the dissention that it had brought to the Confederacy--traditional aspects of who the chiefs were, and how they were responding to it.

GH: That's a very powerful visual metaphor, too. The arrows bound together.

JT: Yeah. So that's what that photograph is about. And I guess our own sense of warrior image and what it is. It's not what's being projected on t.v. necessarily, it is the image of all of us, men, women, and children, who are making a fight to maintain the integrity of our cultural ways.

GH: Well, thanks. I hope that we covered everything... there's a fax ad campaign going on right now to support the artist-run centres and all the cultural centres that are being cut. You're supposed to fax them your response to "Harris-ment"....

[end of tape 2]

Sources Consulted

- Abler, Thomas S. *Canada's Visual History: The Iroquois*. Vol. 78. Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, National Film Board of Canada, 1987.
- Abrahamson, Mark. *Urban Enclaves: Identity and Place in America*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.
- Abrams, George H.J. "The Case for Wampum: Repatriation from the Museum of the American Indian to the Six Nations Confederacy." *Museums and the Making of "Ourselves": The Role of Objects in National Identity*. Ed. Flora E.S. Kaplan. New York: Leicester University Press, 1994, 351-384.
- Adams, Howard. *A. Tortured People: The Politics of Colonization*. Penticton, B.C.: Theytus Books, 1995.
- Akwesasne Notes, Mohawk Nation, ed. *Basic Call to Consciousness*. Rooseveltown, New York: Akwesasne Notes, 1981.
- Alba, Richard D. *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.
- Alberti, Leon Battiste. *On Painting and Sculpture*. (1435) Edited and translated by Cecil Grayson. London: Phaidon, 1972.
- Alfred, Gerald R. *Heeding the Voices of our Ancestors: Kahnawake Mohawk Politics and the Rise of Native Nationalism*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Annette Jaimes, M., ed. *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*. Boston: South End Press, 1992.
- Anrod Shimony, Annemarie. *Conservatism among the Iroquois at Six Nations Reserve*. 2nd ed. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1994.
- Ashcroft, Bill with Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Assembly of First Nations. *DrumBeat: Anger and Renewal in Indian Country*.

- 2nd ed. Ed. Boyce Richardson. Toronto: Summerhill Press Ltd., 1992.
- Atkins, Robert. *Artspeak: A Guide to Contemporary Ideas, Movements, and Buzzwords*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1990.
- Augaitis, Diana, et al., eds. *Questions of Community: Artists, Audiences, Coalitions*. Banff: Banff Centre Press, 1995.
- Barreiro Jose, ed. *Northeast Indian Quarterly: Indian Roots of American Democracy*. Vol. IV (Winter 1987), Vol. V (Spring 1988), 1988.
- Barreiro Jose, ed. *Indian Roots of American Democracy*. Ithaca: Akwe:kon Press, Cornell University, 1992.
- Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. Trans. Annette Lavers. New York: Hill and Wang, 1972.
- Belanger, Lance. "Tango." *Tango: Lance Belanger*. Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa: Ottawa Art Gallery, 1995, 13-32.
- Benedetti, Paul. "Native artist breaks the mould." *Hamilton Spectator* 11 Jan. 1992.
- Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: B.B.C., 1972.
- Berkhofer, Robert F. *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*. 2nd ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
- Berlo, Janet Catherine. *The Early Years of Native American Art History: The Politics of Scholarship and Collecting*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992.
- Berman, Howard R. "Perspectives on American Indian Sovereignty and International Law." *Exiled in the Land of the Free*. Oren Lyons and John C. Mohawk, Eds. Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 1992, 125-188.
- Berry, Brewton. *Almost White*. New York: Macmillan, 1963.
- Bettany, G.T. (George Thomas), 1850-1891. *The Red, Brown and black men of America and Australia, and their white supplanters*. London: Ward, 1890.

- Bhabha, Homi K. "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences." *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. London: Routledge, 1995, 206-209.
- . *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- . "Postcolonial Authority and Postmodern Guilt." *Cultural Studies*. Eds. Lawrence Grossberg, et al. London: Routledge, 1992, 56-68.
- . "DissemiNation." *Nation and Narration*. Ed. Homi K. Bhabha. London: Routledge, 1990, 291-322.
- . "The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism." *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*. Eds. Russell Ferguson et al. New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and MIT Press, 1990, 71-87.
- Birnie Danzker, Jo-Anne. "Cultural Convergence: Or, Should Artists Appropriate Native Imagery?" *Canadian Art*. Fall 1990, 23-24.
- Bissoondath, Neil. *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*. Toronto: Penguin, 1994.
- Blundell, Valda. "An Anthropologist's View of Canadian Native Peoples." *A Different Drummer: Readings in Anthropology with a Canadian Perspective*. Eds. Bruce Alden Cox et al. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989, 63-69.
- Boas, Franz. *Primitive Art*. 1927. New York: Dover Publications, 1955.
- Bonvillian, Nancy. *Indians of North America: The Mohawk*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1992.
- Boutet, Danielle. "Interdisciplinarity in the Arts." *Harbour*. Vol. 2:2, 1993, 66-73.
- Bradley, Jessica and Lesley Johnstone, eds. *Sightlines: Reading Contemporary Canadian Art*. Canada: Artextes editions, 1994.
- Brody J.J. *Indian Painters and White Patrons*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971.
- Bucher, Bernadette. *Icon and Conquest: a structural analysis of the*

- illustrations of de Bry's Great Voyages*. Chicago: Chicago U.P. 1981.
- Burke, Colleen. "The Politics of Representation: a "rational" history of the ethnological collections of the National Museum of Canada." Thesis. Carleton U., 1993.
- Campbell, Richard Dean. *The People of the Land of Flint*. Lanham, M.D.: University Press of America, 1985.
- Campbell, Maria. *Half-breed*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1973.
- Camnitzer, Luis and Ida Applebroog. *The Hybrid State*. New York: Exit Art, 1992.
- Canada, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. *Indian Arts in Canada*. Ottawa: Information Canada, 1972.
- Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. *Restructuring the Relationship*. Vol. 2, Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1996.
- . *Renewal: A Twenty Year Commitment*. Vol. 5, Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1996.
- Canadian Museum of Civilization (the), the Commonwealth Assoc. of Museums and the University of Victoria. *Curatorship: Indigenous Perspectives in Post-Colonial Societies*. (Mercury Series no. 8). Hull, Quebec: Commonwealth Assoc. of Museums and the University of Victoria, 1996.
- Canadian Museum of Civilization (the), ed. *In the Shadow of the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art*. Hull, Quebec: The Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1993.
- Cardinal, Harold. *The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada's Indians*. Edmonton: M.G. Hurtig, 1969.
- Cardinal-Schubert, Joane. "Random Exotica." *Talking Stick*. Vol. 1 (Indian Summer 1994): 4-7.
- . "In the Red." *Fuse*. (Fall 1989): 20-28.
- . *Joane Cardinal-Schubert: This is my history*. ThunderBay: ThunderBay Art Gallery, 1985.

- Catlin, George. *Life among the Indians*. London: Gall, 1870?-1879?
- . *North American Indians: Being letters and notes on their manners, customs, and conditions, written during eight years' travel amongst the wildest tribes of Indians in North America, 1832-1839*. (Vol. 1 of 2) Edinburgh: John Grant, 1903.
- Cavell, Richard A.. "Theorizing Canadian Space: Postcolonial Articulations." *Canada: Theoretical Discourse*. eds. Terry Goldie et al. Montreal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1994. 75-104.
- Ceci, Lynn. "The Value of Wampum Among the New York Iroquois: A Case Study in Artifact Analysis." *Journal of Anthropological Research*. 38, 1983: 97-107.
- Center for Social Research and Education, coll. eds. *Socialist Review*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press. Vol. 24, No. 1-2, 1995.
- Chalmers, Harvey and Ethel Brant Monture. *Joseph Brant: Mohawk*. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1955.
- Churchill, Ward. *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema and the Colonization of American Indians*. Edited by M. Annette Jaimes. Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press. 1992.
- Clifford, James. "On Collecting Art and Culture." *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*. Eds. Russell Ferguson, et al. New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and MIT Press, 1990, 141-190.
- , ed. *The Predicament of Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Clifton, James A., ed. *Being and Becoming Indian: Biographical Studies of North American Frontiers*. Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1989.
- Colden, Cadwallader. *The History of the Five Nations*. 1727. Reprint. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958.
- Cole, Allison. *Perspective*. London: Dorling Kindersely, 1992.
- Collier, John. *Indians of the Americas*. New York: Norton, 1947.

- Colo, Papo, ed. *The Hybrid State*. New York: Exit Art, 1992.
- Cordova, Viola F. "Doing Native American Philosophy." Eds. Sylvia O'Meara and Douglas A. West. *From Our Eyes: Learning from Indigenous Peoples*. Toronto: Garamond Press, 1996, 13-18.
- Cox, Bruce Alden, et al. eds. *A Different Drummer: Readings in Anthropology with a Canadian Perspective*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989.
- , ed. *Native people, Native Lands: Canadian Indians, Inuit and Métis*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1987.
- Crosby, Marcia. "Nations in Urban Landscapes." *Nations in Urban Landscapes*. Exhibition catalogue. Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery, 1997: 11-18.
- . "Lines, Lineage and Lies, or Borders, Boundaries and Bullshit." *Nations in Urban Landscapes*. Exhibition catalogue. Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery, 1997: 23-30.
- Curnoe, Greg. *Blue Book 8*. Toronto: Art Metropole, 1989.
- Daniels, Roy, Willie Dunn, Michael Mitchell and Barbara Wilson, dirs. *These Are My People...* . (13 min., 18 sec.), National Film Board of Canada, 1994.
- David Moses, Daniel and Terry Goldie, eds. *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Dault, Gary Michael. "Robert Houle." *Canadian Art*. Winter 1993.
- Deadman, Patricia. Telephone interview. 7 Jan. 1996.
- De Leeuw, Louise Clementine. *Situation of Canadian Iroquoian women: traditional to contemporary*. Ottawa: 1977.
- Dennett, Daniel C. "Darwin's Dangerous Idea." *The Sciences* May/June 1995: 34-40.
- Dickason, Olive Patricia. *The National Imprint; the contribution of First Peoples to Canada's character*. Athabasca, Alberta: Athabasca u. Educational Enterprises, 1995.

- . *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times*. Toronto: McLelland, 1992.
- . *The Myth of the Savage; and the beginnings of French colonialism in the Americas*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984.
- Dixon, Joseph K. *The Vanishing Race*. Toronto: Musson Book Company, 1913.
- Doggett, Rachel with Monique Hulvey and Julie Ainsworth. *New World of Wonders: European Images of the Americas 1492-1700*. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1992.
- Donaldson, Laura E. *decolonizing Feminisms: Race, Gender, and Empire Building*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992.
- Dosman, Edgar J. *Indians: The Urban Dilemma*. Toronto: McLelland, 1972.
- Doxtator, Deborah, ed. *Fluffs and Feathers: An Exhibit on the Symbols of Indianness. A Resource Guide*. (1988) Revised ed. Brantford: Woodland Cultural Centre, 1992.
- Driben, Paul. *We are Metis: The Ethnography of a Halfbreed Community in Northern Alberta*. New York: AMS Press, 1985.
- Druke Becker, Mary. "Iroquois and Iroquoian in Canada." Eds. R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson, *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*. Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1986, 323-346.
- Duguay, Denise. "Straight Shooter: Photographer Jeff Thomas takes them as he sees them." *The Winnipeg Sun*. 14 June 1991: (arts section).
- Dürer, Albrecht (1471-1528). *The Painter's Manual; a manual of measurement of lines, areas, and solids by means of compass and ruler*. translated by Walter L. Strauss, New York: Abari's Books Inc., 1977.
- Durham, Jimmie. "On the Edge of Town." *Art Journal*. Summer 1992: 15-16.
- . "The search for virginity." *The Myth of Primitivism: Perspectives on Art*. Ed. Susan Hiller. New York: Routledge, 1991: 286-291.
- Eco, Umberto. "Theories of Art." *The World and I*. December, 1988: 152-163.

- Elkins, James. *The Poetics of Perspective*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- Elsner, John and Roger Cardinal, eds. *The Cultures of Collecting*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. (1961) trans. Constance Farrington, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970.
- Fairchild, Hoxie Neale. *The Noble Savage: A study in romantic naturalism*. New York: Russell, 1955.
- Fenton, William Nelson. "Iroquois Masks: A Living Tradition in the Northeast." *American Indian Art: Form and Tradition*. Exhibition catalogue. New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1972:43-8.
- . "The Iroquois in History." *North American Indians in Historical Perspective*. eds., Eleanor Burke Leacock and Nancy O. Lurie, New York: Random House, 1971, 129-168.
- . *Symposium on local diversity in Iroquoian culture*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Gov't. Print Office, 1951.
- Ferguson, Russell, et al. *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*. New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and MIT Press, 1990.
- Fife, Connie, ed. *The Colour of Resistance: A Contemporary Collection of Writing by Aboriginal Women*. Toronto: Sister Vision Press, 1993.
- Fisher, Jean. "Unsettled accounts of Indians and others." *The Myth of Primitivism: Perspectives on Art*. Ed. Susan Hiller. New York: Routledge, 1991: 293-313.
- Folland, Tom. et al. *Towards the Slaughterhouse of History: Working Papers on Culture*. Toronto: YYZ Books, 1992.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things*. New York: Vintage Books, 1973.
- Francis, Daniel. *National Dreams: Myth, Memory and Canadian History*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997.
- . *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*.

- Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992.
- Fraser, Mary. *Joseph Brant, Thayendanegea*. Burlington, Ontario: The Board of Management of the Joseph Brant Museum, 1969.
- Frideres, James S. *Native Peoples in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts*. 4th ed. Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1993.
- Fry, Philip. "Concerning *The Wacousta Syndrome* (More about What's Canadian in Canadian Art)." Bradley, Jessica and Lesley Johnstone Eds. *Sightlines: Reading Contemporary Canadian Art*. Canada: Artextes editions, 1994. 25-39.
- Fussel, Betty Harper. *The Story of Corn: The Myths and History, the culture and Agriculture, the Art and Science of America's Quintessential crop*. New York: Knopf, 1992.
- Gabriel-Doxtater, Brenda Katlatont and Arlette Kawanatatie Van den Hende. *At the Woods' Edge: An Anthology of the History of the People of Kanehsatà:ke*. Kanesatake, Que.: The Kanesatake Education Centre, 1995.
- Gilroy, Paul. "Cultural Studies and Ethnic Absolutism." Eds. Lawrence Grossberg, with Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler, *Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1992, 187-198.
- Goldie, Terry, with Carmen Lambert and Rowland Lorimer, eds. *Canada: Theoretical Discourse*. Montreal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1994.
- . "Fear and Temptation: Images of Indigenous Peoples in Australian, Canadian, and New Zealand Literature." *The Native in Literature: Canadian and Comparative Perspectives*. Eds. Thomas King, with Cheryl Calver, and Helen Hoy. Oakville, Ontario: ECW Press, 1987, 67-79.
- Gossett, Thomas F. *Race: The History of an Idea in America*. Dallas, Texas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963.
- Gray, Viviane. "Indian Artists' Statements Through Time." *In the Shadow of the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art*. Ed. Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC). Hull: CMC, 1993, 137-164.
- Graymont, Barbara. *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*. Syracuse, New

- York: Syracuse University Press, 1972.
- Greene, Alma. *Forbidden Voice: Reflections of a Mohawk Indian*. London: Hamlyn, 1971.
- Grinnell, George Bird. *The Indians of To-day*. 3rd ed. New York: Duffield and Company, 1915
- Grossberg, Lawrence, with Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler, eds. *Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Hale, Horatio. *The Iroquoia book of rites: and, Hale on the Iroquois*. (1883) Ohsweken, ON: Iroquafts, 1989.
- Hall, Louis Koroniaktajeh. *Rebuilding the Iroquois Confederacy*. (s.l., s.n.) 1980?-1985?.
- Hamilton, A. C. *Canada and Aboriginal Peoples: A New Partnership*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1995.
- Hart Baker, Marie Ann. "Gotta Be On Top: Why the Missionary Position Fails to Excite Me." *semiotext(e) : canadas*. Ed. Jordan Zinovich. Peterborough: Marginal Editions, 1994, 298-302.
- Harter, Jim, ed. *Images of Medicine*. New York: Bonanza Books, 1991.
- Hauptman, Laurence M. *The Iroquois and the Civil War: From Battlefield to Reservation*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992.
- Hecht, Robert A. *Joseph Brant: Iroquois ally of the British*. Charlotteville, N.Y.: Sam Har, 1975.
- Henry, Reginald. *Concerning the League: the Iroquois League tradition as dictated in Onondaga by John Arthur Gibson*. new ed. Winnipeg: Algonkian and Iroquoian Linguistics, 1992.
- Henry, Victoria. "The Polemics of Autobiography in First Nations Art." Thesis. Carleton University, 1993.
- Hertzberg, Hazel W. *The Search for American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971.
- . *The Great Tree and the Longhouse: The Culture of the Iroquois*. New

York: Macmillan, 1966.

Highwater, Jamake. *The Primal Mind: Vision and Reality in Indian America*. New York: Penguin Group, 1981.

Hilden, Patricia Penn. *When Nickels were Indians: An Urban, Mixed-Blood Story*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995.

Hill, Bruce, Ian Gillen and Glenda Mac Naughton. *Six Nations Reserve*. Markham: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1987.

Hill, Greg. Fort Erie, ON.: Celine and Calvin Hill, 1967.

Hill, Lynn. *AlterNative: Contemporary Photo Compositions*. Exhibition catalogue. Kleinburg, ON: McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1995.

Hill, Richard. "One Part Per Million: White Appropriation and Native Voices." *Fuse*. Winter 1992: 12-21.

----. "Continuity of the Haudenosaunee Government." *Indian Roots of American Democracy*. Ithaca: Akwenkon Press, Cornell University, 1992, 166.

Hill, Tom. National Museum of the American Indian, Education, Resources and Programs. (<http://www.si.edu.nmai/edu/eduexcul.htm>), 1997.

----. "Woodland Cultural Centre Museum." *Muse*. Fall 1994: 52-55.

----. "The Traditional Dancer." *Pow wow Images; an exhibition of photographs by Jefferey Thomas*. Thunder Bay, ON.: Thunder Bay Art Gallery, 1985.

Hill, Tom, and Paul Williams. *Council Fire: A Resource Guide*. Brantford, ON: Woodland Cultural Centre, 1989.

Hill, Tom, Karen Duffek and the Vancouver Art Gallery. *Beyond History*. Exhibition catalogue, Vancouver: The Vancouver Art Gallery, 1989.

Hiller, Susan, ed. *The Myth of Primitivism: Perspectives on Art*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Hoffman, Gerhard. "Postmodern Culture and Indian Art." *In the Shadow of*

- the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art*. Ed. Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC). Hull: CMC, 1993, 257-301.
- Honour, Hugh. *The New Golden Land: European Images of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1975.
- Hook, Harry, dir. *The Last of His Tribe*. With Jon Voight, Anne Archer, and Graham Greene. n.p., 1992.
- hooks, bell. *Outlaw Culture: resisting representation*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- . *Yearning: race, gender, and cultural politics*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1990.
- Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. *Museum, Media, Message*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- . *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Houle, Robert. "The Spiritual Legacy of the Ancient Ones." *Land Spirit Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada*. Ed. Diana Nemiroff. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1992. 43-73.
- . *Robert Houle: Indians from A-Z*. Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1990.
- . "Sovereignty over Subjectivity." *C Magazine*. Summer 1991: 28-35.
- Houston, James. Interview. "Hour Two Weekday Morning." By Peter Gzowski. CBC Radio, Toronto. Oct. 1995.
- Horn, Kahn-Tineta. "Traditional Culture and Community Competition: An Analysis of the On-going Struggle between the Great Law and the Code of Handsome Lake in Kahnawake." Research Essay. Carleton University, 1997.
- Hunt, George T. *The Wars of the Iroquois: A Study in Intertribal Trade Relations*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940.
- Hutcheon, Linda. "History and/as Intertext." *Future Indicative: Literary Theory and Canadian Literature*. Ed. John Moss. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984. 169-184.

- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. *The Indian Act Past and Present: A Manual on Registration and Entitlement*. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1991.
- Indian Affairs and Northern Development. *Basic Departmental Data - 1995*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1996.
- Ivins, William M., Jr. *On the Rationalization of Sight: With an Examination of Three Renaissance Texts on Perspective*. 2nd ed. New York: Da Capo Press, 1973.
- Jameson, Frederic. *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso, 1991.
- Jennings, Francis, William N. Fenton, Mary Druke Becker, and David R. Miller. *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1985.
- Jennings, Francis. *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Iroquois Tribes with English Colonies from Its Beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744*. New York: Norton, 1984.
- Johansen, Bruce E. *Life and Death in Mohawk Country*. Golden, CO: Nor. Am. Press, 1993.
- Johansen, Bruce E. "Reprise of Iroquois 'Influence' Issue." *Native Americas*. Vol. XIV, Num. 2, 1997: 58-60.
- Johnson, E. Pauline (Tekahionwake). *Flint and Feather*. Toronto: Hodder, 1931.
- Johnston, Charles Murray. *Valley of the Six Nations: A Collection of Documents on the Indian Lands of the Grand River*. Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1964.
- Kaplan, Flora E.S., ed. *Museums and the Making of "Ourselves": The Role of Objects in National Identity*. New York: Leicester University Press, 1994.
- Kanatawakhon Maracle, David. Personal conversation. 19 Nov. 1997, Ottawa.
- . Personal conversations. 3-5 Oct. 1997, Rensselaerville, N.Y.

- . Telephone conversation. 12 Dec. 1996.
- . Personal interview. 9 Dec. 1995, London.
- . *Tsi Karhakta "At the Edge of the Woods": Introductory Mohawk Language Course, Part 1*. London, ON.: The Institute of Iroquoian Linguistic and Cultural Studies of Ontario, University of Western Ontario, 1995.
- . *Kanyen'keha Tewatati (Let's Speak Mohawk)*. 2nd ed. Guilford, CT: Audio-Forum, 1993.
- . *One Thousand Useful Mohawk Words*. Guilford, CT: Audio-Forum, 1992.
- . *Mohawk Verb Study*. London: University of Western Ontario, 1988.
- . *Mohawk verb conjugations*. London: University of Western Ontario, 1987.
- Kelsay, Isabel Thompson. *Joseph Brant 1743-1807: Man of Two Worlds*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984.
- Keeshig-Tobias, Lenore. "White Lies?" *Saturday Night*. Oct. 1990: 67-68.
- Keith, Michael and Steve Pile, eds. *Place and the Politics of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Kimm, S.C. *The Iroquois: A History of the Six Nations of New York*. Middleburg, N.Y.: Press of Pierre W. Danforth, 1900.
- King, J.C.H. "Tradition in Native American Art." *The Arts of the North American Indian: Native Traditions in Evolution*. Ed. Edwin L. Wade. New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1986, 65-92.
- King, Thomas, ed. *All My Relations: An Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Native Fiction*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990.
- King, Thomas with Cheryl Calver and Helen Hoy, eds. *The Native in Literature*. Oakville: ECW Press, 1987.
- Knapp, Millie. "Shelley Niro: Seductive Humour." *Aboriginal Voices*. July/Aug./Sept. 1996: 31.
- Lavine, Stephen D. and Ivan Karp. *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press,

1991.

- Lippard, Lucy R., ed. *Partial Recall: With Essays on Photographs of Native North Americans*. New York: New Press, 1992.
- . *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1990.
- Lussier, Antoine. "The Metis." *Indians Without Tipis*. D. Bruce Sealy and Verna J. Kirkness, Eds. Winnipeg: The Canadian Studies Foundation, 1973: 39-53.
- Lundholm, Michael. "Kanien'kehaka Raotitiohkwa Cultural Centre: A Work in Progress." *Muse*. Fall 1995: 36-39.
- Lyford, Carrie. *Iroquois: Their Art and Crafts*. Surrey, B.C.: Hancock House, 1989.
- Lyons, Oren. "The American Indian in the Past." *Exiled in the Land of the Free*. Oren Lyons and John C. Mohawk, Eds. Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 1992, 13-42.
- . "Land of the Free/Home of the Brave." *Northeast Indian Quarterly: Indian Roots of American Democracy*. Vol. IV (Winter 1987), Vol. V (Spring 1988), 1988:18-20.
- Lyons, Oren R. and John C. Mohawk, Eds. *Exiled in the Land of the Free: Democracy, Indian Nations and the U.S. Constitution*. Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 1992.
- Mackenzie, James Bovell. *Six Nations Indians in Canada*. Toronto: Hunter, Rose, 1896.
- MacLaine, Craig, and Michael S. Baxendale. *This Land is Our Land: The Mohawk Revolt at Oka*. Montreal: Optimum Publishing, 1991.
- Maracle, Brian. *Back on the Rez: Finding the Way Home*. Toronto: Penguin Books, 1996.
- Mark, Leo. "The American Ideology of Space." *Denatured Visions: Landscape and Culture in the Twentieth Century*. Eds. Stuart Wrede and William Howard Adams. New York: The Museum Of Modern Art, 1991, 62-78.

- Martin, Lee-Ann. "First Nations Activism Through the Arts." *Questions of Community: Artists, Audiences, Coalitions*. Eds. Diana Augaitis et. al. Banff: Banff Centre for the Arts, 1995, 77-90.
- McLuhan, Elizabeth and Hill, Tom. *Norval Morrisseau and the Emergence of the Image Makers*. Toronto: Methuen Publishers, Ltd., 1984.
- McMaster, Gerald. *Jeffery Thomas: Portraits from the Dancing Grounds*. Exhibition catalogue, Ottawa: The Ottawa Art Gallery, 1996.
- . "Tenuous Lines of Descent: Indian Art and Craft of the Reservation Period." *In the Shadow of the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art*. Ed. Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC). Hull: CMC, 1993, 93-120.
- McMaster, Gerald R., and Lee-Ann Martin, Eds. *Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives*. Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1992.
- McFarlane, Scott. "The Haunt of Race: Canada's *Multiculturalism Act*, the Politics of Incorporation, and Writing Thru Race." *Fuse*. Spring, 1995: 18-31.
- Mealing, S.R., ed. *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: A Selection*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1963.
- Megaw, J. V. S. "Art as Identity: Aspects of Contemporary Aboriginal Art." *Art and Identity in Oceania*. Eds. Allan Hanson and Louise Hanson. Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1990.
- Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. Trans. Howard Greenfeld. Boston: Beacon Press, 1965.
- Mitchell, Grand Chief Michael. "An Unbroken Assertion of Sovereignty." *Drumbeat: Anger and Renewal in Indian Country*. Ed. Boyce Richardson. Toronto: Summerhill, 1989. 107-136.
- Miller, J. R. *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*. Revised ed, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.
- Moffitt, John F. and Santiago Sebastian. *O Brave New People: The European Invention of the American Indian*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.

- Mogelon, Alex. *The People of many faces; masks, myths and ceremonies of the Iroquois*. Lakefield, Ont.: Waapoons, 1994.
- Monture-Agnus, Patricia. *Thunder in my Soul: A Mohawk Woman Speaks*. Halifax: Fernwood, 1995.
- Morgan, Lewis Henry. *League of the Iroquois*. (Rochester: 1851), Introduction by William N. Fenton., New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1993.
- Myrtle, Minnie. *The Iroquois, or, The bright side of Indian character, by Minnie Myrtle*. New York: D. Appleton, 1984.
- Nagler, Mark. *Indians in the City: A Study of the Urbanization of Indians in Toronto*. 2nd ed. Ottawa: Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology, St. Paul University, 1973.
- National Gallery of Canada. *Berczy*. Ed. Rosemarie L. Tovell. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1991.
- Native Indian/Inuit Photographers' Association. *"Visions" from Contemporary Native Photographers*. Hamilton: Native Indian/Inuit Photographers' Association, 1985.
- Neils, Elaine M. *Reservation To City: Indian Migration and Federal Relocation*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971.
- Nemiroff, Diana, with Robert Houle and Charlotte Townsend-Gault, eds. *Land Spirit Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1992.
- Nicks, Trudy. "Indian Handicrafts: The marketing of an image." *ROTUNDA*. Summer 1990: 14-20.
- Niro, Shelley. Personal interview. 30 Dec. 1996, Brantford.
- O'Meara, Sylvia and Douglas A. West. *From Our Eyes: Learning from Indigenous Peoples*. Toronto: Garamond Press, 1996.
- O'Meara, Sylvia and Douglas A. West. "Teaching About Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: When is it Appropriate to Appropriate?" *Canadian Studies at Home and Abroad*. Eds. James de Finney, et. al. Montreal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1995, 47-70.

- Ottawa Art Gallery (The). *Tango: Lance Belanger*. Ottawa: Ottawa Art Gallery, 1995.
- Parker, Arthur C. *Parker on the Iroquois*. Ed. William N. Fenton. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1968.
- Parker, Arthur C. *The Constitution of the Five Nations or The Iroquois Book of the Great Law*. Albany: New York State Museum, 1916.
- Pelletier, Wilfred and Ted Poole. *No Foreign Land: The Biography of a North American Indian*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1973.
- Peterson, Jacqueline and Jennifer S. H. Brown, eds. *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba P., 1985.
- Petrone, Penny. *Native Literature in Canada: From the Oral Tradition to the Present*. Toronto: Oxford, 1990.
- , ed. *First People, First Voices*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983.
- Phillips, Ruth. "Why Not Tourist Art? Significant Silences in Native American Museum Representations." *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*. Ed. Gyan Prakash. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995, 99-125.
- . "‘Messages From the Past’: Oral Traditions and Contemporary Woodlands Art." *In the Shadow of the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art*. Ed. CMC. Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization (Canadian Ethnology Service Mercury Series Paper 124), 1993, 233-256.
- . "Woodlands Indian Souvenir Art as Visual Text: Reinventing Iconology in the Colonial Age." *Texts 8* Summer 1992: 12-21.
- . "Like a Star I Shine: Northern Woodlands Artistic Traditions." *The Spirit Sings*. Toronto: Glenbow Museum/McClelland and Stewart, 1987, 51-92.
- Price, Sally. *Primitive Art in Civilized Places*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Reid, Martine. "In Search of things Past, Remembered, Retraced, and Reinvented." *In the Shadow of the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary*

- Native Art*. Ed. Canadian Museum of Civilization. Hull: CMC, 1993. 71-92.
- Reid, Rob. "Preconceived ideas challenged by artist." *Brantford Expositor*. 2 Aug. 1985.
- Richardson, Boyce, ed. *People of Terra Nulius: Betrayal and Rebirth in Aboriginal Canada*. Vancouver: Douglas, 1994.
- Richardson, Boyce, ed. *Drumbeat: Anger and Renewal in Indian Country*. Toronto: Summerhill, 1989.
- Richter, Daniel K. *The Order of the Longhouse: the Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.
- Richter, Daniel K., and James Hart Merral, eds. *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and their neighbours in North America, 1600-1800*. Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1992.
- Rickard, Jolene. "Frozen in the White Light." *Watchful Eyes: Native American Women Artists*. Ed. Heard Museum, The. Phoenix, Arizona: The Heard Museum, 1994, 15-20.
- Ritzenthaler, Robert E. "Woodland Indian Art." *American Indian Art: Form and Tradition*. Exhibition catalogue. New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1972:49-54.
- Robertson, Clive. "Art and Issues of Native Identity." *Fuse*. August 1989, 3-4.
- Rodriguez, Richard. "Mixed Blood. Columbus's Legacy: a world made *mestizo*." *Harper's* Nov. 1991: 47-57.
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Canada. *People to people, nation to nation: Highlights from the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1996.
- Ryan, Joan. *Wall of Words: The Betrayal of the Urban Indian*. Toronto: Peter Martin Assoc., 1978.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.
- Sealy, D. Bruce and Verna J. Kirkness, eds. *Indians Without Tipis*. Winnipeg:

- The Canadian Studies Foundation, 1973.
- Seth, J.S. "Interruption Interval Hyphen." *Third Text*. Autumn 1993: 67-72.
- Shimony, Annemarie Anrod. *Conservatism among the Iroquois at the Six Nations Reserve*. 2nd ed. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994.
- Shorten Lynda. *Without Reserve: Stories from Urban Natives*. Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1991.
- Slemon, Stephen. "The Scramble for Post-colonialism." *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Bill Ashcroft, with Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, New York: Routledge, 1995, 45-54.
- Sioui, Georges E. *For an Amerindian Autohistory: An Essay on the Foundation of a Social Ethic*. Trans. Sheila Fischman. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992.
- Small, Deborah and Maggie Jaffe. *1492 - What Is It Like to Be Discovered?* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991.
- Smithsonian Institution. *This Path We Travel: Celebrations of contemporary Native American creativity*. New York: National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution and Fulcrum Publishing, 1994.
- Snow, Dean R. *The Iroquois*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1994.
- Socialist Review Collective. "Arranging Identities: Framing the Issue/s." *Socialist Review*. Vol. 24 No. 1-2, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995: 1-20.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. New York: Routledge, 1995: 24-28.
- . *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*. Ed. Sarah Harasym. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Stevens, Caroline. "Not Holding Still: AlterNative." *Fuse*. Fall 1995: 34-35.
- Strauss, Walter L. *The Painter's Manual; a manual of measurement of lines, areas, and solids by means of compass and ruler*. Albrecht Durer (1471-1528). Trans. by Unterweisung der Messung, New York: Abaris Books

Inc., 1977.

Sturtevant, William C. "The Meanings of Native American Art." *The Arts of the North American Indian: Native Traditions in Evolution*. Ed. Edwin L. Wade. New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1986, 22-44.

Swiss Institute (the). *Red River Crossings*. (exhibition catalogue) New York: The Swiss Institute, 1996.

Thomas, Jacob and Terry Boyle. *Teachings from the Longhouse*. Toronto: Stoddart, 1994.

Thomas, Jefferey. unpublished artist statement. 24 Nov. 1997.

----. Personal conversation. 22 Nov. 1997, Montreal.

----. *Red River Crossings*. Exhibition catalogue. New York: The Swiss Institute, 1996: 60-3.

----. Telephone conversation. 30 Sept. 1996, Ottawa.

----. Personal interview. 13 Dec. 1995, Ottawa.

Tehanetorens. *White Roots of Peace: The Great Law of Peace of the Longhouse People*. Rooseveltown, N.Y.: White Roots of Peace, 1971.

----. *Tales of the Iroquois*. Rooseveltown, N.Y.: Akwesasne Notes, 1976.

----. *Wampum Belts*. Onchiota, N.Y.: Six Nations Museum, n.d.

Tessman, Lisa. "Beyond Communitary Unity in the Politics of Identity." *Socialist Review*. Vol. 24,1,2 1995: 55-84.

Theberge, Pierre. *Greg Curnoe: retrospective*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1982.

Thunder Bay Art Gallery. *The New Traditionalists: Rebecca Belmore, Wayne Couchie, Floyd Gray*. Thunder Bay, Ont.: Thunder Bay Art Gallery, 1988.

----. *Portraits: Paintings and Photographs by Rick Hill*. Thunder Bay, Ont.: Thunder Bay Art Gallery, 1986.

----. *Pow wow Images; an exhibition of photographs by Jefferey Thomas*.
Thunder Bay, Ont.: Thunder Bay Art Gallery, 1985.

Thunder Bay Art Gallery and Garry Mainprize. *Stardusters: New Works by Jane Ash Poitras, Pierre Sioui, Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Edward Poitras*.
Thunder Bay, Ont.: Thunder Bay Art Gallery, 1986.

Todd, Loretta. "Neocolonialism Lives." *semiotext(e) : canadas*. Ed. Jordan Zinovich, Peterborough: Marginal Editions, 1994, 303-305.

Torgovnick, Marianna. *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives*.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Trigger, Bruce G. *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985.

----., ed. *Handbook of North American Indians: The Northeast*. Vol. 15,
Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. "Questions of Conquest: What Columbus wrought and what he did not." *Harper's*. Dec. 1990: 45-54.

Vazquez de Espinoza, Antonio. *Description of the Indies*, c.1620. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press., 1968.

Vickers, Jill. "Where is the Discipline in Interdisciplinarity?" (unpublished conference paper), 1991.

Vizenor, Gerald. *Manifest Manners: PostIndian Warriors of Survivance*.
Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1994.

Wade, Edwin L., ed. *The Arts of the North American Indian: Native Traditions in Evolution*. New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1986.

----. and Rennard Strickland. *Magic Images: Contemporary Native Art*. Tusla, Oklahoma: Philbrook Art Center, 1981.

Wadell, Jack O. and O. Michael Watson. *The American Indian in Urban Society*. Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1971.

Walker Art Center and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. *American Indian Art: Form and Tradition*. Exhibition catalogue. New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1972.

- Wallace, Paul A.W. *The White Roots of Peace*. Port Washington, N.Y.: I.J. Friedman, 1968.
- Walters, Anna Lee. *Talking Indian: Reflections on Survival and Writing*. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1992.
- Waubageshig. *The Only Good Indian: Essays by Canadian Indians*. Toronto: New Press, 1970.
- Weaver, Sally Mae. *Medicine and Politics among the Grand River Iroquois*. Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1972.
- White Roots of Peace: Reading of the Great Laws of Peace*. Volumes 1-10, (videotapes, approx. 20 hrs.), With Jacob Thomas. Iroquoian Institute, 1992.
- Wight, Darlene Coward, ed/curator. *The First Passionate Collector: The Ian Lindsay Collection of Inuit Art*. Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1991.
- Wilson, Edmund. *Apologies to the Iroquois*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1960.
- Wolf, Susan. "The Politics of Recognition." *Multiculturalism: Examining The Politics of Recognition*. Ed. Amy Gutman. Princeton: Princeton Press, 1994.
- Wong, Lloyd. "Mohawks in Beehives." *Fuse*. Fall, 1992: 38.
- Woodland Indian Cultural Educational Centre. *Indian Art '82*. Brantford: Woodland Indian Cultural Educational Centre, 1982.
- . *Indian Art '85*. Brantford: Woodland Indian Cultural Educational Centre, 1985.
- York, Geoffrey. *The Dispossessed: Life and Death in Native Canada*. 3rd ed. Foreword by Thomson Highway. Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1992.
- York, Geoffrey and Loreen Pinder. *People of the Pines*. 2nd ed. Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1991.
- Young, Iris Marion. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton

University Press, 1990.

Young, Robert J. C. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Young Man, Alfred. "Indian Art Centre Retrospective." *ACS Bulletin*. Vol. 18. No. 2-3 (Summer-Fall), 1996: 10-12.

----. "The Metaphysics of North American Indian Art." *Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives*. Eds. Gerald McMaster and Lee-Ann Martin, Toronto: Douglas and MacIntyre, Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1992: 80-99.

----. "Issues and Trends in Contemporary Native Art." *Parallelogram*. Vol. 13. No. 3, 1988: 28.

Zentner, Henry. *Indian Identity Crisis: Inquiries into the Problems and Prospects of Societal Development among Native Peoples*. Calgary: Strayer, 1973.

Zinovich, Jordan, ed. *semiotext(e): canadas*. Peterborough: Marginal Editions, 1994.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

APPLIED IMAGE, Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved