Escaping the "Progress Trap": UNESCO World Heritage Site Nomination and land stewardship through intangible cultural heritage in Asatiwisipe First Nation, Manitoba

by

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ABSTRACT

The First Nation community of Poplar River in Northern Manitoba is using a UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination to assist with meeting local needs. Going beyond the expected, non-renewable resource development, Asatiwisipe First Nation is taking control over its own developmental plans, and forging an ecologically sustainable vision of community-controlled economic and political development. This initiative is an escape from the 'progress trap' where Indigenous resource stewardship practices will guide sustainable community economic development. This thesis explores the application of intangible cultural heritage as a lens for looking at the culture/nature discussion, food sovereignty, Indigenous resource management as well as Aboriginal and treaty rights. Based on longitudinal research over the past eight years, this dissertation is a collection of interviews and narratives from community members, personal experiences and policy research. Despite systemic Eurocentrism and many challenges, permanent protection of the Poplar River Community Conserved Area through the World Heritage Site nomination is perhaps the best solution for the community as it is an initiative that has been instigated by the First Nation itself.

Azaadiiwiziibi giiwedinong Manitoba odaabajitoonaawaa' iwe UNESCO World Heritage site gaa-ijijgaadeg ji-wiiji'iwewaad gechiwaag. Awashime ji-izhichigeng ji-giitwaami-aabajichigaadegin ondaadiziwin zhigwa gaa-gidimaagizing. Asatiwisipi Ishkonigan wiinawaa odazhiikaanaawaa' ji-ondaadizing imaa nakeya'ii. Zhigwa miinawaa ji-anokaadamowaad ji-ondaadiziwaad ani-niigaan zhigwa ogimaawin ji-niigaanishkamowaad. Owe onashowewin da-maadanokaajigaade anokiiwinan ji-onachigaadeg gechiwaag onji. Giizhaach ji-gwayaanchigeng gechiwaag imaa onachigaadeg ji-ani-wiiji'igowaad bemaadiziwaad. Owe mazina'igan wiindamaagemagan aaniin waa-izhi-onachigaadegin ono onashowewinan ji-wiiji'igowaad gechiwaag imaa gaa-ayaawaad giiwedinong ishkoniganan. Ji-izhaang ji-gaganoonindwaa Anishinaabeg ji-maamiinobii'igaadegin onashowewinan mazina'iganing. Daa-ikidom aaniish wemitigoozhiwi-izhichigewin, gechiwaag imaa gaa-onokaajigaadeg zhigwa gaye Parks Canada/UNESCO gaa-wiidookaagewaad, mii owe maawanj menoseg wiinawaa aaniish Anishinaabeg odazhiikaanaawaa' owe izhichigewin.

La communauté autochtone de Poplar River dans le Nord du Manitoba utilise le site du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO pour appuyer les besoins locaux. La Première nation, Asatisiwipe Anishinaabeg *devient gérante du développement écologique dans la forêt boréale où elle habite. Elle est responsable de l'économie et de la politique communautaire. Cette initiative a eu lieu avant les propositions du développement ou les pratiques d'intendance Indigène des ressources naturelles guideront le développement économique durable. Cette thèse explore l'application du patrimoine culturel immatériel comme un objectif de regarder le débat culture/nature, la souveraineté alimentaire, la gestion des ressources naturelles par des Autochtones ainsi que les droits ancestraux et issus de traités. Cette thèse est une collection d'entretiens et de récits de membres de la communauté, des expériences personnelles et une analyse d'importants enjeux des politiques publiques dans la domaine des droits autochtones. Malgré Eurocentrisme systémique, ce projet est encore la meilleure solution pour cette communauté, car il s'agit d'une initiative qui a été mise en place par la Première nation elle-même.*

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to say *gichi-miigwech* to Poplar River First Nation for supporting my presence in the community for the past eight years. Thank you for welcoming me into your community, assisting me in my work, providing me with company on many occasions, sharing with me your knowledge, wisdom and kindness and generosity. A sincere thank you for the friendships I made with many of you and for enduring my numerous questions and academic expectations. To my teachers, Abel, Ken, Walter and Jean and their family, Sophia and Ray, Noel, Ernest, Russell, Byron, Budski, Kelsey, Albert, Guy and Kate, Marcel and Frances, Stanley Bittern (RIP) as well as so many others. A big thank you also well to Fr. Anthony and Fr. Rhéal for allowing me to stay at the mission on occasion.

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This work and much of the research would be not be possible without the generous support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Northern Scientific Training Program (NSTP) and the Manitoba Research Alliance (MRA) as well as the support and office space I have received from St. John's College and the University of Manitoba. Thank you to Poplar River First Nation for also providing me with support for my stay in the community on many occasions. Although they are my own reflections and experiences, I take full responsibility for any errors in what is written.

FOR THE COMMUNITY

During one informal interview, one Poplar River First Nation community member told me: "we have all these researchers coming into our community to do studies. And then they tell us we have this problem and those issues. We know we have problems. We do not need you to tell us that. What we need is solutions".

This struck a chord with me and my research. Although I may not have the solutions and I cannot provide help in the way that I'd like to, I tried my best to help Poplar River with this work. I believe that permanent protection of the land and the World Heritage Site nomination is one of the solution to some of the problems. Ensuring the sustainability of the land will forever provide you with the cultural aspects of your heritage to fall back on: the knowledge of the land, the ways that have always worked for the Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg and the security of who you were and are to know the direction in which you are heading. Protecting the land based on traditional practices of land and resource stewardship will forever ensure you have food to put on the table and that your culture will thrive. I can only assist Poplar River with broader concepts of issues that you experience first-hand at the very local level.

My name is Agnieszka (Agnes) and I have been working with Poplar River First Nation since 2007. I have received permission from Chief and Council to conduct interviews, collect some stories, and up to 2014, I have been regularly coming to Poplar River doing that and providing the community with updates on my work.

With this dissertation, although an academic endeavor with the university and the larger scholarship in mind, I aimed at practicality. I was conscious of community-based research as a tool and I tried to move slightly past research for research's sake and provide the Aboriginal and academic community with something that could perhaps be of use. This may be idealistic and indeed the goal of many researchers, but as promised to those members of Poplar River with whom I discussed my work with, I will keep the community in mind as I write this doctoral work.

In **Chapter 1,** I introduced the community and Pimachiowin Aki to the readers. These are my views of the First Nations and the World Heritage Site nomination, and I hope that I have portrayed Poplar River in the [good] light that I have meant to.

Chapter 2 was written with the deferred nomination in mind. I understand the importance of this nomination and the amount of sweat that went into it. I have thus tried to provide Poplar River with scholarly tools and policies that can aid in the revised nomination.

In the food section on **Chapter 3**, I wanted to elaborate on this important component of life that affects us all. Many of you have talked food and life with me that always included looking at sustenance in some way and how traditional economies signify *mino-bimaadiziwin*, 'the good life' for you. This chapter was aimed at providing scholarly work on food sovereignty, but with the context and intent to assist the community in ensuring traditional and cultural activities like hunting, trapping, fishing and 'gathering' are forever continued. I have heard many stories of community gardens, small potato patches, the raising of chickens and harvesting wild rice, blueberries and other renewable resources like *okandimoo*, *wiike*, blueberries and red willow. Having said that, I realize that Poplar River is a hunting, trapping and fishing community and as such, I tried to articulate how caring for your land – how each head trapper's presence on the land and use of the resources from that land is a sustainable way – to forever ensure the animals and your traditions are there. This is your Aboriginal right. I examined this framework by looking at different Supreme Court of Canada cases and policies affecting your Aboriginal and treaty rights in **Chapters 5 and 6**.

In **Chapter 7,** I describe sustainable community economic development. I have outlined how Poplar River's Poplar/Nanowin Park and the World Heritage Site initiatives are models for an environmentally-protective form of economic wealth. I have taken a theoretical community development analysis to see what other ventures could be feasible in Poplar River. I have looked at numerous case studies that fit with Poplar River's land-protective objectives, but which can also provide you with ideas as to what socio-economic activities can be brought into the community. The few examples and discussions I have surveyed here are simply meant to be something that could be used as a starting point by the leaders of Poplar River First Nation; they are not meant to be one-and-only imposing views of an outsider.

In the final section, in **Chapter 8,** I summarize my four main arguments, that:

(1) *Intangible cultural heritage as suggested through UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage can be fruitfully applied in Canada to enlarge the current interpretation of Aboriginal and treaty rights.*

(2) *Indigenous resource stewardship is an Aboriginal and treaty right.*

(3) *Much of the food sovereignty scholarship is based on the capitalist agriculturalist perspective that does not fit in with the boreal forest Indigenous hunting, trapping and gathering modes of production, and thus limits some policies and dialogue about land and resource use.*

(4) *Aboriginal land stewardship and resource use is based on a set of cultural and social relations (not 'title' to land) that can effectively establish sustainable community development and change the meaning of Aboriginal and treaty rights.*

The theoretical part is for the academics and policy makers. The practical arguments through your stories and narratives are reaffirmations of your community and echo the voices of other Indigenous peoples. That is for you. You know it is your right as Indigenous people to be self-determining and as per your traditional ways, look after the 'gift' of land that was entrusted to you by your ancestors and which you are borrowing from your future generations. With this thesis though, I also wanted other Indigenous people who are struggling with development and resource rights to know that communities like yours are living those rights on a daily basis. And that these rights to resource stewardship should be embedded in the interpretation of your Aboriginal and treaty rights.

The entire 200 + page document was given to the Chief and Council in 2014. Copies of the interviews, transcripts and any of the video footage I took, was given to the band office and Pimachiowin Aki Corp. As well, this two page summary of my research was given to numerous members of your community, all the interview participants and placed at the band office and sent to Pimachiowin Aki. I wrote the summary with you in mind, and so I hope it serves your needs.

Agnieszka (Agnes) Pawlowska-Mainville
Winnipeg, April 2014

FREQUENTLY USED ANISHINAABEMOWIN TERMS

To help the reader with some of the terminology used, below is a list of the Anishinaabemowin (Ojibway) words repeatedly used in this thesis. In some cases, translations are provided immediately after the term within the text.

Since there exists different dialectical pronunciations and varying spellings of some of the terms included in this dissertation, I have relied on the 'Double Vowel' or 'Fiero' orthography, which is becoming widely recognized as the spelling system to use (Ningewance 2009: 13). Although I have been provided with assistance from diverse Anishinaabemowin speakers in Poplar River and elsewhere[1] as well as reference books to ensure the terms are correct, I take full responsibility for any mistakes and any misconceptions about their meanings.

aadizookewinan - storytelling

ahnuhbuhkoomeench - kinship relations

aki - land, earth

aki miijiim - land food; 'country food'

akiimazina'igan - maps, 'landscape books'

andomoozwe - he or she goes moose hunting

andoshiibe - he or she goes duck hunting

animiikig - Thunderbirds/thunderers

Anishinaabeg - Ojibway people

Anishinaabekwe/Anishinaabe ikwe - Ojibway woman

Anishinaabemowin - Ojibway language

asati or azaadii(g) - poplar(s) [trees]

Asatiwisipe Aki - Poplar River First Nation

asatisiwipe aki - Poplar River land/earth/landscape

Asatisiwipe Anishnaabeg - Poplar River First Nation *Azatiiziibe Anishinaabeg, Asatiwisipe First Nation, Asatiwisipe Aki, Azaadiwi-ziibi Nitam-Anishinaabe* and even *Negginan,* meaning 'home'.

asati ziibing - poplar river

binesiiwag - Thunderbirds

dibaajimowinag - stories

dibaajimowin - story or narrative

[1] Here I must acknowledge Pat Ningewance, Roger Roulette and Richard Morrison who have taught me so much of the basic grammar terms and rules, that I was able to understand the land-based and historical context for much of Anishinaabemowin.

ganawenjigaade - ‘we monitor something’.

ganawenjigewin or **kahnahwaycheekahwin** - land-care approach I have used the term to discuss ‘Indigenous resource stewardship’

gizhigamizigen! - ‘boil water for tea!’

gwaashkebijige - is the action of ‘going fishing’ by a rod.

ininiwag ganawenjigewininiwag - the cultural preservers or ‘historians’

mawadishiwe - he or she is visiting

minigoowiziwin or **miinigoziwin or miinigowin** - a gift [received]

mino-bimaadiziwin - ‘the good life’, balanced life

Mooniya ikwe - White woman

Mukatewisipe - Black River

odaniibiishimidaa - ‘let’s have tea’

omiigiwewinan - [Creator’s] gifts

oshkinigikwe - young girl, young woman

pimachiowin aki - ‘the land that gives life’; also the name of the World Heritage Site nomination

Pinesewapikung sagaigan or **Biinesiwapigon zagai’gan** - Thunder Mountain Lake

wedi aki minonaagozi - ‘the land here looks good’

ziibi - river

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LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Over the past few years I have had the pleasure to talk with many people. Some were interviewed, some provided me with discussions and stories to help frame my points. Although I cannot include everyone on this list, below are key names of individuals who have directly contributed to this work, either through an interview, or given me notes or stories that have shaped this work. If I have forgotten anyone, I am sorry. This list is in alphabetical order, and I thank you all for your voices.

Abel Bruce - Elder, harvester; my teacher, inspiration and friend.
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INTRODUCTION

In *An Illustrated Short History of Progress,* Ronald Wright writes that:

> Civilization is an experiment, a very recent way of life in the human career, and it has a habit of walking into what I am calling progress traps. A small village on good land beside a river is a good idea; but when the village grows into a city and paves over the good land, it becomes a bad idea (Wright 2006:151).

Wright discusses the human inability – or the greed, or inertia or the foolishness - to foresee or to watch out for – long-range consequences. "Sometimes" Wright continues, it is "the concentration of power at the top of large scale societies" that gives the elites a vested interest in the status quo: "they continue to prosper in darkening times long after the environment and general populace begin to suffer" (Wright 2006:151). Wright illustrates the ways that a society can basically begin its own end in the name of 'progress'. But, does 'progress' only refer to industrial development and the desecration of the environment? Or, can it also represent securing financially-viable options such as eco-tourism, harvesting and renewable products allocation? Are peoples and cultures really separate entities from the land and natural resources?

Not in Poplar River, a small and remote First Nation community located on the eastern shores of Lake Winnipeg. By using an international organization for local purposes, Poplar River First Nation is being innovative in safeguarding their land so that future generations of their people can continue to live the land-based life they do. Their initiative is precedent-setting and other communities and First Nations already refer to this as a form of Anishinaabeg self-determination. This First Nation's perseverance against big corporations and resource development has been hard work but well guided by the local Elders:

> we are a community [has] practiced [to] really stand up to the right to say 'no, we don't want any development in our traditional territory'. And there's reasons why [we] do that. There is so much that is a part of us, and that's why we have made that stand, because the land is so much alive. [..] There were times, we would go back, and sometimes there were tears, because we weren't doing this for us, but for the generations to come. We needed our Elders, for them to remind us that we need our land; [otherwise] we won't survive as a people, our communities will not survive (Sophia Rabliauskas 2009).

This insistence on ventures that characterize local yet sustainable needs has aided this community on the east side of Lake Winnipeg to gain a sense of who they are as a people:

> Protection of the land is the key to our very future. Therefore, to suggest that our traditional lands need not be protected, or that only a part of our traditional territory needs to be protected, is to suggest to us that our lives can be threatened; that our children's future can be compromised or forfeited for some other purpose. It would be disrespectful and immoral for society at large to compromise what we, the Poplar River Anishnaabek, know and assert as the need for life (AAMP 2010:3).

This vision, places as the first and foremost the protection of the land and the small community, which is why the locally-developed Asatiwisipe Aki Management Plan (2011) was just the beginning for ensuring sustainability and permanent protection of this community's trap line territory.

Poplar River's trap line is now part of the larger area of the boreal forest that is included in the World Heritage Site nomination. Essentially this Manitoba fly-in community is collaborating with the neighbouring First Nations to establish a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site called Pimachiowin Aki. Here, First Nations on the east side of Lake Winnipeg in Ontario and Manitoba will administer over the 43,000-square-kilometre area of the boreal forest (IISD 2008; Manitoba 2008a). Each First Nation has different visions; Poplar River's goal is protection of their land from industrial development and the sustenance of the forest's natural ecological processes according to local values and land uses. In my numerous discussions with community members over the past eight years, I have learned that Poplar River's initiative to establish permanent protection of their lands signifies sustainability of a people. Since the two are recognized as being dependent on each other, the vision to ensure economic development while also sustaining the in-tact ecology of the landscape represents a unique re-conceptualization of the meaning of 'progress' and 'development'. In this work therefore, I will argue that in attempting to establish a World Heritage Site, Poplar River is using global infrastructures to meet local needs. In doing so, they are using - but also transforming in their own way - concepts such as the UNESCO's notion of "outstanding universal value", 'resource management', food sovereignty and 'economic development' to protect their

traditional lands through self-governing Indigenous resource stewardship practices, which I argue are a form of Aboriginal and treaty rights. This *sui generis* politicization of the land continues to co-exist with traditional and contemporary land uses that make up the intricate identity of *asatiwisipe aki*, 'Poplar River earth'.

> *We have to keep the natural resources here as much as we can. I know what happens to other places when development comes along, they seem to kind change that, in a way. It kinds of tends to affect the environment, the water. We have a lot of freshwater. If we don't really take care of that, even our own fresh water that we have... already the lake is contaminated. All over, like, they have to boil the water now […] There is such beauty here; there's not many places that are like what we have here. Like having freshwater to drink, having the natural resources like we do. It's very beautiful. [With development] everything will change, there'll be changes. Like for hydro, a dam; if you were to put a dam here, I know one side would be flooded, and the other side, there wouldn't be much water. Now, […] I kind of found that it does something to the land. I find it's really [a] destructive kind of way* (Byron Mitchell 2008).

This thesis was explored from a number of different angles – the historical, political, and environmental and well as from ecofeminist and Indigenous philosophies and from non-colonizing perspectives. These were meant to serve as oppositional to econo-political discourse and set of practices that the mainstream neoliberal view holds about the history and politics in Aboriginal Canada. The theories I examine and in some ways de/construct throughout my dissertation is a fracturing and re-structuring that seeks to constitute my attempt to articulate an academically sound theoretical framework within the multifarious discipline of Native Studies and community-based research. My work in Poplar River over the last eight years is embodied mostly in stories, but also structured in this thesis. Here, I explore this remote community's use of international tools – whether they are institutions, contexts, concepts or methods, and characterize the application of those tools in a particular place in the boreal forest. My investigation has attempted to trace the development of this community's movement to protect their traditional territory, and theoretize around the sustainable development movement on the structural factors found within scholarship. I have looked at the effects

of these endeavours on this location and its construction – de/construction and re/construction – on the community's well-being and self-determination.

Dibajiimowinan, 'stories' and the metanarrative

> *I used to sit down with my dad and tell stories about that long time ago. I sat listening to him tell the stories. I said, 'that must have been good for you dad'. And now, my grandson, sometimes he goes and asks me to put rabbit snares in the bush. Last week he wanted to go in the south in the bush by himself, you know. And [he] knows right where to go and where to set that rabbit snare. Cause I am always there for him to help him out [and tell him stories]. 'Grandpa', he says, I went to the bush". "What happened?" "I got stuck in the snow. The snow is too deep", he says* (Abel Bruce 2013).

It is experience passed on from mouth to mouth that "is the source from which all storytellers have drawn" writes Benjamin in his essay *The Storyteller* (2007:84). He goes on to argue that "[i]n every case the storyteller is a man who has counsel for his readers. Counsel woven into the fabric of real life is wisdom" (Benjamin 2007:86-87). Stories can refer to individual experiences, or, of that space itself. For instance, a specific area is used for hunting in the fall, yet that same site can be differently interpreted by another individual. It can be used for berry picking by the women of the community and medicine picking for the medicine men; the place can also be a meeting place for children or even be a previous sweat lodge location for the local Elders. As well, rivers in a First Nations community function as a fish industry for the fishermen, but also as spots of entertainment while skating in the winter; they are places to swim for kids and teens in the summer, and can serve as reed-covered hidden enclaves for those smoking during autumn evenings. Each of these narratives is unique; the stories expressed through one's sense of self within a particular landscape can later be retold as an

Image 1 *Picking medicines. Numerous land uses provide diverse narratives to the willing ear. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

experience shared by a storyteller. Therefore, unlike the single and causal narrative of emptiness and non-renewable resource development that dominates the story of Canada's moral topography, individual experiences expressed through the 'moral topographies' of Poplar River First Nation members, are open to revelation.

In *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man* (1987), Michael Taussig uses the notion of 'moral topography' to explain the process of colonization of the Putumayo Valley Indians in Colombia during the rubber boom of the early 20th century. He writes that:

> [It is] about history and landscape, about the way men interpret history and recruit landscape to that task, and about the different but complementary ways that they gain power from these interpretations according to whether they are being carried or whether they are carrying other men over this landscape (Taussig 1987:287).

Created by social and by natural history, landscapes are of the imagination; they reflect one's sense of reality. "The Europeans", argues Taussig (1987:287) "employ poetics of imagery, sensuous and passionate [to create landscapes that] are active in binding ruled to ruler and colonized to colonizer". Hence, because landscapes and topographies are symbolic representations of personal and political, historical and economic meanings carved into space, for the dominant society, the moral topography of Indigenous territories is often represented as an 'empty wilderness' that has to be developed and made useful so that 'progress' can continue. Like in South America, Canada's dominant narrative is one of progress and of the divine attempt to develop and make use of the empty space that was discovered by civilization. This mythologized history is told through reified representations which politicize [Indigenous] geographical spaces to legitimize their Canadian dominance. "Those who command space", writes Harvey (1990:234) "can always control the politics of place even though, and this is a vital corollary, it takes control of some place to command space in the first instance". Similarly, within the Canadian context, commanding space signifies controlling Indigenous politics through the process of enclosure; confining Indigenous peoples to reserves represents barricading their de-colonizing narratives in order to claim the land and legitimize its appropriation through discourses of wilderness

and progress. Consequently, the discourse of geographical emptiness of Canada's north serves as the dominant narrative, and the landscapes of many Indigenous territories supply the ideological formations for interpreting the moral topography of power.

Canada's domination of Indigenous space is primarily done through alteration of natural landscapes and through the elimination of Aboriginal presence. "Since space is a 'fact' of nature", writes Harvey (1990:249),

> this meant that the conquest and rational ordering of space became an integral part of the modernizing project. The difference this time was that space and time had to be organized not to reflect the glory of God, but to celebrate and facilitate the liberation of 'Man' as a free and active individual, endowed with consciousness and will. It was in this image that landscape was to emerge.

Indeed, the boreal forest of Canada's north is often portrayed as devoid of human presence, but in *Jack Pine* (1992:104), Bordo writes that there is absence of a specific presence - the Aboriginal. Unlike the paranoid fear exhibited by the rubber barons in the Putumayo Valley in Colombia, the landscapes of the Canadian north are often represented as empty, with simply a trace of vanished "Indianness". The "disappearance of the aboriginal and its replacement by the whites opened up a vague space" argues Bordo (1992:104). This vague and unnamed space allows for canoeing, portaging, camping and experiencing the boreal forest, whose placelessness, Bordo continues, is utopic. This utopia is expressed though the representation of "Canada's North" where the rivers represent paths of relaxing familial canoe trips; the forest, a site for camping grounds for overworked city workers willing to pay top-dollar for anxiety relief; and National Parks exist to accommodate nature lovers and Indian cultural connoisseurs. Like the top of the Andean mountains, boreal forest landscapes are undeniably utopian because their understanding is located in the imaginary: "[w]hite presence appears in the utopic space where the [A]boriginals are not" (Bordo 19992:104), thus, the dominant moral topography of boreal forests is expressed through narratives that persist on the articulation of a *specific* human presence established by absenteeism of natives. Dominant society's geophysical interpretation therefore,

articulates the narratives of vague landscape space that continue to this day to shape our imaginative understandings and attitudes about human dwelling, colonialism and Indigenous lands. Writes Bordo (1992:106):

> The constitution of the landscape image as a space absent of human presence holds the key to understanding the new wilderness ethos and its relation to aboriginality. In order to demonstrate that aboriginal presence is at best a contingent presence […it must be] establish[d] that the pictorial space as voided human presence is a frame, constituted by the systematic voiding of human presence. That frame establishes wilderness as a way of looking at - and as a way of denying - an ethos in short, that might have outlived itself.

The absenteeism of Aboriginal people - for a specific frame, for 'development' - is also a reflection of Eurocentric perceptions of Indigeneity and its history, and I will discuss this in Chapter 3.

Canada's experience of the boreal forest landscapes is greatly dissimilar from Aboriginal peoples' experience and relation to them. For example, the moral topography of the empty space of Lake Winnipeg's east side is interpreted differently than the moral topography of *asatiwisipe aki*. Places of that land are produced by individual human activity, thus, are bound not only to the present but are also manifestations of the past. The Anishinaabeg here, have been creating narratives about the relationship to their traditional territory not only through their oral histories about where their roots are, but also through the notion of 'knowing the land' and being responsible for the 'gift' of land. A landscape is socially meaningful and identifiable when a historical dimension and knowledge of the surrounding places are attributed to it. The spaces protected by the Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg exist as moral topographies through resource use and associative cultural landscapes; it is through the exercise of the land-based modes of production and actively ensuring the land is sustained that these individuals build narratives over the landscape. These practices of interpreting their landscapes and the voices presented here are my attempts to support this community so that they continue to be keepers of the culture and storytellers of multifarious narratives.

In *The Postmodern Condition* (1984), Jean-François Lyotard stresses the need for a heterogeneity of discourses and the importance of theoretical, practical and aesthetic judgements that

multivarious narratives have on a society's autonomy, rules and criteria. Arguing against totalitarian or unifying theory – the metanarrative - Lyotard presses on the importance of a plurality of discourses and the privileging of experience and senses over texts and discourse (Best & Kellner 1991:147). Voicing his apprehension about 'the grand narrative', Lyotard coined the notion of the metanarrative: the master idea that can be characterized as a grand narrative common to all. Truth has a value in the discourse that occupies a certain place in our society and Lyotard writes that: "true knowledge...is always indirect knowledge; it is composed of reported statements that are incorporated into the metanarrative of a subject that guarantees their legitimacy" (1984:35). The metanarrative of 'progress' continues for Canada through resource development and resource extraction: economic development is progress and it is needed and in the 21st century! We can even make it earth friendly with our new technology! Manitoba's east side will become better in terms of modernization and quality of life for local people! Jobs will be available and people will be able to buy things at the stores! The grand narrative surrounding progress and development is reiterated continuously through the privileged discourse of truth and enlightenment history. The metanarrative of 'progress' arising out of non-renewable resource development and hence economic development is insisted on by the mainstream, and it is reflective of the province's political and historical discourse. In Manitoba, such arguments are justified through specific scientific and economic prescriptions, which for Lyotard, are commodities that the master narrative sells as the discourse of legitimization. Hegemonic discourse indeed powers the economic necessity for the next dam, transmission line project, timber and mine licenses. In order that Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg do not, as Taussig (1987:287) implied, 'carry other men over this landscape' this community is envisioning

> possible alternatives from other business opportunities that would not cause damage to the land. And ecotourism was one of the options that was discussed by the group. […] And another task that needed to be done was to look at all the other opportunities, but the main cause was not to bring damage to the land and the environment […] We have

> already talked about these various measures [non-renewable resource development and Hydro's BiPole III project] but we know that there is nothing in it for us economically, so it's not a really an issue for us economically (Ernest C Bruce 2010).

Arguing for the urgency of *petits récits,* or little narratives, Lyotard (1984:36) claims that it is only this form of rhetoric that will destabilize the metanarratives. Like Lyotard, Taussig (1987:209) also uses narratives himself because they create a:

> mode of perception - a way of seeing through a mode of talking – figuring the world through dialogue that comes alive with sudden transformative force in the crannies of everyday's life pauses and juxtapositions [...]It is an irregular, quavering image of hope, this inscription on the edge of official history.

Narratives, rather than assenting to the universal truth or agreeing to a consensus, can put into question the grand paradigm (Best & Kellner 1991:166). The grassroots voices of Poplar River First Nation, many of them members from communities who continue to be impacted by colonization, are not fighting for a better future by means of sustainable economic development and the UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination. The collective story of the nomination and individual narratives, *dibaajimowinan*, now challenge the metanarrative of 'progress' by refusing to fall into its trap. The Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg voices are counter-narratives of history, capitalist values and dominant meanings of economic 'development'.

Currently, very few, if any, local communities are allowed to directly partake in the resource-sharing economy of the State because no partnerships are permitted within superstructure narratives surrounding Crown land. The State thus, draws upon complex narratives of wilderness conservation and progressive development as its moral topography of forests, which systemically exclude local communities and their geophysical interpretations from this colonial ideology. The ideological formation of that structure is so powerful that it can even constrain individual or counter-hegemonic narratives so as to ensure sustainability of the dominant narrative. Nonetheless, the question of narratives and of the moral topography of bush lands is not one of single accounts, especially when it assumes a political bearing from the fact that a significant portion of the people producing counter-

narratives inhabit the landscapes, and as it were, live in them. A consideration of Indigenous peoples' moral topography is thus imperative to distinguish incongruous narratives of undisturbed, prescriptive rights to the bush. Accordingly, Aboriginal narratives 'on the edge of official history' represent counter-hegemonic voices to the sequential order of Canada's colonial history; these narratives of places are stories that shatter the official account of this geophysical space and instead create counter-narratives of Canada's past. Indigenous storytellers and their fragile voices ground their identities and histories in landscapes by resonating throughout the imaginative realities of individuals. The *dibaajimowinan*, 'stories/narratives' found here are reflections of a space exterior to the hegemonic discourse; the multiplicity of voices used for this project came directly out of Poplar River First Nation members and I have re-presented them as an explicit confrontation to the master narrative of development as 'progress'. Abel Bruce, an Elder friend shares with me his belief that the values of 'the past' should be carried forward like the wind carries leaves around:

> same thing as us, we are alive. Even the trees that you see there, the trees are alive. The tree talks and all that, you know. The wind carries around, the wind carries the message around. That's want it is. It carries your message.[…] A lot of people now I hear, 'don't bring up the past, don't bring up the past". We have to do it. No matter what. This. Me. I'm there. […] we have to bring it [all] back you know. We have to bring it back. This is what we are at today. I know we have so many new things now, just coming up now today. I think those[old ways] are the ones we have to keep. The ones we have now, today (Abel Bruce 2013).

Summary of Thesis

In Chapter 1, I have tried to describe the community of Poplar River and the UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination so that the reader can visualize the area and better understand the context of the arguments presented here. Unfortunately, there are not enough adjectives to describe the beauty and warmth of the community - in both the natural and human scope. Not only is the natural landscape around Poplar River immensely exquisite, but the shades of green – ranging from the penumbra of pine trees, to the lighter shades of the lichen on the exposed igneous boulders, to the bright lushness of the

wild grasses on the shores of the river – give the impression of Group of Seven northern landscape. However, unlike Tom Thomson's and A.Y. Jackson's paintings where the *absence* of Indigenous people on the Canadian wilderness is considered special, it is, on the contrary, the interaction with and use of the spaces and places in Poplar River, or Asatiwisipe Aki that makes the landscape here of outstanding heritage and value. It is *because* of Indigenous people that this area is so unique. Without the presence and the collective memory of the local First Nations members, the rich heritage of the area would not be so symbolic, and Chapter One will describe this community, present some voices and stories as well as depict the cultural landscape. This chapter will also describe the context of the World Heritage Site initiative and identify some of the local needs and narratives that numerous members of the community have articulated to me. The portrayal is essential in understanding not only the 'backyard' of the community, but also the role it plays for the local Anishinaabeg (and Cree). The description is representative of my view of the community and I have illustrated but a mere part of what can only be seen through a personal visit.

Chapter Two will discuss my conceptual and methodological framework for this dissertation. Here, I will describe my longitudinal research methods, my positionality and my methods of obtaining "data" while relying heavily on narrative methodology. This thesis is the outcome of my long-term involvement in the community since 2007; at the time working on my master's thesis, the community wanted help in the collection of oral histories from Elders and community members in case legal action was to be initiated to obtain permanent protection. Eventually, my involvement with this community became my doctoral research project and this dissertation is a document from the last eight years of following this remote First Nation's process in protecting their trap line territory as part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. My research was done in conjunction with appeasing to and working with two – oftentimes opposing - cultures and views of reality. Whereas the academically defined positivist epistemology assumes that there is a single reality that can be measured, the Anishinaabeg

worldview assumes that there are ever-changing and multiple realities that can make measuring difficult (Abel Bruce 2010, pers. comm.; Richard Morrison pers. comm. 2012). My position as a non-Aboriginal immigrant rendered me to find the texts of Eigenbrod *Travelling Knoweldges* (2005), Said's *Orientalism* (1978), Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1965/1991: 74), Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and Kuokkanen's *Reshaping the University* (2007) of great importance in my theoretical approaches to my research. Eigenbrod's outsider position in relationship to Indigenous literature is that of "immigrant perspective in a migrant fashion" (2005: xiii), where the loaded term of race is nonetheless pertinent and contemplative of her work in the discipline. Kuokkanen's 'white' skin too, is reflective of her [Sami] identity and relationship to racist discourse. Kuokkanen argues that racist discourse "insists that 'people of colour' does not refer to actual skin pigmentation but rather to the condition of oppression and discrimination" (2007:64). Meanwhile, Said, Memmi and Fanon have served as a basis of examining my own re-presentations and re-positioning of Indigeneity within the institutional power dynamics which continue to influence the structure of the political, economic and social dilemmas of contemporary society. I have relied on these for understanding the phenomena of racial, oppressive and social conflicts at the center of Aboriginal-White contemporary relations, my own research as well as the larger framework on the UNESCO nomination and the notion of 'cultural heritages', which I largely examine in Chapter 3. In fact, anti-colonial and foucaultian theories of state and colonial power structures have also assisted me in identifying the chains of explanations that link micro-processes such as individual acts of violence upon oneself or another, with broader structural processes found in political economy such as capitalism, neo-liberalism, oppression and my own place within this machination (Bagchi 2005; Foucault 1984/1993; Friere 1970; Kulchyski & Tester 1994; LaRocque 2010; Marx 1972; Memmi 1965; Nadasdy 2003; Spivak 1999). As a woman, I have also relied on feminism to dialogize the struggles of Aboriginal people, of the 'poor' and of the seemingly uneducated; of women who fight/write for justice in academia, law or active in grassroots movements.

I have relied on aspects of decolonizing feminism to create a narrative space for those who are silenced: not only women, but also harvesters and Aboriginal Elders like Abel Bruce from Poplar River. Inclusion of Native people in resource 'management', economic development, access and use of protected spaces are also reflective of the social and environmental justice discourse and movement currently flourishing in Manitoba and Canada. Environmental justice as a framework to include Aboriginal people in resource issues includes the fair treatment and involvement of all people regardless of race, sex, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies; it is "based upon judgments of what is just and fair" (Bryant 1995:20). Through this definition, an environmental justice lens offers a relevant framework in supporting initiative like Poplar River. Likewise, my collaboration with Elders from Fox Lake Cree Nation like Noah Massan also made me critique the metanarrative that they are 'voices of the past'. Therefore, decolonizing feminism, ecojustice, anti-capitalist frameworks were all essential to the discourse of natural and cultural heritage, of food and medicines, of tangibility and intangibility; of metanarratives of 'progress' and even the stories found within *asatiwisipe aki*, the landscape of Poplar River.

In Chapter 3, I will discuss this culture-nature interaction and the concept of *miinigoowiziwin*, 'a gift', as an aspect of intangible cultural heritage. The concept of the 'gift' as one of the elements of Anishinaabeg intangible cultural heritage can be found resonating in every aspect of Poplar River First Nation Elders and harvesters who have shared some of their knowledges with me; this concept also scaffolds each of the chapters of this dissertation. Although the tangible evidence of the area's wealth can be easily recognized, to be named a natural *and* a cultural heritage site of outstanding value, it is through the rich *intangible* heritage of the cultural landscapes that renders the potential World Heritage Site its quintessential uniqueness. Pimachiowin Aki's uniqueness is rooted in its temporal and cultural fluidity; it is not a memorial site for an extinct group of Indigenous peoples, but rather, the project

bears unique and exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition which continues to thrive. Specifically, the landscape that was nominated for its 'outstanding value' is the space that indicates a people who have been actively taking care of these lands since time immemorial. It is a landscape that exhibits both, the natural and cultural values, in essence, a cultural landscape. The cultural connection between the people and the landscape is emphasized through the mixed-category Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site nomination and Poplar River's [Indigenous] Community Conserved Area ([I]CCA) where nature and culture exist in a way that shows the totality of Anishinaabe epistemologies. The myriad of challenges associated with the expectations of being of 'outstanding universal value' or having proven 'authenticity' and 'integrity' in a World Heritage nomination will also be discussed in this chapter.

Image 2 *Sunset at Poplar River. The land here is rich in nature and culture. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

In *Ojibway Heritage* (1976/2008), Basil Johnston writes that "to the Anishinabeg there was no gift or giving without a recipient (2008:23). In presenting the earth as motherhood that deserves veneration, the Anishinaabeg, as "beneficiaries of their mother's care and love, [ ] are obliged to look after their mother in her illness and decrepitude" (2008:25). Because it is part of the cultural value system and belief that the earth was 'gifted' to the Anishinaabeg, it is the peoples' responsibility to take care of the land and all the animals within in. Because the Anishinaabeg depend on this 'mother' for sustenance, they have to care for her and in Chapter 4, I discuss the notion of *aki miijim*, 'land food', as it relates to harvesting, food sovereignty and intangible cultural heritage –all indicative of *mino bimaadiziwin*, 'the good life'. While being critical of capitalism and agrarianism, I illustrate why the safeguarding of the boreal forest is vital for not only ecological reasons, but because local people continue to rely on the resources for *mino bimaadiziwin*. This distinct character with a significant

merging of culture and scenery, where food obtained 'off the land' through hunting, fishing and/or trapping co-exists with store-bought food and the local food values are reflective of sustainable harvesting practices.

Chapters 5 and 6 is where I articulate the local resource stewardship practices and rights that arise out of harvesting and long standing occupation of *asatiwisipe aki*, 'poplar river land' by the Anishinaabeg. In conjunction with provincial legislation and the World Heritage Site nomination, international and local mechanisms will not only promote ecological integrity of the area, but support Poplar River's self-determination and customary governance over the natural resources found within the community's trap line area. Here I look at the reciprocal value system that exists through local food ethics, the bequeathing of tobacco and through harvesting restraint - these are but some of the forms constitute Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg intangible cultural elements. Specifically, the forms of Indigenous resource stewardship that come out of cultural and local values as well as traditional knowledge are the basis for a different and larger interpretation of Aboriginal and treaty rights in Canada. As such, the interpretation of these rights is more than an environmental or a sustainability issue; it is a moral and ethical matter of Indigenous justice. As people whose epistemology exists in viewing the local landscape as a 'gift' to be cared for, the Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg's resource stewardship is embedded in the larger framework of rights that were never extinguished. Whereas I illustrate this position at a local level in Chapter Five, the theoretical and legal framework for this argument is discussed in Chapter Six.

In both chapters, I have attempted to re-construct and re-present some of the *dibaajimowinan*, 'narratives' within new conceptions of a postmodernist framework. Postmodern discourse represents the advent of something new: the development of new categories, theories, methods and modes of knowledge as well as conceptualizing alternative social and cultural situations. In a sense, I hope that my research *is* postmodernist as it is intended to contribute to the development of critical theory,

critical understanding of Aboriginal and treaty rights as well as radical politics for the present age. I strongly believe that there is a need to begin the discussion of looking at Aboriginal and treaty rights as elements of something more than the tangible sum of its parts. I suggest that intangible and tangible Indigenous resource stewardship systems are cultural practices that need to be put into that open 'box of rights' - looking after the land is the basis of a people's cultural survival as land-based Indigenous people in Canada. As such, legal mechanisms need to be made and, realizing that a thorough judicial case study for this position is outside of my area of expertise, my limited survey of the cases is meant as strings that may need to be pulled further in this direction by well-meaning professionals in this field. I hope I have provided them with a community-based model and appropriate scholarly introduction to work with.

Finally, Chapter 7 is what I hope will be practical to the community. Here, I discuss some models of community economic development and suggest some of the ways Poplar River-led endeavours of eco-cultural tourism can be considered. The possibilities are endless and I believe they should emerge from the community; the ideas presented here are therefore written in a way so as not to be imposing to Poplar River self-determination.

In an effort to historicize the conceptual categories of political economy and to locate the specificity of capitalist social relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada, I used a Marxist perspective to challenge the narratives of marketability and economic development. The critique of contemporary political and economic relations is not just for analysis but also looks at the social forms of production in terms of reconceptualizing how reproduction and transformation can become points of departure. I relied on aspects of Marxism as a theoretical foundation for this project because, as community-based and Indigenous research, I aspired towards a transformation of the current capitalist systems and the establishment of new egalitarian social relations of production. Because the poverty permeating most Aboriginal communities and the numerous contemporary land

conflicts and land claims in Canada are mementos of capitalist and colonial greed, an understanding of this critique of capitalism can help analyze the fundamental political and economic problems that capitalist institutions – under the guise of 'progress' - produce, historically and today.

This approach to political economy necessitated inclusion of political economy *and* political ecology, and it is an aspect found in every chapter. I have placed the two seemingly oppositional concepts together because in Poplar River, ecology will *be* economy. By applying Marx's idea of use value and exchange value for example, a space to discover Aboriginal economies, Indigenous knowledges and local traditions in a de-colonizing context can be made. This is evidenced thought the belief that the landscapes of *asatiwisipe aki* are more "valuable" than money generated from the BiPole III project (IISD 2008; AAMP 2010; Pawlowska 2009), and that a formal and an informal economy of First Nations consists of a lifestyle and own level of participation in the capitalist form of production (Brody 1975 & 2004; Tanner 1979; Kulchyski 2005, Tough 1996; Shewell 2004; Berger 1975; Feit 1995 & 2004). Decolonized moral topographies begin with a convergence of two fundamental but very distinct interpretations of the land and two distinct narratives about the relationships of Canadians with those landscapes. Therefore, in the spirit of an "intellectual working towards a post-colonial space" (Kulchyski 2000:25), Marxist, environmentalist and Indigenous critiques of political economy have been used in Chapter 7 to challenge the way perceptions and representations of Aboriginal lands and communities, of poverty and employment, of the notion of 'progress' and heritage, are understood and re-presented.

***Niin miikana aki-mazina'igan,* 'my road map'**

> *Stories, it is all about stories. The academic research involves data and case studies, the Aboriginal ways of knowing involves stories. Lots and lots of stories. The stories from the different areas of* asatiwisipe aki *are what I learn about the Queen's chair, about the rocking rock, about fast rapids. Stories of survival teach me about determination and techniques of novel technology. Stories of trapping and hunting teach me about harvesting as I can understand the larger context and tips because they came with a story.*

> *The story of Abel's friend being jumped by an escaping lynx will forever teach me NOT to swing at a trap with an ax* (Pawlowska-Mainville 2013, pers. notes).

This thesis is my version of what I saw to be an illustration of a new ~~hi~~story for Poplar River as articulated to me by numerous individuals. Perhaps not so much as a coherent single narrative, but much more like a lapidary in the way this thesis was written. The examination of Poplar River's attempt to establish a World Heritage Site on their trap line territory is written from a non-colonial political position that has captured narratives of individuals to articulate the whole project. It is a scattered composition of snapshots of connected and sometimes disconnected beginnings, surfaces and proliferations embedded within different voices and unique socio-political locations; I have also woven into the dissertation some personal reminiscences, teachings, and humorous anecdotes that I experienced or was shared with. This is a narration rather than a 'finding' as I discuss both a series of events from my point of view and I share the techniques used to capture and write some of these stories. As such, I have attempted to include my research findings and scholarly contributions to this work yet also articulate my relationships, my legacies and simultaneously learned lessons and methods during my long-term involvement with Poplar River First Nation members. The readers will notice my re-naming, re-capturing and written re-livings of experiences and data gathered over the course of eight years thrown throughout the dissertation. I tried my best to have any of the stories and transcribed interviews preserve the speakers' personalities, allowing their voices to emerge from the page.

Postmodern theory opens up a dialogical space that absorbs all theories and with the best of intentions, submerges the blending of new and old, modern and 'traditional', all-encompassing and annihilating ideas, into its framework. What this open disciplinary space means is that I was able to inductively recognize Poplar River First Nation member's voices and re-build that knowledge to generate academic research that reflects Indigenous perspectives, experiences and intellectual traditions while applying critical theory to corroborate those narratives. Although my work and methods were largely adaptive to my own individuality and requirements, I have relied extensively on what I consider

to be the best sort of research available in the field. I hoped that in reading many Indigenous works and learning from non-Indigenous scholars working with Indigenous people like Julie Cruickshank, Fikret Berkes, Harvey Feit, Iain Davidson-Hunt, Thomas Berger, Stephane McLachlan, Peter Kulchyski, Paul Nadasdy and Hugh Brody, Jarvis Brownlie, Robin Ridington, Colin Scott, Antonia Mills and Adrian Tanner will reflect in the quality of my research. These heterogeneous knowledges have been guiding me to become a better non-Aboriginal researcher working with Indigenous people; the inclusion of Native intellectual voices and scholarship enabled me to present anti-colonial sentiments from the people directly affected by these forces of oppression and to carve out a niche that can be further promoted. In recognizing obscurities and contradictions, discontinuities and re-deployment of concepts, this thesis was set out to capture the holes in current scholarship and political frameworks about the local Indigenous environmental movement in relation to a self-determining attempt to shift political and socioeconomic powers from the neoliberal transnational to local and grassroots people.

Here is a story from *Pinesewapikung Saagaigan* (or *Binesii zaaga'igan*), Thunder Mountain Lake that I have captured in my field notes:

> On the mountain, there are Thunderbird eggs in the nest. But then someone built a tall radio station tower up there and destroyed the local people's sacred site. But with time however, the tower imploded; it seems like the nails and screws flew out of the structure outwards. Now the Thunderbird eggs are back in their nest. There are lots of spirits in Thunderbird Mountain. And there are lots of stories like that. But it is best to come to the community and hear them for yourself (Pawlowska-Mainville 2010, pers. notes).

There are stories like this and many others that I have collected during my time in Poplar River. Some of them are included in this thesis, and a number of them have Anishinaabemowin terms. Both, the stories and the Anishinaabemowin expressions contain a wealth of information, including oral values and epistemologies of the Anishinaabeg. Because a language carries people's memories, whether they are recounted as individual reminiscences, as collective history, or imaginative tales, the collection of stories from Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg and the use of Anishinaabemowin here, is meant to offer a narrative of a people. Sweetgrass First Nation Language Council (1994:1) writes that

> Native language embodies a value system about how we ought to live and relate to each other . . . It gives a name to relations among kin, to roles and responsibilities among family members, ties with the broader clan group . . . Now if you destroy our language, you not only break down these relationships, but you also destroy other aspects of our Indian way of life and culture, especially those that describe man's connection with nature, the great spirit, and the order of other things. Without our language, we will cease to exist as a separate people.

At the same time, Anishinaabemowin was used – for the lack of the precision that a certain concept was understood, and through bits and pieces - to demonstrate the importance of the language. There are words that I was taught and felt that they were important; some of them are used here because they best articulate I am attempting to say, conceptually. Additionally, as fluent speakers of Anishinaabemowin grow older, the community questions whether younger speakers know the language well enough to pass it on to the next generation. Making an effort myself to learn the language while I collected the stories from the Anishinaabeg living at *asatiwisipe,* I value the teachings, the beauty and my ability to have basic knowledge of this language presented here. Although I did not interview Ojibway/Cree-speakers who could not speak English, I have been taught much of the terms here by different Anishinaabeg, and my interpretations and discussions of some of the terms were meant to provide some meaning to the reader. They are nonetheless my interpretations of the teachings that were given to me.. I hope this language duality embedded in the text will prove effective and instructive for those interested in Anishinaabeg language and culture studies.

This dissertation is meant to be read as a 'collection' where stories are compiled and interwoven with theory and an assortment of knowledges that make up the whole. Although academic, I tried my best to make it accessible to those community members who may want to read, refer to, or use the findings here for the betterment of their community. Much like a lapidary, where stones or gems are fashioned in a way that makes up the whole design, I am a researcher who uses numerous tools and a collection of stories to produce a specialized piece of scholarship that will hopefully be fruitful to the community of Poplar River as well as academia. What I tried my best to do is to guide this thesis so

that it could be beneficial to Poplar River and I did this my first and foremost, listening to what the First Nation's members are saying about some of the issues that arise in regards to the UNESCO World Heritage Site. I have applied theoretical frameworks to help understand the perspectives identified by the community members - as I have understood them, and as I think they have meant them. This thesis can reflect another chapter of Poplar River's history and I hope that some of the voices here will be valuable to future generations.

Through narratives, people communicate and express how they have made sense of their lives, their experiences and their perceptions. The context of narrative methods as an emerging qualitative research method is particularly pertinent to a study such as the one outlined on these pages because it allows for exploration at the personal level but includes relationship and intersection with culture and structure. Many of the historical stories in italics are referenced to either my personal notes or stories shared with me by individuals, or by Francis Valiquette who in the years 1977-1981, summarized some of the changes the community went through since about the 1950s. Francis - one of the most elegant ladies in Poplar River who always wore matching earrings to her outfits, is also an Elder. These notebooks were given to me by Willie Bruce so that I could 'do something with them'. One winter day after lunch, Willie dropped off a box full of notebooks. The notebooks contained the notes, minutes, thoughts and data about the community's well-being, diabetes, water, proposals for development from the past thirty or forty years. He told me that maybe I can include this in my work and research and that people whose names are in the notebooks have all agreed to my reading of these journals. Willie believed that these notebooks may have valuable information, collected over a period of twenty years by his father and other community members. He thought maybe it could benefit the community in some way and that maybe I could help. It was a lot to sift through. But I felt so honored that he entrusted me these notebooks, that I could take them home and read them; I could not say no. We thought about making a history project from these notes and maybe putting it up on the community's

website or in the interpretative center so that they can be accessible to the members of the First Nation. I agreed, and as promised, some of the pages here contain the stories that were included in the notebooks. Some stories I had the opportunity to discuss with Frances, some with others. Whereas in some cases, I discussed the stories in some contextual form, in other instances, I have allowed the stories to speak for themselves. This way, the stories themselves can offer the gift of stories and individualized meaning that each reader can take for themselves.

CHAPTER 1

Wedi aki minonaagozi: 'the land here looks good'

> *This history was told to Francis Valiquette by Walter Nanawin, an Elder:*
>
> *I learned from Walter Nanawin that there was only one school in Poplar River 10 years ago. Just a one room classroom. The teacherage was in the back of this school. Also some children had to go to school in the Church. There were two teachers. They had a classroom there, also there was no hydro in Poplar River. There was a small generating plant for the school. [it] also supplied the HBC with power for lights, etc. There was one other family [who] had a generating plant to run his movie Hall where everyone went to see a movie and then. He [Walter] lived in a small shack at one part of this community[;] he said the people make their living mostly on fishing one season a year in the spring. [S]ome people trapped all winter. But the only employment was spring fishing. There was very little welfare given out 10 years ago. There was no air strip 10 years ago [in 1969]. There was a few government homes, not many, 1 or 2. The rest [were] shacks or log houses. There was no houses were the town site is today. All bush and a small path to the HBC store. The post office was in RC [Roman Catholic] Church run by the priest. They got mail once a month. Walter also said the community is better now. But the people aren't. Walter Nanawin himself now has a movie house where he shows two and three movies a week. I would have liked to talk to this man longer. But he was busy so I had to leave. He has lived here most of his life* (Francis Valiquette 1977/2012).

Ishkonigaaning: 'The reserve' and the community of Poplar River First Nation

> It is nice very good community. So you can go up the river once in awhile; the kids go, like grades seven or nine, take them up the river. So they can see the moose and other animals. Moose, that is pretty scary. And it is scary to see, especially bull moose. But nice (Ken Douglas 2013).

Flying to Poplar River First Nation in a seven-person plane during the hot summer is a different experience than the six-hour drive to the community on the ice road during the frosty months of winter. Each one is unique and the two, along with boat access in the summer, are the only ways to reach *asatiwisipe aki* – 'Poplar River earth/land', in Anishinaabemowin (the Anishnaabe language). The drive up to the community in the winter road allows one to see the morning forest - that unique time right before the sun comes up when snow-covered trees glitter with a hint of blue. In the winter, the whiteness that covers the enormous space is equal in breathlessness to the absolute silence that one can actually hear in the night. In the summer, however, it is only by flying and seeing beneath the plane's

wings that one can really appreciate the vastness of the boreal forest on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg. The thick greenness is dotted with numerous blue lakes and rivers, freckling the vast surface like a human circulatory system that provides an air supply to the large brown lung-shaped Lake Winnipeg.

> *Doris Hudson: Ten years ago they still lived across the river; now they live in government houses in the town site. 10 years ago there was no hydro here. Just the school and Bay had their own generating plant. There was just a path 10 years ago, where today there is all cleared out to the town site. Ten years ago there was a clinic but no nursing station like there is today. The homes are better now than 10 years ago. There is more people living here now than 10 years ago. There was no band office 10 years ago; no band hall. The school was scattered now th[ey] are all on one site. The community is better now than it was 10 years ago* (Francis Valiquette 1977/2012).

The sound of swishing water and wind is heard upon landing in Poplar River First Nation; the wind in the summer feels amplified by the rustling of poplar trees lining the main roads of the community. The boreal surrounding the community, appears powerful and never ending. But the seeming emptiness that one just flew over in the last hour, is alive with plants and numerous four-legged and winged creatures that roar, play, splash, grunt and bite. People are alive here too, relying on the waters and the forest for resources, which is why the boreal is of vital importance to the Anishnaabeg - and to all people. "*Nibi*, water, is the source of life and therefore must be protected" Sophia Rabliauskas tells me, "and Poplar River First Nation is attempting to keep these waters pure, to keep the trees healthy", the land unspoiled by industries, the ecosystem intact (Sophia Rabliauskas 2013, pers. comm.). They must sustain this land because its existence is a continuing foundation of the people's existence. As the Elders of Poplar River First Nation have stated

> 'The Creator has given us life, he has given us land to live from, without that land our people will die'. They have taught that it is our job to protect and care for this land for the benefit of our children and grandchildren. The Elders have also recognized the importance to all people of living on a healthy planet. The current leaders and community members, who are actively seeking to protect this intact boreal forest region, have recognized this world vision (AAMP 2010:2)

Although a community that rarely gets placed on maps - and often gets misplaced - this First Nation has made significant impact in Manitoba at the political and economic level. The people of Poplar River, the Asatiwisipe Anishnaabeg*, in English, are known as members of Poplar River First Nation, a small fly-in community located on the east side of Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba at the mouth of the Poplar River. Poplar River is an Anishinaabeg (Ojibway) community of about 1400 people located at 52°59'46 N and 97°16'59 W. Although the First Nation Reserve #16 land base is approximately 15 km^2 (1500 ha), the Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg traditional territory and 'Community Conserved Area' stretches about 8617 km^2 (800'000 ha) and is broken down into 15 trap lines (AAMP 2011; Pimachiowin Aki WHSN 2012). In *asatiwisipe aki*, the Poplar River lands, Anishinaabeg and Cree families have formed a distinct local dialect that enables many to alternate between Omashkiigoomowin/Inninumowin and Anishinaabemowin; the infusion of Cree enables OjiCree to be an additional language in the community. A few hundred kilometers to the south is Manitoba's capital, Winnipeg where, between the months of January to March, individuals from Poplar River drive on the winter road to do their shopping, to visit relatives and friends, to travel to the trap lines over the frozen muskeg.

Image 1.1 *Houses in the community looking west from the teacherage. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

The community has an elementary school, a skating rink, a health center and band office, as well as a few stores. The Northern Store is the hub of the community, as it is the best place to meet, greet and run into to someone. The community also a home for those requiring daily assistance; the

* Poplar River First Nation is a mostly Anishinaabe community. The spelling for the First Nation by the community is usually Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg, but other names alre also used: *Azatiiziibe Anishinaabeg, Asatiwisipe First Nation, Asatiwisipe Aki, Azaadiwi-ziibi Nitam-Anishinaabe* and even *Negginan,* meaning 'home'.

Elder's Lodge is an architecturally-warm building, where large windows overlook the beautiful Poplar River and the numerous eagles that feed on the rapids not far from the building. It is by far, one of the coziest places to spend time in. Currently, the main economic base of the community consists of commercial fishing at the Negginan Fishing Station, local and band owned businesses like the Sagatay Lodge, Negginan Hardware, Bunny's Restaurant, Dubby's Pizza, Mitasosipe Trading Post, Negginan Building Supplies and the B & B Networks Internet Services. There are individuals that also offer services like movies, babysitting, and driving; others have set up a small convenience store, a café or a 'party' house. The latter can be lucrative as Poplar River is officially a 'dry' community, meaning, that alcohol has been outlawed on the reserve. The community also has its own radio station, where Albert Bruce usually holds his shows and, like many other Aboriginal communities, God forbid someone should keep an avid bingo player away from the radio-bingo!

> *Francis Valiquette writes in her notebooks again: One dream has come true for the community of Poplar River. The dream of a new school has come. It will be started in 1977; a 9-class room school with complete facilities, shower rooms, washrooms with gym. The people of Poplar River have long wished for such a school, so finally the dream has come true. This school will make a big difference in the community and a big help for the community. The gym, I am sure, will be put to good use. Number of students now attending school in 1977 is 168 and the number of students attending in 1967 was 129* (Francis Valiquette 1977/2012).

In the summer, the community of Poplar River is alive, vibrant. The air is sweet from the smell of the tiny bushes of the local wildflowers. Children are everywhere and play until the very late hours of the night. On a regular basis, the place known as Church Rock is filled with children jumping off, diving and washing their hair in the river. Their clothes are left strewn around the bare, brown rock, a smooth remnant of past glaciers that scraped the entire Canadian Shield. Church Rock is a place to meet, a place to swim, a place of childhood. You jump in, really far, and let the current bring you back to the rock. *If* you are brave, you will dive - really deep and as far as you can, and then fight the strong currents that push you out in the direction of Lake Winnipeg. This is a deadly place if you are not a good swimmer, and especially if you are alone. However, it is much fun in the those really hot days of

summer, *giizhide*, when one can swim in a group of kids and adults alike and play tag or just push each other in. The Church Rock swimming area is even better when the boats pass by and make the waves. Kids love the ripples, and the drivers of the boats love making them.

> *It was stormy sometimes we had to deal with that, you would have to wait until after dark. So we could see a road with their bombardier you could see that road real good. We use to six nets about 8 feet; you drill a hole and it just pull it through. You use a line behind the end of the line, and on the other side is a hole. When you start, if you use a jigger you can hear that knocking under the ice where that jigger is poll that's how do the whole and you got it. Now, there is young fishermen; the old ones are gone now. Them young fishermen, they are making money pretty good. Sometimes there is less fish sometimes there is lots of fish* (Ken Douglas 2013).

The community is formed in the shape of a 'w' when looking in the direction of Lake Winnipeg, or an 'm' when looking eastward; directly west across the lake, is the community of Grand Rapids. With the Poplar and Franklin Rivers separating the community into the 'centre', the North and the South sides, the two bridges simultaneously connect and separate the 'North Side' and the 'South Side' of the community. Whereas the North Side has a beach that some will travel to for a swim; the South Side Beach is a hidden gem, where footprints of wolves can be seen on occasion. By far, the best place to swim is indeed Church Rock because it is right in the center of the community, next to the Roman Catholic Mission of St. John Bosco, where I occasionally stayed. The Catholic Mission and the Pentecostal Church are two religious buildings that are continuously well taken care of by those who practice one of the diverse forms of Christianity. There are also those who attend sweat lodges, specifically the Bear Lodge, which is held in the spring and summer months and which, like the bear, is given time to 'hibernate' in the winter.

> *Wolf, it's a pretty big animal, sometimes they take moose. They are ten of them, and they take a moose. One time when I was trapping in Black River, there, in the tall grass, I'd jump over it and all of a sudden, a wolf came out, all five of them. They just were there, and I couldn't move because then they would attack me. ...You're just supposed to survive. There's a lot of stories, some people. I am sure we did our best, how we survived, way back then. What we used to do when we trapped back then, our grandparents* (Ken Douglas 2013).

Here too, the young people are taught how to hunt, trap and fish along with their parents or Elders. For the past few years, culture camps at Weaver Lake have empowered many youth, as this was the place their Elders taught them bush skills including tracking, skinning and filleting, setting traps and snares. This is also the place stories and teachings are shared and oral histories of the Anishinaabeg are enjoyed. Healing camps were carried out here too: the Elders were brought together to share their experiences at residential schools, to listen and be heard, to heal and maybe to move on. In Poplar River, ceremonies continue to be performed: Sunday church services are attended, a Bear Lodge ceremony is held in the spring and, some have ceremonies in private. In the summer, the community comes alive with kids – there are kids everywhere, laughing, playing, swimming and asking for sweets.

Image 1.2 *Treaty Days in the community in 2008. Many of the activities were located near the local elementary school. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

> *The community of Poplar River in 1967: the community did not have electricity. There was no employment; just the local people made a living by trapping or fishing in the summer and trapping in winter. There was no nursing station here in 1967. There was no air strip; the planes landed only on floats in the summer in the water also on ski in the winter. There was a school; but only one school. School attendance in 1967 was 129 students. The community has only one store, the HBC where everyone [did] their shopping* (Francis Valiquette 1977/2012).

Over the past few years, I have seen Russell Lambert, Vera Mitchell and Clifford Bruce as chiefs, and Guy Douglas as Acting Chief. Each of the leaders is unique in his or her own way; whereas Guy is incredibly gentle and Russell very soft-spoken, Clifford and Vera have determined voices. The population of the Treaty Five signatory community is approximately fourteen hundred people, but some two or three hundred people are either off at school, working off-reserve in nearby communities or

cities or permanently living in other areas. Spatially, the community feels large - it would normally take me about one hour to walk to any place from the 'center' of the community, which includes the Northern Store, the school and the band office. However, when looking at the 1500 hectares of living space that is the reserve - followed by the seemingly never ending bush then the community gives the impression of existential diminutiveness. Already shrinking due to growth of houses needed for the rapidly increasing population, a housing shortage is one of the issues the community must deal with as part of their economic development initiatives. This problem, exacerbated by the social issues resulting from colonization has led in some cases, to relationships and homesteads being intertwined with substance abuse, physical and sexual violence. But healing the people here means reviving the land-based economy and way of life…

> *I used to trap beaver, muskrat, otters, on Rice Lake. I miss it once in a while 'cause I used to go in the spring and every fall with my old man. My grandparent, Tom Douglas. He used to go with the Valiquettes, Marcel and his brothers there, Jim Valiquette. He used to go there, he used to have his trap line there, that where the Bruce's go in, Abel and his dad; they use to go trapping there. Mukate Lake, in the spring and winter, and the fall. In the fall, we used to go Mukate River[Mukatewisipe], we used to trap there in the fall. There is a portage to the Poplar River there, that's where they come…* (Ken Douglas 2013)

In order to describe this cultural landscape, the community of Poplar River will build an Anishinaabeg Cultural Interpretative/Visitor Reception Centre to serve as the hub for cultural heritage interpretation and preservation. Such an interpretative center is essential because most sites on *asatiwisipe aki* are not easily recognizable to the larger public; in fact, a large segment of the visiting public views the site as an unrelated collection of trees, rivers, swamps and animals within the landscape – an empty wilderness. As a result, a commonly identifiable cultural or sacred site can only be identified with the help of a local individual who 'knows the land'. For the reason that land-based Aboriginal cultures must be understood to be present in the spaces of the landscape, the entire territory can be said to be resonating with human dwelling; thus a symbolic space for the First Nations members of this community exists throughout the 8000 km^2 of "bush". It is necessary to recognize that, as land-

based Aboriginal people, the Asatiwisipe Anishnaabeg must have access to certain sites to live a cultural or traditional life, but in order to conserve these specific sites, the entire area must be protected.

> *Lynx has a short tail and nice ears and brown. It's like a cougar. This young man was trapping, and he figured he got lynxes, and he asked his stepbrother in law, and it was a dog. It's a wonderful animal. They don't want to see anybody; they are shy and timid* (Ken Douglas 2013).

The Poplar/Nanowin land has many such sacred or culturally important sites. Several archeological sites were identified in this region containing ceramics and a variety of stone tools; there are also numerous pictographs along different rivers. Archeological identification of these sites indicates "continuous use of the land and resources for at least the past 3 000 years by Aboriginal peoples" (AAMP 2010:29). Moreover, numerous culturally important sites are landmarks considered historically and socially sacred to members of this community such as burial grounds and cemeteries; places of myth and origin; places of historical occurrences and homes of spiritual beings to name a few. Historical places can include Negginan, an old trading post where families were established and contemporary relationships were formed; it is a place where Treaty Five [adhesion] was signed thus it is an important monument of the confirmation of Aboriginal rights that shaped the politico-social formations of the present community. Sacred spaces include places of sightings of spiritual or important beings like the Sasquatch or the Thunderbird and Thunderbird Eggs; places where sweat lodges are or have been located; sites of old churches (Catholic); and sites associated with sacred beings. All these sites are 'sacred' to the community but, although the definition of 'sacred' oftentimes overlaps with other meanings, these places nonetheless are part of a larger epistemological importance, mythical or real. In fact, the Poplar River Anishaabeg have many 'sacred spaces' on their landscape but these are not openly talked about; some individuals speak of them, some maintain a strong Christian influence but in general, the Ojibway are famous for guarding their traditions (Hallowell 1960). Here is one look into a story of sacred traditions:

> So many stories from way back. In Weaver Lake, even on the big high rock you can see prints. All kinds of prints. Sometimes when you can you pick, there are all those signs there. There is a place there where you can put tobacco; people still put tobacco there, oh yeah. So that nothing happens to them, it's like they are protected I guess. They just put tobacco there to go across. One time that's what happened. It was windy there one time, we were trying to go across, and this old guy, put up tobacco there to calm down, and it wasn't about half an hour and the wind come down. And they went and crossed together to the other side (Ken Douglas 2013).

A permanent legally designated protected area will fulfill the Anishaabeg vision for protection and traditional uses: "Permanent legal protection of our lands, under provincial legislation, is intended to preserve both our way of life and this boreal region forever" (AAMP 2011:41). The community does not want to see any development on their lands; they have learned what 'development' does to Aboriginal communities. Cases like Fox Lake Cree Nation, Tataskweyak and Grand Rapids speak for themselves about the damage hydro-development may have on Aboriginal communities; Asubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows) and Wabigoon can speak to mercury poisoning from pulp-and-paper mills. Shefferville, a small town on the border of Quebec and Labrador, can attest to open pit mining that extracted the life of many of the Naskapi men and women, along with the iron ore. Insisting on prohibitions of commercial use of their lands and resources fits well with the local Anishnaabeg objectives:

> Protection of the land is the key to our very future. Therefore, to suggest that our traditional lands need not be protected, or that only a part of our traditional territory needs to be protected, is to suggest to us that our lives can be threatened; that our children's future can be compromised or forfeited for some other purpose. It would be disrespectful and immoral for society at large to compromise what we, the Poplar River Anishnaabek, know and assert as the need for life (AAMP 2005:3).

Freddie Bruce, who in 2008 was working for Health Services in the community, said that he loves the intactness of the land here. He tells me that

> I do a lot of hunting. I do a lot of hunting, and fishing. I've been here all my life and whenever I leave, I miss it. Just the sense of being in a wilderness; it's nice and quiet. A place you can relax and let everything go. I went up north, all the flooding that happens with hydro, and then I come back here, like the land is untouched. Up there, it's so messed up, and just to see that land being destroyed like that. That doesn't have to be. We're pretty lucky where we are, we're not flooded and the animals here, they are not running

> away from all the flooding. I mean, we are lucky the way we are, the location. […] Like I was saying, to leave the land the way it is, and everything will be okay. I don't want to leave this place; I am going to die here. That's how much I love it here. This is my home (Freddie Bruce 2008).

Thus, by using an international organization like UNESCO for local purposes, Poplar River First Nation is being innovative in safeguarding their land; their initiative is precedent-setting and other communities are already using the Asatiwisipe Aki Management Plan [AAMP] (2010) as an example of self-determination. The following chapters will look at some of the ways that this remote First Nations community uses global mechanisms to ensure that their economy, their natural and cultural resources and their Aboriginal and treaty rights are forever protected against the 'progress trap'.

> *We just want to protect the land, so that people don't come and spoil our land. It's a nice land, nice hunting place for the moose and the other animals…we want to protect, so that we can survive on wild meat like moose. That's why we want to protect our land* (Ken Douglas 2008).

Pimachiowin aki: **'the land that gives life' and the UNESCO nomination**

In her notebooks, Francis Valiquette writes some data about Poplar River. Essentially, she begins a small history project to determine the transformations of the community over the past decade from 1967 to 1977-78. In her books, she writes:

> *The population of Poplar River [in 1977 was] 535. Number of people in the community 10 years ago […] was 390 people living in Poplar River. Number of homes in community [in 1977]: 87 homes; only 5 homes in 1967[…] They have good carpenters in the community. These men have been trained in carpentry. I believe some of these men took their training […] in 1969. They came back to the community to teach other men to help build the houses.[…]The chief [in 1977 was] Norman Bruce. He [had] 4 councillors. [This number of business or local industries and the type of employment opportunities in 1977]:HB – 5 local, 3 staff; School 5 locals and 7 teachers. There were 4 or 2 locals and 2 nurses working at the nursing station and one person was working for Manitoba Hydro [Hydro line connected electricity to the community in 1981]. There were 4 commercial fisherman. Trapping was also a way of making a living; fishing too. Indian affairs was responsible for governing in the community 10 years ago in 1967. Now in 1977 there is self-administration.*
> *What kind of problems, dreams, plans did the community have? New school planned to start building in 1977. [Nine] classroom school. In 1981, the school had an open house [and] Community CHR has been taking water samples from the river around the north*

> *side. [Caring for the water and taking water samples was done systematically in Poplar River since the 1960s]* (Francis Valiquette 1977-1981/2012).

As Francis notes, the community has changed dramatically from 1967 to 1977, and since then, the community has grown even more. Although many things have changed for the First Nation, the biologically diverse land around the community, continues to ensure the people's *mino-bimaadiziwin*, 'well-being'.

The boreal forest on *pimachiowin aki* is dominated by black spruce and jack pine, along with secondary tree species such as aspen, white birch, white spruce and balsam fir, with some species from the prairies and the eastern deciduous regions; the ground is covered with ericaceous shrubs, mosses and lichens (UNESCO 2010). Four major rivers carve through the area, including the Bloodvein, already officially recognized as a Canadian Heritage River. The old Lake Aggasiz site provides an essential habitat for black bears, wolves, lynx and owls, as well as lake trout, pike and walleye and also as well as the threatened woodland caribou and the chestnut lamprey, a species of special concern (UNESCO 2010b). The boreal forest, smelling of pine and 'freshness' and dry dust – and muskeg right after a rainy day -- covers about 53 percent of Canada's surface; it includes among the last undisturbed forest spaces on the planet. The area located on the traditional territory of Poplar River Anishinaabeg on East Side of Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba is part of this large continuous, intact region of the broader boreal ecosystem. The vast space that holds the *atik*, the endangered Woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) as well as *miigizii* (eagle), *ma'iingan* (wolf), *ogaans* (pickerel), and numerous other species, is important not only to the integrity

Image 1.3 *The first set of rapids on lower Poplar River. The rapids are close to the community and many events occur in this area. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

of this ecosystem, but for the local people. The territory is located on the Canadian Shield and so the exposed bedrock that was scraped by the glaciers in the last Ice Age, the trees, the different species of wildlife – essentially 'all of it', narrate today many *dibaajimowinan*, 'stories' for the local people.

> It's peaceful; it's very peaceful. Say you wake up in the morning, say you wake up in the morning, and you open up your drapes and you go outside and make yourself a cup of coffee, and see the sun rise. It's really something. And you witness that coming of the light though the trees, you can get a breeze on the trees, flowers. You can hear the birds singing in the trees [laughs]. Sometimes when a bear comes around, the dogs will be barking [laughs]. […] You can go camping out on the lake; just make a fire. We drink tea, have a cup of tea, watch the sun go down, hear the water on the rocks, feel the breeze. It's one reason why I love this place (Byron Mitchell 2008).

Undoubtedly, this is not a 'pristine' wilderness in the sense that it is unoccupied: every nook and cranny has been named, has a narrative or cultural significance; the 'bush' is overlain with cabins, trap lines, ancient burial sites, trails, hunting grounds, fishing camps, berry picking fields, sacred sites: places of prayer and of play. The terrain is also symbolically covered in individual memories –like Byron's above, in collective histories and in names. Numerous culturally significant locations exist, most notably for Poplar River, the nearby Weaver Lake, where healing and culture camps are held every year. This special site, while also used to revive and teach the youth traditions and practices, is also a site of sharing the pain from residential schools and a meeting spot. "Weaver Lake", Ken Douglas, a local Elder tells me, is

> a nice place; we go there to have fun. Last weekend…we went there last weekend. The meeting for this Lands Management, they were meeting over there, the people from Pauingassi, Little Grand [Rapids], Bloodvein and Berens River. They were meeting over there, they were all happy. To see what they were doing up there, why we are up there…they saw what we were doing and now they are happy. They liked the lake […] they were interested to keep this land, to keep this land going, keep it protected (Ken Douglas 2007).

The entire *asatiwisipe aki* includes ancestral trap lines and resource gathering sites as well as various archaeological sites, which, with local oral histories, represent more tangible evidence that helps to demonstrate that the area has long been of special significance to First Nations. And, as evidenced

through Ken's words, the local Anishinaabeg of the region, are determined to keep the area from destruction.

In 2007, the Crown Corporation, Manitoba Hydro was beginning to make public their plans to run a 500kv high voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission lines across the East Side of Lake Winnipeg. There was little to no consultation with the local First Nations. However, surprising many Manitobans (including Manitoba Hydro), the communities decidedly put a First Nation face on the boreal forest that same year. They publicly announced their UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination, an initiative they have been working on since 2004. Since then, Poplar River and the neighbouring First Nations, with support from organizations like the Canadian Boral Initiative, the American Philosophical Society and the David Suzuki Foundation as well as Canada's Environment Minister and the province of Manitoba and Ontario have been working on the official UNESCO nomination package. The final 300-page World Heritage Site nomination was submitted to UNESCO in 2012 and the Manitoba Hydro project, known as the BiPole III transmission line project, was eventually moved to the other side of Lake Winnipeg.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) World Heritage Site is a program by which member States designate specific places to be of special cultural or physical significance for humanity, and thus warranting protection. The sites that are recognized to be of "outstanding universal value" (UNESCO 2013j) could be in the form of a natural place like a mountain, lake, park, island, ecosystem, or a cultural site like a building, complex, city or monument; it could also be a combination of both. Once designated as such and placed on the UNESCO list, World Heritage Sites are bound by the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) and are eligible to receive funds to ensure their safeguarding.

Presently, there are 1007 properties on the World Heritage List. Of those properties, 779 are cultural and 197 are natural sites; only 31 are of mixed-category (UNESCO 2014). Examples of World

Heritage Sites include the Statue of Liberty in the USA, the Great Wall of China, Mount Kenya National Park in Africa, the pyramids of Egypt, the Aborigine-inscripted Uluru-Kata sandstone monolith in Australia, the historic site of St. Petersburg in Russia, and the historic mountain rail-line of India. These sites are unique in their own way, but are recognized world-wide for their value and importance. Canada has 17 World Heritage Sites located within its borders and there are another seven sites on Canada's Tentative List of World Heritage Sites (Parks Canada 2013e). Of the 17 sites, eight are cultural and nine are natural sites. Examples of the Canadian sites recognized for their significance include Wood Buffalo National Park in Alberta and Northwest Territories, Rideau Canal in Ontario, L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site in Newfoundland and Labrador, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump in Alberta as well as SGang Gwaay in British Columbia. Pimachiowin Aki would be the 18th Canadian site and the first to be a mixed-heritage site, that is, a site of cultural and natural value. The decision about the nomination however, will only be announced in 2016.

Based on both natural and cultural heritage values, the World Heritage Site proposal called, Pimachiowin Aki, "the land that gives life" in Anishinaabemowin is a 43 300km^2 boreal forest territory and comprises of Poplar River's ancestral trapline areas, the traditional territories of Pauingassi, Little Grand Rapids, and Bloodvein First Nations in Manitoba, and Pikangikum First Nation in Ontario. Included in this proposal are also Atikaki and Woodlands Caribou Provincial Parks in their respective provinces, and the Ontario and Manitoba provincial governments. The heritage site nomination is governed by Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, a non-profit agency that is composed of representatives from each participant Aboriginal community. The Manitoba government has spent $4.5-million over the last decade, has committed $10-million toward a trust fund for the project, and an additional $234,000 was set aside by the province to re-work the bid in time for 2016 (Russell Lambert 2014). The province of Ontario has contributed $850,000 to date. Russell Lambert, the Chief of Poplar River First Nation in 2008 told me that

> we will continue to on [it]. The government supports it and I hope we can continue to work with the provincial government. I hope that it is an agenda [for them] and the people want this area to be recognized as a World Heritage Site. And we think that we can get it […] It's a first of its kind in the province and the first of its kind in Canada; there are other sites, but they have not been nominated like Poplar River has [i.e. nominated their own site] (Russell Lambert 2008).

Additionally, the Province of Manitoba has passed new legislation, the East Side Traditional Lands Planning and Special Protected Areas Act (2008), which ensures that the First Nations on the east side of Lake Winnipeg play a major role in protecting, managing and developing their traditional lands. The legislation is precedent-setting, and as the first of its kind in Canada, it enables the First Nation's own land-use plans to serve as the permanent legal mechanism for protection of their respective territories. This is noteworthy since normally, traditional lands in Canada are protected through a provincial or territorial body and most World Heritage Sites are managed by Parks Canada, with the exception of Dinosaur Provincial Park. History and literature show that government-led protection rarely meets the unique needs of Aboriginal people, and I will discuss the importance of this First Nations-led endeavour in Chapter 5.

Image 1.4 *Ski-doo ride up the Poplar River. Only knowledgeable people know how to safely cross this river and its numerous rapids. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

Poplar River First Nation is unique within the UNESCO designation project. The community's 8000km^2 trap line territory will be placed under permanent protection. Unlike other First Nations communities involved with this World Heritage Site nomination, most notably Pikangikum First Nation which is searching for innovative opportunities in commercial forestry, Poplar River is emphasizing the

conservation of the landscape and the present ecosystem (White Feather Forest 2009; Poplar River 2010). This signifies that whereas some First Nations plan to select certain regions of their territories for small-scale development, the Poplar/Nanowin Rivers Park reserve will be an area strictly protected by the Manitoba Minister of Conservation, thus industrial activities such as mining and logging are to be forbidden. Ultimately, a UNESCO designation would ensure that implementation of measuring and monitoring mechanisms for all First Nations' cultural landscapes are set in place. As parties to an internationally recognized network of protected areas, these ancestral lands will enable the First Nations to develop economically in a way that ensures sustainability of both the environment and the peoples. For Asatiwisipe, in particular, the designation would enable the community to establish a Cultural Interpretative Center, to bolster the Weaver Lake cultural and healing camps, to create innovative forms of a sustainable economy through eco-cultural tourism, and lead to new structures of culturally controlled, community-based development. Unlike the other sites in Canada, the twofold nature of the nomination (as a natural and cultural site), if designated, would be the first of its kind in Canada and only the second in North America, after Papahānaumokuākea. In this respect, Pimachiowin Aki, like other heritage areas, would be a catalyst for emerging appreciation for Indigenous heritages.

Although this World Heritage Site is a collaborative effort between all parties to maintain the ecological integrity of this area, each First Nation involved in the project has developed their own land-use, resource stewardship/management plans and unique initiatives for economic and sustainable development. Since my involvement in this project consisted of long-term duration in Poplar River only, this dissertation will focus exclusively on Poplar River First Nation, and many of the examples and personal references provided here, came from my time spent with members of this community. And, below, is a story from one of the most fascinating men I have ever met and the most interesting writer/storyteller, Walter:

> I'm talking about the land from here to Black River, where we used to travel to the trap lines. Cause the winter road there, from time immemorial, that people have travelled to

> Bear Head River, Manomin River and Black River and Bear Head River. And that road, they have travelled that road, I've waded that up to my knees in cold freezing water in spring. Going back and forth on native block on the trap lines. Even before the trap lines were made. And I saw trees; that's the Crane Creek muskeg, where there is nothing but water in the spring. And they came upon something there, I think they were caribou. We didn't see them in the lake, but they heard us coming; we couldn't see them but [we] heard this splashing; lots, out of that lake, you know. They must have been there drinking, they must have been watching or heard us for a long time, me and Willie, coming from Black River, coming to Poplar River get some flour or sugar or tea.
>
> Warm spring, we were waiting. So we're tired in the legs, and we were getting numb, and so Willie says, "we'd better go". There's a kind of islands, lumps of land, little hills of land, there in that Crane Creek and muskeg. That's a protected land. It turns to be a lake - for willows and all kinds of medicine in there for the Indian. He knows the richest kind of medicine. My wife recognizes some of them, and we also protect these medicine trees and willows, we even have some out here, on Pickerel Island, the wife is looking after them that my grandfather had dumped out of his medicine bag years ago! Some of them growing, it's a small enough [patch], but [...] we will pick them after it grows. "Remember that on the beach?"[, he asks Jean. "I guess", she answers]. And these flowers that grow, muskeg flowers, and muskeg after muskeg, and it becomes land. This is protected land that we are talking about (Walter Nanawin 2008).

And here is another story from 1977 that tells the many changes that took place in Poplar River from the mid-1960s. Francis Valiquette provides this historical glance:

> Gordon bittern was Chief in the community in 1967. He said the community was poor those years ago. There was no work for people. The homes were very poor. Not very many people had jobs he said. It was hard for people to make a living. Some fishing in the spring and summer; mostly trapping in winter. Freight was brought in by tractor trains in winter for HBC. There was not much welfare just the ones who were sick and under doctor's care. He said he got his first government home in 1968. Before he lived in a log house. He said the community is a way better now than it was then. He was chief for 14 years. The population was 300. The reserve is getting better, like healthcare. There is not much TB – hardly any because we are looked after very well. We have a nursing station, a doctor's visit twice a month. The children are healthy. But long ago we didn't see this; a lot of people died because there was no doctor here. Now airstrip, new building, hydro; we never used to see these before. There is no death going on in the community because we have good nurses in the community. That's the way medical services help us a lot (Francis Valiquette 1977/2013).

There is also a story that I can share of my visit to Poplar River in the winter of 2013, one of the most surreal visits:

> After spending one Monday afternoon driving around in silence, sharing stories with Abel over decaffeinated tea, I ended up my day at the school gym watching the Canadian World Wrestling Federation. The excitement that was seen among the kids over watching the uniformed men was contagious. The kids, the Elders were all gathered in the school

> gym and it was a great opportunity to catch up and visit with old friends and former interview participants. This was day one of the Poplar River Sasquatch days where hockey games, imitating animal calls and setting traps in a team are still part of the week's activities. So is the competition for the title of the Sasquatch woman and Sasquatch man… (Pawlowska-Mainville 2013, pers. notes)

Additionally, after a pleasant discussion about my progress of collecting oral histories in Poplar River, Noel Bruce, the former higher education counsellor provided me with some accounts about this First Nation. "According to the Elders", Noel tells me,

> trappers used to take their families to their trap lines in the fall and came home after the spring trapping season has ended. The trappers would sell their furs to the HBCo many of the trappers came back to Poplar River to sell their furs during the winter - mostly by walking or some used dog teams and most trappers would take dogs to trap lines and make wooden toboggans and snowshoes to use for all purposes (Noel Bruce 2007, pers. comm. & notes).

All these narratives are expressed and articulated in experience, and are not often thought about consciously. Place narratives and the narratives about the World Heritage Site thus act as personal expressions of collective ideals and imaginations. The allegorist lives an experience but when later re-telling the narrative, that story is re-experienced, and often, a new understanding is created, which is why I hope future generations of Poplar River First Nations members can re-live and re-tell their own understandings of the stories contained within this thesis. Russell Lambert's childhood memory about spending time with his dad on the trap line is something that reminded the then-Chief why the land is important to him, and why the young people should be encouraged to go trapping once in a while. They need to

> experience the difference, see the life of a trapper. […] when I came back from [my] first year of university, I went out with my dad to his trap line. And we spent about three or four weeks there. And it was something very dear to me, because it was a big change for me; none of this nine-to-five thing - because sunrise to dusk that's when your day ends. And we were on the go for about twelve, maybe fifteen hours a day. And of course, there was no hydro, so when you came back, it was almost bed time. And when the sun rose is when the day started (Russell Lambert 2008).

Similar to Benjamin's understanding of stories told, which are interpreted in translations of their meanings, the concept of narratives embraces the idea that specific localities can only be understood in

terms of people's perceptions and experience of them. As such, emotional, aesthetic and symbolic appeals of this space of the boreal forest are oftentimes transformed into historical and social discourses that people have of this place. Simply put, landscapes are those localities carved into space through cultural and/or personal experiences. Hence, the many different narratives I collected from members of Poplar River about this cultural landscape are purposely netted into this academic piece, as are my own experiences of *asatiwisipe aki*.

Indeed, in 2013, Abel took me out to Big Black, where the edge of his trap line begins. We sat along the snow route on the way back and warmed up next to the fire. Abel was sharing some stories of his life out on the land; how he had to produce a pair of snowshoes to get himself home one time; how he survived days on one can of fish oil. Abel knows his trap line thoroughly: he knows the best place set to set his traps and where the good camping sites are. He can also share so many of his experiences on the land with just my finger pin-pointing to a location on the map in front of us. Like Abel, many of the Elders remember the intricate details of the local landscape: they recall the number of rapids on a river, how to cross them, the names of sites and in some cases, where to harvest fish, muskrat or best sites to kill a moose. When Abel humbly tells me what he knows – only because he has experienced it - he is re-living stories and experiences of 'the old people' and their long-gained knowledge and skills that were passed down to him. Many of the Elders I spoke with in Poplar River like Abel Bruce, Walter and Jean Nanawin, Kenneth Douglas, Albert

Image 1.5 *Looking at the Poplar River trap line territories with an Elder. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

Bittern, Marcel and Francis Valiquette, are tradition bearers and practitioners. Not only do many of these individuals have much knowledge and personal and collective histories about very specific spots, I am amazed at their ability to remember some of these stories with such immense detail. For example, Abel once told me the specific day of month in 1978 that the Poplar River ice thawed for the spring. For Abel, this way of life, the freedom and possibility to go to his trap line, is so important to him, that it defines him. He always insists that he is a trapper; that trapping is all he knows. This identity represents a symbolic expression of his individual relationship to his land; this connection is reflective of his cultural teachings. To remove Abel from the land, or to remove the land from him, would be to cut off his heritage, his history, his knowledge and skills – his life. The land, his trap line, *aki*, is fundamental to Abel's survival as he lives off of it and from it. He relies on it for his *mino ayaa*, '[individual] well being', for his income and for harvesting, and the next chapter will discuss how I worked with some of these knowledge-holders in Poplar River.

CHAPTER 2
Mawadishiwe: Methods, Methodology and 'Visiting'

> *That is why it's good what you [the author] are doing…what you are doing there, coming here and doing all this...* (Abel Bruce 2013).

When discussing and planning my research methods for my fieldwork and subsequently my dissertation, one of the professors in Native Studies, asked me: what did you actually *do* in Poplar River? This was a difficult question to answer, because the vast majority of qualitative research methods provided to me throughout the course of my studies did not prepare me for the methods by way of which I actually carried out my research. Although prior to fieldwork I designed a plan and a set of interview questions for myself, with time I discovered that following a strict sequence of questioning and a rigid schedule was not effective for me. There are of course guidelines, but in my experience, successful research methodologies are based on a case by case basis. Somewhat like adaptive research methods, where the personality of the researcher or a situation determines some approaches on the spot, my methodology was very flexible. This is not to say that I did not prepare for my fieldwork in the formal sense. Relying on longitudinal research and a relationship of trust approach, my methodological toolkit included researcher observation, key informant interviews with Elders, community-members and resource harvesters as well as policy analysis. Nonetheless, I realized that working with an Indigenous community and doing community-based research, there is no predetermined and set-in-stone set of research protocols and methods. This chapter will introduce and discuss some of the conceptual frameworks that have become the tools I used in my research methods.

This project was a largely qualitative and I relied on numerous - but personalized - methods and methodologies in conducting my research and writing my dissertation. My methodology did not consist of quantifying people and peoples' voices as 'data' to be collected, analyzed and presented, which is why there is no 'findings' chapter. But my scholarly 'findings' here, are an outcome of my long-term involvement with Poplar River, which provided me with an in-depth understanding of this

community. Since this was an Indigenous community-based project, numerous individuals played a large role in helping me not only to develop my own methods, but also understand the complex issues that formed the outcomes of my discussions and conclusions. The narratives of Poplar River First Nations members in this community-focused project are meant to be heard and passed on, with the goal of influencing positive change in community *mino-bimaadiziwin*, 'well-being', and in Canadian-Aboriginal policy.

Over the course of eight years, my frequent visits to Poplar River have enabled me to carry out discussions; this form only comes through trust-relations that develop over time. My long-term involvement permitted me to actually engage in the community – and this is very rare for researchers who often feel the pressure to collect and draw data because their time is limited. Researchers who solely rely on data rather than relationships do not take into account the Indigenous methods of study. As such, this research is composed of mixed qualitative methods – Western and Indigenous – that used narrative methods adapted from Indigenous methodologies and decolonization methodologies to explore the ways Poplar River uses global structures and ideas to meet local needs. Based mostly on the stories of the participants and PRFN members as well as on policy analysis, I have combined the methods I was taught as a student in the Department of Native Studies as well as a first-generation Polish immigrant who was guided by the Cree and Anishinaabe people about their ways of understanding the world and about their choice of being listened to. My methods were based on the things I learned by being present in the community – sometimes by trial and error – of how community-based research with an Anishinaabe community is to be carried out. I combined my prior knowledge as an individual, as a student/scholar and as a guest being advised by some community members regarding how to do the work.

> *Ice fishing, Winter 2013. This is the recipe: First you pick a spot - but not too deep, where the pickerel spawn. You may want to have experience or a knowledgeable fisherman with*

> *you; I just went where they were. Then you take the enormously heavy corkscrew and drill into the ice. When you are left with a perfectly round hole, you take the scoop and clear the hole from the accumulated ice pieces. You must do this scooping every once in a while - as soon as the water hole begins to be covered by that thin and invisible layer of ice again. Then you sit still, quietly with your line down the water hole and wait for a bite. And wait. And wait some more. This may happen in a few minutes, in a few hours or never. After about 20 minutes in the -37 weather, this activity became for me as exciting as watching that ice form over the water hole…*(Pawlowska-Mainville 2013, pers. notes).

Agnieszka ndizhikaaz: Positionality in my research

> *It's time for us to try and tell them, what is this land doing here, for us, now. We're trying to protect this land. That's why you're here for, to protect this land* (Abel Bruce 2013).

Community-based research (CBR) takes on a multifarious meaning when a First Nations community is involved. It is even more varied when a non-Indigenous researcher comes in to the community to 'do' research because things like colonialism, power, race, gender and rights are put into play. Postcolonial critiques like those of Said (1978), Fanon (1961), Memmi (1965/1991) and Spivak (1999) stress the need to recognize the ways in which the colonized bodies construct imperial knowledges, prejudices and power relations. The process of knowledge construction (Foucault 1984/1993 & 1997) are seen as central to the way in which wider geopolitical and economic power is secured by some groups, thus a need for a radical re- and de-construction of history and knowledge production is not only required but inclusive of a diversity of perspectives. One of the most important methods in CBR and Indigenous research is to acknowledge that these power relations exist and that they play a significant role in the outcome of the research and the research data. In *Orientalism* (1978), Said argues that 'strategic location' is a "way of describing the author's position in relation to the material [s/]he writes about" (Said 1978: 20). One of the necessities then, is to locate oneself in the research process because, if I am to 'engage' in the community of Poplar River, where do I stand in reference to my project? What discourses and pre-existing factors will affect how I interact with members of this community?

> *It is interesting that* biiwideg*, the visitors coming into Poplar River are representations of power for members of Poplar River, especially the kids and youth. When I first came to Poplar River, most people assumed that I was a nurse or teacher; when I was there with John, my partner, many assumed he was a doctor or priest. I thought it was interesting that the belief that only "authority" figures like doctors and nurses, government officials, lawyers, priests and dentists are the few people who would come into the community. When I inquired about this, the idea was that most* biiwideg*, or* mooniyag *that come into the community, come with an agenda. They come to get something, find something out, or do something. Rarely do individuals come to enjoy Poplar River. But yet, here I was in Poplar River, at a discursive crossroad where the same landscapes of* asatiwisipe aki *were being constructed in such dichotomous ways: simultaneously dirty and pristine, at once a socially polluted victim of colonization and a wilderness monument of an absence of industrialization. Steeped in 'the forces of political economy, power relations, marginality and the notion of post-colonialism, central northern Manitoba is also constructed and perceived as a resource rich hinterland – the "northern" Canada'* (Pawlowska 2009:65; Pawlowska-Mainville 2010, pers. notes).

In Poplar River, the first thing that anyone notices about me is my skin colour and my gender, thus in a community composed mostly of Aboriginal people, I am identified as *mooniya-ikwe*, white woman. My position as *mooniya-ikwe*, forces me to narrow down my approaches to successfully complete my research with this First Nation. As *mooniya-ikwe*, I am always aware that 'Whiteness' – whatever that is, is embodied through me in my position of an outsider. As a result, it took longer for individuals to warm up to me, to approach me and to feel at ease with me. It seemed as if I, the researcher, was 'researched back' by the members of the very community I was to do research in. It took a few lengthy visits to overcome this racial factor, and only with and multiple visits and through long-term engagement, I was able to show that my 'Whiteness' was only reflective of my skin colour. Visit after visit, countless anecdotes were exchanged about heritage, identity and history over tea; at some point a few years later from my initial stay, those who have invited me into their homes have began casually letting me enter their histories and stories of experiences in *asatiwisipe aki*. Long-term and frequent visits to the community and discussions of the diverse things that bond individuals as humans subsequently permitted me to eventually access the information at a deeper level. In-depth understanding of the community permitted me to have a glance at the dynamics within the community.

Because of the frequent visits to Poplar River, because encountering and speaking with many people about things other than my thesis, I have learned to really understand the factions and the dynamics that exist in the community. Rather than accumulating "pure data" that pertains only to the research topic; I was able to collect stories that defined the way the community as a whole relates to the issues that exist within the research topic. For example, Byron's refusal to attend university was not part of my research; the fact that lack of jobs for university graduates in Poplar River is an issue that only can be connected to this community's insistence on economic development ventures that will create jobs *in the community* for such individuals. Ray's famous moose balls were the butt of many jokes during Treaty Days but it is something that only those who have heard his stand-up comedian's son talk will understand. My mix of methods (western and Indigenous methods) therefore, was also reflective of my own position, positionality and personality.

Image 2.1 *Enjoying time on the Franklin River with friends. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

Despite what was just stated, it is important that I articulate my position to my work in Poplar River and to the written component that makes up the entirety of my doctoral project. The framework of this thesis is written by a non-Aboriginal woman, a first generation immigrant to Canada. I was born and raised in Toruń, Poland; I came to Canada with my parents as a child but I continue to have strong links to my homeland and the family that was left behind. I continue to speak my language and I also speak French and some conversational Anishinaabemowin; all three languages frame my perspectives and positions in Native Studies and in my work with Indigenous people. In 2013, I married John, an Anishnaabe with whom

the numerous discussions and debates I had, helped shape my thoughts and insights about Native Studies and cultural studies.

Although my education is largely based on the western perspective, the Native Studies Department at the University of Manitoba and the numerous years I have spent in Poplar River (as well my work with the *Makeso Sakahican Inninuwak*, with whom I worked briefly as a doctoral student), taught me how to approach Aboriginal issues from a non-colonizing perspective and decidedly with personal interpretations of the forms of Anishinaabeg methodology. In *This is Not a Peace Pipe*, Dale Turner (2006:116) writes that "a critical [I]ndigenous philosophy is meant to engage European philosophy while at the same time unpacking the meaning and praxis of colonialism in the history of ideas". As a European, I have attempted to work within the existing political and legal situation in a way that brought forth profound change for the better to the Aboriginal people with whom I had the pleasure of working. I would like to acknowledge here, that throughout my work, it was important for me to work with Aboriginal people and with Indigenous forms of methodology, yet not lose a sense of my own identity.

> *I received a good teaching in Poplar River. As embarrassing as it is, I want to put it here, in my thesis to pass on the teaching I was taught. Upon our discussion of so-and-so, I made the comment that you should not trust so-and-so because I have heard that she is an untrustworthy woman. Having been a friend to the First Nation member, I obviously offended him. Upon my apology, I was told that you should never pass on things that you have heard; only say the things that you have experienced for yourself - just passing on unconfirmed information, or hearsay is not right. We should only say things that we know are true. This common-sense reprimand was so memorable for me that I definitely learned my lesson. This was a teaching passed on to me from someone in Poplar River. I do not need to say your name – you know who you are. And I thank you for that* (Pawlowska-Mainville 2013, pers. notes).

The research process and *Niin-izhichigewinan:* 'my way of doing/practice'

> *As I sat watching Abel eat the pieces of oranges I have cut up, we chatted over coffee about the fact that there are people "out there" that want to stop the fur industry because it is cruel to animals. As we talk about the process of killing animals, this man, who has*

> *spent all his life trapping - creating traps, checking snares, killing the ones who are found alive in the traps, skinning, selling and at times even eating his catch - is finding our discussion personal. It is after all, people "out there" that are judging his way of life and even impacting his livelihood* (Pawlowska-Mainville 2013, pers. notes).

While discussing the ethical component of Aboriginal community-based research, scholars like Tuhiwai-Smith (1999), Kovach (2009), Kulchyski (2000) and Brown & Strega (2005) argue that community-based research (CBR) projects must be identified and verified by the community. CBR is increasingly used across a variety of disciplines and settings. Most, if not all, Natives Studies programs today require their students to do fieldwork at the graduate level. Academia is increasingly expecting that fieldwork with an Aboriginal group or community be based on the principles of CBR (CCBR 2012). The Canadian Centre for Community-Based Research argues that CBR is a form of research that strives to be community situated, collaborative and action oriented (CCBR, 2012). This signifies that not only must the research be of practical relevance to the community, but that research results must also be oriented towards making positive social change and promote social equity (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999; CCBR 2012). Community-based research must therefore have motivational aspects for action-research and move away from research for knowledge's sake (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999).

This practicality of research was certainly expected of me when I summarized my doctoral proposal for the community of Poplar River. One of the counselors reminded me that I was welcome to work with them, but that research which would benefit the community, in other words, be *useful* to the members of the First Nation, is expected (Mason E. 2009, pers. comm.). Rather than limiting, this expectation was in fact helpful for me because it

Image 2.2 *Racing on snowshoes during the 2013 Sasquatch Days. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

allowed me to guide my research in a way that was constructive and welcome. I was happy to know that Chief and Council were involved in the research process by outlining some of the prospects they find relevant to their community. In additional to my insistence on formally acknowledging traditional modes of production and governance, it is with hope that my collection of stories from Elders and other community members, my policy-analysis of World Heritage and forms of community economic development will be beneficial to the community's updated World Heritage Site nomination. I also believe that my arguments about a broader interpretation of Aboriginal and treaty rights will contribute to policy reform and protect Indigenous people whose lands, resources and stewardship practices are threatened. Moreover, some councilors have suggested that the stories I collect and any videos or pictures I take, can be placed at the future Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg Cultural Interpretative Center, and so the public can learn from the teachings I captures through my work too. All in all, as I write my thesis, the perception that it be beneficial and accessible to the community, provides a sense of direction that is both comforting and encouraging.

'Plan B' and *mawadishiwe*, 'visiting'

> *That's what I have been doing a lot; teaching the language. White people don't understand our language. Where we are now. You are learning something already. And I will understand now; it is really good for you to do this. You start to learn our language, and pretty soon, you will understand. We will be able to talk to you* (Abel Bruce 2013, talking to me about my work in the community).

My first trip alone as a student-researcher to Poplar River First Nation was in July 2008; the previous year, I visited the community with my supervisor, Dr. Kulchyski, who introduced me to the leaders of this First Nation. As part of my Master's thesis, my fieldwork consisted of collecting oral histories in response to the proposed Manitoba Hydro Bi Pole III project on *asatiwisipe aki*. My collection of histories and land-use stories was to be used in the community's 'Plan B'. This back-up

plan would have resulted in the community taking the government to court if the protective measures over the land were not adequately entrenched against non-renewable resource development and the Bi Pole III proposal. What I specifically liked about this project was that the initiative was community-led and my role was to support Poplar River in their undertaking. I was invited to help out the community based on their own local needs. The friendships that I have developed through my long-term visits in each year of my Master's program led to the decision to pursue my doctoral degree. Over time, the relationship I made with certain individuals became the foundation of my long-term community-based research with this community. Consequently, the methods and findings for this doctoral dissertation arise out of an eight year long relationship with the community of Poplar River, that is, from the period of 2006 to the present. I say the present, because my visits and community-based work in Poplar River are on-going.

Research involving Aboriginal people must include decolonizing methodologies (Ashcroft et. al. 1989; Tuhuwai-Smith 1999; Kovach 2009). In my view, effective decolonizing methodologies must legitimize Indigenous knowledges and ways of doing 'research'. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, I believe that methods for researchers should be applied on a case by case basis. I have applied approaches that adapted best to me and my ways of doing things - and the Anishinaabe philosophy and cultural framework of establishing relationships, has suited me creditably. For the past few years, I relied heavily on the Anishinaabemowin concepts of *mawadishiwin* or 'visiting', and on *odaniibiishimidaa*, 'let's have tea' and *dibaajimowinan*[1], 'stories'. These relatively simple terms represent the foundation of [decolonizing] Indigenous research to me. I believe that the three concepts

[1] Dibaajimowin: I used this term as it is the term to generally referring to stories in Poplar River. However, in Anishinaabemowin, there are different variations of this word, depending on the context. To 'tell a sacred story' (*aadisookan*) or to 'teach by telling a story' (*aawechige*) or 'tell a story of somebody' (*aajim*) are represented by different words. Source: Pat Ningewance, Roget Roulette, Abel Bruce (personal communications) and Ningewance, P. *Talking Gookom's Language*.

alone can lead to highly successful research and good information and, if employed well, they can offer so much more. In fact, *mawadishiwe,* 'visiting', was the method I relied on to establish a relationship-of-trust that became the foundation of my longitudinal community-based research. This relationship blurred the lines of my research life and my personal life as it was based on meaningful friendships and relationships that often trespassed on my academic role.

Mawadishiwe comes first in longitudinal research as it is important for researchers to make the time to 'visit' the community and frequent individuals with whom a relationship of trust must be established prior to any information being gathered. *Odaniibiishimi,* 'have tea' and *dibaajimowin,* 'story' are terms from Anishinaabemowin that reflect Anishinaabe relationships but which have become central for me in my research. 'Tea' and 'storytelling' are part of the process, and community-based research with Indigenous people must rely and acknowledge these as part of the methodological course of action. Abel, an Elder and a long time friend of mine gave me feedback one evening as to the ways I 'conduct interviews' with him:

> Sometimes if you don't have anything to eat, you can offer some tea. This is a good thing to offer, something like that. I am used that. My mom used to teach me a lot about that. Even if you don't have any tea. Even if you don't have a tea or coffee at home or whatever. Water, give them some water; that's the best way you could do, and from there, they know you're respectful, they know that you will be a respectful guy. Then people will come to you… And that's is what my mom and dad would tell me a lot about that. This is the ways I am using it now; and this is the way I feel for you, using it this way, offering me this and all that. This is the way I like it. That's like when you go somewhere else and visit (Abel Bruce 2013).

Indeed, *mawadishiwe* represents the human aspect that connect us all yet it is the additional side of fieldwork that includes making a commitment to spend time with an individual(s) and having tea/coffee or sharing a meal and exchanging stories. Over the past few years, I have heard many stories –some great, others sad and others quite bizarre; and, I have told numerous stories about myself and what I have seen. 'Sharing about myself' is a critical component of my approach and was the key mechanism

that helped me build trust and honest relationships with community members. Exposure of personal, sometimes painful, stories and problems can be quite humbling; nevertheless, that emotional connection can indeed become a foundation for rapport. Although longitudinal engagement through *mawadishiwe* is based on Anishinaabemowin, it is evident throughout the research carried out by those decolonizing non-Aboriginal scholars working with Indigenous communities in Canada. Individuals like Hugh Brody (1975) with the Inuit, Peter Kulchyski (2005) with the Dene and Julie Cruickshank (1990) with the Athapaskan and Tlingit women, are some of the academics employing the approaches articulated through the terms discussed above. These scholars as well as others like Kovach (2009), Ridington (1988), Brownlie (2003) and Tanner (1979) are also examples of individuals working with Aboriginal communities and connecting with them through the notion of *mawadishiwe* – visiting, and sharing of tea, food and exchanging stories as part of the 'research' process. Brody articulated his experience of visiting and sharing a meal with a community member:

> I often visited the home of an elderly man. The visits had become one of the most relaxed parts of my work; the old man, his family, and I talked, drank endless cups of tea, and often ate together (Brody 1975:169).

Drinking endless cups of tea permitted Brody the space and time to talk with the elderly man and learn more about/from him. Cruikshank (1990:372) too, writes that tea was a time when the women would share their stories: "We all had lunch together; afterward, while we were drinking tea, Mrs. Ned began speaking". Tea plays a large part in many cultures, and in Poplar River, like many other communities I have visited, having tea, represents the process of sharing stories; it is a time where enough trust has been established, that the two individuals who were once only connected through a mere formality, have now crossed over to a process of a relationship.

Mawadishiwe and its counter parts, *aadizookewin*, 'storytelling', and *gizhigamizigen!*, 'boil water for tea!', have constituted the framework of my engagement. Visiting – not only the

community and the individual homes of members, but also having them come over to *our* homes, is a component of longitudinal research. Longitudinal research requires frequent visits to the community, regular up-dates of the progress of the project and visibility/accessibility. This is important in Indigenous research so that the community knows that the researcher will not just collect data and disappear. Since I visit Poplar River a few times per year, most people know me and what I do. As such, it is now much easier to obtain 'research participants'; in fact, First Nation members working at the band office, especially the women, are now always eager to provide me with a list of people who I should talk to, who would be best to interview. Having completed many interviews and having spoken to numerous individuals about the Asatiwisipe Lands Management Plan and its protective measures at the community level, I continue to have many people enthusiastic to share their stories of being out on the land or to refer me to somebody else.

Undoubtedly, this "snowball effect" was the principal qualitative method within longitudinal research that I came to rely on. Heckathorn (1997) discusses some of the advantages and disadvantages that exist in snowball sampling, especially when it some to accessing "hidden" populations (Heckathorn 1997: 174). Snowball sampling refers to a process that starts from an initial state of small significance and builds upon itself, becoming larger and larger. This effect is usually respondent-driven (Ibid., 1997:177), meaning that it is the interviewee that refers other people who can be interviewed. As a result, what starts off with a single individual, multiplies exponentially, like a rolling snowball, and ends with a very large sample group. This method of collecting data is especially useful and beneficial to a [non-Indigenous] student coming into a First Nations community; as a stranger, it is very unlikely that people will willingly participate from the initial start of the fieldwork. However, with time and community reference, I found that individuals were more likely to agree to be interviewed because a member from their own community has brought the person in. I can confidently

say that the person brought in by a community member, is one that is deemed 'trustworthy' in the eyes of his/her fellow First Nation members.

For me, this method, intertwined with the concept of *mawadishiwe*, proved to be a foot in the door in my long-term involvement in Asatiwisipe Aki. I can recall the moment that Noel Bruce, told me he has someone for me to interview; an Elder, he told me, that is knowledgeable and respected in Poplar River. When we arrived at Walter's house, the two men spoke in Oji-Cree, or rather, a mix of both because whereas Noel is Ojibway, Walter is Cree. Noel introduced me briefly, and Walter agreed to speak to me because Noel said I was a student doing some work for the band. This day began what became one of the longest and most impressionable friendships between the Nanawin family and myself. Afterwards, Noel and other members of the band council, as well as Walter, guided me to more Elders. Then, these additional Elders told me to speak to so and so. This was a very effective snowball sampling method because it truly gave me access to the "hidden population" (Heckathorn 1997; Atkinson & Flint 2004). If not for Noel, Ernest, Casey or Emile and many others, I would not know who in the community is a fisherman, a hunter, a trapper, an Elder; and it would be incredibly forward of me to show up at an old man's door demanding an interview!

> *At some point in my research, I came to the conclusion that most of my data comes from men, and I wanted to include some more women's voices in my data. It is interesting that women were willing to be interviewed, but often, when I asked to speak to them about the land, food and/or resource use in Poplar River, many would respond "you should speak to my husband. He knows all that stuff". I was surprised how humble many of the women are, and how little recognition women's roles "in the bush" tends to receive in research. Over the course of time, I examined many of the books that deal with resource management, and very little correlation exists between women and terms like harvesting, resource, management, hunting, trapping, and fishing. Julie Cruickshank and Elizabeth Povinelli wrote about similar experiences. Here in Poplar River, women continue to be engaged through "cultural, conversational, and economic overlap, interinvolvement, and exchange" (Povinelli 1993:15) I know that this field is largely dominated by men, but I was really keen on bringing women's perspective, voices and activities to the discussion on resource stewardship. This speared vital the more I actually spoke with women at an informal basis. They would often share stories of going on the land with their families; these stories often include teaching their kids about how to do things when out in the*

> *bush, how to prepare harvested meat, i.e., how to cut with the meat fibres and not against. They were also largely involved in berry picking, plant identification (which berries are edible) and with passing down of bush skills in camp vicinity. Here is how the kids learned now things were taught to their parents, and how their grandparents were taught techniques. Women's roles on the land therefore, seem to include voicing the many cultural practices passed down* (Pawlowska-Mainville 2010 pers. notes).

Furthermore, qualitative methods in community-based longitudinal research also include observation, active participation and key-informant interviews. Active participation sets up the potential for snowballing and singling out the key-informants that longitudinal research method amasses. While attending numerous events in the community, some people would ask me who I am, what I am doing in Poplar River, and once I provided an explanation, they would say, "oh, you should talk to ….[my grandfather, me, my dad, so-and-so]". This was a chance to make a mental note and perhaps include this individual as a future interviewee. Nonetheless, because – like in many other places – there are social factions and familial divisions in the community, some people would say to interview so-and-so, but definitely *not* so-and-so. In most cases it was during such informal discussions, and in the least of cases, during an interview, that some participants would provide information that was either oppositional to the steps taken by the chief and Band Council or disapproving of some individuals or leaders. I took such comments into consideration but was forced to use my judgment to determine if the data was based on a personal distaste for the person, or if it was based on the reasoning that affected the entire well-being and decision-making in the community. In the cases that I did conduct formal interviews, the individual was usually referred to me

Image 2.3 *Looking at a map with an Elder. On occasion, maps were used in my interviews and informal discussions. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

or wanted to share their knowledge with me. The interview was 'personalized' to the individual, meaning, I would change a few questions to adapt to the situation and the role of the person in the community. So, with Elders, I asked mainly questions about their life on the land, their trapping/hunting/fishing experiences and about the teachings they were taught. With leaders of the community, such as the chief and any councilors or political advisors, I would re-frame the same questions so that they are relevant to their functions; this included questions about the land or resource stewardship and reformulate them in the context of Aboriginal and/or treaty rights, provincial and UNESCO legislation and the World Heritage Site proposal. This adaptive design was imperative in formal (and informal) interviews as it would be unproductive and inefficient (not to mention inappropriate) for me to ask Elders to discuss Canada's policy or UNESCO World Heritage Sites and for a young councilor, his life-long experience as a head trapper. Neither individual could speak much about the subject; I would also be probably laughed at for my ignorance for asking impertinent questions that reflect little understanding of the community members.

However, although the questions varied slightly in their structure, the original list of questions included the following themes:

1. How long have you lived in the community?
2. Can you tell me something about yourself? For example, what is your name and your role in the community?
3. Do you own a trap line? If yes:
   a) How often do you go into the bush?
   b) What do you go into the bush for?
   c) Do you take your family with you?
   d) How do you manage your territory? (fire, trapping, selective cutting, other management or stewardship practices?)
   e) Can you share some stories or experiences about your time on the land? Are fishing, hunting, ceremonies, berry picking, or other reasons for you to go in the bush?
4. Do you participate at camps in Weaver Lake? Why? Can you share some stories or experiences about Weaver Lake?
5. Re: Lands Management Plan:
   a) What does 'development' of the land mean to you?
   b) What does protection mean to you?

6. What can you tell me about the Asatiwisipe Aki Lands Management Plan?
7. How is the World Heritage Site initiative a form of self-determination?/From your understanding of local oral history, how far does the Poplar River Anishinaabe "traditional" land extend to?
8. What future do you see in Poplar River? What role do you see the leaders play?
9. What is your preferred place in Poplar River territory?
10. Where do you usually go?

When conducting formal interviews, the process was quite academic. Both parties knew that it was a research interview and permission forms would be explained, signed and oftentimes, the interviews would be recorded. I would ask the questions, and the interviewee would answer until we completed most or all questions in about thirty minutes to one hour. I offered $30-$50 for the interview and/or sometimes a small gift or gas slips of equivalent value. The values of the fees were dependent on my funding, which varied from year to year. Finally, although anonymity was always an option, to date, all individuals were eager to have their names accredited to their knowledge.

The meta-narrative of 'ethics'

> *It means a lot when you ask me have a nice day. I hope you had a nice day.* Mino-giizhigan (Abel Bruce 2013).

Over the past few years, I have interviewed about ten people through this formal method; more than fifty discussions, however, were made informally. Some of those interviews were transcribed and their direct words placed into this dissertation. However, informal interviews, discussions and confidence in *mawadishiwe* where narratives were exchanged over tea, became the dominant form of learning and 'data collection'. Due to the fact that with time, my relationship with some of my 'interview subjects' became more than research-based as we often visited each other or spent evenings talking about diverse issues, 'data collection' and the standard principles of research, changed their significance. In some instances, as tea was refilled during one *mawadishiwewin,* the topic of discussion

pertained to my research –and suddenly research ‘protocols’ and ‘ethics’ became obscured. With each prolonged visit, it was more awkward to suddenly stop or interrupt in mid-sentence and whip out a digital recorder and a permission form because a good story or ‘data’ is presented. Sometimes I wrote notes afterwards to recall the story or data; other times, I relied on memory. Abel Bruce once told me that it is important to listen (rather than take down notes) because what you will remember is what you are meant to learn. Sometimes those teachings will come back to you years later and they will only be recollected and understood then (Abel Bruce & John Mainville 2013, pers. comm.). Periodically, I just enjoyed the occasion and let the stories fade away in the moment.

As such, there are not many ‘formal’ documents and records of permission, but tons of names to which knowledge or information can be attributed. For example, the numerous discussions I had with Ernest C. Bruce or Abel Bruce about land use were pertinent to my research, but were not captured on a digital recorder or by means of a formal interview. My decision to include some of these discussions in the final dissertation was based on the fact that the ‘informants’ or more precisely, ‘knowledge holders’, trusted me with further transmitting their stories and teachings. Able once told me that “it is good what you are doing. I like what you do”, and thus was willing to share information and showing me things more willingly; the things he did not want disclosed, he would outright say. Many people wanted to get things ‘out there’ and were looking forward to seeing some of their knowledge placed at the future Interpretative Center. Likewise, on numerous occasions I ‘verified’ the sections where direct voices were referred to in my work. This verification was sometimes accomplished through looking at pieces of the written components together, sometimes through the colourful posters I had put up at the Education building, the Band Office and the Health Center or through informal discussions that helped reinforce the ‘findings’. Any ‘conflicting’ opinions or ‘inconsistencies’ I recognized as truths to the individual voicing them so I did my best to acknowledge them as differing, but not wrong. In some

cases, when a statement or a position was important yet 'risky', I personally decided to not disclose the person's name, and have instead used 'Poplar River First Nation member' as a source. Again, I tried not to be a source of conflicts or problems not further any animosities as a reflection of my ongoing ethical commitment to the community.

Although this method could be considered by many universities, governments, ethics boards and even some ethnographers as inappropriate, informal discussions through *mawadishiwe* with Indigenous people worked best for me. Albeit the Informed Consent Forms (please see Appendix X) and the University of Manitoba Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB) who emphasized 'protocols', provided me – sometimes reluctantly, with an ethics license each year. I must stress the point here that Indigenous community-based research methods greatly differ from the academic codes of research conduct outlined by such organizations. The ongoing relationships one must establish to do longitudinal research shifts the inherent power relation of the research process into a respect-based relationship. The need for formal interviews therefore diminished over time as a result of this interaction. Long-term research allows the researcher to obtain better information as more people are willing to share material in a more honest way; because the respect is there, individuals are no longer inclined just to provide the answers they think the researcher wants to hear. There are also those who agree to share 'data' for the $30 or $50 they may get; but a relationship causes information to be voluntarily shared on numerous occasions by means of a casual discussion. The sense of comfort that is associated with having a normal conversation with a familiar face allows for a more honest and meaningful exchange. Longitudinal research allows for community-based research to become an ongoing dialogue where questions are asked of both parties and knowledge is discussed rather than collected.

This relationship of trust based on honesty and respect gained over time is empowering to the community as well as at an individual level. In my experience, long-term involvement shifts the power of the research relationship to the interview subject because as the research liaison continues, it is the interviewee that has the knowledge and it is the researcher (in academia, the 'expert') who is learning from that knowledge. In one instance, while having Abel over for tea, I realized that, not only do I know very little, but that I am dependent on this individual for teaching me. I am not the 'expert'; Abel is. Although in academia this dependence can be viewed as putting the researcher in an inferior position, in my work with Poplar River, this arrangement empowered the "Native informant" (Spivak 1999) who was *willing* to share knowledge with the entrusted person. And I liked it that way.

The story of narratives

For this project, I have reviewed the many different ways researchers work with Indigenous people. I have examined Kulchyski's *Sound of a Drum* (2005), Tuhiwai-Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999) and Robin Ridington's *Trail to Heaven* (1988). I liked how the authors have incorporated the numerous experiences and stories they have collected over a long period of time and have chosen to articulate all this 'data' in a narrative and dialogical format. Likewise, the *Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry* (1975), *Ninan* (2012), the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), and especially the Poplar River Asatiwisipe Land Management Plan (2010) and the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Project [nomination] (2012), are all documents that successfully include the diverse voices of First Nations members. Although I relied on scholarly research and policy, legal work and newspaper stories as sources of information to help contribute to a plethora of perspectives to my examination, I believe that informal interviews and community engagement - *mawadishiwe* - were the most applicable data-gathering methods in my research. When completed well, I believe that there is

great credibility for non-Indigenous scholars working alongside Indigenous authors; some may rely on Indigenous methods and traditions to balance out elitist historical data and sift through mainstream perceptions. Storytelling, as a narrative method, is part of the oral history method. Oral testimonies from members of Poplar River have provided me with valuable key material to supplement the written records and policy analysis; they have enabled me to identify the larger framework of the UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination and the land-protective measures on a very local and very individual basis.

Furthermore, long-term involvement enabled me to hinge on the narrative research I hoped to do. After about eight years of visiting Poplar River and sharing stories, I discovered that is not the researcher that determines which 'data' is important, but rather, the storyteller. Initially, this was a disconcerting issue for me as it challenged the way academia understands knowledge: as one authoritative voice that seeks, explores and presents. With my long-term involvement and reliance on Indigenous research practices, I no longer 'validated' data that was presented, but rather, presented the data that was valid. It was at that moment that *Life Lived Like a Story* (1991) made much more sense. Here, Julie Cruickshank does narrative and testimonial Indigenous research; spending lengthy amounts of time with the three Yukon Elder women, she writes down their stories – and what they choose to tell her, in a manner that accurately reflects relationships between the ideas *and* the participants. Shawn Wilson (2008:101) too, writes that an "analysis must be true to the voice of all the participants and reflect an understanding of the topic that is shared by researcher and participants alike". Indigenous scholars like Atleo (2004), Ermine (1995 & 2007), Henderson (2007), Monture-Angus (1995), Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) and Smith (2005) assert that there is a third worldview that is Indigenous and assumes the primacy of relationships. For Tuhiwai-Smith for example, relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers signifies negotiating new relationship in research where

Indigenous knowledge is validated and boundaries are places on non-Indigenous researchers. Indigenous research signifies reclaiming 'the future' and revitalizing language and cultural knowledge (Smith 1999:169-178). For Atleo, the theory of Tsawalk ('everything is one'), "assumes reality to be one network of relationships" and therefore one variable of research will be necessarily subject to a multitude of other variables such as family, status, geography and politics, etc (Atleo 2004: 117-118). Ermine discusses the aspect of relationships through an 'ethical space of engagement' where 'possibilities' can happen when two ideas meet and mesh together rather than have an 'either/or' liaison (2007: 194-195). For these Indigenous scholars, a unique form of looking at research and engaging in research signifies forms of exchange that take into account kinship. For me too, a long-term community relationship led to my being immersed wholly into this project through narratives, providing me with a unique opportunity to re-create the space of exploring relationships with the 'subjects' of research.

Notwithstanding, I would sometimes worry that I was receiving little feedback from people about my work. But after inquiring about a commentary to a draft publication to ensure accountability, Ray, the Lands Management Coordinator at the time, answered: "We've known you for a few years now. We know that you are doing a good job." (Ray Rabliauskas 2012, pers. comm.). That statement alone instilled a sense of confidence in how I felt about my research and my methodology. In the same manner, Abel once told me in an interview:

> You come here and your job is to take, ask questions, and take it out...and tell other people. If you need more, I'll give it to you, the more you want, the more I give. I will never stop giving you these things that you need (Abel Bruce 2013).

Similarly, as LeCompte & Schensul (1999: xiii) argue,

> many kinds of evaluative or investigative questions that arise in the course of […] planning and implementation cannot really be answered very well with standard research methods such as experiments or collection of quantifiable data.

If fact, such approaches can end up producing misleading results through small sample sizes, inappropriate questions and a host of other problems.

Image 2.4 *Poplar River airport. Frequent visits often mean flying in small planes like these to get to the community. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

At one point, I was concerned that I did not have 'data' that could be translated and put into a neat graph and visible, irrefutable data that can be recorded and presented. Towards the initial stage of writing this dissertation, I asked myself: what data do I really have? What is it that I actually know, have learned, and can present from all my visits doing 'fieldwork research' in Poplar River? All I seemed to have were memories, lots of field notes, about ten recorded interviews, many unrecorded discussions and experiences and some theoretical knowledge about many multidisciplinary issues regarding the World Heritage Site. And what do I do with all this? If my methods extend past the inscriptions, descriptions and transcriptions of my decade long involvement in this community, how can I translate this to be readable and accurate?

Long term active participation and observation permitted me to engage in community life without imposing on the lives of local peoples who are often busy. Once I came to the realization that people have their own lives, it was clear it would be easier to work with fewer people. The hope that the entire community will enthusiastically and directly engage in research is often an idealistic goal of researchers. As a *visitor* to the community, it was important for me to recognize that the people who live there have a life of their own and cannot drop their responsibilities to become 'fully involved' in the research. As a result, I had to work around the lives of the people who chose to become involved in

the data collection. In my experience, most of the community was aware of why I was there (to do research), few vaguely knew that my research entails the World Heritage Site nomination (whatever that is to some); even fewer members of this First Nation were actively engaged in the research process (being interviewed, reading my papers, listening to up-dates). In a community of 1200 people, establishing a close-enough friendship with few or even one individual with whom I could discuss some aspects of my research, read over a section of my work, carry out an interview or record their words in a publication - is a valid form of engaging with a community. Native Studies teaches us that long term informal discussions with one or two key 'informants' occurring over a long period of time can bring forth better results than hundreds of pie charts, graphs and statistical numbers (Peter Kulchyski 2013, pers. comm.). Had I gone to Poplar River once or twice, had distributed a survey to be completed, my data would be immensely weak. Although for example, the phrase "80% of respondents said they support the World Heritage Site" sounds authoritative, the argument is weaker in content than discussions with key individuals – Elders, harvesters, councilors – about *why* they support the World Heritage Site.

Through this thesis and through longitudinal methods, I have attempted to capture individual motivations, relationships, the experiences and the uniqueness of personal testimonies of the Pimachiowin Aki designation in *asatiwisipe aki*. Oral testimonies and personally hearing them spoken on *aki*, have allowed me to see the facial transformations of individuals who can proudly talk about their lives trapping, their trips hunting, their adventures of survival when harvesting. I know for a fact, that listening to Abel Bruce outside, out on the winter road with the sun warming our faces in the cold February air, was not only complementary but transformative to any research contexts I could have designed indoors over a period of a 40-minute formal interview. The ways of relating to "research" at

that moment was through long-standing principles of reciprocity and responsibility towards each other gained over the period of past few years.

Final thoughts and 'the lurking variable'

My position as a *mooniya ikwe,* 'white woman' and *oshkiniigikwe*, 'young girl' who was doing community-based research brought on plenty of enjoyable moments but also some challenges. I have decided to discuss those challenges here because they have sprung from my long-term engagement with the community and also from my identity. As mentioned, my identifying feature in Poplar River is that of *mooniya ikwe*, a 'white woman' who often comes to Poplar River alone. This "lurking variable" (Moore et al, 2012) has created certain boundaries which, for me, were not to be crossed. I could not just hitch a ride with any man because our sitting together in one car could be seen as inappropriate - especially if he had a partner; I could not have a male friend stay too long at my place, because his car would be seen parked late into the night and assumptions would be made. Likewise, it would be unacceptable for me to go on a hunting trip that involved camping overnight with 'the men'. My stories and data are therefore limited to my role as a woman, hence, I can argue that gender is a defining feature of how the research process is carried out and what data is obtained. Positionality (Said 1978; Tuhiwai-Smith 1999; LaRocque 2010) - in this case my gender too, evoked friendships, research participants and thus, research results that would have been different if I were a man.

From my experience therefore, I can say that community-based and Indigenous research is determined and affected by gender. Consequently, proper procedure that conforms to the norms of the community must be established when doing Indigenous research. I purposely use the term 'must' because in certain cases, I think that lack of knowledge about some of the social protocols that exist about gender relations can lead to unpleasant or even dangerous situations. One example consists of a

brief conversation I had with a man in a public place. This brief and innocuous encounter led to numerous troubles for him and his girlfriend - and indirectly affected me. The situation between them escalated to violence, the authorities were involved, and I was encouraged to change my telephone number. In the end, everything was replaced by newer drama and community gossip, but I learned that community-based research is experienced differently by women and that observation of social norms must be carefully made to avoid unsafe circumstances.

Finally, the biggest lurking variable in long-term community involvement with an Aboriginal community, which oftentimes continues to struggle with decolonization, is the emotional connection. After establishing a close relationship with certain individuals, it is hard not to feel affection for them, but this affection becomes problematic when social issues manifest. In one case, I was devastated to learn along with everyone else that a trusted member of this community was accused of sexually abusing his young granddaughter. The disbelief and sincere pain each time stories like this are heard surpass any academic boundaries and every methodology that one may formulate at the on-set of fieldwork.

These experiences, although important to recognize, do not eradicate the positive and memorable involvement I have had with the community of Poplar River First Nation over the past eight years. Only in Poplar River, could I simultaneously enjoy the taste of boiled moose, hear a good story about the 'little water people' or survival techniques, hear the strumming of an electric guitar – and feel really, really comfortable. In the past, I have eaten frozen raw seal meat watered down with vodka in a metallic cup; and I have eaten fish guts so deeply fried, that I am certain some of it was semi-digested fish feces. But only in the remote community of *asatiwisipe aki*, could I experience surreal reality of eating traditional Nigerian fu-fu with an African priest and then, partly in *Anishinaabemowin*, discuss cultural heritage under the faded greenness of the Aurora borealis.

CHAPTER 3
Izhitwaawinan Anishinaabeg: The Anishinaabeg 'Ways of Living' and Living Heritage

...We have so many stories about the land here, about the Thunderbird Woman, about our past. It's all here.
(Sophia Rabliauskas 2013, pers. comm.)

One night, while sharing a moose stir-fry, my husband and I listened to Pimachiowin Aki spokesperson Sophia Rabliauskas, her husband Ray, and later Abel Bruce, an Elder and trapper, discuss the UNESCO process. It's "hard for us to translate some things" Ray and Sophia say, "not only from Ojibway to English, but also how we think. Like the word *aki*... it is not just land; it is also the trees, the animals, the plants. It is kind of like the landscape...but it is difficult to express (Sophia Rabliauskas, Ray Rabliauskas, Abel Bruce, John Mainville 2013, pers. comm.). The lack of translation or the risk that some things may be lost in translation is common for those speaking other languages or coming from other cultures. For Indigenous people, it is also the unique cultural ways that distinguish their world views from the perspectives of non-Aboriginal populations (McLeod 2007; Richard Morrison 2010, pers. comm.; Ningewance 2004 pers. comm.; Roulette 2010 pers. comm.). Richard Morrison, Pat Ningewance and Roger Roulette have in some way been my Anishinaabemowin language teachers in Winnipeg and they all maintain the importance of learning the language as teachings and a way of life is in them. McLeod too, asserts that Nêhiyâwiwin (Creeness) signifies the preservation of Zhiyiiwiwin (Cree language). "If a culture is to survive on its own terms", McLeod asserts, a language

> cannot exist only in translation. In ceremonies, prayers are made in Cree. I do not think that ceremonies can survive in any meaningful way if they are only in English. Language is the source and expressions of our Creeness (McLeod 2007:39).

McLeod's example of ceremonies is precise; I have rarely attended an Anishinaabe ceremony where prayers, songs or introductions were done in English. Although colonialism has severely diminished Aboriginal languages, McLeod's position that, not only can a revival of Indigenous languages preserve

cultural/tribal narrative memory and find solutions to contemporary problems, but that they are a source of identity for many [Indigenous people] (McLeod 2007:38-40).

Embedded in collective narratives, individual experiences, cultural heritages and languages, Aboriginal epistemologies are crucial components in the transformative learning process for both world-views. Although, perhaps an unabridged understanding may be impossible, mechanisms like the Supreme Court as well as the Constitution Act in Canada can be useful in improving translatability of Indigenous epistemologies. At the international level too, the 2007 Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People and the diverse United Nations programs and declarations like the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) can be used to open up the space for a broader interpretation of Aboriginal and treaty rights to better suit the needs of Aboriginal people. These however, are not sufficient in encompassing the convoluted cultural expressions and ways of knowing of Aboriginal people, and have led to the development of a document that more thoroughly ensures continuity and safeguarding of Indigenous heritages in the global context. Passed by the UNESCO General Conference in 2003, the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage is perhaps the best international instrument to protect cultural heritages of the world.

The Convention is unique in the fact that it largely deals with what many programs, laws and policies ignore: the immaterial. Since 1972, when the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage has been adopted, for example, heritage was very much seen through a Western perspective of the physical: monuments, buildings and other constructions; ruins, archeological sites, and 'pristine' landscapes. These Eurocentric understandings of cultural heritage have in the past few decades, grown to multi-sighted conceptualizations of social landscapes and intangible heritages that are no longer embedded in material traces of the past. The Convention for the

Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage is an instrument that not only protects the intangible, but also takes into account cultural skills, expressions and performances associated with the tangible (Alivizatou 2012:9; Smith & Akagawa 2009; ICHC 2003; 2013d). This chapter will outline the importance of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, how the international document plays – and did not play – a role in the World Heritage Site nomination and how it could be used to bolster Pimachiowin Aki. Also, I will attempt to show how some of the concepts within the Convention - already existing within Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg epistemologies - can be used to reinforce Indigenous rights.

Before I begin my discussion of how intangible cultural heritage exists in *asatiwisipe aki*, and especially, how the UNESCO 2003 Convention can be applied in this context, I would like to spend a moment to discuss the World Heritage Committee's deferral of the decision and some of the criteria utilized within the nomination process, as I believe it is fundamental to the larger understanding (or lack thereof) of 'heritage' and Indigenous peoples. It is my intention that some of the arguments presented here will provide Poplar River/the Pimachiowin Aki communities with some strings to pull further as they work on re-submitting their nomination to UNESCO. Specifically, my discussion of 'integrity', 'authenticity' and 'outstanding universal [cultural] value' is presented here to further deliberate the World Heritage policy and larger discourse.

Culture vs. nature: A deferral of the decision

> *There are lots of stories on* asatiwisipe aki. *There is one from* Biinesiikaa'saigan *about a woman who married a Thunderbird. Sometimes she still comes down. Because of the close proximity of the Thunderbirds in the area, people used to be afraid of people here. Which is why when you cross the shallow Weaver Lake, you should put an offering down; some put tobacco or food; others put bullets or coins. This is where the Thunderbird lives and when people travelled through, they travelled silently. This is important because if you make too much noise on the lake, you will wake up the Thunderbirds and there would be thunderstorms and lightning and lots of wind- some strong enough to tip your canoe*

> *over… This is just one of the* dibajiimowinan *that Poplar River First Nation community members like Ernest, Ray, Sophia, Abel, Ken and Albert told me* (Pawlowska-Mainville 2013, pers. notes).

In the summer of 2013, a few days before UNESCO's decision regarding the fate of Pimachiowin Aki was made, everyone who was involved in the nomination sat on pins and needles. If the area is recognized as a World Heritage Site, "the hopes and the work involved to make this happen will be all worth it, and the recognition will be exciting" Sophia and Ray told me one winter. If the decision is negative, the disappointment, for many, will be great.

These words were prescient.

The decision regarding Pimachiowin Aki's status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site was announced at the 37th Session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) in June 2013. Surprisingly to some, the decision was indecisive; others knew that translatability of Indigenous ways of looking at the world would be difficult. The WHC, composed of two advisory bodies, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) which looks after the 'natural' sites, and the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) which advises on the 'cultural' sites, have postponed the decision over Pimachiowin Aki until more convincing evidence is presented. Together, under the auspice of the WHC, the organizations said that although the natural wealth of the area is clear, the 'outstanding cultural value' of the area is not (WFP 2013; WHC 2013).

Recognizing that

> fundamental questions in terms of how the dissoluble bonds that exist in some places between culture and nature can be recognized […] and the cultural and natural values of one property are currently evaluated separately and that the present wording of the criteria may be one contributor to this difficulty (WHC 2013:176 §6).

The WHC "deferred" the examination of the nomination in order to allow Canada to address the culture-nature issue and re-submit the nomination for the following year. Specifically, the WHC asks Canada and the First Nations to collaboratively "refine and strengthen the boundaries of the nominated

property to meet integrity requirements in relation to the operation of ecological processes within the property and surrounding areas" (WHC 2013:175). Finally, the committee requests Pimachiowin Aki to

> [e]xplore whether there is a way that the relationship with nature that has persisted for generations between the Anishinaabe First Nations and Pimachiowin Aki, might be seen to have the potential to satisfy one or more of the cultural criteria and allow *a fuller understanding of the inter-relationship between culture and nature within Pimachiowin Aki* and how this could be related to the World Heritage Convention (WHC 2013:175 §b, emphasis added).

In essence, the WHC raised doubts about the area's merits as a site of global mixed-heritage. The final decision was postponed, pending re-submission of the Pimachiowin Aki application with updated studies and evidence of outstanding cultural value (WHC 2013:175). This immense task has unfortunately left Pimachiowin Aki unable to complete the requirements before the deadline set for the 2014 decision, therefore the First Nations communities and Canada will only hear the final decision about its status in 2016.

Gaps in World Heritage

> *It was hard getting them to see what we were trying to say. They did not understand that you cannot separate the land from us* (Poplar River First Nation member, 2013)

In raising the issues at hand, I hope that my position will not be construed as a form of interference with Pimachiowin Aki's nomination or to the individuals involved in the process; I fully support Poplar River in their endeavor, and voicing my views of UNESCO was a juxtaposition of my academic and personal values and responsibilities. However, my inclusion of this concerning topic is to highlight that (a) changes are urgently needed to address systemic Eurocentrism of different international organizations and, (b), that it is Indigenous people, perhaps even Pimachiowin Aki, that can bring forth attention to these concerns or even have the power to make that profound change.

Eurocentrism of the WHS process is evident in more than the bureaucratic hoop these First Nations must jump through to 'satisfy' the "cultural criteria," as per the Convention's guidelines. It is a request for Indigenous peoples not only to justify their cultural worth, but to do so on terms dictated by Eurocentrism.

Broadly speaking, Eurocentrism is the belief that Europeans are the prime makers of history, the discoverers of archeology and science, and not just creators of culture but arbiters of what counts as culture in the first place (Blaut 1993). Referring to the notion of European exceptionalism and a perception of the world centered in Western civilization, Eurocentrism "exerts an important influence on discourse and empirical reality" (Blaut 1993:8-9). Within the World Heritage discourse, Eurocentrism exists insidiously through the nomination process as well as through the prepositions outlined in the Convention. In the first Article, the World Heritage Convention defines "cultural heritage" as "monuments […] groups of buildings […] works of man or the combined works of nature and of man […] from the point of view of history, art and science" (WHC 1972, Article 1). Such lofty rhetoric obscures the colonial vantage from which this "point of view" surveys the globe. The grand 'view from nowhere' (Nagel 1986) just so happens to have a European lens. In Article 2, the Committee defines "natural heritage" as biological, geological, and physiographical formations "from the point of view of science or conservation" (WHC 1972, Article 2). A designated cultural and natural Heritage Site must satisfy elements of both criteria. Whereas one is solely based on the artistry of nature, the other is judged on the basis of human-ingenuity. Western criteria for standards, the test and the final decision -not many opportunities for Other standards or subjectivities are present. Strictly speaking, the World Heritage Committee members have come to a land-based Indigenous community on the Canadian Shield and have perhaps expected to see a composite of buildings, monuments, and ancient man-made displays of human presence. Having seen no concrete-based artistry, the committee

members have failed to notice the rich legacy and irreplaceable heritage these First Nations are determined to leave behind: an irreplaceable culture and a sustainable inter-relationship anchored in a landscape that will provide for future generations. As a result, having closely defined (boxed in?), the values and properties of "culture" and "nature" - separately, of course – the World Heritage Committee is bound by its own epistemological definitions.

As discussed in Chapter 1, there are currently 1007 properties on the World Heritage List. About 779 of those properties are cultural and 197 are natural; only 31 are of mixed-category. It is interesting to notice that about 70-75% of the cultural heritage sites are in Europe; Eastern Europe alone has 77 and only 8 natural sites (WHC 2014). By comparison, Canada has 17 World Heritage Sites; eight are cultural and nine are natural sites. However, only two of the Canadian cultural sites are directly associated with Indigenous people (a mention of local peoples in the Statement of Significance is present); the six others are related to European or colonial cultures, including the Red Bay Basque Whaling Station, the Rideau Canal, and Lunenburg, considered to be of outstanding value for its "best surviving example of a planned British colonial settlement in North America" (UNESCO 1995). (Eurocentrism of the World Heritage Committee is perhaps best evidenced through the continued recognition of Canada's colonial history!) The two cultural heritage sites that discuss Indigenous people are Head-Smashed-In-Buffalo-Jump in Alberta and SGang Gwaay/Gwaii Haanas in British Columbia. Ironically, as important as they are, in both cases, it is the 'remains of' that are considered to be of outstanding value as they are largely based on archeological evidence of 'traditional' Aboriginal peoples who *used to* be there. I will discuss these two World Heritage Sites and their management policies in more detail in Chapter 5.

Part of the Eurocentrism is certainly the fact that the World Heritage Committee (WHC) seems to rely on tangible evidence only. In Canada, many of the cultural sites are tangible artefacts that tell a

history; they are palpable proof of a heritage. Unfortunately, since 'evidence' of a thriving culture is needed for the WHC (largely for ICOMOS it seems), then cultural heritage can only be seen from a 'tokenistic' perspective where external manifestations of cultural heritage are recognized as the heritage. For Aboriginal people then, Indigeneity would only be examined from romanticized images of 'Indianness' which would unquestionably fulfil Eurocentric expectations of Canada's north and the 'vanishing Indian' belief (Francis 1992; Berkhofer 1978; Doxtator 1992). However, this belief and its tokenisms do not reflect the current experiences of many Aboriginal communities. In examining 'outstanding universal values' within this society, the World Heritage Committee not only seems to leave very little room for cultural and temporal fluidity, but it also appears to disregard the 2003 sister Convention that outlines the role non-tangible cultural expressions play in heritage discourse. And, on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, in this large ecosystem of the boreal forest, evidence of the tangible is often seen, but it is the rich *intangible* heritage on the cultural landscapes of Pimachiowin Aki that tends to be overlooked. If, as per the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, an inventory of Anishinabeg cultural heritage was collected, the list would contain hundreds of elements like, for example, the site of the Thunderbird Eggs, which appears 'natural' but gains meaning mainly through the intangible stories.

Image 3.1 *Telling stories on the land. Sitting by the fire and just enjoying the absolute silence of the bush is unforgettable. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

In 1972, when the World Heritage Convention came into operation, the international and national protected area policy frameworks gave very little

importance to the relationships of environments with local communities. Indeed, the Convention itself bears no reference to human rights or the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities (Oviedo and Puschkarsky 2012: 286). Oviedo and Puschkarsky (2012: 286-287) write that protected areas often overlap with traditional lands of Indigenous and local peoples and to this day, there exist World Heritage Sites whose management practices override any Indigenous stewardship systems. This signifies that traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, fire practices and collecting of medicinal herbs in protected sites tend to be perceived as potentially detrimental to conservation efforts. The authors maintain that

> human rights violations in protected areas including World Heritage sites in some countries have consisted of forced displacement, restrictions of access to culturally meaningful places or to resources critical for survival and oppressive enforcement measures including cases of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and arbitrary detention (Oviedo & Puschkarsky 2012:288).

Fortunately, in spite of the work that still needs to be done, more and more consultation and participation with local and Indigenous people are becoming part of the procedures. Not only has the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) contributed to the rectification of 'fence and fine' conservation through prior and informed consent to Indigenous lands and resources, but also the notion of a 'rights-based approach' has become for the World Heritage Committee (specifically, IUCN), an entry point for collaboration. Securing land and usufruct rights, promotion of long-lasting protection of the area by communities and park management are increasingly stipulated within the framework of meaningful consultation and community engagement (Oviedo & Puschkarsky 2012; IUCN 2012, ICCA 2014; UNDRIP 2007; UNESCO 2002; UNESCO 2012).

Throughout this thesis, I argue that the World Heritage Site nomination is used by Poplar River and the other Pimachiowin Aki communities as a mechanism for self-determination and meeting local needs. The process has not been easy however, and the policies, categories and perceptions of the

WHC may prove to be difficult to overcome. There is a myriad of challenges for Indigenous (and non Indigenous) communities involved in the nomination process; many of them may be found in the tenets and interpretations of terms like 'integrity' of a natural site, and 'authenticity' of a cultural or mixed site, of the rationale for 'outstanding universal value'. The selection of being recognized as natural, cultural or mixed site, a 'cultural landscape', and under which criteria to be nominated as, poses a difficult challenge. Some of these categories may be problematic for many Indigenous people, and as some Poplar River First Nation members have shared with me in confidence, these expectations are difficult not only to translate to Elders, but to evidence to the World Heritage Committee. Indubitably, this Memmian 'linguistic wrenching' was one of the most difficult aspects of the World Heritage Site application (PRFN member 2013, pers. comm.; Iain-Davidson Hunt 2012 pers. comm.). In one of our discussions with members of Poplar River, I was informed that for the Anishinaabeg, it is not only impossible to separate the natural from the cultural, but to pick only one thing to be 'of outstanding value', is incomprehensible*; exhibiting* 'authenticity' and 'integrity' has also been seen as strenuous. As can be evidenced through the deferral of the decision, working within these contexts, has been difficult for Pimachiowin Aki.

Indeed, Besio (2002), Oviedo & Puschkarsky (2012), Phillips (2002), Smith and Akagawa (2009), te Heuheu, Kawharu and Tuheiava (2012) and well as a number of UNESCO publications show that the notions of 'integrity' and 'authenticity' are highly problematic. For example, in Cultural Landscapes, a collection of papers from a UNESCO World Heritage Workshop in 2002, Besio argues that

> [t]he problem of evaluation is present in both conventions. The evaluation categories of authenticity and integrity applied to sites used by the World Heritage Convention, and the category of people's perception utilized by the European Landscape Convention, do not belong to the canons of rational science. What is more, no objective parameters exist for their measurement because they are dependent on context and meanings, necessitating a procedural and non-defining approach (2002:61).

And, during the 2007 International Expert Workshop on Integrity and Authenticity of World Heritage Cultural Landscapes, the World Heritage Committee participants acknowledged that

> [w]hile cultural landscapes have been the medium to integrate culture and nature, the use and application of the terms of authenticity and integrity have not been fully adapted to the merging of the criteria. Today, the uses and applications of the terms authenticity and integrity for natural and cultural heritage are not fully or comprehensively integrated (WHC 2007: 2).

In both cases, individuals working within World Heritage question the validity and application of the terms. Not only are perceptions and contexts seem to be problematic, but the merging of the nature-culture categories - with often opposing definitions - is dubious in their applicability. Within the notions of 'integrity' and 'authenticity', it is the contextual and practical application of these terms that can be an issue for Indigenous communities like those involved in Pimachiowin Aki. The use of such terms may show a multiple understanding for that kind of value and, pending on who is in charge (an Indigenous community or a government), these will have implications on the modality of knowledge and stewardship/management practices.

The Operational Guidelines categorize the conditions of 'authenticity' through "truthfully and credibly expressed" cultural values and attributes such as form and design, materials and substance, traditions, techniques and management systems; locations and setting; spirit and feeling, language and other forms of intangible heritage (UNESCO 1972b § 79-83). It is required that a nomination shows the degree to which authenticity is present in each of these attributes. That is quite a task! I have spoken with many Elders in Poplar River about the Anishinaabeg stewardship activities, and some of the answers required numerous discussions and my own interpretation of their stories to obtain 'data'. Considering that Elders and many Indigenous people work within a narrative method[ology], I have a hard time imagining them being able to quantify the quality of the spirituality or feelings related to the land, the extent of 'traditions', or the 'authenticity' of using modern ski-doo's to harvest *wazhashk*,

muskrat, for example. In the *World Heritage* special issue on Indigenous peoples, te Heuheu, Kawharu and Tuheiava (2012:13-18) discuss some of the problems with the terminology used to 'prove' authenticity' and 'outstanding universal value'. The authors write that

> rather than seeking historical authentication' and confining heritage to a distant past, indigenous communities are more inclined to link 'authenticity' to uninterrupted human engagement and intergenerational commitment. Rather than simply measuring authenticity in terms of the passage of time, an additional measure should be recognized with the strength of an on-going relationship established with successive generations [...] A case can be made that these four components – site, people, past and future, and the natural environment – are the hallmarks or authenticity and or Outstanding Universal Value (2012:17).

For these authors 'authenticity' has aspects of historical continuity, distinctness and intergenerational transmission. This understanding implies that Indigenous participation and Indigenous/local stewardship practices are the values and knowledges that are continuously embedded in the culture and landscape.

The predicament in relying too much on such terms like 'authenticity', 'integrity' and 'universal value', however, is that the interpretations are often *not* universal and create obstacles for decontextualization. This means that whatever was 'authentic', 'integral' or 'universally outstanding' may pose a challenge in the interpretation of the relationship between new achievement and old ones, of continuity, alteration, and especially 'modernization'. For example, paragraph 86 of the Operational Guidelines states that reconstruction is justifiable "only in exceptional circumstances and acceptable only on detailed documentation but not on conjecture" (UNESCO 1972b). This attempt to find a balance within these conceptualizations has proven to be challenge for many nominations (Cameron and Rössler 2012; Oviedo and Puschkarsky 2012; te Heuheu, Kawharu and Tuheiava 2012) including Pimachiowin Aki, but can be a starting point in rights-based World Heritage discourse as well as Indigenous stewardship approaches and their legal interpretations.

Like the concept of 'authenticity', 'integrity' can also be subject to different interpretations. The Operational Guidelines define 'integrity' as "a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes [with] significant [cultural and natural] features [...] in good condition" (UNESCO 1972b § 88-91). Within this definition, all elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value "must be of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property's significance" The fact that 'integrity' is somehow associated with a size of the property seems outlandish as boreal Indigenous peoples' movements and land-use are vastly greater than the number of permanent occupations or residences. Whereas the dynamic relationship of traditional peoples to the ecological processes is acknowledged in the Operational Guidelines, the "impact of deterioration processes [should be] controlled" (UNESCO 1972b § 88-91). This is highly problematic in terms of Indigenous people's histories where a balance of 'modern' and 'traditional', may lead to forms of hybridity that some may consider no longer 'authentic'. This judgement is of course Eurocentric. Philips (2002) writes that the concept of 'integrity' has a different application for cultural landscapes where the interaction of people to the natural environment may be present:

> IUCN looks for evidence that the integrity of the property is well protected, and that there are effective management policies in place that can retain or restore the essential qualities of the cultural landscape. However, the concept of integrity has a different application for lived-in landscapes. It is integrity of the relationship *with* nature that matters, rather than the integrity of nature itself (Philips 2002:48)

The fact that the application of 'integrity' differs from one criteria to another is questionable – which interpretation of 'integrity' for a site of 'outstanding universal value' will be given to one designated as natural? Which understanding will be given to a cultural site? How will this concept and its application work within a mixed-heritage site? Perhaps, rather than assessing how a natural or cultural site has properties of 'integrity', the relationship determining the 'integral-ness' of a natural site to local people

should be examined. Likewise, the existence of local peoples and their cultural values to the sustainability of a natural site should be viewed in the same manner. Of course, the definition of 'integrity' becomes even more convoluted when different categories of cultural landscapes and criteria for selection are included in a nomination.

Currently, UNESCO's criterion for selection is based on numbers that determine where a site will be located on the scale of I-X. The criteria is a set of descriptions on a spectrum where criterion I is on one end, and criterion X is on its opposite other (criterion XII is inversed with criterion VIII on this spectrum). Criterion I, for example, represents "a masterpiece of human creative genius" and criterion V represents

> an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change (UNESCO 1972b).

Criterion X contains "the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation" (UNESCO 1972b). It is on this spectrum that sites must "fit into" the World Heritage List. Pimachiowin Aki is placed under four criteria: where traditional human settlement and land use are representative of a vulnerable culture (criterion V); where diversity is associated with living traditions and beliefs of outstanding significance (criterion VI); and, where on-going ecological and biological processes (criterion IX) are indicative of conservation and include threatened species (criterion X). The challenge with this spectrum is that 'integrity' and 'authenticity' of 'universally outstanding' sites is again hard to narrow down. I anticipate that criterion V, where expectations of 'outstanding traditional human settlement or land use' are the problem; perhaps the World Heritage Committee has seen reserve houses or hunting cabins, yet expects something more 'traditional' or 'Indian'. Likewise, evidence of land use by boreal forest Indigenous peoples is

embedded in sustainable practices and cultural activities and through Indigenous presence -not drastically altered landscapes. Naming places, use of trails by ski-doo's and river-ways as highways; stories and enhancing biodiversity within established trap line areas are all evidence of land use. I discuss some of these Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg stewardship practices in Chapter 5.

Another gap in the World heritage discourse is the lack of knowledge the general public has of the 'outstanding value' of local people's customary stewardship systems within a World Heritage Site. Outstanding universal value' means

> cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity (UNESCO 1972b §49).

From speaking with some Poplar River First Nation members, it was difficult for them to think of themselves as 'so exceptional' that they transcend national boundaries. However, in order to articulate this on the nomination, I believe that it would be helpful to frame 'outstanding universal value' in the context of a vulnerable culture that despite colonial policies, has survived. Pimachiowin Aki is 'universally outstanding' because Anishinaabemowin, Ojibway language, needs to be revived; Anishinaabeg ways of life need to continue. No other place in the world (outside of parts of North America), has other Anishinaabeg. If the Anishinaabeg of this region disappear, if their way of life and epistemologies are gone, no longer would this unique form of Anishinaabe culture construe the boreal forest in eastern Manitoba for us. The presence of the Anishinaabeg on the land is directly associated with natural integrity because, as the World Heritage Committee argues in the Operational Guidelines, no area is totally pristine and all natural areas generally involve contact with people:

> Human activities, including those of traditional societies and local communities, often occur in natural areas. These activities may be consistent with the Outstanding Universal Value of the area where they are ecologically sustainable (UNESCO 1972b §90).

The world needs to recognize this unique cultural group of Indigenous people in Canada, their unbroken way of life in the 21st century, and understand the history of the Indigenous peoples in Canada as articulated by the Anishinaabeg. Inadequate understanding of the 'universal' significance of the unique knowledge systems and cultures the Anishinaabeg *as Indigenous peoples* present to the world, is something that can contribute to the world, and to World Heritage discourse. In Poplar River, the sustainability of the area with its 'significant natural habitats' (criterion X), is a direct consequence of criterion V: traditional human land-use representative of culture.

Precisely, one of the reasons that the World Heritage Convention has included a new criteria, 'cultural landscapes' within the World Heritage List in 1992, is due to the relationship between peoples and biodiversity. The World Heritage Committee has classified 'cultural landscapes' into three main categories. The first category is the 'clearly defined landscape' designed and created intentionally by man and embraces gardens, parks and constructions for aesthetic reasons, some of which may be associated with religious or other monumental buildings. The 'organically evolved landscape' is the second category, which results from social, economic, and/or religious imperatives. Subdivided into either a relict or a continuing landscape, it is a category where the present form has been altered in response to the natural environment. The final category is the 'associative cultural landscape' whose inclusion on the World Heritage List is "justifiable by virtue of the powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence, which may be insignificant or even absent"

Image 3.2 *Ice knowledge. Checking the strength of the ice permits safe travels. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

(WHC Operational Guidelines 2008: 87). To date, there are 85 cultural landscapes that represent the "combined works of nature and of man" on the properties list (UNESCO 2014b).

Cultural landscapes are understood to be a mélange of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment, which often reflects unique sustainable land-use practices and governance systems and specific spiritual relations to nature (Cameron and Rössler 2012; UNESCO 2014b). With the first inscription in 1993, the Maori associative cultural landscape became a part of the Tongariro National Park and World Heritage Site in Aotearoa, (New Zealand). With the Ngauruhoe and Ruapehu mountain peaks as sacred sites of the Maori, the cultural landscape was a step forward to a rights-based practice and collaborative management where Maori customary laws and traditional management forms are now recognized (Cameron and Rössler 2012; UNESCO 1993). For the Anishinaabeg on Pimachiowin Aki too, and perhaps for many other land-based Indigenous people, it is the anchoring of intangible elements on the land that is important, hence an 'associative cultural landscape' is the best category as it focuses

> on the symbolic associations people have with a landscape as opposed to the material objects found within a landscape. While people may not physically change a landscape, a rock outcropping, for example, may be linked to origin stories and create a linkage between a society's identity and a landscape (Davidson-Hunt et al. 2012:14)

Poplar River and the other Pimachiowin Aki First Nation's territories are filled with archaeological goods, campsites, and other material 'data' attesting to their historical presence on the site; the insistence that tangible corroborations to the oral narratives are provided is rather unsettling and culturally biased. In view of that fact, not only does the Pimachiowin Aki cultural landscape exists through 'living heritage' and people's interpretations of that landscape, but also some Poplar River First Nation members have lamented that the sustainable ways of the Old People are now somehow a transgression. One Poplar River First Nation member bemoaned, ironically, that it is as though Aboriginal people should be 'blamed' for not destroying the land and leaving 'evidence' (Byron

Mitchell 2010, pers. comm.). Indeed, because Anishinaabeg history can be said to have 'biodegradable archives', associative cultural landscapes can only be evidenced through intangible elements embodied through people. This heritage, conceptualized as a "web of social relationships between a specific group of people (whether a family, clan or tribe) and a place where they have lived since the beginning" (Battiste & Henderson 2000:44), is not only continued through physical manifestations of culture, but also through their immaterial counterparts like knowledge, collective narratives and teachings. Surely, "everything is important", Jean Nanawin tells me one evening, "everything is important because everything is connected" (Nanawin Jean 2013, pers. comm.). Likewise, "what you put in the water, you put in your body" Abel, a long time trapper, tells me, "so you can't only protect one species, but must think of the entire *aki*, the landscape. And, humans belong to *aki"* (Abel Bruce 2013, pers. comm.).

The recognition of 'cultural landscapes' as a category of World Heritage Sites can be seen as a step forward in the recognition of the 'outstanding universal value' of the interaction between people and the natural environment . The very existence of naturally in-tact places often means that they have been valued, safeguarded and carefully used by the local populations for generations. This recognition can, not only empower local communities so that their tangible and intangible cultures are maintained, but also grant concession to human rights within conservation measures. It is important to mention however, that Indigenous people do not just fill in 'gaps' in environmental management; the cultural landscapes represent more than just knowledge that can be "used to develop a body of science that takes [I]ndigenous skills and knowledge into account" (Ntsoane 2012: 36). Indigenous skills and knowledges also present the World Heritage discourse with a different lens and unique stories, cosmologies, ontologies, histories and perspectives. In this sense, Indigenous stewardship governance over a World Heritage Site would not only signify the narration of own landscapes to the world, but

also training, capacity-building and transmission of those skills. Since often little is known about the history of local/Indigenous populations and their ultimate triumph over extermination and discrimination, the 'outstanding' value of Indigenous cultural landscapes can also represent a challenge to colonial narratives and silenced voices. As te Heuheu, Kawharu and Tuheiava (2012: 11) state, an interpretation of Outstanding Universal Value can be better achieved "by taking the 'local' context into account".

Finally, while some of the issues I have raised here are my own reflections to the deferral of the decision about Pimachiowin Aki, these are thoughts that could be further examined. One can certainly raise the questions of the importance of the semantics of 'authenticity', 'integrity' (or intactness) or 'outstanding universal value', in relation to Indigenous people and the entire nomination process. For example, how can resource use by communities fit simultaneously into a category that ensures cultural 'integrity' or 'authenticity' yet also maintain 'integrity' of a natural site? Likewise, can a local community dependent on the resources meet "the essence and spirit of the property, attributes and dynamic processes especially at the time of inscription" in perpetuity? (WHC 2007:3). How does sustainable community economic development fit into these categories and yet also into the expectation of 'outstanding universal value'? In some cases, places are inscribed as natural, mixed or cultural sites, or as cultural landscapes; the omission of the human or cultural aspect from a natural site raises the question of involvement of Indigenous peoples is World Heritage, specifically, how State parties go about involving local communities (te Heuheu, Kawharu and Tuheiava 2012). How can colonial and de-colonizing contexts fit into the schema of reconciliation and Indigenous rights? Although a UNESCO World Heritage Site may be extremely beneficial for Indigenous peoples (and I still believe that they are!), the nomination process may be very disheartening for Indigenous people. It is unfortunate too, that the initiative to establish the World Heritage Indigenous Peoples Council of

Experts (WHIPCOE), whose purpose was to provide complementary advice on the nomination process and management practices of heritage sites associated with Indigenous peoples, was rejected by the World Heritage Committee in 2001 (UNESCO 2012).

Seeing Beyond the Corporeal: Heritage and the 2003 UNESCO Convention

> *Richard, a Midewewin medicine man from Nigigoonsiminikaaning, Ontario, shares this teaching. Everything in this world, he said, is a circle. Everything exists in circular motions, not only the ecosystem, but also the teachings and the way of life, is seen to have a circular form. The seasons are continuously coming and going in the same order, the moon's phases are circular and the houses we [the Anishinaabeg] used to live in were circular and located in a circle in the community. Circles are there to maintain a balance of life. For example, sharing circles are in balance as everyone is sitting beside each other and not one in front and one in the back. Even animals sleep in circle – the deer, the dogs and when we curl up into a ball, we also sleep in a circle* (Richard Morrison & John Mainville 2011, pers. comm.).

After the destruction caused by the World Wars, UNESCO has gone through numerous means of state-driven cultural preservation. Due to people's ability to rebuild after conflict, the term 'cultural heritage' has changed considerably in recent decades, partially owing to the instruments developed by UNESCO. Beginning with the Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore in 1989, to the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity from 1997-2005, and finally to the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003, cultural heritage is now recognized as existing not only through monuments and collections of objects but also through intangibility. The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (herein after 'the Convention') was endorsed specifically for the purpose of protection, promotion and awareness of intangible heritages across the world. Due to threats of disappearance for reasons related to, among other things, globalization, rapid processes of industrialization, the movement of peoples from rural to urban settings, the abandonment of traditional employment and practices, technological developments, socio-political dynamics, colonialism and the destruction of resources upon which cultural heritage may exist, there is now a great need to protect the unique

cultural heritages of humanity (Alivizatou 2012; Abungu 2012; Grenet & Bartolotto 2011; Smith & Akagawa 2009; UNESCO 2013a; UNESCO 2013b; UNDRIP 2013). Working at the national and international levels, the Convention is designed to identify, promote and protect unique heritage through identification, inventorying and safeguarding. Two lists have been established as the mechanisms of assistance in protecting intangible cultural heritage (ICH): the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. Whereas the Representative list is a collection of cultural expressions and practices that exhibit humanity's cultural richness and bring forth awareness of diversity, the latter list is composed of cultural elements that require urgent measures to keep them existing (UNESCO 2013a; 2013b). Since its adoption in 2003, there are currently 327 cultural heritages inscribed on the two lists, making the convention one of the fastest UNESCO documents to be ratified by the State-Parties to date (UNESCO 2013d; Albert et al. 2013).

Today, the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage is the most pertinent instrument defining and stressing the need for cultural and heritage protection. Although the Convention is broad in scope, the definition of 'intangible cultural heritage' is characterized by Article 2 as:

> 1. [...] the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.
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> 2. The "intangible cultural heritage", as defined in paragraph 1 above, is manifested inter alia in the following domains:

(a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
(b) performing arts;
(c) social practices, rituals and festive events;
(d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
(e) traditional craftsmanship (ICHC 2003, Articles 2.1 & 2.2).

The document builds upon existing international agreements and reinforces recommendations concerning cultural and natural heritage whose attributes are considered belonging to a group or society who has inherited the cultural heritage and maintained it until the present with the intent to benefit future generations (Albert et al. 2013; Baird 2013; Cominelli & Greffe 2012; Stefano et al. 2012; UNESCO 2013d). Placing emphasis on "living heritage that is performed by people, often collectively, and communicated through living experience" (UNESCO 2011:3), UNESCO's document is unique in its aspiration to protect the immaterial, meaning, the processes and conditions of heritage rather than products. Precisely, it is not the existence of concrete manifestations of heritage through objects, instruments, artefacts and sites that the Convention is centered on, but rather on the transmission - or the passing down of heritage from generation to generation - that is accentuated. However, the definition does not exclude the tangible as it is often the manifestation of ICH, thus exhibiting that the two heritage components are directly associated.

It is important to mention here that the 2003 Convention is only applicable to State Parties, meaning, only Nations that have ratified the UNESCO Convention are bound by the document. Also, other than the mandatory inventorying, the organization cannot enforce any legal measures to sanction protection of the identified heritage elements. Currently, Canada is not party to the Convention, and although in existence for over 10 years now, the document has not played any significant role in Canada's heritage policies. Canada de facto, has not been a strong advocate for its ratification. The lack of interest in the Convention could be on the basis that the present multicultural and Aboriginal and treaty policies are seen as sufficient for the protection of elements like language, celebrations and

diverse cultural freedoms. However, my assumption over this strategic position is due to the unresolved Aboriginal and treaty rights, Indigenous governance and outstanding land-claims whose interpretations and scope may be broadened with the implementation of this instrument; this is the position I will take in Chapter 6. Canada's refusal may also be a result of the colonial legacy (and present) that still works to totalize/obliterate intangible cultural heritages from the original inhabitants. It is interesting to notice that the three other culturally-diverse Settler-States like Australia, United States and New Zealand have all chosen not to endorse this Convention as of yet. Nonetheless, despite Canada's indifference (or reluctance) to adopt the 2003 Convention, the document can – and has in some places already - been used as a guiding tool to establish protective measures over local aspects of cultural heritage. After all, starting ground-up may be the way to push the federal and provincial governments in the ICH direction, as ultimately, identification of cultural heritage elements can only begin from communities themselves.

Asatiwisipe Aki ICH: inventories & elements

> *That Weaver Lake, it's a nice place to be there. There is our river there, you can go up the river. You can go up the river, you can drink the water. And then you have Kettle, and they used to see [those] Kettles. Rock Kettle, eh, up the river it's like a kettle because kettles, it's what they are. They are up the river from Weaver Lake; not far from Weaver Lake. They used to take the Elders there. Some of these people from South wants to see that, how they look like. Rock Kettle is really big one. I guess they were there, I guess, a long time ago* (Ken Douglas 2013).

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) was designed to protect those elements of heritage that are most fragile. Although the Convention recognizes the interdependence of ICH and their tangible aspects, it refers particularly to this association through Indigenous peoples who "play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and recreation of the intangible cultural heritage, thus helping to enrich cultural diversity

and human creativity" (ICHC 2003: preamble). The document was not written with Indigenous people in mind specifically, but, unlike the spectrum upon which the Criteria for Selection of the World Heritage Site are to be placed, the land-culture interdependence is here perceived non-dichotomously. Again, even though it is neither binding nor multilateral, the Convention can serve as perhaps the best of guides to begin safeguarding ICH. Based on the recommendations, resolutions and inventorying methods contained within, as well as the large scholarship on the subject, the Convention can effectively enrich distinct local or national measures and supplement Indigenous efforts for cultural continuity. For Poplar River and the other Pimachiowin Aki communities, the Convention can serve as an instrument to re-formulate the nomination. Just like the World Heritage Site serves as a tool to meet Poplar River's local needs, the 2003 Convention can become a mechanism for cultural and natural heritage protection, and an aid in bolstering the nomination in time for 2016.

Indigenous peoples' natural and cultural heritages are already threatened; and in the case of cultural heritage, the Convention can assist with safeguarding some of these elements in addition to the 'integral' cultural aspects protected under Aboriginal and treaty rights in Canada. The document is a good first step in establishing measures to identify, to ensure respect, and to provide awareness and protection. 'Safeguarding' of ICH is characterized in Article 2.3 of the UNESCO Convention as:

> measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage (ICHC 2003:§2.3).

Documentation of ICH in this context is completed through 'inventorying', which is an obligatory component of States who are party to the Convention. Inventorying, essentially a collection of all the elements, includes the formulation of concrete plans to safeguard ICH. Guidelines for ICH inventorying are available from UNESCO and may consist of:

1. Identification of the element (its name within the community), any existing locality and a short description.
2. Characteristics of the element. This includes any associated tangible or intangible elements, languages and perceived origins.
3. Persons and institutions involved with the element. Here, practitioner details such as age, gender, name can be used; any participants (holders or custodians of ICH); customary practices governing access to the element; and, modes of transmission.
4. State of the element: viability. Threats to the enactment or transmission are named here as is the availability and viability of the associated tangible and intangible resources. The safeguarding measures in place are also noted here.
5. Data gathering and inventorying. Consent from and involvement of the community in data gathering and collection, restrictions, if any, on the use of inventoried data and identification of the resource persons, date and place.
6. References to literature, discography, audiovisuals, archives, etc (UNESCO 2013e).

This is a list of components that may be used to guide communities and State Parties to identify and document their ICH. The list can be drawn up by means of written catalogues, of audio-visuals, and digital collections. In Manitoba, no ICH inventories have been completed to date at the government level but such an inventory could help with bringing appreciation for Anishinaabeg (and Indigenous) as well as other cultural heritages in the province and in Canada.

However, I do not want to claim that such inventorying is the only viable way to establish measures for ICH protection. For many Aboriginal communities, whose lands, traditions and languages are disappearing at an alarming rate, a collection of those elements of cultures that are still existent within living memory of Elders could help revive aspects of heritage for the youth. Since globalization and homogenization are rapidly increasing, since a large percentage of Aboriginal people are removed from their lands and their land-based activities are diminishing due to non-renewable resource development, inventories that can serve as teaching tools or mnemonic devices can be of invaluable assistance to future generations. If completed according to local needs and protocols, inventories can be serve as wonderful tools in schools, as well as in land-claims, industrial development negotiations or even in fights for Aboriginal title.

Although I do advocate for inventories (or inventory-like collections) to be made by Indigenous peoples to protect their heritages, I believe that Poplar River and the neighbouring nations involved in Pimachiowin Aki have already began a process whereby they have 'inventoried' Anishinaabeg collective stories and legends, traditions and cultural tangible and intangible 'mementos'. As part of the nomination, the community/ies have articulated their 'cultural wealth' among the 'natural wealth'. In this case, the First Nations-driven lands plans or Community Conserved Areas are used as an apparatus to instigate measures for support of all forms of Indigenous cultural and natural heritages. Even though I strongly believe that it is UNESCO, its counterpart the World Heritage Committee and the two advisory bodies, ICOMOS and IUCN, who need to critically reflect on their own assumptions, an actual ICH inventory completed by the communities can help with the redesigning of the Pimachiowin Aki nomination as per the World Heritage Committee's suggestions. Inventorying would not by any means signify conforming to the standard and expectation of the World Heritage Committee but rather, will be a 'bottom-up' approach to locating and establishing protective measures within a government-regulated framework. Arguably, the Supreme Court of Canada's emphasis on the integral 'customs, practices and traditions' the form a basis of Aboriginal rights, bring ICH into Canada already through the Constitution Act of 1982 (*R v. Van der Peet S.C.C. 1996*; *R v. Sparrow S.C.C. 1990*) and, the Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg already 'live' these elements on a daily basis.

Image 3.3 *Going where the hidden treasures are. This beach is on one of the local islands and some families use the area to swim or harvest medicines. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

Since the inventory is done through a community-based process, practical technical and capacity-building skills can make inventorying an empowering experience for members. Capacity-building of community members could be done through training workshops and practical technical skills in inventory-making and ICH continuation as well as transmission. Awareness about the value and diversity of the ICH could also be done through education and advocacy. These may include traditional knowledge, scientific, technical, legal, economic and other studies. Some of the planning could include working cooperatively with other organizations to promote understanding about the Indigenous cultures - not only as an ethnographic study, but in their way of life, values, epistemologies, knowledges and rights. Those in charge of implementing concrete safeguarding activities and conducting training in the stewardship and appropriate transmission of ICH, could also be qualified in undertaking and/or coordinating ICH-related activities that could become the staple of the eco-cultural tourism Poplar River has it its plans. Specifically for Aboriginal people, inventorying may not only bring forth protective measures and empowerment for reclaiming responsibility for own heritage, but the process may also be a form of healing from trauma created by diverse government policies, residential schools and social issues resulting from colonialism.

Of course, protective protocols regarding ownership, intellectual property and copyright of the data identified, collected and inventoried would have to be a vigilantly balanced by the community/ies. This is a concern for numerous disciplines like archival, cultural, heritage studies as well as in anthropology and law. Some of the scholarship dealing with intellectual safeguarding measures have presented case studies of communities either separating their knowledges and skills among members, providing access by demand only, having numerous caretakers of inventories or giving 'keys' under strict legal guidelines (Alivizatou 2012; Cummins 2012; ICHC 2008; Stefano, Davis and Corsane 2012). Respectively, ICH inventorying and any safeguarding measures should be organized so that

responsibility for heritage and heritage 'management' should be at least similar to or better than the current policies and plans created for the management of natural resources and over [in]tangible cultural heritage. These are by all means, dependent on the needs of each community's understanding of *mino-bimaadiziwin*, 'well-being' and best preserved through continuity and 'living heritage', which I will further develop as a basis of community economic development in Chapter 7.

> *Sometimes in March of 2013, it was yet another visit of mine to Poplar River. This time, I brought my husband John with me. It was one of those visits where I tried to do everything and see everyone. It was Budsky, one of the friendliest Northern Store workers that invited us to go ice fishing with him. It was Sunday afternoon, after church, that we met up behind the Northern. We walked over to the ice with the little fishing rods, crates to sit on and frozen minnows. Sitting out in the open, vast, snow covered Lake Winnipeg, I was cold and soon lost all hope for any sort of catch. The companionship of my fellow ice-fishers was only in presence as little can be said so as not to scare the fish; this was not at all as action packed as I thought it would be. After sitting out there for over two hours, John finally caught a teenage pickerel. I knew he would; he put out tobacco just before he drilled the hole. Here, in* asatiwisipe ak*i, fish still give themselves up when you offer tobacco* (Pawlowska-Mainville 2013, pers. notes).

Living Heritage in Poplar River

> Through the centuries the people have lived in this region and with their intimate knowledge of all forms of life, have practiced true sustainability. They have lived by hunting and fishing, gathering food and medicines as well as making a living through trapping and fishing without destroying their environment. The community will use these practices as a base for their long term management plan. The plan will be based on traditional methods and knowledge along with scientific techniques and data (AAMP 2010:2)

The Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg have a heritage that is one-of-a-kind in the world. Many people in the community continue to live a hunting-based culture, relying on their skills, 'old ways' of doing things and trusting the knowledges of their land to harvest resources and live according to the cultural values and protocols passed on to them by previous generations. Marcel Valiquette, a sweet Elder whom I interviewed in 2010, shows me how people used to prepare the fur. Standing in his sunny living room, Marcel describes the way people used rabbit robes:

> people used to use rabbits in their ways of preparation, years ago. They lived, the trappers. They took rabbit skin, before it dries, eh, they cut it thin, in strips. It's pretty long, like 5, 6 feet long. They get a bunch of it - I've seen in done when I was a kid - and then hung it up in a tree, in a stick, to soften the hide, to loosen the loose hair. And they'd hang them up there for a week, and they'd bring it in. It's soft from the wind and maybe a little bit of sun in the winter. They'd call them rabbit robes. The trappers used to use them for trapping, eh. I know my dad had one. When I first went to trap with my dad as a kid, he had one; he shared it; oh it was warm. You leave a little part there [shows me] and you have a stick that you put through that rabbit, like a stick made up of sharp ends, and a centre to have it open there, and stuff that hide in there, and weave it through there. We used to help my mother use it when we were kids; it used to be fun. And you'd put your finger in there and tighten it. And you hold the other one, and you hook this in [shows me how to hook it in] and you had to line it. It was good. They [the trappers] were good fur trappers (Marcel Valiquette 2010).

By going to their trap lines, individuals like Marcel Valiquette, Abel Bruce, Ken Douglas, Ernest C Bruce, John MacDonald and all the others, are 'living' their heritage. By practicing the way of life that was taught to them from by their kin, these individuals embody Poplar River's 'living heritage'.

The concept of 'living heritage' is now applied to intangible cultural heritage (ICH), as defined by the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Dymitrow 2012; Grenet & Bartolotto 2011; Stefano et al 2012; UNESCO 2013f). ICH is often referred as 'living heritage' because it encompasses elements like traditions, practices and customs exhibited through individuals and communities, not objects. Internationally, there are numerous examples of elements which constitute intangible culture and which are already inscribed on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding or the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Some of these elements include the gingerbread technique from Northern Croatia (Hrvatska), the craftsmanship of Alençon needle lace-making (France), the cultural space of the Semeiskie (Russia), and the places of memory and living traditions of the Otomí-Chichimecas people of Tolimán (Mexico). Accordingly, whilst the needle lace making in the Basse-Normandie region of France for example, is seen as a symbol of Alençon identity passed down from generation to generation, the Otomí-Chichimecas places of memory encompass the symbolic and spiritual meanings

and practices related to nature that are rooted in the value system of the community, thus constituting an important part of the social life and providing the people with a sense of identity and continuity (Grenet & Bartolotto 2011; UNESCO 2009 & 2010a). The lists also consist of lyrical folk songs (Korea), trumpet-music playing and dance (Uganda), worship of Hung Kings (Viet Nam) and many others. In all these cases, it is the communities and individuals – the 'living heritage' – that ensure the tangible elements of each culture are continued. The procession programmes and instruments was subsequently set to help promote different measures for the preservation of cultural heritage, which, largely thanks to Japan's leadership in this direction, now encompass 'living' expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants.

Japan's post 1945 destruction and the subsequent reliance of local Elders and knowledge-holders to re-teach young people in learning cultural skills, crafts and traditions yet also join the global economy were the precursors to the UNESCO 2003 Convention on ICH (UNESCO 2013f; Stefano et al 2012). Some examples of the country's cultural properties include music, arts and crafts techniques like metalworking, woodworking, doll making and textiles and pottery as well as dramatic performances; it is the skills possessed by individuals and groups that contribute of the cultural wealth of Japan (UNESCO 2013; Hyoki 2013). What is interesting about the Japan case is that recognition is not only given to the immaterial features of the intangible heritage, but also to the owners (individual or collective/group) of an item to encourage transmission and permanence of heritage. Individuals or groups who are part of the process to ensure heritage is transmitted can obtain funding - in some cases it is up to 2 million ¥/year ($20'000 CDN) - to help protect their craftsmanship, their work and its continuity (UNESCO 2013c; Stefano et al. 2012; Hyoki 2013). In addition, these 'living heritage' carriers also receive grants and other government financial contributions to maintain their skills. Since Japan views its Elders and knowledge, skill and/or heritage carriers as "living national treasures", the

country promotes cultural activities to ensure awareness by means of facilitating activities, encouraging and training young people in learning cultural skills, disseminating creativity and overall providing them with assurance that learning their own cultural crafts is a viable form of participation on the contemporary economy (UNESCO 2013; Hyoki 2013; Stefano et al 2012; Smith & Akagawa 2009).

In Canada, identification of this form of heritage has already began and includes traditional games, culinary traditions, animal husbandry and places of memory. The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland writes that ICH is "the family events we all celebrate, our community gatherings, the languages we speak, the songs we sing, knowledge of our natural spaces, our healing traditions, the foods we eat, our holidays, beliefs and cultural practices" (Heritage Foundation 2008). Newfoundland and Labrador (as well as Quebec to an extent) serve as the best examples for attempting to raise awareness for ICH and establish protective measures; in fact, though a partnership with Memorial University, the Heritage Foundation has began inventorying the province's diverse heritages (Memorial University 2013; Heritage Foundation 2008). The ICH inventory of Canada's East already includes ballad singing, snowshoe-making, fiddle-playing, throat singing, berry picking, boat building and much more (Memorial University 2013). By recognizing and celebrating ICH with festivals, support of transmission, and exploring potential of ICH as a resource for community development, Newfoundland and Labrador has began the work of encouraging tradition-bearers to continue their work - and show that it is valued.

Since ICH is often manifested through the non-material, an immense broad range of elements can make up the 'living heritage' of a community. It is the legacy of tangible things like artefacts and the corresponding "intangible attributes such as mentifacts and socio-facts" (Dymitrow 2012:5), that are inherited from past generations and maintained for the benefit of future generations that make up a combination of heritage. Intangible cultural heritage is mediated by humans and brought about in real-

time; in other words, ICH can "exist" during the moment of performance, as it is ultimately a socio-cultural product (Dymitrow 2012:5-6). In this frame of reference, Indigenous cultural landscapes are a great example of lived heritage as they are revealed not only through data gathered and stored, but by lived experiences that are continually practiced and brought into existence by the local people. To illustrate, in Poplar River, some of the intangible cultural features range not only from language and the relationship to land – although they are the foundations of the 'spirit' of the direction that the community's economic development is heading - but include also knowledges, land-based practices and distinct narratives. Governance too, through the leaders, chiefs and councillors who guide the community's well-being, economic development and the Ma Ma Wichitowin Mutual Land Relationship Board, are all a form of culturally-driven value systems of heritage in a contemporary context. The numerous culturally-based 'norms' are in fact the guidelines that today encompass the entire community eco-system where need, culture and economics are set up according to local values and ambitions. Cultural heritage in Poplar River also encompasses art and other forms of artistic expressions, in this case, the pictographs located at Weaver Lake and Wrong Lake that gave rise to woodland art that is so appreciated by the world. The set of values like those profound concepts of *cheemeenooweecheeteeyaung/jii-mino-wanji'idiwag* 'living well together', *ahnuhbuhkoomeench,* 'kinship relations' and others like *keetoomay keewayahtoon* or *giiweyendam,* 'giving back to the land/home' or *ganawenjigewin,* 'land-care approach or monitoring' all reflect linguistic expressions and

Image 3.4 *Local Elder and trapper looking after his land on the Mukatewisipe. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

knowledge of a cultural system that is found among the Anishinaabeg here. The interpretations of such terms may be specific to a vicinity but in *pimachiowin aki* and *asatiwisipe aki,* these expressions represent a definitive initiative that is embodied within local epistemologies and ontologies. There are teachings embedded in each of these expressions; for example, *ganawenjigewin* is a word, an expression, and a teaching about how to do things right on the land or else consequences will happen. It is also a structure of protocols that echo practices like hunting, snaring, fishing and trapping; skinning and food preparation; games and medicines (Abel Bruce 2013, pers. comm.; Walter and Jean Nanawin 2012, pers. comm.; Richard Morrison 2011, pers. comm.; Pat Ningewance 2013, pers. comm.; Davidson-Hunt et al. 2012; Pawlowska-Mainville 2013, notes; Pimachiowin Aki 2013). All these elements flow from the landscape and Anishinaabeg heritage but local uniqueness and distinctive Anishinaabe cultures are so rich that it is impossible to discuss them all such a small project like this dissertation!

The World Heritage Committee's assessment of the natural and the cultural heritage sites privilege the nature-culture dichotomy and thus lack the critical intangible heritage and community-based/Indigenous perspectives that can best ensure safeguarding measures. Validating land-based Indigenous peoples solely on the basis of physical structures is incongruent with worldviews and beliefs of Aboriginal peoples who tend to see ICH holistically (Johnston 2008; Kuokkanen 2007; Smith and Akagawa 2009). Just like epistemic conventions are rooted to the land-based social order, the Anishinaabeg are rooted to their trap lines; this rootedness renders the collective healthy and independent (Johnston 2008). Being dependent on the land for *mino-bimaadiziwin* is significant because anchoring to the land represents the anchoring of knowledge and of life to that land. Kuokkanen (2007) too, argues that an anchored relationship with nature is part of an Indigenous worldview. The relationships that Indigenous peoples have forged with their environments for

centuries are "a consequence of living off the land and depending on its bounty" (Kuokkanen 2007:42). Living "off the land", continues Kuokkanen,

> involves hard work, but in return, the land gives indigenous peoples their very being. Indigenous people understand the land's bounty both as a gift and as a relationship made manifest, but they do so in concrete rather than romanticized term. That is why many of them continue to recognize their ties to the land in various ways (2007:42).

In the case of those Indigenous people living off the land, land is a source of their culture. Living off the bounty of the land requires hard work and a collaboration of community members, which is why Aboriginal cultures emphasize the relationship of community to the land. The land-dependent individual often requires the support of his/her family or community to help him/her deal with starvation, survival, diseases and celebration of abundance of supplies; in Poplar River, being on the land is hard work, but monitoring the land a head trapper is responsible for, is an entrusted obligation towards the Creator (Able Bruce 2013, pers. comm.).

Likewise, Abu-Khafajah & Rababeh (2012) illustrate in the context of Jordan that meanings are generated through continuous encounters between individuals and the environment. The authors write, "cultural heritage is identified as a social communication process in which material of the past is encoded and decoded according to influenced from contemporary contexts and ways of life, as well as individuals' experiences and perceptions" (Abu-Khafajah & Rababeh 2012: 73). In this sense, buildings, monuments, archaeological digs and ancient man-made displays of human presence are not the only 'evidence' of heritage around *asatiwisipe aki*. Many of the ICHs in Poplar River are dependent on each other and reflective of one another. Cosmology and the stewardship approaches that mirror the culture are also embedded in the language of the landscape. Most notably, the site of the *binesiiwag* and *animiikig* 'Thunderbirds' and 'Thunderers' respectively, and the Other-than-human-beings exist on *Asatiwisipe aki*. They also exist in the stories the Anishinaabeg tell - like the story of the woman who married a Thunderbird or Ray's story about the tenaciousness of muskrats. There are also stories of

ceremonies like the sweat lodge, the shaking tent, the *midewewin,* other healing ceremonies as well as those vibrant Christian festivals and oral histories. The narratives, the local *dibaajimowinan,* 'narratives/stories' represent the 'evidence' of culture where it is the members of this First Nation who 'live' heritage through their daily lives. These *dibajiimowinan*, 'individual accounts' that are understood to be facts. For example, all the Elders are collective of individuals with immense *Anishinaabe-gikendaasowin*, 'knowledge', yet these individuals have diverse *dibaajimowinan*. Below is a *dibaajimowinan* about trapping; it was told to me by Abel Bruce:

> ...yeah they fight you. One time I had a lynx there, it was in '72 or '76, with Sophia's brother there, Gordy, Gordy Bittern. In the winter time, me and my brother went; I went to Gordie that time, I took Gordie that time. Sometimes we took turns driving a ski-doo, and one time there, Albert told me, 'you go to that creek over there, and me, I'll go there on that south side'. There used to be creeks in that lake, you know. Now you got [beaver] dam after dam after dam on that river. And you get to the last one there, and there used to be little rapids over there, small ones, over there. Every time you go to a dam like this, and there is lots of water, you have to go cut it down like this. After we pass that river, coming home, we set snares, we drove and set snare after snare, snare after snare. The last trap we went to over there, I told Gordie, "Gordie", I said to him, "don't bother lynx if you get a lynx, don't bother". All of a sudden, I hear him yelling, "Abel", he says, "I got a lynx, he's alive!" I look there and, after I took that lynx from my snare and it was frozen; it was small enough, not too big, but medium size, and I come to [Gordie's] snare there, and I see a lynx there. And I say, "Gordie, you're too close to him, he'll jump on you right away". But Gordie, I was looking at him, got a stick, [I said] "don't touch him". And all of a sudden, that lynx jumped up, and jumped up like this, you know and ... I guess I just took an axe or something, and he took an ax and tried to hit him. And instead of hitting him, he hit the snare and just cut off that snare. And that lynx went running away, you know. And Gordie was running right behind him and that lynx was running away.. And I see [the lynx] jumping like this growling, jumping like this, you know. And I told Gordie, "Gordie, why did you have to do that?" And then I see his jacket, his jacket was all torn up in the back here [laughs]. I guess that lynx must have gotten his back there, you know. I couldn't laugh, you know. I didn't want to laugh hard... "Well, you can laugh now Abel", he says. I didn't want to laugh. I says, "I am not laughing at you". So after that there, we had a fire and made some tea; good to make some tea before we leave (Abel Bruce 2013).

This story is but one of the hundreds that Abel Bruce can tell of *asatiwisipe aki*. Abel can show the good places to hunt moose and where he found a wolf; how he survived a rough time in the bush by making his own snowshoes out of plywood. Ken Douglas on the other hand, can locate the area he

knows where the pickerel are and can recount the time they had to weather out a storm deep into the night. But then there are those *dibajiimowinan* told by *ininiwag,* 'men' and by *ikwewag*, 'women', and those told by the *ganawenjigewininiwag*, 'the cultural preservers', and I consider one of them to be Walter Nanawin, who knows not only a variety of such stories, but also writes them himself. Walter has shared with me stories of the *mamagwesiwag,* 'the Little Rock People', of the Little People and the Water People. He told me about the Icelandic fisherman, about the UFOs in the area, about the love stories he turns into poems and songs. Walter can even pinpoint the locations of some of the most incredible events on the landscape on a map and show me where the Thunderbird eggs are and what they mean. Through all this, he made the seemingly empty map laid out in front of us, filled with chronicles of events. So, what initially was an isolated cluster of trees, a mountain, a body of water, or a pile of rocks, with the *dibajiimowinan*, it became Weaver Lake or the Thunderbird eggs, or an old campsite...

Listening to the *dibajiimowinan* of and about Elders like Abel Bruce, Albert Bittern, John McDonald and Walter Nanawin, confirms the fact that going out on the land or looking after their trap lines reinforces the relationships these individuals have with their ancestors - 'the old people'. The stories of these Elders tell me that they have been gifted with not only trap lines, but also with the knowledge that has been gathered for generations about how to cross the *Asati-ziibing* successfully, how to navigate around the muskeg to access the old trails, and where the safe places to dock a boat are. *Aadizookewinan,* 'storytelling', can be heard from Elders, skilled hunters and/or trappers about the land; from the women knowledge-holders about beading, about medicines, about Other-than-human beings and place names. The local Elders have been gifted with stories about the land and the people of long ago and of not so long ago; some stories are heartbreaking, others are funny. Some of those

diibajimowinan were so complex, I still do not understand them…and then there were those that were so explicit, I blushed!

Therefore, whether it is through attending the culture camps or through continuing to live a harvesting economy, individuals who contribute to the larger collective knowledge of narratives can be identified here. Many stories about the landscape 'mark' certain events of the community life, including seasonal practices, such as when Abel goes to his trap line only once the ice has hardened, or stories about changes in the collective narrative, like when the people were forced to relocate from Black River due to Canada's administrative purposes. If all the heritages - tangible and intangible - of the Anishinaabeg here were identified there would be the volumes and volumes of information; and lots more narratives and data and pictures would be produced if individual *dibajiimowinan*, 'stories' were included as part of that collection.

Anishinaabemowin as the ICH means of transmission

Many of the stories I heard from Elders like Abel, Ken or Walter are interwoven with English and Anishinaabeowin/Inninumowin. From places on the land to terms used to express a concept, Anishinaabemowin is the language of transmission of all the intangible cultural elements, and is indeed 'lived' heritage in Poplar River. Many of the First Nations members continue to speak Anishinaabemowin, and many have stressed the need to revitalize the language among the youth. Individuals like Elders and those whom I presumed to be about 40 years old or older, are fluent in Ojibway and use it throughout the course of their days. I sat with Emile Mason, the former band council member who spoke on his walkie-talkie in Anishinaabemowin. Many others speak the language and I was fortunate to learn and practice my basic Ojibway with some individuals. Regrettably, like in many other Aboriginal communities, the language fluency drops down dramatically

between this fluent generation and the youth. Very few of the kids and teenagers seem to have the language fluency that the older generation does. This is something Poplar River is working on, and I hope that is a successful endeavour as Anishinaabemowin is a beautiful and compelling language.

Much knowledge is based on the language and in my work with Poplar River, Anishinaabemowin is used to specify certain cultural elements. "A lot of our culture" Pat Ningewance an *Anishinaabe ikwe*, 'Ojibway woman' tells me, "is based in the language. We look at the world though our language, so a lot of our life, our terms and things are actually based on our actions" (Pat Ningewance 2013, pers. comm.). In Anishinaabemowin, verbs are the foundation of the language, so for example, nouns like *ozhibii'iganaak* (pen), translates to 'that which you write with' and *zhoonyawigamig* (bank), translates to 'money house'. Since Anishinaabemowin is so verb-based, the activities which the language describes are dependent on specific cultural activities, many of which are land-based. As a result, for many of the Aboriginal languages to thrive, [land-based] cultural activities are essential because so much of the language is dependent on knowledge that is embedded in the landscape or in the history. For example, a *gichi-mookomaan* (an American) really means 'big knife' because of the American War of 1812; and *ogimaakaan* (chief) is actually an 'artificial leader' because the position was imposed by Indian Affairs (which is also called in Anishinaabemowin *zhooniya-ogimaa*, 'money boss', which is self-explanatory). Likewise, an activity on the land, like hunting or fishing, will use words that are specific to the species one is hunting. So, whilst the action of going hunting for moose is *andomoozwe*, the action of going duck hunting is *andoshiibe*; *gwaashkebijige* is the action of 'going fishing' by a rod[1]. These are but some of the expressions that reflect the relationship of the people upon the landscape, and tell us that *aki*, 'land', is indeed the basis of this unique Anishinaabe culture.

[1] Here I must acknowledge Pat Ningewance and Roger Roulette, Anishnabeg teachers who are not from Poplar River, (not to mention the many Poplar River members) who have taught me so much of the basic grammar terms and rules,

Moreover, words like forest or lake too, not only symbolize the place one comes from, is going to, or is at, but also tend to be descriptive of the feature. The word *mukatewisipe* in Anishinaabemowin for example, is actually based on the feature: 'the river that is black', or 'where the black bears are'. Undeniably, the Mukatewisipe is so black that it seems like the ice is black too, and Abel Bruce told me that he also saw many black bears along this river, which is also the main highway to get to his trap line. In 2013, Abel took me to see the river and the former settlement of Big Black River. The snow was incredible that year, and watching a 70-year old Elder pull a home-made sled and a ski-doo out of the waist-deep snow was intensely conflicting. On the one side, I admired his strength and I knew that he is used to this sort of 'action'; on the other hand, my own upbringing about helping out older people so that they do not have to exert to such an extent, was a very daunting experience.

The landscape of culture in Poplar River

No doubt, the Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg cultural heritage exists in the past and present and on a continuum; it is tangible and intangible and transferrable within both. It is unique to the region in its locality and exquisitely versatile in its Anishinaabeg identity. From my long-term and frequent visitations, I was able to experience the many aspects of this community's cultural heritage. The ones I have shared here are not meant to be limiting; rather, they are meant to be examples of ICH that are simultaneously embodied within the 2003 UNESCO Convention yet were also somehow overlooked in the World Heritage Site nomination by the same/sister organization in 2013. Intangible cultural heritage elements of the Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg are not merely 'traditional' (whatever this term signifies), but also take into account the contemporary applications of practices and skills passed down from generation to generation and incorporated into today's customs. What needs to be understood then, are

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that I was able to understand the land-based and historical context for much of Anishinaabemowin. The spelling system that is used here is the 'double vowel' orthography and it is the one that I was taught with the two University of Manitoba instructors throughout my studies.

all the meanings, values and practices by which people culturally engage when out on the land and how these communities and individuals make meaning of these places *in the present.*

Asatiwisipe aki is a trapline territory of 8000km^2, and the landscape is rich with stories and cultural sites. The *aki* here is unique because the local knowledge is specific to this area and cannot be found anywhere else; one cannot cross a set of rapids identical to the ones at Nanowin River or the Mukatasipe. The very specific areas about which particular stories can be told in great detail will be forever protected through the Pimachiowin Aki nomination and the Asatiwisipe Aki Management Plan (2010 & 2011). The cultural landscapes and knowledge about this space are elements that make up the intangible cultural heritage of the Anishinaabeg and they must be protected to ensure the Indigenous people of the area are provided with a sense of identity and continuity.

Poplar River and the Pimachiowin Aki partner communities have a cultural landscape that reflects the Anishinaabeg identity, which in turn becomes woven with stories of heritage, cultures and encounters. Therefore, the initiative to ensure permanent protection over the traditional trap line territory is a written down record of all the meanings, values and practices by which people engage when out on the land and how these communities and individuals make meaning in these places for the present (AAMP 2011; Ntsoane 2012; Pawlowska 2009 & 2013; Pimachiowin Aki 2013). This element of clearly explained in the Asatiwisipe Aki Management Plan:

> Through these practical, life-sustaining relationships to the land, our ancestors, our Elders and our community at large have also developed profound spiritual relationships to the land […] We recognize and honour the teachings and presence of our forefathers who lie buried out and through the lands that they have occupied over the millennia. All these things give our people a deep sense of gratitude to and respect for the creator and we have tried to illustrate this aspect of our profound relationship with the land (AAMP 2011:7).

For Poplar River, land is not a binomial opposite of culture. This dichotomy can be effaced through local interpretations of the nature-culture dichotomy that sees the two as interdependent: the teachings are in a way 'buried through the lands'. The words of Abel and Ernest below illustrate their

relationship to the land, which arises out of the teachings to care for the land. Abel tells me "Elders taught me how to protect and care for my trap line and this is what I am doing now, me" (Abel Bruce 2013, pers. comm.). Ernest too, believes that the Anishinaabeg are "the rightful caretakers of our trap lines [because] that's what we were told to do by our Elders" (Ernest C Bruce 2010, pers. comm.). These voices recount the belief that the trap lines, *aki*, is fundamental for the well-being of the people in Poplar River. Here, going out on the land, taking care of the resources by hunting, trapping, fishing and camping, is just 'doing' what was taught. This responsibility was "passed down to [us] and we are just doing what you're supposed to do", tells me one teenage girl with whom I sat on Church Rock one sunny day in July. "Well", confirms Byron Mitchell, "God gave us this beautiful land, so we have to take care of it" (Byron Mitchell 2008, pers. comm.). The Asatiwisipe Aki Management Plan (2010) maintains the same position that:

> [I]it is our job to protect and care for this land for the benefit of our children and grandchildren […] The Creator has given us life, he has given us land to live from, without that land our people will die (AAMP 2010:2).

Taking care of the land through use of traditional, local, ecological and cultural knowledge is a land-based epistemic convention rooted to the social order of the Anishinaabeg. As an element of intangible cultural heritage, specifically those Anishinaabemowin oral traditions and expressions, local knowledge systems and practices, it is 'written' in the social order through the process of socialization of Anishinaabe culture to the land (Johnston 2008; Kuokkanen 2007; Ntsoane 2012). Ntsoane (2012: 41-43) argues that people who create the landscape not only strengthen the oral history of the site but also provide opportunities to achieve a better understanding of the material, linguistic and spiritual value of the local heritage.

Considering the land to be a gift that needs caring for (PRFN 2010:2; Bruce 2011; Battiste & Henderson 2000:40; Johnston 2008:25-26; Kuokkanen 2007:89), the stories of Indigenous peoples

reflect that responsibility. Because lives were dependent on harvesting activities, the best hunters and trappers were the ones with wisdom that went beyond 'knowledge'; the individual had to respect the land (Abel Bruce 2011, pers. comm.). There are numerous teachings and songs describing respect and thanks-giving for the rich land (Abel Bruce 2013; Blondin 2006; Johnston 2008; Henderson 2007; Richard Morrison & John Mainville 2008, pers. comm.; Teresa & David Etchinelle 2011 & 2012, pers. comm.). For example, in the Mikmaq beliefs, the *mntu* is a form like a guardian spirit, thus,

> when people gather roots or leaves or bark for medicines, they reconcile the spirit of each plant by placing a small offering of tobacco at its base, believing that without the cooperation of the *mntu*, the mere form of the plant cannot work cures (Henderson 2007: 141).

Johnston (2008) too discusses the many different gifts, like the gift of medicine, that have been received by the people and in return, the Anishinaabeg must always give thanks in the form of tobacco; other Anishinaabeg make sure that 'spirit food' is always given (Richard Morrison & John Mainville 2008, pers. comm.). All the Elders I have spoken with in Poplar River, give some form of thanks to the resources they gather; whether tobacco, bullets, food or coins, these items reflect the connection that many harvesters have to the 'gift' of land. Ray Rabliauskas and Abel Bruce both acknowledge that the 'gift' relationship also occurs during hunting: "animals give themselves up to us, the hunter, so you cannot sell that meat. It is a gift, so you can't sell it" (Ray Rabliauskas 2013, pers. comm.). Because there are spirits - those life-sustaining forces, and there are responsibilities - those protocols one must abide by, 'gifting' is an Anishinaabeg cultural heritage that connects and re-connects the people to their lands.

"To the Anishinaabeg", writes Basil Johnston in *Ojibway Heritage* (2008:x), there was no gift or giving without a recipient". Johnston's book about the history, stories and ways of the Anishinaabeg is riddled with elements of intangible cultural heritage. The word 'gift' is prevalent throughout the text and I counted at least thirty-two occurrences of this word. The notion that the land is a gift, that its

bounty is gifted so that it can be re-gifted is one of the most important elements of the ICH that discounts the nature-culture dichotomy so prevalent in Western society. The book itself a gift to those hoping to learn about Ojibway people, to the 'gift' of creation, to human bearing the unique gift of fire; to women giving the gift of life and the gifts of medicine, food, names, well-being, and even old-age, Johnston articulates this culturally epistemological heritage that exists within Anishinaabeg heritage (Johnston 2008). Because Kitche Manitou created the moon, starts, mountains, plants and man, Johnston (2008:23 & 25) writes that

> [a]s the giver gave freely and generously, so the receiver must acknowledge his gratitude in the same spirit [...] the dying leave behind the mantle they occupied, take nothing with them but a memory and a place for others still to come. Such is the legacy of man: to come, to live, and to go; to receive in order to pass on. No man can possess his mother; no man can own the earth.

Since the purpose of the Anishinaabeg is to 'live and pass on', ensuring that future generations can benefit from the land is part of the Anishinaabeg ontology and cultural value system. That approach leaves tangible heritage evidence mainly through sustainability. Nothing in Anishinaabeg heritage teaches about separating man from nature; on the contrary, the way of life and even Anishinaabemowin tells us that *aki,* 'land', is part of the people.

'*Aki*' is a gift exists in numerous ways. I have specifically chosen the term *aki* here, because *aki* is more than 'land'. This concept, embedded in Anishinaabemowin includes the people, the resources, and the land - and even the relationship that ties them all to each other. Sophia Rabliauskas and Pat Ningewance have both taught me that 'maps', the term largely used to describe the physical topography of the land, is called *akiimazina'igan*, roughly translated to 'landscape books' (Sophia Rabliauskas 2013, pers. comm.; Pat Ningewance 2012, pers. comm.). Hence, just as the topographical maps cannot capture the totality of the ecosystem, the term 'land' cannot fully capture what *aki* signifies to the heritage of the Anishinaabeg here. Through just this expression, an intangible cultural

heritage lens can be used to grasp not only the language, but also the notion that *aki* is the 'gift' that truly anchors its people.

Finally, unlike Tom Thomson's and A.Y. Jackson's paintings where the *absence* of Indigenous people on the Canadian wilderness is considered special, it is, on the contrary, the interaction with and use of the spaces and places in Pimachiowin Aki that makes the landscape here of 'outstanding universal value'. It is *because* of Indigenous people that this area is so unique. A visitor may only see trees, but the local First Nation members know every crook and nanny, every crevice of the landscape. They are the people who know all the good hunting, trapping, fishing and berry-gathering sites; they can tell where the Thunderbird has its nests and eggs; and where the famous Rock that Rocks is. Why one travels Weaver Lake quietly and where the 6'000-year old archeological artifacts were found. The culture of the Anishinaabeg here makes the land 'alive'. In 2013, compelled to gather evidence of 'outstanding value' of their cultures, the Pimachiowin Aki community members were constricted through their own re-presentation of themselves in a way that would speak to a Western audience. The World Heritage Committee's deferred decision indicated that, rather than presenting their land-based cultures as they are, the Anishinaabe must discuss them from the standpoint of the European-based organization. Ironically, a resubmitted nomination, altered to fit the Eurocentric expectations of uniqueness, signifies that Indigenous communities worldwide must translate their distinctive cultural values into images that mould into the parameters of the World Heritage Committee - itself supposedly searching for uniqueness!

It is only through Eurocentrism that, when traveling across Pimachiowin Aki, the World Heritage Committee saw beautiful and clean rivers, green pines, smelled the sweet air of wildflowers and muskeg, but yet failed to appreciate culture whose values have kept it so. It is this cultural connection between tangible and intangible heritage that shows the totality of Indigenous

epistemologies and it is this aspect that needs to be emphasized in World Heritage discourse. Any heritage framework that devotes care only to tangible objects would definitely expose itself to the opinion that it is not seeing the wood for the trees (Grenet & Bartolotto 2011). To exist for generations as a distinct culture yet nevertheless depend on the local ecosystem for harvesting and for *mino-bimaadiziwin*, 'the good life' – but with minimal impact on the resources, is heritage worthy of protection. But the World Heritage Committee must move past Eurocentric notions of human ingenuity and open their ears to distinct cultural narratives that speak of in/tangible heritage, cross-category interactions as well as 'modern-traditions'. Until then, the idea of what constitutes 'culture' and what represents 'nature' will continue to be divided by neat categories of Eurocentric formulations. Pimachiowin Aki and Poplar River's permanent protection over their trap line territory are both aspirations that are based on time-honoured cultural practices existent in contemporary Indigenous societies; both propose UNESCO an opportunity to re-conceptualize nature and culture, past and present in colonial geographies differently.

The concept of 'belonging' to *aki* is embedded in the concept that the land was 'gifted' to the Anishinaabeg. Because it was a 'gift', it must now be taken care of, and I will discuss the importance of this cultural conceptualization of local resource stewardship practices within the framework of rights in Chapter 6. But, in order to better understand the broader political importance of intangible cultural heritage for Indigenous people, an examination of the very local 'occurrence' of one ICH element: *aki miijiim,* 'land food' within *pimachiowin aki, '*the land that gives life' will be discussed next.

CHAPTER 4
Andawenjigewin: 'hunting for food' and food sovereignty

> *"Local food is what keeps us healthy", I was told by Sophia during one discussion in 2013. Ray likes moose stir fry. Sometimes he adds vegetables to it, sometimes not. Moose stir fry is one of his most favourite meals. But he also likes beaver tail and muskrat. He says that muskrat are very tenacious. They jump out at you and sometimes you even have to run. One time, he was chased away by a muskrat. Another time, he tried to kill a muskrat with a shovel; his kids watched in open eyes from inside the car as he tried to use this tool to kill one. A few years later, my husband John came up to Poplar River with me and as we shoveled the snow from Ray's roof, he accidentally broke a shovel. Then another one was found broken. We still joke to this day, that John, who is from the muskrat clan, broke the shovels as a tenacious revenge for the muskrat Ray tried to kill with a shovel that one time on the road long ago...*(Pawlowska-Mainville 2013, notes).

When I began my research, many of the answers I received to my questions about the community's decision to protect the land, were accompanied by *dibaajimowinan,* 'stories', that often started with: "one time, when I was setting my traps, I shot a moose…" (Abel Bruce 2013 pers. comm.) or "yeah I used to trap rabbit, marten, fox, lynx…I ate lynx before, it tastes good…" (Abel Bruce 2013 pers. comm.) or "long ago I would boil the fish when the old man was getting trees" (Jean Nanawin 2009, pers. comm.) and even "yeah, I am a fisherman, I don't like this [office work]; I like to fish" (Guy Douglas 2012, pers. comm.). How was it that my questions about environmental protection and resource 'management' or stewardship were often answered with anecdotes about food, animals and community *mino-bimaadiziwin*, 'well-being'? It seemed like when I talked about the land, people would tell me *dibaajimowinan* about their life on the trap line; when I asked about what they find important in the community, they would tell me about the fishing station; when I inquired about the World Heritage Site and protective measures, some members would talk about the youth who will be able to hunt and trap like the people of today and of long ago. As many of these discussions were carried out over tea or dinner, my questions and the answers I received led to more questions than answers, and hence more discussions over a meal...

As I began looking at this idea, many more connections were made in my research about resource stewardship, Aboriginal rights, the harvesting mode of production and even my constant

invitations to eat, eat and eat. Through my fieldwork and through the narratives articulated by members concerned with establishing permanent protection of their lands and the World Heritage Site, I saw the connected web: resource stewardship, harvesting, protection of land, the continuation of cultural heritage in Poplar River, Aboriginal rights - all eloquently expressed over food - were basically about food! The more I pondered this aspect of my research, it did after all, play a significant part of my methodology and I discussed this in Chapter 2, the more I could not ignore the presence of 'food' in my research. The grandeur of the subject came as surprisingly to me in my work as did the weight I gained every time I visited Poplar River.

Effectively, I acknowledged the presence of food in my examination of the World Heritage Site in Poplar River. How could I not - it crossed over all the disciplines of my research! In the end, I recognized the existence of sustenance as an embodiment of food sovereignty in the Anishinaabeg through the cultural heritage of local and traditional knowledge, food ethics, and the episteme of gift-giving, interdependence and reciprocity. Founding the principles of food sovereignty to be already inherent in the cultural system of these land-based people, it became apparent that this First Nation uses this discursive concept in a unique way to reflect their own needs within the Pimachiowin Aki UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) nomination. The guiding principles of what I saw to be stewardship responsibilities were in fact, 'food ethics' that are embedded in values and culture of the local peoples. As such, eventually, the line between *aki miijim,* 'land food', responsibility for the resources, Aboriginal rights, and my own research became so blurred, that it was almost indistinguishable.

Aapiji minopogozi: 'this tastes very good'!

> *Sometimes people bring us moose meat. The hunters... they go out and when they come back, they just come in and leave us meat. It's what people do here* (Jean Nanawin 2013, pers. comm.).

Harvesting of resources for diverse purposes including food, additional income or medicines are a form of land use and occupancy which indicate a longstanding relationship to the land; land use and occupancy represents the continued reliance on *aki miijim*, 'land food' and Indigenous food systems. Linda Earle, writing for the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (2011) writes that traditional Indigenous diets and consumption patterns originated from complex and holistic food systems that include

> local plant or animal resources through gathering or harvesting, and which possess cultural meaning as a traditional food. As such, traditional foods and nutrient intakes vary by local geography, seasonality, and cultural group. In general, however, historical Aboriginal diets comprised of traditional foods were high in animal protein, nutrient-rich, and low in fat or high in marine sources of fat. The energy spent in obtaining traditional foods was significant given the very physical demands of hunting, fishing, trapping, growing and gathering (Earle 2011:2-3).

Indigenous food systems are reflective of the way peoples relate and live on the land –they are the intangible and tangible elements of a specific Indigenous culture. These systems also form the basis of society, governance, modes of production and resource stewardship (Usher 1976; IFSN 2014). Obtained from harvesting by means of gathering, fishing, hunting and trapping, northern food is reflective of the importance 'the bush' way of life, the land and distinct cultural diets. The Indigenous Food Systems Network (2014) writes that

> In a place where biological and cultural diversity lends itself well to tremendous localized abundance of traditional foods, Indigenous peoples throughout what is now known as the Dominion of Canada have developed distinct cultures based on traditional harvesting strategies including: hunting, fishing, gathering and cultivating culturally important plants and animals in our respective traditional territories.

To supplement their income, many individuals in Poplar River, rely on the resources through hunting and trapping, fishing and other harvesting of the plants such as berries and saskatoons and medicines (Noel Bruce 2008, pers. comm.; Abel Bruce 2012, pers. comm.; Ken Douglas 2013). Having existed since time immemorial, this food obtained from the land, often prepared traditionally, embodies

specific values and protocols that reflect the Poplar River First Nation [Indigenous] food system or what some members have called *aki miijim*, 'land food'.

In articulating his support for the domestic economy and 'country food' systems, Usher (1982& 1989) argues that there are symbolic and very tangible reasons for Aboriginal people to have *aki miijim*, 'land food':

> One is security. Native people have seen many economic boom and busts, and know that even in the best of times, they are the last hired, first fired and get the lowest paid jobs. Consequently, wage employment, even though people may want it, is not considered a permanent or secure source of livelihood. The land, on the other hand, provides exactly that anchor of security because, properly cared for, it will yield food forever (1982:11).

Considered by some to be the most sustainable economy in human history (Brody 1975 & 1981; Harvey 1990; Peterson et al 2010; Sahlins 1972; Tough 1996; Usher 1976), the hunting and gathering economy is a way of life that puts food security as the most important aspect of society. While Usher (1976:118) articulated that many native northerners are "well aware of their good fortune in having plenty of meat at a time when they hear increasingly of undernourishment and starvation in other parts of the world", Tough writes that the interchangeability of the hunting/trapping economy with wage labour during the later stages of the fur trade, was what enabled Aboriginal people in Manitoba to survive the drastic changes of the regional economy. Tough (2007:195). states that the Anishinaabeg and Cree of the region in the late 1880s "felt compelled to resort to their normal occupations" of fishing and hunting because it afforded them subsistence and own way of life. Similarly, in their discussion on the material and symbolic practice of hunting, Peterson et al. (2010) illustrate that materiality of food production in hunting societies strengthens the symbolic meaning of food in ways that are rooted in natural systems. The authors write that hunting "provides hunters with an opportunity to link modern humans with natural systems through their food, and is a global phenomenon to which nearly every human culture can trace its roots" (Peterson et al. 2010:128). Modern capitalist systems of organizing commodity production have separated not only products of their own labour from mankind, but also

sites of production – and even sites of consumption. Noting that one of the founding principles of capitalist modernism is alienation from one's own products, Harvey writes (1990:101&103) in *The Condition of Postmodernity*, that

> separating sites of production from sites of consumption, thus hiding both the natural and human resources [is] used to construct the face of modernity […] we can take our daily breakfast without a thought for the myriad people who engaged in its production.

The symbolic meanings of contemporary consumption and food can be useful in identifying the persistence of Aboriginal people to exercise hunting, trapping and fishing.

Manore and Miner's (2007, ed) compiled essays on how Canada's hunting way of life is a manifestation of a 'modern' identity for many communities, can align with the arguments of Peterson et al. that hunting enables society to experience itself and nature differently than it could if humans no longer hunted. Illustrating that hunting has been an integral part of Canadian history, from First Nations, to Metis, to the 'poor settlers' and sports hunters, Manore and Miner (2007: 1-5) show that the harvesting wildlife is essentially a part of the national narrative. For the Anishinaabeg in *asatiwisipe aki*, managing the resources on the land by means of harvesting continues to have symbolic meaning, especially since groceries at the local Northern Store tend to be very expensive and often of low quality. Indeed, a remote northern First Nation like Poplar River whose only grocery store *is* the Northern, sells merchandise at maximum prices. A few examples from my 2011 visit include a 1.89L Beatrice apple juice for $9.19, and Minute Maid Orange-Strawberry-Banana juice of the same size costs $10.29; a 400g Bright Mozzarella Cheese is $11.79, and one Delissio Rising Crust all dressed pizza cost me $24.99 and it was insufficient for three adults. These examples may be seen as 'frivolous', so for those making a home-cooked meal, a few small items which I consider necessary for home-made dinners include one can of Hun's tomato paste which costs $1.49, and one single yogurt container is $1.69; to buy a family-sized yogurt, one has to pay $6.25. A 4L jug of 1% milk costs $12.59, and meat can be bought at varying prices and with even more fluctuating quality. Although the

prices are sometimes without taxes, the average price of food in Poplar River can be estimated to be two to three times higher than the price of food in Winnipeg. Below is a chart that exemplifies the price difference of food in Poplar River and Winnipeg.

Year	Item	Poplar River	Winnipeg	Difference
2010 (Feb & March)	gas	$ 1.29/L (Feb 21) $ 1.48/L (Feb 24)	$ 0.98/L (Feb.) $1.02/L (March)	23% 31%
	bread, 675g	$ 5.79	$ 2.54	56%
	laundry detergent 4L	$ 30.79	$ 11.99-13.99	55-61%
2011 (Nov)	gas	$ 1.79/L	$1.19	33%
	bananas	$4.29/kg	$1.69/kg	61%
	canned food, 398 ml (beans/pasta/chili)	$4.45	$1.13	75%
	apple & oranges mixed bag	$12.99 (1kg mixed bag)	$3.35 (1kg bag of apples) $3.07 (1kg bag of oranges	74% 76%
	canned fish 213g	$4.65 (tuna)	$3.43 (salmon)	26%
	processed cheese 250g	$8.95 (jar)	$2.85 (slices)	68%
2012 (Feb & March)	gas	$1.72 (March 23)	$127.0/L	26%

Table 1: Comparison of average retail prices for food and other selected items in Poplar River and Winnipeg from 2010-2012. Source: own receipts and assistance from Statistics Canada: CANSIM 326-0012 (Statistics Canada 2014).

The reason for the expensive pricing can be explained through the cost of transportation and import. It is also true that more northern communities like those in the Arctic have even more costly provisions, but as a fly-in community, Poplar River too, is dependent on the transport of provisions by means of a barge in the summer, the ice road in the winter and the plane in all seasons. The fact of bringing food in does not secure access to food however. During one of my summer visits to Poplar River, the barge was late due to difficult weather conditions on Lake Winnipeg. As a result, an exemplary pattern of capitalist supply-and-demand was made evident, and as the days of waiting for the barge progressed, the supplies of food, gas and other items dwindled in the store. Accordingly, the

prices of the last few items rose higher and higher with each passing day. In the end, when the shelves were more than half empty, and necessities such as diapers, gas, milk and meat were almost gone, the prices increased dramatically. Gas which is often at $1.60-1.80/L, rose to $2.20/L; diapers which cost around $30 were exceeding $40. Meat such as pork cutlets and ground beef, although at almost regular price, was of very questionable quality.

Image 4.1 *Empty shelves at the local grocery store. In 2008, the barge was late and as a result, provisions were limited. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

Food security in Poplar River became an issue for me as well, not only through the stories I heard about food but also through my own experience of food insecurity in the community. When I travelled to the First Nation, I had grants that supported my fieldwork; these $2000 to $2500 dollar amounts rarely permitted me the comforts of choosing 'good' food. In fact, my trips up north always consisted of changing my diet to suit the availability of products and prices of the Northern Store. In 2007, I bought one onion for about three dollars; the vegetable was so mouldy, that I was forced to peel the layers off the onion one after another. By the time it was ready to be consumed, the onion was the size of a shallot. My 40 minute-long walk to the store then, left me with $3 out of my pocket and with something that I could only taste, but not really eat. As such, high prices, unexpected situations and dubious category of food products are one of the significant reasons why the local system of procuring food is so important in this community. At a time when products are unavailable or quality uncertain, meat and fish obtained directly in the community 'off the land' plays an extremely important role in Poplar River. The dependence of the community on *pimachiowin aki*, 'the land that gives life' simultaneously reflects Poplar River's independence from any food insecurity.

Indigenous food systems in the boreal

> *Hunting, fishing and trapping was a way of life or a way to provide for your family* (Poplar River First Nation member quoted in AAMP 2010:26) .

In 1996, at the World Food summit, the World Health Organization (2014) defined 'food security' as existing "when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life" (WHO 2014). The concept encompasses the physical and economic access to food including people's dietary needs and their food preferences. Built on the basis of three pillars, food security is founded on availability, accessibility and use. Availability refers to sufficient quantities of food on a consistent basis, and food access depends on sufficient resources to obtain appropriate food. The last pillar refers to the use of food based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation measures (WHO 2014). Food security is often associated with complex sustainable issues liked to health, economic development and environmental issues like non-renewable resource exploitation and business, and encompasses numerous arguments including equitable distribution, levels of production, global trade, globalization and capitalism (FSC 2014;WHO 2014). The concept of security differs from food sovereignty in that the latter takes food justice one step further, and moves away from trade and globalization as a solution (Borras 2008; Via Campesina 2014). Food sovereignty was in fact born out of the disillusionment with food security and focuses less on the global discourse and emphasizes local (and national) access to food in the name of efficiency, productivity and ecological sustainability. Essentially, food sovereignty takes a step away from political economy and makes local and permanent food justice its focal point.

Since food sovereignty includes reinforcement for the local and small, including collectively owned farms and fisheries rather than industrializing these sectors in a minimally regulated global economy, my discussion of *aki miijim* in Poplar River will rely mostly on the concept of food sovereignty but will also incorporate food security. Nonetheless, as a northern First Nation within a

Settler State, it would be foolish of me to discuss food 'sovereignty' without acknowledging the colonial power relations and northern contexts in Canada. Shewell's *Enough to Keep Them Alive* (2004), Tough's *As Their Natural Resources Fail* (1997) Kulchyski & Tester's *Tammarniit* (1994) all show how Canada's 'Indian policy' and administration led to numerous social issues and a high dependency on food and welfare from the federal government. Whereas Shewell (2004) illustrates that subsistence hunting was one of the ways Aboriginal people could survive on meagre wages, Kulchyski and Tester (1994) show how relocation and controlled game management forced the Inuit to go from complete autonomy, to welfare dependency. Tough's (1997) arguments that 'Indian administration' and pressure to join the wage economy, has set the stage for contemporary issues many Aboriginal and northern communities like Poplar River face. It is important to mention here that although the Anishinaabeg in *asatiwisipe aki* are 'free' to harvest the resources, they are nevertheless constrained in their activities by Manitoba Conservation and Canada. The freedom to exercise their hunting, trapping and fishing rights as per the promises outlined in the treaties and Section 35 of the Constitution Act also plays a large role in the political sphere; the notion of food sovereignty/insecurity of the Pimachiowin Aki communities is encapsulated in this discourse and I will discuss this legal challenge in Chapter 6.

Rooted in grassroots food movements, the concept of food sovereignty as articulated by Via Campesina can be helpful in bringing First Nations communities like Poplar River's positions forward in the global and national context. Via Campesina, or 'the peasant way' is an international movement which "coordinates peasant and middle-class producers, agricultural workers, women and Indigenous communities from Europe, Asia, Africa and America to reform agrarian rights" (Borras 2008; Via Campesina 2014). Advocating on the part of sustainable agriculture, the organization coined the term 'food sovereignty' in 1995, which argued for people to define their own food systems in their own territories. It was not until the Nyéléni conference in 2007 that the pillars of the concept were established. The following six points were developed at the 2007 international forum on food

sovereignty in Mali. At Nyéléni, the deepening of the collective understanding of food sovereignty meant: (1) focusing on food for people, where sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food is at the centre policies; (2) valuing food providers, where sustainable livelihoods through peoples' contributions and rights to cultivate, grow, harvest and process food are respected; (3) localizing food systems, where food providers and consumers are brought closer together, and where genetically modified organisms and dependency on corporations and inequitable trade, is resisted; (4) local food control, where control over lands, water, seeds and livestock belongs to local food providers. This also emphasizes respect for local peoples' rights so that privatization and intellectual property rights are not oppressive; (5) building knowledge and skill, where technology and wisdom is passed on to future generations without contamination through genetic engineering; and (6) working with nature, where the principle of relying on ecosystem diversity is accentuated without damaging the environment (adapted from the Nyéléni Synthesis Report 2007; FSC 2014). These principles insist on a more human-based approach to food, so rather than viewing food as a commodity within the global market, support for indviduals, peasants, small-scale farmers and Indigenous harvesters who contribute to sustainable food practices are highlighted.

Via Campesina's position is that food is more than a component of governance structures, policies and practices that are guided by trade; it is about recognition of neo-liberal policies and the needs to rights-based food systems that build capacity, knowledge and sustainability of both, peoples and ecosystems. Especially, in the face of climate change, these pillars are the embodiment of food sovereignty, and northern and Aboriginal communities can certainly benefit from the principles outlined above. As a remote, fly-in community, the First Nation is in need for sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food. The expensive food that must be flown in or brought in by a barge or yielded through the winter road, creates a form of dependency of community members on the 'outside' to produce and forward the food to the community. With global warming, accelerated environmental

destruction (ie. hydro projects in northern Manitoba), the price of gas rising, and the multiplicity of methods to bring provisions in, the community is perhaps one of the most insecure places in Manitoba. A good example would be, if something happened – anything – that would bar the arrival of food to the community, how long would it take for the people to have a food crisis and ask for emergency? Ernest articulates the answer to such a question:

> We still believe what goes around always comes back around. We started off as a First Nation living off the land and we always believed in the land to provide for us food, medicines. It's slowing coming back; people are starting to rediscover why the land is important and why it needs to be there - because it provides food and shelter. It also provides medicines, and as long as that's there, we know that we can always fall back on that. I think if you ask me, the system will eventually crumble and […] we always have the land to fall back on… (Ernest C Bruce 2008).

Indeed, many of the harvesters in Poplar River are fundamentally living *mino-bimaadiziwin*, 'the good life', because ultimately, they are one of the most sovereign food producers in the boreal.

However, although Indigenous harvesting systems 'embody' the pillars of food sovereignty and the discourse can be used by northern Indigenous communities to obtain food justice, they are not sufficient in meeting the local needs of Aboriginal hunters and trappers. In fact, even though at first glance, the six pillars of food sovereignty appertain to Poplar River First Nation, the agrarian structure though which the Via Campesina understands food sovereignty is inapplicable to northern Aboriginal communities in Canada. Located in the boreal forest at the edge of the Canadian Shield, four out of these six pillars are not pertinent to on the hunting and trapping modes of producing food. Poplar River neither 'produces' food in the agrarian sense, nor does the community's hunting correspond to the demands of markets and corporations - or sometimes even the capitalist system. For example, in each of the Via Campesina pillars, a reference is made to some form of collective agriculture, whether small or large scale. Indicating agrarianism, allusions are made to pastoralists and livestock (pillar 1& 2), cultivating, grazing and GMOs (pillars 3-5) and a rejection of "intensive monocultures and livestock factories" in pillar six. Located in the boreal forest, Poplar River whose acidic soils, climate and

Indigenous traditional modes of production, are not ruminative of pastoral or agricultural activities.

Although Via Campesina's work is largely important in eliminating the food crisis that currently affects the 'landless peasants' and in consolidating a human rights-based approach to the campaign, it continues to rely on conventional neo-liberal state-defined models of land. This means that Poplar River can use the concept; but it does not always fit. Because it does not fit to include the hunting and trapping mode of production, the global campaign for food reform must broaden its current position on land to go beyond the parameters of conventional land reform. Like the materialist perspective of cultural heritage implicit within the World Heritage discourse where "sites associated with living Indigenous peoples of the Americas, and in particular the hunting-gathering-fishing peoples of the northern forests which are part of the global biome" are largely absent (Pimachiowin Aki WHSN 2012:125), the broad understanding of food sovereignty is a biased set of concepts and rules of interaction that are developed out of capitalist agriculture. In fact, to a large extent, hunting, trapping and harvesting societies like those of Indigenous people living in Canada's north are generally excluded from the global discussions of food sovereignty (and World Heritage), and although Aboriginal people from the boreal forests of Canada can certainly profit from the principles outlined by Via Campesina, they cannot fully rely on their theoretical configurations. As a result, the six pillars must be 'translated' to better incorporate the hunting and trapping modes of production that still exists in many regions of the world. This is especially important in setter-States, where Indigenous food systems were already present and well established prior to claims of sovereignty.

Food sovereignty, as articulated by Via Campesina and Nyéléni, is truly a big and important concept in achieving environmental and food justice at a cross-national context; but a form of food sovereignty, one applicable to northern contexts where food insecurity can at times reach 75 % is needed to better understand Anishinaabeg food systems (Fieldhouse and Thompson 2012 quoted in Desmarais and Wittman 2013). Dawn Morrison, the coordinator of the British Columbia Working

Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty writes that the concept of Indigenous food sovereignty

> describes, rather than defines, the present day strategies that enable and support the ability of Indigenous communities to sustain traditional hunting, fishing, gathering, farming and distribution practices, the way we have done for thousands of years prior to contact with the first European settlers [...] We have rejected a formal universal definition of sovereignty in favour of one that respects the sovereign rights and power of each distinct nation to identify the characteristics of our cultures and what it means to be Indigenous (Morrison 2011: 97-98).

Food sovereignty for Indigenous communities essentially embodies self-determination over lands and resources, where access to and harvesting from the land is the hands of Elders, trappers and harvesters like Abel Bruce and other community members. My work with harvesters in Poplar River (and in Fox Lake to some extent) has made it clear that not only are traditional modes of food production not recognized and not respected by mainstream Canada, but also that much of this nation's [environmental] policies adversely impact Indigenous food systems. Traditional harvesters in all regions "express concern regarding the non-recognition in mainstream society of the limited carrying capacity of Indigenous land and food systems and the unprecedented rate and scale of residential, recreational and industrial economic development" (BCFSN 2008:13). The ability of First Nations communities to respond to food needs is unique in that it requires a specific policy approach where management of lands and resources needs to be in the hands of Indigenous people. There is a urgent need to reconcile policy and mainstream economics with Indigenous food systems:

> the neoliberal trade related policies asserting full control over Indigenous land and food systems continue to perpetuate the oppressive regimes that [have] eroded Indigenous peoples' ability to respond to their needs for healthy, culturally adapted foods (BCFSN 2008:15).

Rather than focusing on the Western agrarian concept of food sovereignty, Indigenous food movements reflect self-determination and forms of autonomy that seek to protect and value Indigenous food practices. Certainly, Indigenous food sovereignty challenges the way we look at food; ongoing pressures of colonialization pose significantly different set of challenges related to food and hence, fundamental changes are needed at the community level, at the provincial and State level, and at the

global level.

In effect, the BC Food Systems Network outlines some of the principles of Indigenous food sovereignty such as sacredness - the idea that food is a gift from the Creator and it the peoples' responsibility to look after the land; self-determination - the ability to have access to culturally-relevant, safe and healthy food, including food obtained by hunting, trapping and fishing; participatory-based on individual choices that ensure the maintenance of traditional harvesting mode of production; and, policy - where influence over Indigenous food systems and harvesting regulations is in the hands of Indigenous communities (BCFSN 2008; IFSN2014). Incorporating Indigenous voices and Indigenous food systems in policy, economic assessments, research and environmental regulations and processes is important in ensuring Indigenous self-determination and access to food. Poplar River and the Pimachiowin Aki communities have began this process through the land-protective measures and the World Heritage Site. The community is also involved at the local level by continuing cultural activities and re-Indigenizing young people through cultural affirmation, food feasts and cultural camps; awareness and involvement in traditional land use is also given priority. Positively, many young people are taken hunting and many foresee fishing as a way to ensure food is on the table (Byron Mitchell 2009, pers. comm.).

> Indigenous food self-determination characteristically refers to
>
> > the freedom and ability to respond to our own needs for healthy, culturally-adapted Indigenous foods. It represents the freedom and ability to make decisions over the amount and quality of food we hunt, fish, gather, grow and eat (Morrison 2011:100).

Historically, Canada's land and resources policies have 'legally' circumscribed Indigenous food systems – often without adequate consultation, subsidies for food, or funds for harvesting equipment or tools (Abel Bruce 2012; Tester and Kulchyski 1994 & 2007; Fox Lake Cree Nation Negotiations Office 2010; NRTA 1939). Translating the elements of Indigenous food sovereignty therefore, necessitates re-shaping policy. This is the foundation because Indigenous food procurement is impacted by

contamination and environmental degradation, competing fisheries and harvesters, large-scale development, genetic engineering and invasive species, as well as intellectual property rights and overriding 'advertising' values. Indigenous food systems are also impacted by colonialism where disproportionate experiences of ill-health, a shorter life expectancy, poverty and diet-related issues are part of the effects (Desmarais and Wittman 2013). The breakdown of traditional knowledge and land-based practices contribute to dependence on often unhealthy and highly priced store-bought food and social assistance. Disconnection from families, disruption of intergenerational transmission and inability to meet the costs of travel to harvesting sites continue to be challenges faced by Indigenous people (BCFSN 2008:13; IFSN 2014). I would add to this argument that overriding Indigenous stewardship with provincial and federal legislation further requires reform around land management, forestry, wildlife and riparian stewardship.

Indigenous food systems also enhance the larger interpretation of Aboriginal and treaty hunting, trapping and fishing rights. Indigenous stewardship is an inherent right of Indigenous people to cultural practices, and, as determined by Justice La Forest and L'Heureux-Dubé in *Delgamuukw*, the general claim to a territory also includes the right to use the land for a variety of activities related to the Aboriginal society's habits and mode of life (*R v. Delgamuukw* [1997] S.C.C.). In the context of applicable legal standards, claims to food sovereignty would be no different from all the other claims to the benefits of Aboriginal rights under Section 35 of the Constitution Act; like self-government for example, Indigenous food systems embedded in hunting, trapping and fishing activities can easily be measured under the same standard of establishing elements of practices, customs or traditions integral to the distinctive culture of the Aboriginal group claiming that right (*R v. Pamajewon* [1996] S.C.C. ; *R v. Sioui* [1990] S.C.C.; *R.v. Sparrow* [1990] S.C.C.; *R v. Vanderpeet* [1996] S.C.C.). Naturally, the security of food, including access and availability that come out of a land-based lifestyle, constitute the idea of self-determination. Because any regulations concerning hunting and fishing were to be "in the

interest" of the aboriginal peoples, (*R v. Badger* [1996] S.C.C. and *R v. Horseman* [1990] S.C.C.) and because Aboriginal people were promised to be as free to hunt, fish and trap "after the treaty as they would be if they never entered into it" (NRTA 1930), Aboriginal harvesting and traditional modes of procuring food are also about Aboriginal and treaty rights. Preserving an environment and ensuring mechanisms in which Aboriginal peoples *could* continue to hunt, fish and trap as they had always done is a prerequisite for those rights. Given that Aboriginal rights flow from the customs and traditions of the people, and, if *miinigoowiziwin*, 'a gift' epistemology behind the traditional mode of production ensures everyone has access to local and healthy food, then Aboriginal and treaty rights are the source of Indigenous food systems. In this context, Aboriginal rights *are* food sovereignty and food sovereignty *is* Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Image 4.2 *Ice fishing in February. The ability to access local, healthy and culturally-relevant food represents Indigenous food systems. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

The theoretical context of the food sovereignty struggle must be framed by a changing relationship where social connections inherent in the production and consumption of food are ingrained. It insinuates [re-]democratizing food systems (Wittman, Desmarais and Wiebe 2010:5) that are continually present in Indigenous cultural epistemologies and reflective of one of the most secure forms of food access. The belief that food is *miinigoowiziwin*, a 'gift' from the Creator, is indicative of those intangible teachings about food, which, embedded in language and culture, make Indigenous food sovereignty unique. This integrated vision of food is shared by the vast majority of Indigenous cultures and is an appropriate approach because it considers the phenomena and their consequences comprehensively by taking into account the relationships between all elements of a

complex system (IFSN 2014). In fact, due to the culturally unique relationship that members of Poplar River have with hunting and food, Indigenous hunting communities actually *enhance* the meaning and notion of food sovereignty as articulated by Via Campesina (2014) at Nyéléni in 2007 and its campaigners like Food Secure Canada (2014) and the Indigenous Food Systems Network (2014). Dialogue about food sovereignty arising out of the harvesting mode of production has consequently began.

Perhaps a factor of intangible cultural heritage that can influence rhetoric, Via Campesina's understanding of the *meaning* of land has changed and now included pastoralists and fisherfolk. There is also some evidence that Via Campesina and the campaigners of food sovereignty are re-orienting their take on land and their understanding of food to more intangible contexts. The network is slowly moving to expand its philosophical understanding of the meaning and purpose of land - and consequently the nature of the global campaign itself. As a result of on-going efforts to link the issue of land with the broader issues of food sovereignty, the environment, and to some extent Indigenous rights, the campaign has aspired to define and articulate its own interpretation of the meaning and purpose of land and land reform as "a step toward constructing an alternative vision" (Borras 2008:262). Indeed, Food Secure Canada (FSC), a pan-Canadian alliance of organizations and individuals working together to advance food security and food sovereignty, has been created to advocate for food policies that support this movement (FSC 2014). Influenced by members of the Indigenous Circle during the People's Food Policy process, the organization has in fact added a seventh pillar – Food is Sacred – which asserts that food cannot be commodified because of the recognition that food is a gift of life, and cannot be squandered (FSC 2014). Abel believes that principle wholeheartedly; this is because he knows the sacrifice the animals make to feed the people, and he explained to me how 'gentle' a trapper has to be when killing the live animal that is caught in his traps:

> even when you get a live rabbit. The heart, you just take that heart from the rabbit, pull it down and the rabbit's dead. Even chickens...and you didn't have any gun, don't have any

> gun with you, no gun, no sling shot, whatever you got. You just take a snare, a snare wire..[shows me how to set the snare] That's what I used to do. I never hit any animal with a stick; because when you stick that animal, the animal has so much blood clot in his head you know. That's what I do (Abel Bruce 2013).

Already inherent in the cultural system of these land-based people, the principles of food sovereignty in Poplar River are truly community led, managed, and guided; this First Nation uses the agrarian theories of 'food sovereignty' and re-conceptualizes them to their own needs within the Pimachiowin Aki UNESCO WHS nomination.

"I can just go out and get that rabbit"

> *During the summer months, gardens were common. People who fished for a living had tents or wooden houses around the lake area. There were two fishing stations - Big Black and Poplar Point. Once in a while, they would check/week their gardens. Storing veggies for winter use, was common, therefore, people from Poplar River used the land [for] hunting, trapping and gathering berries, etc. and fishing purposes* (Noel Bruce 2007, pers. comm.).

Undeniably, having a great amount of pickerel fillets, frozen moose meat, rabbit, or duck, is a source of pride and wealth among First Nation members which is why for most Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg, traditional or country food is preferred over Western food. Upon being graced with a supper invitation in the community, often when a plate of stacked, boiled moose meat is brought to the table, it is feasted on with delight. Stories of past moose-hunts or the simple phrase "we used to only eat moose meat like that in the bush" (Jean Nanawin 2010, pers. comm.), usually accompany the meat as salt is sprinkled over it. I have had all sorts of tasty (and some less tasty) items presented to me during dinner throughout my fieldwork. Interestingly enough, some of the youth I met informed me that they do not like fish because it has too many bones and moose meat tastes too strong. Jean once affirmed my disbelief by telling me that the kids "don't want to eat moose. They like food from the store only" (Jean Nanawin 2010, pers. comm.). Laughingly, her young granddaughter informed me that she likes ground beef - like meat balls. Some youth who do not enjoy the strong taste of wild meat are slowly 're-taught' to eat their 'own' food, which is why a return to land-based activities, a healthy diet, a re-learning of traditions are actively directed at the youth (AAMP 2010: 3 & 36; Pimachiowin

Aki WHSN 2012). In contrast to the comment made by her granddaughter about liking store-bought food, Jean responded that: "I once went up south to visit. Someone gave me a burger to eat. I couldn't eat it. It made me sick. It was too greasy. Yeah, it just made me sick because it was so greasy" (Jean Nanawin 2010, pers. comm.). Numerous such stories can be heard, and many Elders laughed at the fact that fish bought from the store has no taste:

> and yeah, when you take food from land… than food from store; it's more healthier when you eat wild meat. It's tasty, and even fish, when you have fish from Lake Winnipeg it's tasty it's good. But if you go someplace else like in Winnipeg, if you buy a fish it doesn't even taste like a fish [laughs]. Not like fresh fish from the lake (Ken Douglas 2013).

The existence of harvested food is necessary not only because of taste and nutritional factors, but also because it represents for many 'our' food. 'Our' food is considered not only healthier, better and more symbolic, but also represents *mino-bimaadiziwin,* 'well-being' or 'a good life' for many Poplar River First Nation members. Ken tells me again that it makes him feel good to eat food from the land:

> I like to eat pickerel, jack fish. They used to eat mariah. Jack fish livers, even whitefish livers, they are pretty good. Mix them with flour... Pretty good [...] I miss eating [land] food; I used to like beaver and muskrat. The meat is soft and has lots of fat. But muskrat does not have fat; just like a rabbit. I liked it smoked and boiled. We used to smoke and we used to boil them, same as rats; if you want to smoke it [...] we used to smoke it and boil them, same as beaver (Ken Douglas 2013).

As it is for Ken, in all these cases, the animals that are trapped, hunted or fished out of the water, are considered 'special', and I have understood this term to be something between 'sacred' and 'good tasting' food. Usher (1976) articulates that for Aboriginal people in the north, food can be an affirmation of their identity. Northern Indigenous people prefer

> country food better than store-bought food, and indeed many insist that a steady diet of imported foods would be abhorrent to them. This is no mere idiosyncrasy; country food not only tastes better, but it is also more satisfying and nutritious. There is no satisfactory substitute for it; hence the acceptance of anything which might be substituted for it entails an absolute loss of welfare of incalculable proportions for native people (Usher 1976: 117).

For the Elders with whom I talked about food, the eating of traditional or self-obtained/hunted food is an embodiment of not only cultural pride for Poplar River First Nation members, but rather,

after numerous policies of assimilation of Aboriginal peoples, of attempts to extinguish Aboriginal cultures, of endeavors to force people off the land and into settlements, of efforts to replace the land-based mode of production with wage labour, it is also a reminder that Aboriginal ways of life, Aboriginal cultures, are thriving in the 21st century. Somewhat like the cuisine of the southern African-American culture, *aki miijim* includes wild meat or local fish, berries and bannock; these can be interpreted to be 'soul food' of the Anishinaabeg. Soul food recipes and techniques are passed down orally, and for many Anishinaabeg, a *wiikongewin*, 'feast' featuring these components may constitute a special event. Bessie, an Anishinaabeg Elder from Couching First Nation, even went so far as to say that a feast where food is brought in, shared and gifted, is a ceremony.

There is a significant, even spiritual, linkage between the land-based mode of production and the sovereign activity on the part of the hunter. Tanner (1979) discusses how a hunt begins from strategizing to the moment a hunter brings the animals home. Because hunting is so deeply embedded in knowing the land, a good hunter must be aware how many animals are in the region, where they are, where their usual routes or migration patterns are. A hunter does the necessary reconnaissance prior to the actual act of going out to hunt, and hence, all these activities represent the epistemological basis for the mode of production that often extends from early childhood to the moment a man leaves the land (Abel Bruce 2013, pers. comm.; Johnston 2008). Absolutely, the act of going out, collecting the knowledge and taking the life of the animal upon offering tobacco, is vastly different than consumption of mass-produced food. It is, as some Elders have illustrated to me, a form of sovereignty that is founded on cultural responsibility. "After all", Sophia tells me, "food is just what you do" (Sophia Rabliauskas 2013, pers. comm.).

This lived tradition represents the cultural practice that is woven into Anishinaabeg collectivity. Because the food is 'ours', it is shared and treated differently, and in my research I discovered that it is indeed more than just about eating; it is about individual *mino-ayaawin*, 'feeling good or good health'

and community *mino-bimaadiziwin* 'well-being/health'. Through my fieldwork in Poplar River and through the narratives articulated by members concerned with establishing permanent protection of their lands through the World Heritage Site, I saw embodiment of food sovereignty in Anishinaabe cultural heritage, in local and traditional knowledge, in food ethics, and most definitely in the episteme of gift-giving, interdependence and reciprocity. In fact, success and self-determination for Asatiwisipe First Nation exists in the confidence and security that comes from, to paraphrase Brody (2004:213), "the belief that there is food, that there always has been food, and all things being equal, that there always will be food that people can get for themselves". Brody continues:

> No one should be surprised when the Indians of today insist that their ways of looking at the world and harvesting its resources will outlive any other. It is not nostalgia, or sentimentality, when the Indians affirm their own identity and special interests; they are not paying their respects to an idealized or fossilized past. They do not say that they have not changed, but – a little paradoxically – they insist, sometimes with remarkable conviction, that their way of changing is what will guarantee survival (Brody 2004:86).

The notion of self-actualization as a community by means of autonomy and the ability to obtain one's own food can be considered *mino-bimaadiziwin*, 'a good life', by the community. The security of food, including access and availability that come out of a land-based mode of production, constitute the idea of sovereignty; whereas today, capitalism and abstract wealth have become the dominant values, land-based economies still understand that one 'cannot eat money'. "One winter", narrates Ken as we examine the map of *asatiwisipe aki*,

> we used a ski-doo too. From Black River, that's where we used a ski-doo. Sometimes it was cold weather..it pinched. But I'd guess we got used to it […] It was stormy sometimes we had to deal with that […]It was good for me…I liked it […] Wrong Lake [*Kwekwesi zaaga'igan*], Mud Lake, [*Azhaszki zaaga'igan*]. We used to travel on all these areas; we used to pick up rice there. And Mud Lake, Mud River (Ken Douglas 2013).

Undeniably, dependence on the traditional mode of production is hard work but in return, the land provides the people with their very being as well as access to provisions. Ken confirms that harvesting and 'going out there' to get the food was tough but very rewarding; throughout his life, Ken basically defied the market-driven system of food production.

Unlike the Marxist critique of the worker's alienation from the fruits of their labour within capitalism, here in Poplar River, harvesting reinforces the relationship between food and its maker. The fact that one can go out and obtain healthy, culturally-relevant food, represents the best of food security and self-determination. The hunting, trapping and fishing mode of production allows for independence because, as Kulchyski (2013) argues, a hunter can choose the day to go out hunting, he can determine his own on-the-job hours, he is his own boss, and when successful [multiple understandings exist in this word], he earns the respect of the entire community. In the bush, hunters and trappers are truly sovereign: alone, no boss, no hectic schedules, no bureaucracy. Absolutely, confirms Abel Bruce who, on the way to his trap line along Black River said that, "when I used to trap, I would go out and spend a month on my trap line. I have a cabin out there. It used to take me days to get there, especially if the snow is deep" (Abel Bruce 2013, pers. comm.). Marcel Valiquette too, tells me that

> I used to be a trapper quite a bit, like around quite a bit; my dad that's what he used to do, was trap all winter, but you can't go by that now. I still have my trapline up in-land. We used to go up there with my brothers when we were living in Black River. I really loved there, being in the bush as a trapper. You can do anything you want, you're your own boss (Marcel Valiquette 2010).

For people like Abel and Marcel and Ken, spending time alone (and with a helper) out in the bush to acquire food and obtain furs can be seen as a form of sovereignty that cannot be matched.

***Aki Miijim*: its meaning in practice**

> *... the way I look at it…and this is the way this land will look after us. Long time ago, I know, I hear people talking about this, you know, 'back in the day', and 'back then'. And I hear a lot of those stories, 'long time ago'. It's a good place for them and it's a good way for us to do that [protect the land for food] you know. 'Cause we've been there; I've been there* (Abel Bruce 2013).

One of the most unique aspects of the Anishinaabeg food system originates in the culturally embedded ethic of sharing and reciprocity of *miinigoowiziwinan*, 'gifts'. Many scholars working with Indigenous people have described and commented on the continuous pattern of sharing and gift giving

including early ethnographers like Diamond Jenness (1922), Franz Boas (1888), Bronislaw Malinowski (1959), Irving Hallowell (2010) and others, like Dowling (1968) Polanyi (1957), Kuokkanen (2007) and Tanner (1979), continue to recognize the cultural structure in hunting societies around sharing.

Malinowski's (1959) concept of the "field of reciprocal power" assessed that sharing came with esteem: that the most generous person was the most highly esteemed by the community members (Malinowski 1959: 30). In *Contributions to Ojibwe Studies* (2010:450) Hallowell's essays too, illustrate the Anishinaabe norms of social interaction like sharing and respect, and the responsibility of a hunter to take care of his family. Hallowell's words illustrate that the 'gifting' mode of production was embedded in the cultural ontology of sharing food:

> A central value correlative with the Ojibwa food-gathering economy is the emphasis laid upon what may be called 'equalitarian' values; these serve to equilibrate the distribution and consumption of goods in a system where purchase in a market is absent. They are expressed through sharing, borrowing, and mutual exchange. Dependence upon hunting, trapping, and fishing for a living is precarious at best and, even though the individual hunter may exercise his best skills, it is impossible to accumulate food for the inevitable rainy day. As a result, if I have more than I need today, I share with you because I know that you, in turn, will share what you have with me tomorrow. In Ojibwa society there are no culturally structured incentives that induce individuals to surpass their fellows in the accumulation of material goods. No one is expected to have much more than anyone else, except temporarily (2010: 450-451).

Concurring with Hallowell and the early anthropologists, Dowling (1968:503) writes that "the hunter who is successful today may not be so again for a week or more. In the interim he must either do without meat or rely on shares from his kinsmen and neighbors to meet his and his family's needs". Dowling (1968: 505) observes that in a reciprocal distributive system, "balance and hence stability through a counter flow of esteem and influence to the person who contributes most" are the key aspects of hunting cultures. Likewise, recognizing responsibility as part of being human and as inseparable from one's identity, Rauna Kuokkanen (2007:40) articulates the concept of gift giving among Aboriginal people in her book *Reshaping the University*:

> Because their survival depends greatly on social and ecological stability, indigenous people have developed a worldview in which a key teaching is responsibility towards

> other beings. This suggests how important the concept of giving is to them: only through giving can they be human. Their very survival depends on it.

Undoubtedly, in the boreal forest, large animals can be infrequent and excess food may occur in long intervals, thus sharing and gifting becomes of critical importance. This is precisely why in many hunting communities, the successful hunter who is generous with the products of his harvest is usually one of the most influential men in the community (Brody 1988, Kulchyski 2007; Dowling 1968:504; Tanner 1979).

Although many early anthropologists like Boas (1888), Malinowski (1959), Hallowell (2010) and Jenness (1922), have contributed extensive theoretical data and formulations about reciprocity, this body of ethnographic work seems incomplete in explaining cross-cultural economic production parallels that encompass the Indigenous [Anishinaabeg] interdependence of *miinigowin*, 'a gift received'. Unfortunately, ethnographic studies of the time demonstrate a Eurocentric explanation through proprietary rights to explain the Indigenous understanding of reciprocity. For instance, working with the Inuit (referred to as Eskimos), both Boas and Jenness shared the observation that the person who 'owns' that animal is the person who sees, wounds or kills it (Boas 1888:482; Jenness 1922:90; Harris 1940:47; Dowling 1968:505). However, in my work with the Anishinaabeg, the concept of ownership is not reflected in 'owning the animal' either through killing, seeing or butchering it, but rather through the *act* of hunting. In other words, it is not the tangible kill that the hunter owns but rather the intangible act-of-being-a-hunter that a hunter possesses after the 'act' of taking the animal. This tangible/intangible distinction can be used to re-examine the 'proprietary' commodification of Indigenous people over wildlife. I will discuss how property and tenure affect Aboriginal and treaty rights in the next chapter, but I want to the show here, how viewing animals to be 'food-as-subjects' rather than 'food-as-objects' continues for many of the hunters and trappers in Poplar River.

In articulating the importance of harvesting, it was necessary for me to take into account the epistemology that land-based [Indigenous] harvesters have about 'food' and their relationship to 'food'.

I have put the term ‘food’ in quotation marks purposely because what is perhaps understood to be ‘food’ in the English language, becomes numerous other items in Anishinaabemowin. Depending on what one harvests (ie., a moose, duck or berries) and what stage of ‘life’ these animate or inanimate elements are (an animate item may also become inanimate or vice versa), the word which in English would fall under ‘food’ changes. Because in Anishinaabe ontology there is a transformation of ‘animate’ into ‘inanimate’ when discussing food, this metaphysical or what some may consider spiritual, relationship to the resources is best evidenced through Anishinaabemowin. For example, *nin-gii-amwaa* is to say ‘I ate moose’ and *nin-gii-miijin moonzo-wiiyaas* signifies ‘I had moose meat’. Whereas the first sentence refers to animate, that is, the animal, the latter phrase refers to the inanimate, that is, the meat (Pat Ningewance 2012, pers. comm.; Roger Roulette 2011, pers. comm.). The linguistic difference of the Anishinaabeg relationship to food is essentially a teaching expressed through language. This teaching instructed me in the fact that the Anishinaabeg experience of nature and ‘food’ extends past the aspect of ‘eating’; in many cases thus, the nature-food relationship continues to be a unique element of cultural heritage and the idea of ‘gifts’ from the Creator (Abel Bruce 2013, pers. comm.; Johnston 2008; Walter Nanawin 2010; Pimachiowin Aki WHSN 2012:89).

Albeit my references are to hunting, most of my conclusions come largely out of my discussions and interviews with trappers and fishermen who also [occasionally] hunt. Like the hunters of large animals, trappers also view the animals they kill as gifts. During my numerous conversations with community members about hunting, many agreed with the lack of ownership, and hence the inappropriateness of commodification of wild food:

> If you start selling meat, then there is a demand for it. There are now cases where hunters sell meat to people in their own communities, and that is odd. That is not the way our people used to do things. It is not a commodity. […] Animals give themselves up to the hunter, so you cannot sell that meat. It is a gift, and you cannot sell a gift (PRFN member 2013, pers. comm.).

Because *miijim* is seen as the gift, hunting is not about the *taking* of life but about the *giving up* of life. This form of non-proprietary relationship to food and 'the kill' can be further explained through moose hunting. Because *andomoozwe* is roughly understood to be 'to go get moose' rather than 'kill the moose' in Anishinaabemowin (Abel Bruce 2011, pers. comm.; Walter Nanawin 2009, pers. comm.; Pat Ningwance 2012, pers. comm.), the activity of being a successful hunter signifies not only going to the bush and obtaining the animal that has given up his life, but also of sharing that animal's sacrifice through giving away of meat and exhibiting proper respect to the animal.

In *Bringing Home Animals* (1979), Tanner articulates the different forms of respect and responsibilities that Cree hunters have towards the animals that they kill. Similarly, resource harvesters in Poplar River, although mostly Christian Anishinaabeg (and Cree), local people still abide by certain rules that exhibit respect towards the animals that are harvested. These protocols are guidelines that are derived from the traditional or 'spiritual' relationship of the people to the non-human beings, and are meant to show respect. This may include placing tobacco or other gifts as an offering, or in exchange for something taken off the land, such as medicines or an animal (Abel Bruce and John Mainville 2011, pers. comm.; Ken Douglas; Walter Nanawin 2010 pers. comm.). Tobacco exemplifies the Anishinaabeg's use of the resources within the gift economy: because it is a gift, one can sell the fur of an animal and one can eat it, but respect for the animal that sacrificed its life must be there:

> [killing animals] is good for them. They go sell it. After they go sell it, they get something from there. After they go sell it, they buy things from the store, food or something what they want to eat. It's just what it is. You don't have to feel sorry for [the animal], cause you already had something for them, to give them, for them. For the ground, you offer tobacco for the [animal]. I know that animal needs something from you (Abel Bruce 2013).

The 'Old People' as Able calls them, never felt 'sorry' for the animals because they respected them; they also knew that when someone is disrespectful, cruel or boastful of the animals, he or she will be punished (Abel Bruce 2013 pers. comm.; Walter Nanawin 2012; Tanner 1979). Abel told me the story of the Mean Old Man who skinned the animals cruelly, and when the dead and skinned animal escaped

that Mean Old Man, he could not catch rabbit on his trap line any longer; he often starved. Through such teachings and through offerings, respect and appreciation for the animal is given; the fact that the taking away of animal life is personally experienced, the hunters and trappers inherently use the notion of 'offering of life' as a mechanism of restraint. Unlike mass-production where an animal is objectified as meat and its death is often removed from the overall sustenance (cultural and physical) context, offering and understanding 'food' as a sacrifice of the animal for the human, serves as tool against over harvesting, over eating and alienation of animal-as-food. In spite of the "outside world pressures and influences" (AAMP 2010:36) that have diminished some of these practices, a few Elders in Poplar River still abide by the traditions that were passed down to them from 'the people of long ago'. So, whereas Abel places tobacco near a tree, Byron prays to God; both are showing acknowledgement for the death of an animal.

In some cases, the spiritual relationship can provide an explanation for certain customary stewardship decisions. Feit states that if animals are "mad", they will make their presence harder to find; Abel informed me that the spring fire in 2009 was due to the *animikiig*, 'Thunderers (Abel Bruce 2012, pers. comm.). Teresa, a Mountain Dene woman, taught me that if you do not feed the water, the land spirits will feel offended and bad luck will be had in a hunt (Teresa Etchinelle, 2011, pers. comm.). For Richard Morrison too, putting out a 'spirit plate' is a form of gratitude and appreciation for the gift of food that we as human beings are given. Similarly Pat Ningewance in *Pocket Ojibwe* (2009) shares some general advice that reflects cultural etiquettes: "Always, always place tobacco in the ground when you are gathering plants, especially for medicine [and] always accept any food that is included at a feast. Do not refuse it" (2009:146 & 153). Likewise, 'proper' disposal of leftovers is also practiced by some individuals; rather than throwing duck or moose bones in the garbage, the remains are put out on the land, 'spirit food' (Abel Bruce and John Mainville 2011, pers. comm.; Abel Bruce 2012, pers. comm.; Richard Morrison 2012).

In conjunction with gift-giving, the respect towards the trapped, snared or hunted animals, food values are also reflected in the now-faint clan-base cultural system. This form of heritage serves as an additional tool of restraint or 'selective harvesting' where the harvester of a certain clan, will not harvest the animal who is also his *doodem,* clan. Understood to be linked to a certain species spiritually, the clan system limits harvesters in the animals they kill on their trap line. For instance, Abel Bruce's *doodem* is *ma'iingan*, therefore, he will never kill or eat a wolf. It "would be like cannibalism" he tells me and my husband John, one night. Laughingly, he tells us he has eaten muskrat, and John, who is a *wazhashk,* answered that he will have to watch out for Abel from now on!

In Beren's River, Hallowell saw what I recognized in my work with Poplar River First Nation: that just like hunting cannot be separated from cultural beliefs about the nature of the world and man's relation to the cosmos, attitudes and beliefs about *aki miijim* cannot be separated from the conservationist measures and resource stewardship systems of the Anishinaabeg. Hallowell observed that hunting for the Anishinaabeg "was not a secular occupation as it is among the white men", and

> success depended as much upon a man's satisfactory relations with the superhuman "masters" of the different species of game and furbearing animals, as upon his technical skill as a hunter and trapper. In psychological terms, these entities were among the great "givers", who bestowed extraordinary powers upon men, who acted as their "guardian spirits", and without whose "blessings" and assistance a satisfactory human life was thought to be impossible (2010:31).

What this signifies then, is a culturally-embedded relationship of people to food that originates from harvesting. Unlike the agrarian concept where food is accessible and in proximity to the home, a hunter-trapper-gatherer lifestyle of the boreal forest peoples differs in that one has to *go out* to get food and bring it home. As many of the trappers and fishermen have told me, this going out to get food, may sometimes take days or weeks; and sometimes, the attempt may end in disappointment.

Because this aspect is largely dependent on knowing the entire landscape and keeping track of the natural resources and wildlife movements, a unique - intangible in some cases - relationship exists

between the animal that will be killed, and the hunter or trapper who will take the animal's life. Abel tells me numerous stories about how he finds live animals caught in his traps:

> I know how to set a trap. […] now, make a little house, put a trap beside there and the little animal comes around, even marten or fox or lynx maybe wolf. Winter fur. Good furs. Next day I go, there it is, alive (Abel Bruce 2013).

Abel follows these words with descriptive details of how to kill a rabbit, or how to strangle a wild chicken:

> there is a chicken, and you are trying to kill that chicken, and you are standing right here [shows me what to do]. You get a long stick, and tie the snare wire right here, and you tap that long stick, you tap that snare wire right here. And if you really want to get them, you put the wire around his neck and pull it down like this. That's what you have to do (Abel Bruce 2013).

Able makes sure to remind me that it is important to put an offering down first - this is to make certain that a trapper will get many animals. The knowledge and skills associated with harvesting play a significant role because although reflective of immeasurable skill and technique with an specific animal and familiarity with the larger environment, once an animal is caught in a trap or harvested, similar extent of knowledge is further needed to turn the animal into 'food'.

Articulating all these elements, Ken shares with me some of his knowledge about beaver:

> we used to smoke beaver and used to a boil them. Same as [musk]rats if you wanna smoke it, you could smoke it. You can boil them or same as beaver. They used to have good meat in them. They taste good, but not when it hot, when it's hot, like beaver, it can make you sick, when it cooled off, that's when you eat it. It can make you sick. Muskrat it's not that you can eat it hot but the beaver because it has lots of fat on him you'll have to wait till it's cooled off than you can eat it. If somebody brings it to me, I'll eat it same as moose meat.

To ensure sustenance, knowledge and 'acting accordingly' in the relationship that bestows food must be present. And, along with the Asatiwisipe Aki Management Plan (2010 & 2011) where the numerous laws, provisions and policies are more formalized, almost all of the community members I have spoken with about the World Heritage Site, argued that Indigenous epistemologies are the only way to monitor the entirety of this [Indigenous] community conserved area.

To conclude my analysis of Indigenous food systems, my time spent with the Anishinaabeg has taught me that generosity and respect are perhaps the most valued characteristics among the Elders and tradition-bearers. These were most exemplified to me though food sharing; I was either invited over to dinner, or was gifted meat or fish, or was told stories about life on the land and the knowledge it took to obtain food. As Jean Nanawin (2012 pers. comm.) states, "they always bring us food. We get moose meat or fish all the time. We don't ask, but they give it to us all the time". All Elders in the community usually receive a portion of the kill; it is a sign of acknowledgement of their continued presence in the community. It is also a sign of respect for their wisdom as the experienced hunters of today have learned their skills from their Elders. Jean Nanawin has showed me once a freezer full of different fish and meat parts that included, most notably for her, pickerel cheeks (Jean Nanawin 2013, pers. comm.). Through dinner and tea invitations, I would ask questions about *aki* stewardship or 'management' and the global measure of protection; and I would inadvertently hear stories about men who harvest; and about those hunters, trappers and fishermen who bring in wild meat, especially moose and fish - and who distribute it to family and other community members. It became obvious to me that, just like one could not separate the harvesters from their trap lines, I could not disconnect the topic of eating or 'sustenance' from my questions about land, culture and *mino-bimaadiziwin*.

Since these 'integral' Anishinaabeg harvesting practices are anchored to the land, the health of the landscape will ensure cultural continuity and vitality of land-based activities. As Poplar River First Nation tell us with their UNESCO World Heritage Site narrative, should this East Side land be compromised,

> there may be some passing sense of loss by people in the outside world and wider society. Some might even feel that 'it would be too bad'. But life would go on for them. The Poplar River Anishinabek are not and cannot be that indifferent. Protection of the land is the key to our very future. Therefore, to suggest that our traditional lands need not be protected, or that only a part of our traditional territory needs to be protected, is to suggest to us that our lives can be threatened; that our children's future can be compromised or forfeited for some other purpose. It would be disrespectful and immoral for society at large to compromise what we, the Poplar River Anishinabek, know and

assert we need for life (AAMP 2010:3).

The 'need for life' often signifies *aki miijim*, 'land food', and all those cultural practices arising out of heritage and traditions, local food values, and the reaffirmed hunting, trapping and fishing rights reveal that there is a symbolic value attached to these resources for Aboriginal people. And people in the community are good hunters! Many have been doing this for most of their lives and 'going to the trap lines' continues to be a large part of discussions about growing up. One hears the pride in the voice of the person who announces that "Willard's son just shot his first moose last fall" (Ray Rabliauskas 2013, pers. comm.) or "[He] is an excellent geese hunter", Eddie Hudson (2011, pers. comm.) tells me of the fire Chief. I have also heard "They are good hunters, them young guys; they gives away practically all of the meat to everyone in the community" (Jean Nanawin 2011, pers. comm.). These statements show that there continues to be pride in bush skills and local land knowledge. Owing to this First Nation's mode of production, individuals here can not only re-live their heritage and cultural practices, but they can also access provisions derived from the boreal forest, in addition to obtaining store-bought food.

Aki miijim, 'land food', is one of the fundamental components of *pimachiowin aki*, the land that gives life. The land gives life because, if well cared for, the waters, the resources, the heritage of the landscape will forever sustain the people. Abel tells me that "we are the land; people are part of the land", and in *asatiwisipe aki*, I have learned that *aki miijim* symbolizes lasting access to food and the World Heritage Site nomination will ensure the land will be sustainable. Consequently, sourced from cultural heritage and the values of 'people long ago' *aki miijim*, represents the tangible and intangible embodiment of Anishinaabeg values in Poplar River in the way the community plans to manage their traditional territory. Trapping, hunting, fishing and harvesting plant resources continues to be the unique yet traditional mode of production that ensures the best of economic security and food sovereignty. The harvesting economy is yet

another manifestation of Aboriginal *sui generis* rights that flow from heritage, and which have concretized themselves in treaties and in the discourse of Aboriginal rights.

Food for thought

When I asked Poplar River First Nation members about the protective measures about land, I heard stories about harvesting and culture; when I asked about food specifically, I heard narratives about well-being, culture, traditions and medicines. Whereas I could identify aspects of the culture and traditions, I still could not for a long time understand why it is that when I ask about traditional diets, Abel for example, kept telling me where the best place to trap is. Finally, as we were standing alongside the winter road on a sunny February day and Abel pointed out that *here* is where you find *good* beaver that I ultimately understood. *Aki miijim,* is medicine! Food *is* medicine and medicine *is miijiman*!

It took me years of listening to him and numerous attempts at travelling with him and showing me his life on the trap line, when I finally realized that not only was I asking the wrong questions, but that I was not putting together the answers as one coherent piece. Of course food is medicine; the word 'medicines' was often linked with the notion of food but I had Eurocentrically assumed that the two are separate: that one is food – something to be eaten like a steak or cabbage rolls, and the other was medicine – something to heal you with, like mint tea or aspirin. Only after this long time listening to Abel and other members of Poplar River, it became clear to me that those who rely on the land for food and cultural activities, view the harvested resources such as beaver and muskrat not as 'food' (*miijim*) but rather, as 'medicine' - *mashkiki*. My discussion with Abel Bruce was excellent in making that distinction. Whereas thinking of food as "feed" or ailment is part of the larger mainstream conception of Western capitalist practices, Able and others like Sophia, Ray, Albert and Jean from Poplar River, have presented me with an understanding that food, is more than just something one ingests to fulfill

temporary caloric quota. Instead, the numerous members of the First Nation have articulated an aggregate relationship to food as medicine. It is the understanding that food is nourishment: it nourishes the animals, the harvester and the connection of all living things on *asatiwisipe aki*. Abel tells me:

> Food is medicine. It is because when you eat a beaver or a muskrat, that beaver or muskrat ate the willow bark, and the *wiike* roots […] so when you eat that beaver or muskrat, you eat also eat that medicine. Because the willow bark and *wiike* roots are medicines. So the animals like beaver and muskrat and moose are healthy because they eat the willow, the *wiike*, you also get this medicine by eating them (Abel Bruce 2013).

Abel knows that when the animals are trapped and hunted off the land, they not only taste great, but they are also medicines - *mashkikiwag*. This is because when a muskrat is eaten, the harvester also indirectly eats the food of the muskrat, and absorbs the medicinal properties of the muskrat food source. So the medicinal properties of the willow bark – like aspirin and *wiike* – are carried on through the muskrat or beaver, to the human. This "is why our old people were healthy", tells me Abel,

> they ate the medicines through the muskrat and through the beaver. Those animals were not injected. The animals in the store are injected, but the muskrat and beaver eat the medicines. Medicine is food, it is all the same. The same healthy things we eat, it is what get and keeps us healthy (Abel Bruce 2013).

Abel who has spent most of his life trapping, acknowledges that the reason he is still strong enough to go trapping or travelling to his trap line on Mukatiwisipe, is because he has been eating muskrat, and beaver and moose and rabbit most of his life. It is those animals that eat the things we now pick as our "medicine". But unlike Abel and the other harvesters, we 'skip' the connector between medicine and our health: nutritional elements found in healthy foods. So, while many people in the south purchase medication and 'healthy' food in specialty stores or marked sections at the grocery mart, people in Poplar River have the benefit of getting food that is already healthy and full of medicinal properties. Abel continues:

> even lynx, people used to eat hides from the lynx long time ago. I remember my mom used to feed me hide from the lynx. That's food. But those other ones, marten and mink, it tastes different, different kinds of meat, even though they eat the same kind of root from the

> ground and all that. Beaver is good to eat too. Beaver eats ginger, *wiike*, that's medicine. You can eat it from the beaver, cause the beaver eats that, it's good for your health, nothing wrong with that. Even muskrat eats *wiike*, that's medicine. And when you eat that muskrat, it's good for your health. And when you buy something at The Northern, cow and all that, lots of things there. They inject the animal. In the bush, you don't go and inject those animals. And when you go buy the meant from The Northern, the meat comes from Alberta, all over. That animal has been injected, cows and pigs…(Abel Bruce 2013)

Pulling out his collection of jars in which he has numerous forms of *okandimoo, wiike, mashkodewashk*, he tells me that he takes this to supplement his diet – since his age and his grandchildren do not allow Abel to trap as often anymore, he relies on medicines to keep him healthy. He informs me that his father has shown him about medicines; he taught Abel that some you can ingest, others inhale, some grind into powder to replace flour. But "if I eat a muskrat or beaver, I do not need this medicine because it is already in them" (Abel Bruce 2013, pers. comm.). Noel Bruce also informs me that, according to late Alex Mitchell,

> people who ate wild foods were very strong and never got sick because he said, moose, beavers, muskrats, and other animals ate plants that were healthy and medicated, i.e. beaver, rabbits, muskrats and moose and water fowls ate food that had medication like the ginger roots and, etc when they ate these animals, they were healing from the medicated plants the animals ate. He also said that women used to get up as soon from giving birth to a child, that's how strong the women were in the old days and today we don't see that, he told me - makes sense when you think about it. In short, traditional food made people strong and healthy. We can see why 'living off the land' is still important today. Additionally, people would gather ginger root, for example in the fall - to prepare for illnesses like the flu. They would gather other medicated plants and specific tree barks for the common flues that are associated with fever (Noel Bruce 2007, notes)

Picking *miskoobiimag* is a good example of how *mashkiki* and *aki miijim* lead to the balance around *mino-bimaadiziwin*. Once the bark has been shaven off, and the tobacco layer peeled, the branches should be put into place as deer chew on the twigs. The small branches not only attract the deer, but also work as a laxative; the properties of the medicine regulate the deer intestines and cause them to have the distinctive pellets as their poop!. So after tobacco is made, the deer are nourished and the meat of the deer is healthy from the *miskoobimag*. As a result when tobacco is placed for the deer that has given up her life for human consumption, it is almost like returning the gift for the person who

provided the deer with the exposed *miskoobimag* twigs. The *miskoobimag* is therefore connected to the tobacco, to the deer, to the food and ultimately to the well-being of the individual (Abel Bruce and John Mainville 2013, pers. comm.). One can pick medicines from where the good animals are – they know best and we can learn from them.

Because, like *miijim*, *mashkiki* is seen as a gift, there are protocols that must be followed. Able "always put[s] tobacco down" before he picks medicine and goes on his trap line.

Image 4.3 *Asatiwisipe mashkikiwag. Medicines collected from the land. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

Correspondingly, I was told that you put down tobacco, food, bullets or coins because you are acknowledging the gift of health that is given either through *miijim* or directly from the *maskikiwag*. It shows respect and represents the cultural heritage element of reciprocity that unequivocally comes with the responsibility of taking care of *pimachiowin aki*. So the protective policies and the UNESCO designation that I began to seek out on the landscape directed me through the frozen water channels of harvesting narratives and *mino-bimaadiziwin* stories and eventually led me to learn about medicinal food that makes one feel *mino-ayaa*, 'good'.

On the other hand, there is this whole notion of 'wild' that is associated with wild meat and 'country food'. During one of my exchanges with Abel and subsequently with Ken over tea, we talked about trapping – why do it? In the past, Aboriginal people would harvest and use every part of the animal, but why continue to go through the effort to trap the animals with the fur prices so low? Is it a mere cultural exercise or is the trapped animal being consumed as a delicacy? Unofficial and provincial statistics indeed show that there is a significant amount of fur-bearing animals trapped in *asatiwisipe*

aki, about 30 furs per year of mostly marten, some lynx, and the occasional fox or fisher (Manitoba 2010a). Occasionally, the meat of the animals is consumed, but very few individuals continue to eat the fur-bearing animals they trap. So, if the fur is not worth much at the fur auction, and the meat is not eaten; and the moose meat is consumed, but the hides/skins are not often treated locally, why does the provincial regulation over these activities exist? Is it for conservation only? Or is it for controlling Aboriginal harvesters? Is it to limit the Indigenous system of food production, processing and distribution that involves non-governed food handling?

Perhaps one of the explanations for the continuous exclusion of the hunting and trapping mode of production from discussions of food sovereignty is that, whereas agrarian food production, fishing and farming are largely depended on market relations, wild game or wild meat is not for sale. Since only a small portion of the populations consists of a wild diet, and because it is wild (hence 'free'), it is controlled and regulated by the provincial government in Canada. The Manitoba Hunting Guide (2012) writes that "it is illegal to buy, sell, trade, barter or offer to buy, sell, trade, or barter the meat or internal organs of a wild animal" (Manitoba 2012a). This preamble is written every year in bold red letters in the Manitoba Hunting Guide. Curious to finding out about the restrictions on trapping, I contacted the Manitoba Legislative Specialist on Wildlife at Manitoba Conservation. My discussion with the individual was not recorded and, paraphrased below, was very interesting from the point of view of consumption of 'wild' meat. Upon asking why it is illegal to sell wild meat, the Legislative Specialist on Wildlife answered:

> [no one sets the price] because the person would be charged for poaching. It is illegal to sell harvested meat in the province. Harvested meat can be given to family members and shared, but it is illegal to sell it. [..It is illegal to sell it] because this could not be regulated. Too many people would go hunting and poachers would hunt whenever […] If all animals out there would have a price attached to them, people would all go out and get them. It could not be regulated.
>
> *Pawlowska: So, how is it that fur-bearing animals can be harvested: their furs sold at market price, and their meat cannot be sold?*

> Specialist: Well, this is because there is commercial value placed on fur. It comes out of a long trading business. And the meat cannot be sold because [pause] very few people actually consume the meat of a lynx or wolf or other trapped animals (Manitoba Conservation 2012, pers. comm. January 21, 2012).

This discussion was refreshing, because, it is an example of the historical materialism where the economic interpretation of history and culture is based on capital and materialism; like the intangible cultural elements of Anishinaabeg, here, the fur is separated from the larger context of cultural Indigenous values. Because fur can be marketed, it is commodified but the associated meat - the animal itself that the meat comes from – unlike moose, has un-edible associations with it. Since the moose is a large animal whose sizeable meat will be eaten, there is no wastage. But, given the circumstances, if a trapper sells the fur of the animal he/she has harvested because the market decides the price of fur, then should not he/she have the choice of selling the meat of that same animal to someone who will eat it?

Of course, community members from Poplar River agree with the provincial law that wild meat should not be sold:

> If you start selling meat, then there is a demand for it. There are now cases where hunters sell meat to people in their own communities, and that is odd. That is not the way our people used to do things. It is not a commodity. […] Animals give themselves up to the hunter, so you cannot sell that meat. It is a gift, and you cannot sell a gift (PRFN member 2013, pers. comm.).

To be clear, I am not advocating the selling of wild meat to be introduced into the economy, I do however question the source of the position the concept of 'wild' carries with it. I find it interesting that this 19th century notion of the hunting economy has seeped into the reasons for wild game regulation. To say that 'very few people will eat a trapped animal' like lynx or wolf, is to exclude Aboriginal cultures who *do* eat trapped animals. Rather than insisting that *all* animals would be automatically killed if more than just their furs are commodified, perhaps the issue lies in *which* animals would be killed; after all, not all small animals are trapped, not all animals trapped are consumed by Aboriginal peoples. The eating of some animals may culturally determined: in Poplar

River, bear is not eaten, neither is wolf. In many cultures, Aboriginal people do not eat the animals of the clans, for example, a person of a muskrat clan will not harvest or kill a muskrat. This is because it is believed that the animal is a member of the clan, it is "like eating your own kind" (Abel Bruce 2013, pers. comm.; John Mainville 2013, pers. comm.; Pat Ningewance 2012, pers. comm.). Others, like the Inuit in the arctic do not eat foxes; but the Cree have been known to consume them. Other animals like otters, squirrels, rabbits and especially beaver, are known to be the staple food of some Aboriginal groups. Some Omushkegoowag from Norway House would say that beaver tails are a delicacy (James Queskekapow, 2010, pers. comm.). Ken reveals one of his stories to me:

> Way back when, we did not eat marten; we don't eat that. Muskrat you eat. Just put it away, the skin, just take the fur out, stretch it and sell it. You just throw [the meat] away. Yeah these old trappers, they would just do that [eat lynx]. My old man, my grandfather, he used to cook that. But i never tasted it. I just watched him, and so I asked him, what are you eating? And he told me "lynx", and so I asked him, "how does it taste?" And he said "good" but I never tried. It looks like a cat any ways [laughs] (Ken Douglas 2013).

From my understanding, it appears that wild meat, is often seen to be "gross" by the larger mainstream society. Part of the reason is that it is "unregulated" and thus could be seen as dirty or contaminated, another part is precisely this connection to it. Many individuals with whom I shared my numerous adventures and trips up north with, seemed largely shocked yet fascinated with the idea of hunting and eating something that a few minutes ago was walking around on its feet. This is also evident in the idea that restaurants cannot sell wild meat, largely because it is "unregulated". The Manitoba Hunting Guide states that

> a permit is required by anyone who wishes to possess or serve the meat of a wild animal in any place where meals are served for money or any other form of remuneration. [...] The meat can only be obtained from a legal source such as donated by a hunter who lawfully harvested the animal under the authority of a license (2012:13).

It is evident in this description that un-licensed Aboriginal hunters may have a hard time obtaining the license, if at all. Coincidentally, seeing how it was largely women who historically did the trapping, and it was largely those animals that sustained (financially and physically) the lives of the families

when the hunters were away at a hunt, is wildlife regulation then, an embedded form of capitalist patriarchy? In fact, in many cases, the meat from trapped animals like rabbit, muskrat, partridges and beaver, were harvested by women. To say that meat cannot be 'sold, bartered or traded' like it is prohibited in the provincial hunting guide, is to deny the modes of production of many Aboriginal women worldwide.

What this signifies then in the context of Aboriginal mode of production, is that State-approved foods that exist *within* the capitalist agrarian framework only, are edible. Once 'food' leaves the State-sanctioned, commodified framework, it is taken outside of the scope of 'normalcy'; this Us (Canadian/consumer) versus Them (Aboriginal/harvester) seeps into issues associated with food justice and food sovereignty. For example, in December 2011, the National Post wrote a story with the following headline: "Wild game meat not welcome at Ontario food Banks" (National Post [NS] 2011). The article states that unless they grew up on a farm or died at a slaughterhouse, donations of moose, deer and other wild game are not accepted by Ontario food banks on the basis of safety. The word "license" and regulation are repeated throughout the article outlining that although cut, wrapped and frozen at a licensed shop, donations of deer steak and ground venison by the Safari Club International was rejected based on provincial health regulations. In response to the claim that seeing people go hungry is more accepted than "properly processed wild game" (NS 2011), Food Banks Canada responded with "we look to government regulation to help us identify what sort of safe-quality products can be shared in this country" (quoted in NS 2011). Although the Club is made up of mostly non-Aboriginal people, it

Image 4.4 *Anishinaabe moose meat cuisine. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

nonetheless consists of individuals who kill and eat 'wild' food. The idea that wild game is somehow unclean because it has not been approved by scientists indirectly corresponds to the process of hunting. Within this idea is the ideology that hunters may not be experienced enough to take 'good' or clean meat, and that certainty of quality can never be established because it is not verified by 'real' knowledge - science.

Most provinces are similar in their position. *Maclean's* Magazine 2012 article proposed re-writing the rules about wild game, stating that only in Nova Scotia, restaurants are "free to offer the meat of wild bears, beaver, rabbits, pigeons and such delicacies as raccoons and crows" (Richler 2012:71). The author, Jacob Richler, also discusses an interesting menu by an Alsatian-born chef, which includes, wild venison, wild duck, grouse, bear and beaver tail in a small West Coast Fishing Club lodge in Haida Gwaii. There are also other places of exceptions throughout Canada, like the territories, where, in Inuvik, freezers are filled with muskox and caribou, and in very special places in Toronto and Vancouver, where game is served "free of charge" but must be accompanied by a $150 bottle of mineral water (Richler 2012:72). If there are exceptions to the rule, then meat harvested by First Nations hunters and trappers could certainly be served at local restaurants in communities to enhance the socio-economic situations found in many reserves. This delicacy could be served in Poplar River's Cultural Interpretative Center, where a dinner of "we-shot-it-ourselves" could be accompanied by cultural education to make the eco-tourism in the community a truly unique experience. This however, would require de-materializing and de-structuring the agrarian capitalism that continues to permeate food and wildlife regulations, and a re-conceptualizing of food ethics that guide Poplar River First Nation's resource stewardship practices.

In conclusion, in this chapter, I argued that much of the food sovereignty scholarship is based on the capitalist agriculturalist perspective that does not fit in with the boreal forest Indigenous hunting, trapping and gathering modes of production and thus limits some policies and dialogue about land and

resource use. I have illustrated here the local Anishinaabe food system whose fundamental component is the belief that it is the 'sacred duty' of the Anishinaabeg/Indigenous people to protect the 'gift' that is *aki*, 'land' and *nibi*, 'water'. Embodied in Elders and traditional harvesters, Poplar River's re-conceptualization of possible economic opportunities to reflect food security and accessibility through traditional and local knowledge is an extension of *mino-bimaadiziwin*, 'the good life'. Harvesting ensures that healthy and culturally relevant food is accessible, however, this mode of production is more than an activity related to food, it is also a socio-cultural aspect of a people's relationship to the land and their use of cultural spaces. I will examine how resource stewardship in the form of local customary governance and embodied in Indigenous food systems exist in Poplar River in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5
The ways of 'people long ago' and Indigenous resource stewardship

> *So north, going into the trap lines now, north of Poplar River, north and east, into this protected land, I've travelled and waded in the muskegs. I've waded in the muskeg and in Crane Creek muskeg. Just this creek, called Crane Creek 'cause it has lots of cranes. It is just two miles north of here, and my grandfather, Walter Bruce had hunted caribou in that area. So he came upon, he surprised a crane sitting on one egg - that's a big egg - and the crane got up and chased him [laughs]. "I couldn't find anything, that crane was really, was really aggressive, so I had to avoid that, avoid that place, I couldn't get the caribou", he says, "so I came home. I didn't want to disturb the crane laying its eggs"* (Walter Nanawin 2008).

About three years ago, I watched the Disney cartoon *Bambi* for the first time. The movie is about a cute baby deer named Bambi who is taught by his mother to avoid at all costs the antagonist of the story, 'the hunter'. There in interesting scene in the film where mama-deer tells Bambi that "people come and hunt us" so it is important to run away. As predicted, a male hunter shows up and recklessly shoots everything he sees; I counted about 18 shots being fired - at the birds, the trees, the little rabbits and still, the deer was not killed. This imagery of the hunter represents what the larger society mainly considers with regard to harvesters - Aboriginal and non; the perception that hunting is a backwards practice - uncontrolled, cruel and 'savage' - continues to prevail among mainstream populations. My discussion with Abel one evening on a really cold day in March illustrates his response to the mainstream idea of hunters and the activity of hunting for food:

> The way I see it, people long time ago, doing it, […] it wasn't hard for them because they really want something that you want to eat. Even rabbit, snare a rabbit. You really have to get this rabbit, cause you really want it for food. […] I never had no power, no difficulty with that 'cause every time, I see people offering tobacco before they pick those things up from the ground, you have to do this first, offer tobacco. They ask what's going to be used for this, for that […] when you wanna get rabbit, beaver and all that, you offer tobacco. And this is why I don't have any difficulty with that, me. […] Maybe some other people feel that way, but no, I don't feel that way… ahh, what's the use killing a rabbit, I feel sorry for that, I feel sorry killing the rabbit for that. I don't feel that way cause I really want that rabbit. I want to eat it so bad, 'cause it's good to eat it. It's good for your health and all that (Abel Bruce 2013).

And, harvesters in Poplar River are experts; no one believes that people go around shooting relentlessly like the hunter in *Bambi* did. The hunters know the best time to hunt, trap and fish for the catch they

are looking for. For example, it appears to be 'common sense' that a pregnant cow in the spring will not be shot – unless the hunter's life is in danger (AAMP 2010:36). When Ernest, a head trapper in Poplar River First Nation, goes beaver trapping, he is selective of the beaver he chooses: older males, in specific seasons, are targeted in his trapping activities: "when there are too many beaver, they kill each other and a population crash occurs" he tells me (Ernest C Bruce 2011 pers. comm.). When picking cedar, "I pick only the older branches so that the young ones can grow", Abel informs me (Abel Bruce 2011, pers. comm.). And when Jean fishes with Walter, she does not need to remind him that the big fish are the best and that the little ones still need to lay eggs – he has learned this long ago from his father, the fisherman (Jean Nanawin 2011, pers. comm.). Likewise, nearly everyone in Poplar River knows that spring and fall are best times to fish for pickerel, and early winter is best for heading out to the trap lines because the snow is not too deep (Ken Douglas 2013, pers. comm.).

Because knowledge about the landscape is gained by 'going out on the land' (Abel Bruce 2011, pers. comm.; Ernest C Bruce 2011, pers. comm.), this signifies that local people have the best and most detailed knowledge of black bear and beaver populations, of locations to kill moose, and of the places to pick blueberries and so on (AAMP 2010; Berkes 2008; Ken Douglas 2013). Berkes (2008:5) acknowledges that Indigenous environmental knowledge is exceptionally detailed and appreciation for this knowledge is "paving the way for the acceptability of validity of traditional knowledge in a variety of fields. The land-based teachings of 'land knowledge' are passed down from one generation to the other and continue to be applied today in the community's unique system of managing their trap line territory. Each individual head trapper is in charge of the wildlife within his specific trap line, and each fisherman knows how much fish can be caught from the rivers and lakes. That is because when living from, camping and travelling on *asatiwipe aki*, men and women "see what is on their land" says Ernest C Bruce (2011, pers. comm.): "to effectively care for the land, cultural and traditional 'norms' are employed to ensure ecosystem permanence" (Ernest C Bruce 2011, pers. comm.). Hence, the Poplar

River initiative of protecting their trap line territory represents an exciting initiative not only from the perspective of protected landscapes and wildlife conservation through a UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination, but also a new vision of community-controlled economic development, where local values will guide resource stewardship. This chapter will discuss Indigenous stewardship systems as they manifest themselves in Poplar River as well as the role they play in policy. Before I begin my discussion of Indigenous resource stewardship, a note about 'traditional [ecological] knowledge' or 'Indigenous knowledge', 'TK' or 'Aboriginal knowledge' in Poplar River is warranted here.

Asatiwisipe Aki *gikendamowin*

> *…to get a muskrat in the spring time, there is a log here, a big log floating around in the shore, you know. In the river, and you put, maybe you just chop the log a little bit like this. Or maybe you don't have to chop it, you can just put weeds there you know [shows me] some weeds. As soon as that muskrat sees that log, he'll go just around, and he'll crawl up this log you know and so you put a trap right here; just put weeds all around there and put a trap on top of the weeds. And the rat will come swimming to those logs and traps and will take that trap and fall under water and he will drown himself.... and you'll just take the muskrat out of the trap. And you can set that trap again. Even if you see an old log like this; there is the main land right there; and you see a log going like this, I put a conibear trap, square like this; I put it right there, and you put a stick right there in the conibear trap, and when the muskrat sees that log, he will climb up right away, this is when you get that muskrat* (Abel Bruce 2013).

Many scholars have attempted to dichotomize, interpret or recognize the complexities of traditional knowledge in terms of their respective epistemologies, contexts and underpinnings (Berkes 2008; Nadasdy 2003; Feit 1988 & 2005; IUCN). Berkes (2008:5) writes that the term 'traditional knowledge' is, by necessity, ambiguous since the words 'traditional' and 'ecological knowledge' are themselves ambiguous:

> There is no universally accepted definition of traditional ecological knowledge.. In the dictionary sense, traditional usually refers to cultural continuity transmitted in the form of social attitudes, beliefs, principles, and conventions of behavior and practice derived from historical experience (2008:5).

Nadasdy (2003:60) on the other hand, writes that traditional knowledge is more of 'a way of life' and rather than a regional manifestations, it is a global phenomenon. Likewise, in discussing the emerging recognition of Cree tenure and rights, Feit (2005:275-277) recognizes that early Hudson Bay Company workers had observed 'Indian conservation customs' that linked knowledge of beaver populations and a family-based hunting territory system. In the same sense, organizations like the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) illustrates that it is precisely local and Indigenous communities and the inherent 'traditional knowledges' that ensure biodiversity. In volume three of the series, entitled *Protected Landscapes and Wild Biodiversity*, Dudley (2012) writes that

> the interaction of people and nature over time has produced [areas] of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value: and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values (Dudley 2012:8).

The respect and subsequent examinations into how local peoples have for centuries, or since time immemorial, continued to rely on the resources without exhausting them is growing. Several of those studies suggest that traditional practices enhance the biodiversity that we appreciate today. Whether it is knowledge and wisdom of Gitga'at seaweed (Menzies, ed. 2006; Turner an Clifton 2006), Cree harvesting practices (Berkes 1988 & 2008) or Anishinaabe fire management (Berkes & Davidson-Hunt 2006) or the need to incorporate these into State management (Anderson & Bone 2009; Feit 1988,1995 & 2005; Freeman & Carbyn, eds.1988; Nadasdy 2003 & 2009; Notzke 1994; Tanner 1979; Usher 1976, 1982 & 2009), social relationships are the basis of monitoring within Indigenous resource stewardship systems.

Positioning their philosophical and epistemological differences, sometimes in the context of co-management or as antithetical to it, the larger discussion of traditional knowledge- interpretation and usage within the scientific or environmental assessment framework will not be presented here. While such studies are instructive and important, my usage of the term 'TK' will be used interchangeably with TEK and Indigenous knowledge as all three generally refer to 'Indigenous ways of knowing'. Whereas

I will discuss the legal context of traditional knowledge within Indigenous resource stewardship in the following chapter, here, I use the term to show that Anishinaabeg 'knowledge' of 'resources' is reflective of Indigenous stewardship.

Since Poplar River First Nation is part of the consortium applying for a nomination that aspires to have their territory designated as a site of both natural and cultural wealth, much of the scholarship on 'traditional ecological knowledge' in natural resource management would necessarily need to include cultural resource 'management'. As discussed in Chapter 1, the community is culturally vibrant and here, *ganawenjigaade* of natural resources would have to include cultural resources. In discussing 'TEK' in environmental assessments and management, Usher (2009:50) sums up the concept to include:

> Empirical facts or associations based on observation and experience, explanations of fact, a culturally [and I would add, locally] specific way of organizing and understanding information, a set of values, and – in a very broad sense – cultural [and local] norms about how to do things. From an Aboriginal perspective, TEK is what people learn from experience, from family and community, and from stories handed down about how to live life fully and effectively in their environment. It is thus both knowledge of how things work and a guide to action.

I believe that this framework sets up the context of my discussion quite well in terms of its broad definition. To this understanding, I would also include 'cultural resources', which, as discussed in Chapter 3, are not necessarily tangible but which nevertheless continue to resonate through the 'living heritage' that is the local Elders, harvesters, story-tellers as well as through *ganawenjigewininiwag,* 'keepers or historians'. My usage of the term 'traditional knowledge' in this work arose out of the literature on TK and from my discussions with members of Poplar River First Nation who generally considered the idea of *aki-gikendaamowin, '*land knowledge', to be simply 'knowledge' gained from personal experience, *bimaadiziwin,* 'life', *aadizookaanan,* 'collective oral histories', and *dibaajimowinan,* 'individual narratives [shared and/or passed down]'. For some more than others, *gikino'amaagewinan,* 'teachings', like lessons to be learned or guidelines to be followed, were also

factors that influenced their life on the land and harvest. The cohesiveness of all these terms can be said to fall under the terms *ganawenjigaade,* 'be watch over/take care of [the land]', and *aki gikendamowin* 'land knowledge'.

However, I do distinguish between the larger cultural 'traditional' knowledge that exists among all the Anishinaabeg and which was passed down as part of a cultural (Anishinaabeg) framework, and the concept of 'local knowledge'. Poplar River is unique, both as a community with distinct local needs and in its locality. The mix of Anishinaabeg, Cree, and Oji-Cree speakers and non-Aboriginal members living in the community permanently allows for socio-geographical creativity and cultural variegation. 'Local knowledge' therefore, will refer to the valuable information of resident members (not all Anishinaabeg or Aboriginal) about the surrounding landscape of *asatiwisipe aki*. In *What is Native Studies?*, Kulchyski (2000:17) discusses this difference within the discipline of Native Studies, arguing that traditional knowledge differs from local knowledge in that the first is

> the knowledge of the cultural traditions of an Aboriginal people; it can take an enunciated form, as in the teaching of the Great Law of the longhouse peoples, or it can be implicit in the manner in which people live their lives, make decisions and so on. […] Local knowledge, in this schema, is the knowledge associated with a particular territory of land and water, a form of knowledge that comes with a lengthy period of occupancy. Local knowledge can be traditional or Indigenous; it may even be possessed by non-Native peoples who have acquired it through a long or intensive relation to a particular territory.

Both of these are knowledges found in Poplar River, where the mix of Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree and non-Aboriginal people create the wholeness of information about resource stewardship.

Ken tells me a story about how knowledgeable the moose hunters are in Poplar River:

> In this country, there is lots of moose. Lots of bull here. And they don't kill a cow in this spring, in case it is pregnant or something. My son-in-law used to catch and he would remember how much he would kill them. He would always go for a hunt. Sometimes they go together, three guys or four guys or five guys; they would go up the river and when they saw it, and they shot it. They don't bother it when go up, they just take it when they come back. There is lots of moose all over the place. Somewhere in the bush and a deep snow. They go up the river in this summer, sometimes for a week... in September, that's when you see a moose [best] (Ken Douglas 2013).

Ken's story about hunting moose alludes to the fact that Indigenous resource management is an aspect of knowledge, life-long experience and conscious decision-making. For example, curtailment of harvesting is common in Poplar River, and below, Abel illustrates how he practices selective and intermittent harvesting:

> like a couple of years ago, like five years ago, I had 78 martens, a whole winter, 78 martens. Sometimes I used to get four a day; sometimes I used to get two a day and I'd come home with that. That's part of the area I used to trap marten, not the other ones. I tried to save the other ones for next winter. I never set a snare for the lynx. Forget it, I save that one for next year. Even fox are good, for the trapper, for the fox, for the fisher. I save that for next year; I'll just go after marten for this year. I'll just go for marten this year (Abel Bruce 2013).

For Abel, sustainability and geography determine harvesting, but so do cultural protocols, subsistence needs and even economics. The Anishinaabe ways of viewing the world and humankind's existence within it, serves as a tool to of Indigenous modes of production. As a trapper, Abel has the knowledge, the skills, and the respect towards the animals that he kills. The concept of *miinigowizi,* 'to be gifted' with land, and hence, there is an obligation to care for it, can be seen as one of the elements of the broader Anishinaabeg intangible cultural heritage; respect for wildlife through offerings, especially tobacco, will ensure that the animals are not 'free' for the taking, but rather, reflect a respectful exchange so that humans can survive. I have articulated the Anishinaabeg cultural belief of reciprocity and gift-giving in Chapters 3 and 4.

In the context of Indigenous modes of resource stewardship, my exploration about *aki* , 'the land' and how to ensure this 'gift' is best cared for, led to my understand that when one takes care of the gift that is *aki*, it will 'gift' back. In reciprocity for good stewardship, *Manitou omiigiwewinan*, 'the Creator's gifts', will come through an abundant landscape where animals will give themselves up to the hunter (Abel Bruce 2012, pers. comm.; Jean Nanawin and Walter Nanawin 2011, pers. comm.; Tanner 1979). In Poplar River, the harvesters who share their harvest with fellow community members are known as *nitaa-andawenjige ininiwag* - 'good hunters'. Berkes (1988 & 2008) and Tanner (1979)

speak of the Cree beliefs that it is the animals, not people who control the success of the hunt, thus the hunters-fishermen have certain obligations to fulfill towards the animals to ensure a productive hunt. Brody, Feit, Usher and Freeman & Carbyn's edited book, *Traditional Knowledge and Renewable Resource Management in Northern Regions* (1988) echo similar assessments of the northern harvesting systems whereby Indigenous people abide by certain rules to ensure a continued and proper use of resources. In some cases, dreams play a large role in harvesting, and Hallowell noted that among some of the Anishinaabeg traditions, an animal "boss" can send human 'catch' by guiding him through dreams. Recording some of the traditions, Hallowell tells the story narrated to him by an Anishinaabe hunter who

> dreamed of a beautiful girl approaching him. Waking up, he interpreted this dream as meaning that an animal had been caught in one of his deadfalls. He went to the trap and, sure enough, he found a female fisher (2010: 331).

In Poplar River, some instances of this system have been shared with me, but in all cases, I received the impression that they were told to me in confidence, which is why I will not provide examples here.

Feit (1995:191-193) argues that reciprocity, community and social relations, are the basis of Cree land and resource tenures. Because the land passes from one generation to the other, the extent that humans use or control 'God's creations' are part of a broad social reciprocal obligations evidenced in stewardship practices. Therefore, the right of all Cree to ensure productivity of the land and animals is assisted by a system of stewardship where social relations are an integral part of land use strategies among the Cree of James Bay:

> Rooted in reciprocity between humans and animals and in […] ways of negotiating the tensions between collective and individual claims of access to lands and control of the products of one's labour. Hunting territories are both expressions and means of reproduction of Algonquin social relations, symbolic meaning, and relations to the land and wildlife, i.e. they are integral to social reproduction broadly construed" (Feit 2005:281).

Indigenous resource stewardship has an undeniably social aspect to the 'natural' component. This allows the harvesters and Elders to build extensive ties to the land and acquire vast knowledge of the resources:

> They are constantly aware of the changing conditions of the game populations. They note changes in the frequency of sign of moose, the numbers yarding together, the rates of twin births, and age and sex ratios. For beaver, they note the changes in the number and size of colonies, size of litters, and the frequency of abandoned or new colonies. They can easily discuss these trends with an outsider, comparing present conditions with those of last year, the year before, or five years ago (Feit 1995:193).

Exchanging information with fellow harvesters and family members permits making adjustments to ensure sustainability. Changes over time in the use of land such as moving trap-setting sites, alternating fire-wood harvesting areas, selective hunting and rotating family campsites have many implications for diversity of flora and fauna species as well as the transmission of knowledge. This is also the case of the Anishinaabeg whose social systems are the foundation of resource stewardship. The Anishinaabeg of Pimachiowin Aki write that

> The group of people who cooperate in work during seasonal trips out on the land, such as a winter hunting and trapping group, typically consists of the friends and family who chose to work together for personal reasons (Davidson-Hunt and O'Flaherty 2011). Although highly variable, this group usually consists of at least two married couples and their children. This composition supports the important work partnerships traditionally associated with northern hunters and trappers (Hamilton 2010); that is, men travel out by day to hunt and trap while women (and young children) harvest near the camp, process harvested goods and maintain the camp. This routine is significant because it sets the extent of a hunting/trapping area, or "family harvesting area" (Deutsch 2010), […] these "family harvesting areas" continue to be important to how people make use of the land, and are set within a larger system of government-registered trapline areas […] which were delineated in consultation with and under the guidance of resident Anishinaabeg. As Dunning (1959) noted for Pikangikum, "government registration of the trappers and territories was based on the 1947 grouping of trappers and their own definition of existing trapping areas". For this reason, creation of a registered trapline system was understood by Anishinaabeg to be akin to a Treaty-making process, in which lands were being set aside for the exclusive use of Anishinaabeg (Berezanski 2004), and a confirmation of their stewardship responsibilities toward all resources on their traplines, not just fur resources (Pimachiowin Aki WHSN 2012:90).

Aboriginal rights are essential in the recognition and legitimization of traditional knowledges. In the context of 'rights', these knowledges can be used as a valid form of stewardship that can work

independently or even alongside of positivist knowledge. Elders, head trappers and resource harvesters are aware of the trends of the ecosystem; they record them, discuss them with others, compare them with previous years and can provide explanations for changes that occur on the land by relating them to the weather, human activities, developmental projects, or more recently, to global warming. Feit confirms that "some of the trends observed by the stewards are the same ones used by wildlife biologists to monitor game populations, although few biologists have such long-term and detailed knowledge" (1995:193). In a remote community like Poplar River, who is better to look after the land, than the local Elders who have spent their entire lives familiarizing themselves with it?

The solidity of the Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg stewardship system emanates from the local landscape, values and practices passed down from 'people of long ago'. Ken tells me about the teachings he received about going up the river:

> my grandfather, before he would go up the river he would put down tobacco. Even some people they to put things in the river. Before you go up the river we used to do that. Some of our people, they would put things in the river, like this river. Like where we lived, on a higher rock. They say there was something in the water like that. I did not understand why they do that (Ken Douglas 2013).

Individuals like Abel, John, Ernest, Walter and many others have also spent much of their lives in the bush; consequently, they have immense knowledge when it comes to 'natural resources' and possess extensive *ganawenjigaade*, 'land care/monitoring' knowledge and skills about harvesting. Abel has shown me some of his skills out on the land, along Marchand's Creek and Mukatewisipe; although the time spent with this kind man cannot be fully expressed on paper, I can share some of his knowledge here:

> Always pick the right thing. Sometimes I'd get five or ten or fifteen lynx a day you know. You can do that. You can just come there and get yourself a snare. They are smart animals...it wants to keep his life. You can't just go there - like marten, you can't just get it in the trap,[like] the fisher [...] that's how animals are. That's why I have been a trapper all these years; I know what it's like. You can't just go ahead and trap every animal. Otter, otter lives under water, beaver lives under water. You couldn't trap [them all] but you can make hole first, set a snare for beaver under the water (Abel Bruce 2013).

And, his skills to catch beaver in the spring result from the knowledge that was passed down to him by his ancestors and from his own experience out on the land for most of his life:

> In winter time, ice is right here [points with his finger], you have a beaver lodge and there is a trench; they have a trench right here; and you only have one trench. That's where they come out and swim around and they have their feeds around here; they use that all winter. They have that feed; they don't bother that feed until December or January. They need that feed. But in the fall, they go hunt around and swim around. When it starts to freeze up, you have so many trenches. Here, they have a home...they go and eat there; they swim around all over. In January, that's the best part to do it; there is their feeds around this lodge, you have feeds, poplar trees and all that, you know. Poplar branches like this [shows me], kept them there. So you set a snare right here [points], set it around their feeds, cause they don't go to hunt; they don't go swim around too much 'cause they got their feeds here. The ice helps them go around. That's the best part of getting a beaver. You get a stick right here; put a stick under the ice, maybe three or four snares, just set a snare here. I'll put a snare right there, another one here. Or, you can put another one there in deep water. You can have those snares with one stick.... maybe you can put two there if it is deep enough. Or you can just put one snare. And these beaver, they are really hungry to come out, they are [going to come out of the trench], they will swim around; this is where you get them, with snares. They will come around to eat (Abel Bruce 2013).

Ken on the other hand, although having trapped much of this life, identifies mostly as a fisherman, and many of his stories reflect that identity:

> I started when I was 14 years old…Marcel and Edward, I used to work with them. That's what I learned from them… how to fish… comes from my old man. We used to do this in the spring and summer . We remained for a month. [but] after my heart surgery, I gave up everything I had. There was nothing left for me and I did feel sad I see all those boats go by… I look out at them and I said to Raymond, that will never be us again, we will never go out there again. Yeah we used to be out on that lake all that time. In the fall and in summer, we used to be out there year round. Even in the winter (Ken Douglas 2013).

But, although he has spent most of his life fishing and absolutely loved it, Ken also recalls his life on the trap lines and the teachings he received:

> There are a lot of things they were doing way back then. Sometimes I try to remember, I know I used to go out trapping, I used to like that in the fall; and in the spring kill muskrats. We used to put down a log there; when you chop that, you put it on top. And when a muskrat runs across he'd get caught in the trap. He can't do nothing when he [gets caught like that]. Same as beaver. When you set a trap; we would put a trap and try to get it up, out of the deep water. That's how we use to catch beavers. We use to do lots of tracking. Some of them hunt, but now they only have marten. They say there is a good price for them. There used to be lots of lynx and Rice River and Black River. [...] People just know I guess. When the snow is deep, they don't go there. In December and past November they would go; they would have to use snowshoes (Ken Douglas 2013).

Ken has spent most of his life obtaining resources from the land; he still would, if he was not 'old' he says. Abel too, would go and live out on his trap line now.

Rabbit and many other small animals like muskrat, marten, fox and beaver are still caught in Poplar River for fur, moccasins or gloves, art, and sometimes sold; but the price of $10 or $20 for a pelt is sometimes not worth the time spent travelling to and within the trap lines, checking the traps, skinning and preparing the skins (Abel Bruce 2010, pers. comm.). With the fur industry struggling, many Elders and harvesters in Poplar River nonetheless continue to trap. Fur quotas from Manitoba Conservation confirm that fur production in Poplar River has a steady pattern: Abel and Ken agree that trapping helps obtain some additional money for the harvester. This year, "lynx [fur] is $150 so it would be great to have the extra income, especially when you pay about $700 for electricity on a retirement pension" (Abel Bruce 2011, pers. comm.). Some trappers sell their catch locally, but may send their pelts off to the provincial fur auction because "then maybe you can get a bit more" Abel tells me. Ken also interprets a trapping system that is ruminative of economics:

> Lynx, they were just like rabbits. Like lynx, there is hardly any around. We used to snare them just like rabbits. We used to kill them, a few of them. Now there's a poor price on fur. Not like before, there used to be good price (Ken Douglas 2013).

In fact, provincial data show that there is a significant amount of fur-bearing animals trapped in *asatiwisipe aki*; these statistics also show that sustainable practices, not immediate economics, are guiding systems. To illustrate, provincial data shows that beaver pelt prices rarely exceed $50 but are nonetheless the most trapped animals; wolf and lynx, whose furs range from $100-200 are hunted below five pelts per year (Manitoba Conservation 2010a). This helps to show not only that culture defines economics in Poplar River, but that the community's resource stewardship is sustainably practiced.

It is "a lot of work. It is a lot of work to trap a beaver", Abel tells me during one of our conversations over tea in 2013, "but I do it anyways". Since individuals like these harvesters have

spent most of their lives out on the land, they are the 'experts' of *asatiwisipe aki;* only the local Elders, harvesters and community members know the 'baseline' and are best at detecting changes to the environment. Knowing 'baselines' is specifically important when industrial development comes into traditional land as only people who are living within the landscape can expose any and all the adverse effects; I have seen this occur in my work with the Makeso Sakahican Inninuwak. In Poplar River, the Elders are quick to identify changes to the land and the environment due to climate change or outside detrimental effects. Ken tells me how

> Old time ago, the old timers would see sturgeon in the rapids. They used to paddle, there were no motors. No more sturgeon, the water is too dirty. Their waters have to be clean. There are all kinds of things there [and the river]. That green stuff [...] We had a meeting about sturgeon, how to make them survive. They asked how we know about sturgeon. There are no sturgeon maybe somewhere in the lake, but not by here. It's a clean fish; same thing like a catfish (Ken Douglas 2013).

Noel too, tells me that he can see notices significantly shifting weather patterns:

> It's from all the global warming. We know that, there is, there is hardly any mosquitoes around. There is not mosquitoes around. Before, when you go out, there would be mosquitoes on you all the time. Now you hardly see any. What you have is not like before; there are no mosquitoes around. There used to be lots of mosquitoes before (Noel Bruce 2008).

Albert Bittern notices variations around the community with climate change:

> there used to be some snakes, there's hardly any snakes around this summer. Like garden snakes. And birds, there's hardly any birds around any more...like sparrows. There used to be a lot of them in spring, but there is hardly any now. And owls, there's hardly any owls around. And berries, there is usually a lot of berries, now there's none. And saskatoons, there was hardly any around last year. And strawberries... that climate change is really affecting [it all] (Albert Bittern 2008).

And, Walter Nanawin, whom I regularly saw looking out onto the river with Jean, his wife, would go out behind his house and just look to see the changes of the seasons. Walter, who is also a writer, would recite many poems and stories and songs to me about the land and many other enchanting subjects. He tells me during one of my interviews about the need protect the land:

> since I've travelled, I've written down some stories, and my special one there, called Weird Indian Tales, and the other one, Trapper's Cabin. And there's Echoes of Lake

> Winnipeg and Indian Chiefs of Treaty Five. I also have my songs written in words, of interesting places that I've been…[and] so I've seen trees, and I think the land should be protected. There's too much going on, take for instance in the spring, I always watch the birds, I always watch the robins, my wife and I have been interested in [them]. I say, "look, out the window, see how many robins are there this year?" This year there haven't been many, there's seven, they're not robins, there's three there, sitting up in the poplar tree and singing no more. They don't sing any more. They seen to have a madness about them, like they might have been stripped off their land down south, but they come up here and ... we don't bother them. And we just look at them, and [what] they do about, where they pick up bugs. And I don't know where they go from there, cause you don't see them again. You don't see robins around in the summer time, like right now, you know. It's not that there aren't any trees, it just that there's lots of poplars in Poplar River (Walter Nanawin 2008).

All these Elders not only recognize varying ecological changes in Poplar River, but they also know where many of the sacred sites are; a few Elders have shown them to me on a map and narrated numerous stories about the Rock that Rocks, Kettles, Thunderbird Eggs, and sites of all those Other-than-human beings. Indigenous *aki gikendamowin* is all aspects of land knowledge, in other words, the responsibility for ensuring resource and heritage sustainability for future generations.

Indigenous conserved areas

> *We ran into problem in 1980s I guess. The price of fur went right down to the floor. I think it was Greenpeace. You've heard of them?[I answer 'yes']. They got into some northern parts of Manitoba, and got into, these people and wanted to see how it's done; how the trappers do it when they go out into the bush. They found out that some trappers that didn't attend their traps too often, there was fur in the traps. I've seen that in the paper. There was lynx caught in a leg-hold trap, they call it, a steel trap. They found out he was all bleeding, and they tried to stop that trapping all together. Like trapping and all that. So the government changed all that. The government changed; they got rid of all the leg-hold traps, but it took a few years* (Marcel Valiquette 2010).

As part of the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site nomination, the community of Poplar River has designated their traditional territory specifically for conservation. This signifies that whereas some First Nations plan to select certain regions of their territories for small-scale development, the Poplar/Nanowin Rivers Park reserve will continue to be an area strictly protected by the Manitoba Minister of Conservation and all industrial activities such as mining and logging are to be forbidden

(AAMP 2010:41). The vision that the local landscape become a permanent and legally designated protected area will fulfill the Anishaabeg aspirations for meeting their local needs: "Permanent legal protection of our lands, under provincial legislation, is intended to preserve both our way of life and this boreal region forever" (AAMP 2010:41), thus, along with the Atikaki Provincial Park in Manitoba and the Woodlands Caribou Provincial Park in Ontario, the Poplar/Nanowin Park Reserve will remain an area intended for conservation of the intact boreal ecosystem (Manitoba 2008 & 2010).

Image 5.1 *Wood harvesting by local peoples. Access and resource use will be permitted in designated areas. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

It is important to note that in contrast to the two parks, Poplar/Nanowin Park's designation will allow recreational development and resource use by local peoples. Although the entire Poplar River trap line territory will be protected; spaces within that landscape are designed for different purposes and will vary according to local needs and cultural practices. Due to their treaty and Aboriginal rights, Aboriginal people have a right of access, without licenses and without restrictions, to specific areas on any unoccupied Crown land (Manitoba 2012:12) and in Manitoba, the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement [NRTA] (1930), although often interpreted to mean the opposite, is meant to ensure that First Nations have a constitutionally protected right to harvest for food. Since restrictions have in the past - and in some places continue to be - placed on traditional activities of Indigenous peoples within parks and protected areas, including World Heritage Sites (Binnema and Niemi 2006; Oviedo and Puschkarsky 2012), the community has always been adamant about their traditional territory *not* be classified as a 'park' in the traditional 'fence and fine' sense:

> Permanent legal protection of our lands, under provincial legislation, is intended to preserve both our way of life and this boreal region forever. Logging, mining or the

> development of oil, petroleum, natural gas or hydro-electric power are prohibited in Manitoba protected areas. While we do not wish our protected area to be classified as a "park", we recognize that the prohibitions of commercial uses in Manitoba protected areas fits well with the objectives for our Anishinabek protected area (AAMP 2011:41).

Precisely, Poplar River's insistence that industrial activities are prohibited so that the local 'way of life' is sustained; this culturally distinct socio-ecologic dynamic has been identified by the international community, especially by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as an [Indigenous] Community Conserved Area (ICCA or CCA). Basically, ICCAs are

> natural and/or modified ecosystems containing significant biodiversity values, ecological services and cultural values, voluntarily conserved by Indigenous peoples and local communities, both sedentary and mobile, through customary laws or other effective means (IUCN 2014).

The areas can include ecosystems with minimal to substantial human influence as well as cases where manifestation of traditional land-use patterns are evidenced by local communities (Philips and Harrison 1999; IUCN 2010). The International Union for the Conservation of Nature describes some of the features of Community Conserved Areas to be a interdependent relationship of people to their ecosystems for cultural or livelihood reasons where the locals play a major part in the conservation decision-making of the habitats, species and ecological services associated with cultural values (IUCN 2010). This socio-ecologic relationship is what drives the resource stewardship process and I have conceptualized the Poplar/Nanowin Park to an example of an [I]CCA. Although Poplar River does not identify their intent to 'become' an ICCA in their Asatiwisipe Aki Lands Management Plan (2010 & 2011), the notion that Poplar River is a 'Community Conserved Area' was often used in the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site Nomination document. For example, the submission to UNESCO states that: "while community lands are described at the provincial level as 'Community Planning Areas', they also represent Indigenous 'Community Conserved Areas' […] as defined internationally by IUCN" (Pimachiowin Aki WHSN 2012:203).

While the 'legitimacy' of ICCAs are rooted in the values and meanings they possess for the most directly concerned peoples, they are not officially legislated as a federal tool in Canada. There is currently no policy and no frameworks in Canada to effectively use ICCAs or CCAs as tools for protected areas, and many [I]CCAs are largely a 'voluntary' process (Alison Hough [Manitoba Conservation] 2014, pers. comm.). Due to Canada's colonial relationship with Aboriginal people, the issue of ICCAs is complicated. At present,

> there are no terrestrial, riparian or marine ICCA's in Canada, although some comprehensive agreements allow for voluntary set asides of land for protection by Indigenous People to be governed according to standards established by Canada (ICCA 2008 quoted in Wilson et al 2012: 11).

I believe it is largely due to the presence of Aboriginal treaty rights and title, which, when examined through the concept of ICCAs, would be broadened in scope. International organizations composed of conservation and cultural professionals like IUCN (through the World Conservation Congress), the ICCA Consortium, the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as the International Labour Organization through the C169-Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (1989) all acknowledge the socio-ecological concept to mean the customary governance by Indigenous peoples and local communities to their ecological conservation efforts (ICCAC 2014; IUCN 2012; ILO 1989; UNDRIP 2014). Effectively arguing that the respect of rights would actually advance, rather than diminish, conservation outcomes, more and more recognition is made of this paradigm under International Law. The *International Law and Jurisprudence Report* (2012) for example, illustrates the impressive extent of provisions in binding and non-binding international instruments that support, broadly put, the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities over their territories, areas and resources:

> The research at the international level confirms the fact that Indigenous peoples and local communities are not merely stakeholders, but are rights-holders who must be respected and recognized as the stewards of their territories, areas and natural resources (Jonas, Kothari & Shrumm 2012:10).

The importance of that land-people relationship cannot be denied, and legal, or other effective means to protect areas *and Indigenous people of those areas*, means that recognition under statutory law, through an international, nation-to-nation convention or agreement, or through other effective mechanisms under which traditional Indigenous territories operate and are governed, is essential. Since, as a general rule "Indigenous Peoples are not considered to be an integral part of the landscape and essential to the continued well-being of the land" (Wilson et al 2012: 12), recognition of ICCAs in Canada would signify recognition of Indigenous self-determination, governance and stewardship practices over the lands, resources and traditional territories. Certain Supreme Court of Canada cases like *R v. Badger* [1996], *R v. Delgamuukw* [1997], *R v. Sioui* [1990], *R.v. Sparrow [1990] S.C.C.* and the recently decided *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia,* SCC [2014], where full Aboriginal title to approximately 2000 km^2 of Tsilhqot'in land was recognized, have already affirmed Aboriginal people's rights of culturally-relevant traditional use of resources. ICCAs would provide yet another mechanism that may not only enhance some of those rights, but also decrease Canada's infringement of any current Aboriginal and treaty rights. I will discuss the legal arguments for Indigenous stewardship in more detail in Chapter 6, but here I would like to elaborate on the policies Poplar River is using (and can use) to meet their needs.

The support of Manitoba[ns]

> The Community Conserved Areas of the Anishinaabeg dedicate most of their traditional territories to interconnected protected areas as envisioned under the First Nations Accord. […] The customary stewardship of Anishinaabeg in the five community Conserved Areas together with the adjacent parks and conservation reserve [will] ensure this integrity (Pimachiowin Aki WHSN 2012:182).

As I write this dissertation, the nomination is being re-written by Pimachiowin Aki and it will be seen with time how the partnership will move forward with governance over the area. However, despite the fact that ICCAs are not legislated in Canada, my decision to use this concept in this thesis was a way to

make ICCAs a prescriptive tool towards recognizing Indigenous stewardship as a form of Aboriginal and treaty rights. ICCAs are inclusive of the ecological, socio-cultural, governance and inter-dependent features, and the term may be used generically to include the natural and cultural components that precisely reflect the mixed-category World Heritage Site nomination that Poplar River is part of. Indigenous Community Conserved Areas recognize a community's relationship to their territory in the unique way that is inclusive of sacred sites, ecological intactness and local governance institutions. These Community Conserved Areas are supported by their respective provinces which have

> passed enabling legislation to recognize the community plans, including the designation of protected areas in what are now being recognized as Community Conserved Areas […] adjacent lands [not included in the nominated area but are contiguous to it] fall under the direct responsibility of the Pimachiowin Aki partners and represent Indigenous "Community Conserved Areas" as defined by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (WHSN 2012: 116 & 8).

ICCAs can indeed represent a practical apparatus towards recognizing what an intangible cultural heritage lens suggests: that the continued relationship of Indigenous people to their lands based on cultural practices, knowledges and epistemologies can be legally endorsed. A few leaders of the First Nation have used this term when discussing their initiative with me, essentially informing me that the best mechanism to protect their lands is one that recognizes the relationship of the local peoples to *asatiwisipe aki* (Ernest C Bruce 2011, pers. comm.; Noel Bruce 2011, pers. comm.). [I]CCAs can serve as a supplementary rights-based tool to sanction those embedded practices of Indigenous people to their lands. Nuances of ICCAs are already present in Indigenous stewardship and food systems; in Manitoba, Poplar River is doing this through the Pimachiowin Aki nomination and their very own Asatiwisipe Aki Management Plan [AAMP] (2010 & 2011), which outlines some of their customary governance practices over their cultural landscape.

The Plan is

> an outcome of successful efforts by Poplar River First Nation to assert the desire for protection of Poplar River Anishnaabek Traditional Territory […] The goal is to protect the land from industrial developments, sustaining natural ecological processes for present and future generations (AAMP 2011: 1&5).

Recognizing that industrial activities would permanently alter the last of Manitoba's intact eco-system and the protected woodland caribou's habitats, administration and conservation of the entire 8617 km^2 of Poplar River's land will be dome by means of local knowledge in collaboration with scientific knowledge. Embodying a written, legal outline for the sustenance of the landscapes, including natural resources, wildlife biodiversity, ecological and cultural integrity, the document is intertwined with models of economic ventures and governance guidelines that inform this community's distinct cultural identity. The Asatiwisipe Anishnaabeg, as Aboriginal people, continue to maintain that their "traditional uses, means of access and activities upon the land will be given primacy" (AAMP 2010:36) and that local and traditional knowledge is the foundation of the laws, provisions, policies and customs for community resource use:

> We have prepared the following community/customary laws, provisions and policies as directed by our Elders, for the management of the resource use by our own community members. We will develop awareness and training programs for these laws and policies. We will also prepare and apply sanctions or penalties to those persons who do not comply with these rules (AAMP 2010:36)

In effect, the Plan provides a written framework of the community's traditional knowledge, values and Aboriginal and treaty rights under Treaty Five. For example, only community members are allowed to hunt moose. The moose must be a bull and will only be harvested in autumn and winter; the meat will be distributed to family and other community members. More specifically, a community hunter can only take what he needs for himself, his family, or others he will share meat with, and meat must never be purposely wasted and left behind; no wildlife meat can be sold for cash (AAMP 2010:36). In other words, for each wildlife harvest, whether moose, rabbit, duck or geese, traditional modes of production and cultural values are maintained.

Additionally, all harvests will be reported to the community's Ma Ma Wichitowin Mutual Land Relationship Board (AAMP 2010:6) so that a correlated body of monitors and administrators can keep monitoring mechanisms like data collection and measuring. The Asatiwisipe Working Group too, will work assist with community decision-making. The Group will consist of a Lands Manager, a superintendent and band councilor, as well as one youth and one Elder representative to ensure the continuum of these modes of production and good cooperation between the First Nation and Manitoba Conservation (AAMP 2010:44-46).

Encompassing the entire eco-system where selection, need, culture and economics are set up according to local values, the entire [I]CCA is divided into distinct land use categories and land designations. Because the community envisions different types of land uses, they have distinguished their traditional lands into: (1) protected areas and islands (strictly protected with traditional land use), (2) interim protected area (similar to the previous category, but other land uses can be determined), (3) community resource areas (sustainable use of the resources for community use like gravel extraction, community logging, sawmill and air strip development); and, (4) ecological reserves – protected under provincial regulation to be ecological zones (adapted from AAMP 2010:42; Ed Hudson 2011, pers. comm.; Ernest C Bruce 2008 & 2011; Ray Rabliauskas 2013, pers. comm.; Russell Lambert 2008, pers. comm.). At the community level, the Management Plan and the Asatiwisipe Aki Ma Ma Wichitowin Board will be the lead authorities for the protected area where accountability to the community, Chief and Council and the Province of Manitoba will be based on the governance model already well-established in Poplar River. Below is a flowchart taken from the Asatiwisipe Aki Management Plan, which outlines the community's decision-making.

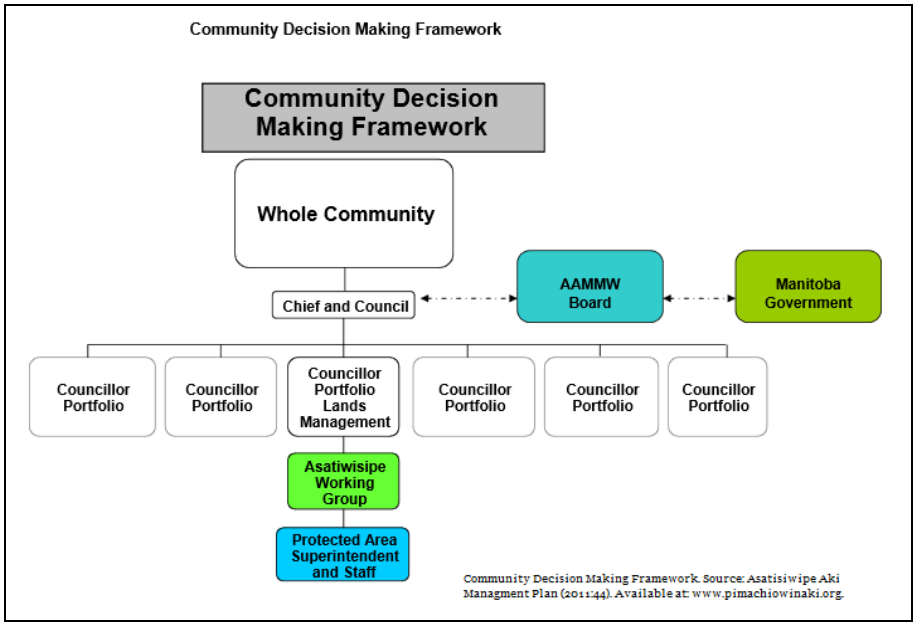

Figure 1. The Community Decision Making Framework outlines the model that will guide Poplar River's land and resource stewardship. This is an approach that is already well established in the community. Source: Adapted from the Asatiwisipe Aki Lands Management Plan (2011:44). Available at: www.pimachiowinaki.org.

Poplar River resource stewardship or *ganawenjigaade*, 'monitoring', as referred to by some of the Elders, manifests itself locally as well as through various laws and policies as well as through the concept of [I]CCAs. Although Canadian civil society organizations, legislative and some judicial systems may not officially support ICCAs and local community governance over natural resources, it is largely inadequate education, documentation and knowledge of the public that is having a negative impact on implementing the approach (Jonas, Kothari & Shrumm 2012:19-24; IUCN 2014). To demonstrate, the Nunavut Act and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act offer the Inuit an opportunity to exercise their customary law through the application of *qaujimajatuqangit*, 'Inuit knowledge', for the stewardship of the environment (Tester & Irniq 2008). In Manitoba too, the East Side Traditional Lands Planning and Special Protected Areas Act (2008) is perhaps one of the closest formal recognitions of ICCA-like Indigenous-governed areas. The Province of Manitoba's official recognition of Poplar River's and the other Pimachiowin Aki First Nations' land-use plans in legislation, sets the Canadian standard for First Nation customary stewardship in the boreal forest. Along with the WHS designation Poplar River can foster a paradigm shift in our thinking about

Indigenous natural resource and cultural heritage stewardship as well as Aboriginal and treaty rights. In other words, to effectively care for Indigenous landscapes, cultural heritages needs to be employed, and slowly, Manitobans have began to appreciate these unique Indigenous contributions.

Through the CCA model, the community members can base their conservation decisions on social, economic, and environmental principles; it is a pre-emptive approach that will guide community economic development in a just and equitable manner. Sophia articulates the long process of coming into a common understanding:

> We didn't have experience with the legislation, to do quick research, about how we are going to [do this] so we don't screw up and we will not jeopardize our treaty rights. And so there was a lot of things we took into consideration when we sat down at a table with the government. So, we brought forth two sets of values, two sets of beliefs. So we have to take the time, to make them understand where we were coming from, the beliefs that we hold, what the land means, and also to respect their values. Coming to a common understanding without coming to a confrontation (Sophia Rabliauskas 2009).

As the biggest stakeholders, leaders of this First Nation have ensured that control over matters concerning their community is held at the local level. The Government of Manitoba supported the First Nations, and with the intention of developing and implementing "a new government-to-government relationship" with Aboriginal people of the area, the East Side Traditional Planning and Special Protected Areas Act [herein after the Act] in 2008 was created. Recognizing Aboriginal and treaty rights as well as the unique attachment of Aboriginal people to their lands for the purpose of *mino-bimaadiziwin*, 'the good life', the provincial government affirmed the need for not only the protection of the boreal forest, but of the Aboriginal interests to resource and traditional territory management. The Act therefore, is intended to provide First Nation communities like Poplar River with the opportunity to plan and manage the natural resources contained within their traditional areas (Manitoba 2008). In Sections 1(3) and 1(4) of the Act, the purpose and Aboriginal rights are outlined:

> (a) to enable First Nations and aboriginal communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg to engage in land use and resource management planning for designated areas of Crown land that they have traditionally used; and,

> (b) to provide designated areas of Crown land on the east side of Lake Winnipeg with special protection from development and other activities that might occur on that land.

and,

> This Act is not to be interpreted so as to abrogate or derogate from the aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada that are recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* (Manitoba 2008).

Through this Act, First Nations on the east side of Lake Winnipeg may request their traditionally used area to be designated as a traditional use planning area by setting out boundaries and determining levels of support. The East Side Traditional Lands Planning and Special Protected Areas Act legalizes stewardship activities of Aboriginal people. It enables First Nations to have a meaningful and culturally respectful opportunity to engage in social and economic development while also manage their traditional territories according to their land-use plans (Manitoba 2008; Russell Lambert 2008). The new government-to-government relationship signifies that any State-initiated natural resource management and conservation practices will be negotiated with Aboriginal communities or governments. This approach is the opposite of previous provincial planning initiatives whereby development drove the planning process and often ignored Aboriginal and treaty rights or even interests to the land.

With this new legislation, Poplar River and other First Nations involved in the World Heritage Site project area have legal standing for their Community Conserved Areas. The Act will make the nomination for a UNESCO designation unique because, if approved by the international organization, the site will be governed not by federal or provincial administration, but by Pimachiowin Aki and its First Nation members. In other words, the lands that make up the proposed World Heritage Site, specifically those of the five First Nations, will be managed in accordance with whatever approved land-use plan these communities have. While enabling Indigenous self-determination over this community conservation area and without contravening any First Nations rights identified in the federal constitution, the Act is the first of its kind in Canada. Further confirming support towards the

World Heritage Site project and Poplar River's community plan, a $10 million trust fund was also provided by the Manitoba government in 2009, with more funds set aside for the project's 2016 re-submission.

World Heritage Sites in Canada

> *We try to get them involved, like last fall, we tried to get them out, like to Black River, there is about 53 rapids to go, that's quite a ways. Like, it took about ten guys, five days to get up there. And we were hunting, feed them for three days. And we flew the youth from here to those camps, and we put them on the land, we show them to set up a trap, beaver traps and snares. And we had a couple of Elders come with us too, just to show them like, where, that we mean business, we are not fooling around here. They were reluctant at first, and they started getting used to it, and they started getting used to it, and we wanted to let them be. There was a couple [youth] that just wanted to fool around, but whatever. We kept them on the hiking trails so we were just showing them trees and plants, even like, boat safety and survival. Like what to look for, like, for food. And fishing, we took them fishing, and help to fillet a fish, prepare a fish. Same thing with the beaver. There's Elders that taught them how to skin a beaver, and to stretch them. And the Elders prepared, like, showed them whatever they needed to show them how to cook it. They did that* (Freddie Bruce 2008).

In determining the extent of effectiveness and empowerment of Aboriginal people through collaborative means of resource management, specifically, co-management, Nadasdy (2009: 83) asks: what role do legislation, institutions and communities play in ensuring that traditional knowledge is used in resource management. And, to what extent its use is captured and converted by communities? Numerous cases can be made for a wide spectrum of these answers ranging from Aboriginal exclusion from protected areas (Binnema & Niemi 2006), entrepreneurship (Anderson & Bone 2009) and bureaucratization of Aboriginal harvesters (Nadasdy 2003), to joint management (Borrini-Feyerabend 2004, ed; ICCAC 2014), adaptive collaborations (Berkes 2008), cultural landscapes (Davidson-Hunt 2012; IUCN 2014; ICCAC 2014) and even a three-track process (McLachlan 2013). Poplar River is unique in the way that, rather than having their traditional knowledge incorporated into the State structure by scientists and policy makers, the community has incorporated Western, scientific and bureaucratic tools into their own customary institutions. This means that it is not traditional

knowledge that will be included in the decision making, but that traditional knowledge will guide the capturing, collating and interpretation of data that, if needed, will be supplemented by scientific knowledge in a collaborative manner (AAMP 2010:36-48; Russell Lambert 2008, pers. comm.). Poplar River will cooperate with and work in a partnership with provincial managers and biologists to ensure full supply of information, but ultimately, through both the East Side Traditional Lands Planning and Special Protected Areas Act and the framework of Pimachiowin Aki's individual Community Conserved Areas, the trap line territory of the First Nation will be governed through modern forms of customary stewardship.

With support from the Province of Manitoba through the East Side Traditional Lands Planning and Special Protected Areas Act and their own lands management plan, the Poplar River [I]CCA represents a unique part of the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site nomination. However, while these laws and theoretical concepts represent Western tools through which this First Nation will ensure community needs are met, local knowledges and traditional practices are the best way of ensuring that the ecological integrity of *aki*, the land, will last for generations. Based on the realization that species extinction and environmental degradation can be halted by the protection of entire eco-systems, new rhetoric on sustainable development and inclusion of local peoples now stipulate in many regions that local and Indigenous communities have to be consulted. Certainly in Canada, consultation with Aboriginal communities and accommodation of 'traditional knowledge' is required in all environmental assessments (Anderson & Bone 2009; Canada 2012; Usher 2009).

The diverse land use patterns in Poplar River continue to be based on ecological knowledge, stewardship *and* on social relations; it is these monitoring mechanisms that will look after the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site. This is what makes this site so one-of-a-kind. If designated, not only will this site be the first mixed-heritage category site in Canada, but it will be a legacy borne out of First Nations-led aspirations where largely Indigenous people, not Parks Canada, will be the

governing body responsible for this World Heritage Site. In my Master's thesis (Pawlowska 2009), I examined how Parks Canada, the federal administrative body managing UNESCO designated territories, could affect the sociopolitical independence and resource stewardship of local First Nations in two Canadian Parks. Here, to provide a better appreciation of the significance of this nomination, I would like to provide a very general comparison how some Canadian World Heritage sites with continuous Indigenous presence, use and/or history or attachment to the area, are currently managed. Specifically, I will look at the management plans of two UNESCO sites : the SGang Gwaay/Gwaii Haanas in British Columbia and the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump in Alberta. SGang Gwaay was designated in 1981 (Gwaii Hanaas was nominated in 2004 and overlaps with SGang Gwaay) and the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump was designated in 1981; both sites were nominated on the basis of outstanding cultural value.

I did not include any Canadian World Heritage Sites that are designated based solely on their 'natural' components. Certainly, other WHS sites, like Wood Buffalo National Park and the Kluane/Wrangell-St.Elias/Glacier Bay/Tatshenshini-Alsek are continuously used by local Aboriginal communities. Located at the juncture of the Peace and Athabasca Rivers and home to the wild bison and the whooping crane, Wood Buffalo National Park completely devoid of Aboriginal 'presence' in its UNESCO Statement of Significance. The Kluane/Wrangell-St.Elias/Glacier Bay/Tatshenshini-Alsek too, is recognized for

> joint properties [that] encompass the breadth of active tectonic, volcanic, glacial and fluvial natural processes from the ocean to some of the highest peaks in North America. Coastal and marine environments, snow-capped mountains, calving glaciers, deep river canyons, fjord-like inlets and abundant wildlife abound. It is an area of exceptional natural beauty (UNESCO 1972).

Indeed, at the heart of 'Canada's North', both UNESCO sites have eliminated any history and association of the local First Nations. Since Pimachiowin Aki is a 'cultural landscape' that articulates the respectful value system that Anishinaabeg have anchored to their traditional lands, I have decided to

focus on World Heritage Sites that can be considered "Indigenous" because their existence explicitly recognizes Indigenous cultural heritage. Having said that, due to the different criteria (natural or cultural or mixed) and the categories found within (criteria I-X as discussed in Chapter 3) as well as a range of other classifications, it is difficult to compare the sites – to each other and to the nominated Pimachiowin Aki area. Each one of them is unique, include different geographical regions and distinctive Indigenous cultures, and fall under different interpretations of 'outstanding universal value'. Nonetheless, I believe that looking at how the sites are managed in the context of Aboriginal people would help in better understanding the significance of Pimachiowin Aki First Nations' self-determination over the resources. Thematically comparable in terms of geographical scope as well as through continuity of Indigenous people whose relationships to the lands include natural/cultural resource stewardship or in one way or another across the landscape, my choice to examine the forms of management of Head-Smashed-In and SGang Gwaay was simply to view how the presence, governance and cultural/natural heritage stewardship of Indigenous people within UNESCO designations are mediated - through the sites themselves and through World Heritage discourse. Unlike Pimachiowin Aki, these sites are largely administered Parks Canada where level of inclusion, co-management and accommodation of Indigenous needs and governance structures is constantly negotiated.

SGang Gwaay (and Gwaii Haanas), meaning 'Red Cod Island Village' in the Haida language is a UNESCO heritage site based on cultural value. Located on a small island northwest of Vancouver Island, SGang Gwaay illustrate the Haida art and way of life (UNESCO 1981). The remains of large cedar long-houses and totem poles:

> illustrate the art and way of life of the Haida. […]The site commemorates the living culture of the Haida based on fishing and hunting, their relationship with the land and sea, and offers a visual key to their oral traditions […] the art represented by the carved poles at SGang Gwaay Ilnagaay (Nan Sdins) is recognized to be among the finest examples of its type in the world (UNESCO 1981).

Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve along with Pimachiowin Aki, is on the Tentative List; the Park Reserve covers 138 islands as well as SGang Gwaay. In Gwaii Haanas, the "rich and living culture of the Haida people permeates the area" (UNESCO 2004). Both sites are co-managed by local peoples and Parks Canada, but since SGang Gwaay is essentially in Gwaii Haanas, I have decided to use the Gwaii Haanas management plan, whose regulations also include SGang Gwaay. *The Gwaii Haanas Management Plan for the Terrestrial Area* (1993) (herein after 'the Plan') outlines the protocols for safeguarding the ecological, cultural and wilderness values of the area. These are based on "previous agreements, Haida traditional knowledge, findings of detailed field studies, and the results of extensive consultations (GHMP1993:5). The Plan exists in addition to separate marine, ecosystem restoration and cultural resources planning guides, which are all run by the Archipelago Management Board. The Board, composed of equal numbers of members from Haida Nation and the federal government, is also working with Fisheries and Oceans to oversee the planning, operations and management of Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site. The stipulations found within the management plan are inclusive of Haida self-determination. An agreement between the Haida and the federal government Gwaii Haanas indicates that Haida lands are "subject to the collective and individual rights of the Haida citizens, the sovereignty of the Hereditary Chiefs, and jurisdiction of the Council of the Haida Nation (Gwaii Haanas Agreement 1993: 2). This means that the 'ownership' of the lands and waters around the area is subject to Haida Nation, and this agreement has resulted in a generally respectful and constructive relationship between the Haida Nation and Canada in Gwaii Haanas (Iredale and Pfahler n.d.: 25; Maria Husband [Gwaii Haanas/Parks Canada] 2014, pers. comm.).

Although a joint endeavour where reciprocal good faith and common cause is the goal, it took over forty years of negotiations between the Haida Nation and Parks Canada in search of a cooperative management model for Gwaii Haanas (Iredale and Pfahler n.d.:17; GHMP 1993:4). Since the World

Heritage Site was designated, conflicts over limited funding, monitoring (should the totem poles be straightened?) and more recently, the conflict over the commercial roe-herring fishery (Iredale and Pfahler n.d.; Maria Husband [Gwaii Haanas/Parks Canada] 2014, pers. comm.; Vancouver Sun 2014) have challenged this collaboration. Since the management plan stipulates at the on-set that it does not constitute a land claims agreement or treaty within the meaning of Section 35 nor construed as affecting any Aboriginal and treaty rights (1993:10), the regards of the Heiltsuk and three other Aboriginal communities within the borders of Gwaii Haanas were ignored in the herring dispute. The fact that the RCMP were placed in the waters to stop any Aboriginal people from "Fisheries Act violations" (Vancouver Sun 2014) is indicative of the importance that Aboriginal governance and stewardship must have in the co-management of World Heritage Sites and protected areas.

It is worth noting the Haida Gwaii Watchmen Program, which started as a Haida-led initiative, where local people launched the efforts to protect the site by volunteering to care for their own cultural heritage (Iredale and Pfahler n.d.:9). The Watchmen Program is a seasonal form of employment for Haida members of any age who offer a "first-hand introduction to Haida culture by sharing their knowledge of the land and sea, their stories, songs, dances and traditional foods" (Parks Canada 2013). The Watchmen are individuals who travel and live on the site - stewards - and guide visitors around the area. The program is a First Nation-led venture and can serve as a wonderful example of Indigenous self-determination over cultural heritage.

The Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, was nominated on the basis of its outstanding 'cultural' wealth, but which, ironically, is wholly owned and managed by the Province of Alberta where the property is designated as a

> a Provincial Historic Resource under the provisions of the Alberta Historical Resources Act [where] [m]anagement under contractual agreement(s) [is] between State Party and a third party: The grasslands of Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump have been cared for under the rangeland management practices of the ranching families that inhabit the area. Grassland management of the provincially-owned land at the site is provided through the contractual obligations of renewable leases with the original owners. There is at the same

> time, a continuing formal involvement of the regional First Nations people in the strategic management of the site (Parks Canada 2006:§4).

The site, does not seem to have any partnerships nor any First Nations involved in its management. In fact, Brink (2008) argues that the site is a cultural construct because depictions of jumps with archeological evidence arise largely out of non-Aboriginal researchers who ignore the deeper cultural and spiritual significance of the site and what occurred there. The author's criticisms over government's preservation and interpretations of a site are largely due to the narratives that must satisfy both, a World Heritage Site of outstanding cultural value and a place of enduring significance for the Peigan and Kainai. Illustrating that local First Nation have been pressuring the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Management Board to relinquish ownership, operations and interpretations of the site, Brink upholds that traditional knowledge held by Elders and ceremonialists is needed here.

Indeed, the larger historical aspect of the area lacks contemporary and traditional narratives of local Indigenous peoples. In fact, the site is world-renowned for its

> historical, archaeological and scientific interest. The presence of so many undisturbed stratified layers of bone and cultural deposits at great depth is representative of 5,700 or more years of continuous occupation, interrupted by one period of non-use. The landscape is an outstanding example of the subsistence hunting that perpetuated the existence of the plains nations as a "buffalo culture" into the late nineteenth century and to which they still hold in the form of their spirituality and in the preservation of their "traditional knowledge base" (Parks Canada 2006: §2c).

Although traditional associations to the culture are mentioned in this description, the management of the site to date, has no framework for engagement nor input from local First Nations. In fact, key scientific studies and research programs related to the site do not mention any community collaborations or any current Aboriginal narratives about the landscape (Parks Canada 2006). Head-Smashed-In, is essentially a UNESCO World Heritage Site based on Western values as well as scientific and archeological studies where policies of "interpretative development", "sterile cultural material" and decisions by the government 'experts' are done only "under a system of formal consultation with the nearby First Nations people, the regional towns and the rural municipality" (Parks

Canada 2006:§6). The problem of representation of Head-Smashed-In landscape is the complexity of identification of their inherent intangible cultural values of the Kainai and the Paigan. This significant site is rarely accorded its underlying concepts such as the religious and associative values embedded within this natural, cultural and historical space. Engaging more Aboriginal people into the site, could significantly broaden the scope of intangible heritage within this area. For example, complex bison knowledge held by local Elders could foster credibility and mutual respect; access to the site by having input into the management of cultural heritage could not only make the Parks Canada system more adaptable to the interests and needs of First Nations, but also address colonial and historical legacies associated with the loss of certain forms of heritage. Lastly, it is unfortunate that the site, with only about twelve permanent staff (seventeen seasonal), appears to leave little room for capacity-building of local peoples. The expectations of workers too, can be said to be beyond the scope of many. For example, the Senior Interpreter must possess "knowledge of curricula-based programmes in the Alberta educational system […] and how they dovetail with provincial curricula patterns and curricula from other jurisdictions" (Parks Canada 2006:§4).

Both SGang Gwaay/Gwaii Haanas and the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump are unique in they involve Indigenous people; whereas the SGang Gwaay/Gwaii Haanas is more conducive to Aboriginal self-determination, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump seems to exclude First Nations communities in the stewardship of the site. Deliberating the future of *pimachiowin aki* on Weaver Lake while conducting ceremonies and inviting politicians to join them, Poplar River and the other Anishinaabeg communities are from the get-go very much in control of the nomination process. Russell Lambert tells me that the nomination was "very empowering to Poplar River" because the implications are about community consensus, involvement and capacity-building (Russell Lambert 2008, pers. comm.). The Pimachiowin Aki nomination can also be very empowering because it is largely about re-presentations. World Heritage Sites should be about the modes and contents of the sites' narratives and about a visitors'

experience of space. To illustrate, whereas one Haida village is described by Parks Canada as a site of "what was once a vigorous Haida community of 300 people is today a haunting assemblage of weathered and fragmented house frames and mortuary and memorial poles" (Parks Canada 2013d), the Head-Smashed-In buffalo Jump is seen as a

> a sophisticated and highly reliable hunting system resulted in the generation of a stable food supply reflecting a degree of technological control over food production not normally imagined for hunting and gathering peoples (Parks Canada 2006:§2a).

In both examples, the metanarrative of progress can be visible, where the history of colonialism is presented to the world as "abandoned" in the SGang Gwaay (Parks Canada 2013a & d) and displacement is presented under the guise of "nomadic" in Head-Smashed-In (Parks Canada 2013b).

Image 5.2 *Drumming during Aboriginal Health Awareness celebrations. Individual self-determination will help form new narratives for the community within the nominated site. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

With the Pimachiowin Aki WHS, it is Poplar River and the other member communities who will be in charge of how their history and contemporary reality is presented and re-presented to the world; this WHS is reflective of the *dibajiimowinan*, 'narratives' not the metanarrative; of typonymy, of traditional and local knowledges and of dialogue around nature-culture. As such, Pimachiowin Aki and a UNESCO World Heritage Site is a test not of the nomination by these communities, but rather of the institutions who will respond to them. It is my hope that the balance of cultural and natural stewardship as well as the land-based practices and administrative work combining all the knowledges and unique visions of each Anishinaabeg community, will be as fruitful as the community members wish it to be.

> *Today the elders are strong and pushing us to negotiate to have our lands permanently protected. We are getting close. It's very interesting, when you negotiate and we have our*

> *own management, because the government is not going to allow that […] at the same time, there is that component of healing, our community has been through a lot, like any First Nation in Canada and Indigenous people all over the world. At the same time, we are working with healing, healing our people and that component is very important because whenever we go into the negotiations, we recognize that, we acknowledge that we have that* (Sophia Rabliauskas 2009).

Living Heritage carried forward

> *In 1975, there was an Indian Agent coming around here. He would look at everything. I don't need you to speak for myself. [Now] we want people to train, like Conservation Officers, to look after the land or something like that* (Albert Bittern 2008).

All the individuals I interviewed shared the fact that taking care of the land is something that comes from 'the people of long ago' and must be carried forward. In accord with many of the objectives of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, elements like land-based practices, traditional and local knowledges, harvesting and the skills and values associated with them must be transmitted to future generations:

> we would go on top of the mountain, on top of that mountain there, Thunder Mountain there, Binesiika. We used to go there, we used to track there. I used to trap there, with John Berens when the supplies were bad we used to go there. All those old guys would go there, all these old guys who used to go there are gone. Yet it was nice to learn things from there. About our lives; they would say things I never heard before. But when they were there, I learned from them. And from them, I learn how to survive our way, go trapping, so that after we grew up, we know how to do, from the old people there, the elders (Ken Douglas 2013)

Numerous people in the community have shown eagerness to protect the land; many have identified the need to revive some of the teachings, the cultural values and 'old ways' of land stewardship:

> we don't want to lose any of those things, what ancestors used to do long time ago. It's time for us to move on with this [Poplar River-led land protection and knowledge systems]. The way we're doing now, today. Long time ago, our ancestors used to protect this land, long time ago. and where are we now today. Where are we? Are we there? We're supposed to be there; we're supposed to be there now. It's time for us to do what people did long time ago. I know I hear a lot of that, you know, stories about long time ago. We still need that. We have to bring the past, we have to bring it back. We still need it. [...] those minds that came around long time ago, those are good minds. Long time ago. This is what we are

> doing now. We are trying to bring up, this land, the good way it was, the right way (Abel Bruce 2013).

A large number of community members in Poplar River have pointed out that it is important to teach the young people about the ways of 'people long ago', because "these days", Ken tells me,

> the kids don't know how to survive. They don't know how to do that; too much in school I guess. They don't know how to survive in the bush, how to get something to eat, how to survive, how to catch rabbits - to kill and shoot them rabbits. We used to snare them: you follow a rabbit trail and set a snare. Norma Bruce tells me that she tried to snare a rabbit...and up the rabbit jumped over the snare [laughs]. Now these animals are getting smarter not like before [laughs] (Ken Douglas 2013).

Ken Douglas also tells me that "hunting and camping, summer camping, the youth, the healing camping, and family camping" (Ken Douglas 2008, pers. comm.) are important to him because he likes seeing the young people do the things his Elders did. Noel Bruce too, explains that the World Heritage Site and the community-led conservation area is

> for the younger generation, we're doing this for the young people [...] we are hoping for young people [to be] conservation officers, someone to look after the land and to look after tourism. There will be a lot of activities and lots of opportunities in the future on the land [if left the way it is] need to keep the land as is; it is for future generations, we saw what happened down south, and we don't want that anymore. Like I said, we saw what happened down there, like clear cutting, we don't want this (Noel Bruce 2008).

For Abel Bruce, 'living a "good" life' or *mino-bimaadiziwin,* was articulated as profoundly important and below, he shares the fact that trapping and teaching his ways - and the ways of the 'people of long ago' about the bush life is important:

> That's what I've been doing, in my home town. I have been trapping all my life. That's my way of life doing it; no job, nothing. That's a job for you; I do this and that; sometimes they call me out to the school, that's what I tell them; it's my job to do it, teaching kids at school [...] it's good to teach them, you know. Maybe I'll still be here for them, those other ones. If I do, if I live that long. I'll always be there with them (Abel Bruce 2013).

For many Elders and harvesters here, land-based activities have been their way of life and consist of the Anishinaabe *izhitwaawin*, 'way of life'. The rich heritage of this part of earth would be lost without the collective memory of local First Nations. Despite generations of colonialism, the values passed down from generation to generation, the medicines, bush skills, ceremonies, language, clothing,

and cuisine, still flourish. The people of this boreal region have been present on these lands for centuries; the Asatisiwipe Anishnaabeg with their 1200 or so members have created a vision for the land that parallels the vision they see for themselves.

Echoing a continuation of tradition, the entire 8000km^2 *asatiwisipe* territory is currently divided into fifteen trap lines. In Manitoba, these off-reserve First Nations trap lines represent an area of land that a head trapper (the main 'steward') is responsible for the overall environmental system. Although a comprehensive land-use plan is designed to control good governance of the territory, each individual head trapper will continue to monitor, manage, conserve and even permit access to the resources. The latter, however, does not signify that everyone has 'free access' to all resources; in fact, access is only obtained by means of permission from the head trapper and only upon his approval that resources can be indeed be taken from the territory. This inter-generational protocol over trap line stewardship is one of those many intangible cultural elements that reflect the rich Anishinaabeg heritage. To reiterate my arguments in Chapter 3, because those non-physical elements like cultural expressions, epistemologies, songs and dances, mainly live through individuals who 'perform' them, ICH is referred to as 'living heritage'. Like each of the trap lines are passed down, the transmission of knowledge and thus all those intricate forms of cultural heritage, are dependent on the local hunters and trappers who embody this 'living heritage'.

Image 5.3 *Re-learning practices and skills. Many activities are directed at transmitting local cultural heritage to future generations. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

The main reason for protecting the land Abel tells me, is so that the legacy of 'the people of long ago' can be passed down to the younger generations. The sense of cultural continuity is inextricably linked "to a sense of identity as it conveys the ideas of timeless values and unbroken lineages that underpin identity" (Lowenthal 1985: 62). Elders and harvesters like Abel, Ken, Walter,

John Charles and Ernest want to protect their trap lines and natural resources because it is their way of life and their cultural right; the symbolism they have attached to some of their unique sites are founded on their own and their ancestor's history and familial experience. Ken recalls where some people from the community picked *manoomin*, wild rice:

> When they used to trap with Rice River, we went through the lakes: Rice Lake, there is three lakes there, and Deep Lake, and Fox Lake. *Muskosee'zagaigan* - Rice Lake, *Waagoos zagaaigan* - Fox Lake, *Gagiskawap zagaigan* - Deep Lake. These three lakes are mostly together. That's where they used to pick up rice there, Marcel [Valiquette], Rice Lake (Ken Douglas 2013).

And, Marcel Valiquette tells me how he takes his family to family to fish and how he shows them the bush life out on his cabin:

> I have a little cabin, about 10 miles from here. I go there in the summer, for a day or so. We take some of our grandchildren there, my wife and I. We like to get out. I have a little boat here, I go down there in the summer, sometimes for a little ride. Now I am kind of scared to drive around too much because my eyesight is not too good [laughs]. […] I set a net down sometime, right here [points out the window]. In the spring. I take two of my little boys here. My grandchildren that live close to here, I take them there when I lift my net out in the winter. It's nice. My son, he's a fisherman. He comes out here in the summer to fish. I had a big boat here. I sold that last year. I got rid of it. It was really big;
>
> it was 50 ft long. It's for the lake, eh. It was a living boat. A part of it was - you can sleep in there, there was a lodge. We were always out there; we did not have to come in much (Marcel Valiquette, 2010).

Byron Mitchell too, is a young man who hopes that his dad will teach him how to commercial-fish because that is just what people do here:

> we fish. Fishing is kind of different for me, I like to fish, have wild food. A lot of people are really into living this way. Sometimes I find that they prefer it more than what they buy at the store. And it doesn't cost that much to go out to go out on the river or go hunting. It doesn't cost very much. Maybe hop in a canoe [laughs]. A lot of the guys like to hunt, like a lot of my uncles, my dad. They love to hunt. Young people - the young guys tend to pick on that. A lot of young guys tend to go hunting with their parents or uncle or whatever. A lot of them fish. I don't think there is one person here that does not know how to fish. A lot of the young people, they love to hunt, they do. Every fall, they go up the river and up on the lake here and hunt for moose. In the spring and fall, there's ducks, geese, in the spring. There's fish always around (Byron Mitchell 2008).

Such stories, became richer and richer each year I spoke with community members; for many of them, it was nice to recall some of the stories and experiences of the life out in the bush or on a trap line.

Trap line territories are unique and irreplaceable cultural lands: they are vehicles for heritage and social well-being. Poplar River First Nation members view their trap line territory as a site with many uses, faces, histories, expectations and interpretations – this is evident through their history and through the lands management plan. But *asatisiwipe aki* is also a site of the 'stage' where the Elders and harvesters demonstrate their knowledge and skills - their heritage - and how the health of the land influences the *mino-bimaadiziwin* of the people. Cultural heritage in Poplar River goes hand in hand with the intellectual process of re-living memory and the spaces of the cultural landscape. Traditional harvesters and resource users are the embodiment of the culture of practice and praxis, so if ICH is the 'knowledge carrier' (Cominnelli 2012:247), then individuals like the local Elders and harvesters are the instruments of transmission. ICH can not only bring solutions to problems not yet solved; but in many cases, can reduce time.

In Chapter 3, I have exemplified how Japan uses 'Living Heritage' as an economic means of production. Japan is one of the leaders in developing laws for safeguarding traditional cultures and many of this country's policies can be made applicable in Northern Manitoba. Here, the Anishinaabeg and local Elders, harvesters and knowledge-holders are the living heritage treasures that can be further supported with the eco-cultural tourism as they are literally, Canada's 'Living National Treasures'. Although Manitoba has begun recognizing local and traditional resource stewardship and knowledges, especially through the East Side Traditional Lands Planning and Special Protected Areas Act, more can be done to support these Living Heritages. Things like provincial programs and policies (as well as development industries) should establish measures and mechanisms to protect those Living Heritages, including Indigenous Elders and skill-holders, and furnish them with instruments to better impart those ICH elements to their young people. Meaningful and long-term measures could include direct

compensation for those individuals who maintain traditional skills and practices; their work can be seen as a non-for profit business of ensuring environmental and cultural sustainability, and I discuss in Chapter 7 how land-based employment like conservation officers can be a forms of community economic development for Poplar River. For example, Abel Bruce is an Elder and trapper; he has mastered the domain/practice of being a head trapper. His trap line is very remote, and he knows the best paths, rivers and streams to follow, and he knows where the best camping and trap-setting sites are. He has been a trapper all his life, and he continues to be a successful and knowledgeable trapper. This cultural domain within which he is working, his trap line, is his heritage; it was passed down to him, and he continues to share the knowledge he gained from his land with others. He can easily take on the role of (or even replace) the province-sanctioned Conservation Officer ; who else knows as much about that area, the wildlife, the condition of the populations, fire-history and sacred sites as him? In order to obtain one tenth of the data about the region that Abel has, the Officer would have to live there. And since that is not the case, why not provide individuals like Abel with the means to ensure that the next head-trapper of Trap line Number 4, his family or community member, will also have the means, the knowledge and skills to effectively manage the land?

If knowledge carriers in communities like Poplar River were used to find solutions to woodland caribou conservation, water health from green algae, or marten populations, then they would not only be substituting the work of 'experts' and Conservation Officers but reducing the working time of these people to figure out knowledge that the local Elders already hold. This form of recognizing *and acknowledging* 'Living Heritage' would represent a true equal weight of Indigenous knowledge and science. Traditional resource users are the embodiment of successful sustainable practices; their understandings and value systems ensure that the land and resources are not depleted.

Such 'experts' are like professionals of a discipline - and systems should be enacted to directly compensate them for their role as stewards. Because frequent visits to the trap line (observation),

discussions with other harvesters (dissemination), ensuring inter-generational transmission (publication), and 'data-collection' of the natural resources (analysis) is similar to the work of a full-time scientist, as the most qualified individuals for the job, wage for the continuation of their stewardship within the ICH scheme, should be available. Measures to nurture Abel's skills for example, as well as other vehicles permitting him to continue going out to his trap line could be established through Poplar River's [I]CCA initiative and financially assisted by the province, Canada, or UNESCO. Traditional resource users like Abel Bruce should be granted with Conservation Officer-like powers, with wages to support the development of their skills, and with additional funds to take on measures needed to ensure the sustainability that is expected of an [Indigenous] Community Conserved Area. No other scientist or individual could ever be a better steward of the land than the trap line holder who continues to use the land and the resources to such an extent.

Likewise, Walter Nanawin, is the story-teller of the community; his rich familiarity with the local and cultural histories, should be recognized as a form of continuing the heritage of Aboriginal community members. Although he is Cree, Walter is not only acquainted with the local history of Poplar River, but also with the Cree and Anishinaabeg oral histories and the movement and history of all the people in the region (including Icelandic fishermen). Walter tells fascinating stories of the *Memegwesiwag,* 'Little People', the Water People, the people from outer space and many others. Plus, Walter is creative, and has used his familiarity with his Cree (and Anishinaabeg) heritage to develop games for children, language tools, and he also writes stories, poems, histories and even considers himself a small-scale gardener and entrepreneur. If Manitoba wants to protect the environment and Indigenous heritages in a way that ensures sustainability, then conservation of the Living Heritage - the individuals who live on the land and are the best at monitoring effects, and individuals with rare skills who are keepers of traditions or languages - needs to be put into place to protect Aboriginal identities and cultures.

I will further discuss this possibility within the framework of community economic development in Chapter 7, but here my illustration of Elders' and harvesters' distinct contributions to heritage were meant to show how access to these practices and collective histories can be revitalized. These elements can assist future generations to learn about monitoring the land and the natural resources according to the ways 'the old people' have taught them. Indeed, the only way that cultural heritage and environmental protection of traditional lands can occur, is through a bottom up approach, at the grassroots level - by those who 'live' the heritage and rely most on the local natural resources. In his *Africa's Rich Intangible Heritage*, Abungu writes that:

> Prioritizing the involvement of local communities and other relevant stakeholders does not mean consulting with them once in a while and only when required; on the contrary, it means walking with them through the journey of brainstorming, planning, and developing heritage management approaches, as well as co-managing with them. [ ] This is even more crucial when dealing with ICH, as it is engrained in the daily lives, memories, thoughts and practices of communities, groups and individuals. A lasting solution must come from …the communities at a grass-roots level (Abungu 2012:68).

Abungu argues that grassroots movements and the knowledge of Elders, the 'libraries' of African communities, are best to protect local heritages, traditions and lands. They too are the 'living heritage' of Africans. Likewise, recognizing Elders as 'Living Heritage' and supporting their means to continue transmitting their knowledges and skills through a valorization of their land based activities on the trap lines, will immensely benefit not only the Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg, but other Indigenous communities - and Canada as a whole. The goal of 'Living Heritage' is to learn from and apply the teachings and knowledges from the 'people of long ago', the ancestors. It is an additional mechanism to assist First Nations in community development yet also revive and strengthen the land-based mode of production which continues to be to this day, the hallmark of cultural heritage in Poplar River.

CHAPTER 6
A 'sacred duty' and Aboriginal rights

> *The integration of customary governance in planning and management is a defining feature of Pimachiowin Aki. The Pimachiowin Aki Management Plan explains customary governance as a sacred duty to care for the land and if Anishinaabeg "are no longer active on the land, or are excluded from decision-making, this* sacred duty *will remain unfulfilled, compromising the health of both Anishinaabeg and the land" [HTFC 2011 quoted]* (Pimachiowin Aki WHSN 2012:127, emphasis added).

The care with which each harvester obtains a resource comes out of the teachings of 'people long ago' - the Elders and knowledge holders who have passed down their knowledges and skills through the generations. Each harvester must know the teachings and the protocols around obtaining resources from the land so that he can be a successful hunter, trapper or fisherman and feed his community. The "more respectful [a harvester] is, the more animals will give themselves up to him" Abel tells me. When the animals give up their life so that the Anishinaabeg can eat, it is people's responsibility to in turn, care well for the animals and the local landscape. Again, as mentioned in my introduction, the concept of the 'gift' as one of the elements of Anishinaabeg intangible cultural heritage can be found resonating in every aspect of Poplar River First Nation Elders and harvesters who have shared their knowledges with me. The intangible cultural heritage of *aki* as a 'gift' granted to the people is exemplified through social practices and knowledges about the sustenance of the community members. Both of these frameworks were pertinent to my examination of the customary practice of taking care of the land and the natural resources by the Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg within the structure of Indigenous rights.

Resource stewardship is an Indigenous right.

My philosophical framework for this position was largely inspired by those Elders and harvesters whose stories of limited and seized catch, convoluted history with conservation officers and frustrations with diverse boards, teams, policies and governments who overrode their knowledge of the

land, presented me with another option in which to consider *ganawenjigaadewin*, 'land-care/monitoring'. Some of those were from Poplar River, others were from other communities; some of those good stories from Poplar River were contrasted by those I have heard in other areas. I will rely on the broad understanding of this concept, to refer to my discussion of 'natural resource stewardship' or 'customary stewardship' as an Aboriginal and treaty right.

Some definitions first.

I will use a few terms to talk about my examination and it is pertinent to provide the reader with some parameters (not boundaries). Although the stewardship of natural resources appears to be a self-defining term, in the Aboriginal context, the definition can imply traditions rooted in the Euro-Canadian context. Ken, in sharing with me his confusion about what it means to practice sustainable 'resource stewardship or management', answered so eloquently: "We don't over fish, no. I guess they wanted them [the harvested animals] to grow...I don't know what it means [laughs]" (Ken Douglas 2013). Undeniably, the terms 'management' and 'resources' have much cultural and ideological baggage and Shapcott (1989:72) argues that

> '[r]esource management', given the relationship of many Native people to the natural environment, is as foreign to them as the courts in which they have argued their rights to lands and 'resources'. The words 'resource' and 'management' imply a human superiority incompatible with the holistic values expressed by many traditional Native people.

Other scholars like Anderson and Bone (2009), Berkes (2008), Nadasdy (2008), Notzke (1995) and Usher and Bankes (1986) have all articulated the difficulty of working with this term. In some instances 'management' indeed implies control over or directing something and may evoke the Euro-Canadian notions of "manipulation" and deployment of the natural habitat for the direct benefit of

humans. Nadasdy acknowledges that the term 'management' is riddled with assumptions and meanings:

> Use of the term "management" […] implies not only the existence of "knowledge" as separate from practices, values, and social relations, but also of a formal institutionalized system of management complete with specialized managers. This is why many, scientists and resource managers especially, have been so reluctant to admit the existence of such a thing as indigenous management systems in the first place (Nadasdy 2009:81).

Although 'knowledge', 'traditional', 'management' and even science's interface in the framework of 'indigenous resource management' are contested in their meanings, they are nevertheless inextricably linked in Western thought and practices. The term 'natural resource management' is also used in Canadian policy to delineate that responsibility but because of the ideological presumptions that come along with 'natural resource management', Ernest C. Bruce, the head trapper on one of the trap lines in Poplar River argued that he is not a manager of the land; he is the steward of the territory he traps in (Ernest C Bruce 2011, pers. comm.). However, while some Poplar River First Nation members prefer the term 'stewardship' in place of management because it symbolizes ideas of guardianship and 'care', others informed me that they really dislike the term 'stewardship' because it is taken from the English and British elitist understanding of a 'servant's duties or authority over resources "in the service of God" (Etymoline 2014).

However, not denying the power relations embedded in this concept, and not wanting to get bogged down by semantics as the term is a tool for my larger rights argument, I will use the term '[Indigenous] resource stewardship'. Granting my accord with Shapcott and Ernest C. Bruce, and after long deliberation, ultimately my choice for this term over 'resource management' was due to the different connotations I saw to be associated with each notion. For me, management implies the capitalist, managerial idea of managing certain assets – those tangible properties. It is the idea that we, humans, do something and the land responds. Resource stewardship however, implies both equal

parties acting and proving feedback – a tangible and intangible relationship. In my view, stewardship is about having a bigger vision for the land, not managing what's there to accomplish a specific goal or objective efficiently. Whereas I see a good manager managing so that things will be the same (at the very least) at the end, even after use (like restoration after development); a good steward will ensure that a more prolonged relationship with the resources will be the outcome. Although I view management in some cases to be a sincere task for reconciling numerous systems to ensure sustainability, my work with the Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg and with the Makeso Sakahican Inninuwak at the Clean Environment Commission hearings for the Keeyask generating station in 2013, emphasized for me that, more often than not, 'resource management' suggests transformation of resources into utility effectively and with minimal damage. Finally, with 'resource management' also comes 'mis-management' - often with devastating results; but resource stewardship as illustrated to me by Able, Ken and even Noah Massan from Fox Lake, includes taking into account errors and making mistakes that one can recover from.

Despite the fact that Poplar River has a lands *management* plan –one community member told me that Poplar River had to resort to the Euro-based concept on occasion so that "people can understand what we are doing" (Poplar River First Nation member 2012, pers. comm.) I chose therefore to work with 'resource stewardship' because the term exists largely outside the dominant natural and cultural resources discourse, it implies less dominance over nature, and lastly, 'stewardship' is the term that appears in the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site Nomination. In my analysis of the practice, I consider the term to signify the collective and/or individual act of taking care of the land, allocating how the land will be used (including exploitation) and responsible use and protection of the natural environment through sustainable practices including both, conservation and use. Rather than separating humans from the environment, the 'ecological' or 'natural' from 'non-ecological' and/or

'cultural/social', the term implies that resource stewardship is the 'product' of the human and cultural effect that is embedded in the complex network of social relations, values, traditions, heritages and knowledges. Indigenous resource stewardship stresses the fact that local people and harvesters are mediating their relationship to the land and the resources through social and cultural arrangements. Indeed, many Poplar River First Nation members have stated that the responsibility for taking care of the land gifted to them from the 'people of long ago' is simply their 'moment' to ensure the land borrowed from future generations will sustain. Resource stewardship in Poplar River is hence both, the tangible acts and intangible processes of the ways people 'of long ago' lived *mino-bimaadiziwin*, 'the good life'. These resource stewardship practices are what guide sustainability of *asatiwisipe aki* and Abel tells me that the conscious actions of looking after the land and the resources is based on cultural, local, traditional and ecological knowledges and agreements made collectively. This is why

> we have to bring [these things] back you know. We have to bring [them] back. This is what we are at today. [...] I think those are the ones we have to keep; the ones we have now, today (Abel Bruce 2013).

In this thesis, 'resource stewardship' is also the notion of ensuring that the natural resources are sustained so that Aboriginal and treaty harvesting and cultural rights can be exercised. The Asatiwisipe Aki Management Plan (2010) and the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site Nomination (2012) also refer to resource stewardship or 'customary stewardship' as part of the measures for permanently protecting the land of the east side of Lake Winnipeg. The Pimachiowin Aki Nomination document made reference to this term by defining 'customary governance' as

> understood in the complete sense in which it is found in Pimachiowin Aki and includes: cultural and ethical principles that shape how people make use of the land. Land tenure relations that shape how people gain access to the land, and leadership institutions that are central to the maintenance of land tenure and stewardship practices. In sum, customary governance is a vital part of Indigenous land-use and relationship to the land. Therefore, inclusion of customary governance in site management provides greater representation of traditional land use and contributes to actively sustaining relations between people and their environment (Pimachiowin Aki WHSN 2012:127).

As a result, I will also use this term, rather interchangeably, unless otherwise mentioned.

As mentioned before, *asatiwisipe aki* can be roughly translated to 'poplar river earth/land'. However the word *aki* has an immense symbolism and is very inclusive of different aspects of 'land'. Because everything is connected, *aki* has a broad term when discussing natural 'resources'. Part of my research included examining Manitoba Conservation maps of *asatiwisipe aki*. When I used the maps in interviews and discussions with some of the Elders, we started off with looking at maps - but we ended up with talking about the *aki mazina'igan*. There is a very big distinction between the two. Whereas maps are pieces of paper showing static two-dimensional representations of a three dimensional scale portraying land-water differences through contour lines and little symbols of elevations, *aki mazinai'ganan* are cultural narratives of the relationship between humans and *aki*. With this understanding, *aki*, is inclusive of land as well as sites, [hi]stories and travel routes. *Aki mazina'igan* can be understood as the Anishinaabeg collective memory anchored in the landscape. In *Cree Narrative Memory* (2007), Neil McLeod talks about the notion of collective and cultural consciousness. In the book, McLeod writes that Cree narrative memory is composed of the collective memory of generations about their spirituality, their lifestyle and their connections through time and place. Similarly, my discussions with Elders, and other community members who live in Poplar River and who are familiar with the term *aki*, have shown me that this broad term travels through the places, the narratives and the overall consciousness of the people who depend on *aki* to live *mino-bimaadiziwin*, 'the good life'.

Image 6.1 *Ken Douglas giving the map a story. Maps were helpful in talking about specific places or evens on the land. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

Moreover, because land-based practices are embodied in the way of life of the trapper, hunter or fisherman and since the term *ganawenjigaade* was used by some of the local Elders, I will refer to this Anishinaabemowin term when discussing the local forms of natural resource 'stewardship'. Understood as *ganawenjigaade* (also spelled as *kahnahwaycheekahwin)* meaning 'it is taken care of, protected' or 'they care of it, keep it', I have heard the term used a few times to signify the land-care approach, or the people's responsibility to take care of the land (Abel Bruce 2012, pers. comm.; Ernest C Bruce 2010, pers. comm.; Roger Roulette 2010, pers. comm.). Since there are teachings and numerous items embedded in this non-constraining term, I will rely on this meaning when using the term natural resource or customary stewardship.

Lastly, it is important to note that since my work was with Poplar River, many of the examples provided here stem from that relationship and the local teachings I have been given; although the community is oriented towards conservation, the concept of '[Indigenous] resource stewardship as an Aboriginal and treaty right' can be [especially] applicable to communities where industrial development is planned or has already occurred - and I will briefly discuss how this is immensely significant within those circumstances later in this chapter.

Co-management

> *You know what I noticed, with this whole climate change, it is because of climate change, that we have less mosquitoes now. Yes, we have much less mosquitoes around. I don't know what is going to happen* (Noel Bruce 2008).

Outlining the need for conservation of the 'pristine expanses', Greenpeace Canada writes that intact areas of the boreal forest, those areas remaining in their natural states "will be better able to resist and recover from global warming than those areas fragmented by roads, logging, mining, or other human activity" (Ferguson, Nelson and Sherman 2008:4). Precisely due to the threats of industrial development, global warming, biodiversity extirpation, and many others, the movement to protect the

environment is in full force. Many are looking towards Indigenous resource stewardship systems to examine how resource use and sustainability can help mitigate some of the anthropogenic effects we have on our ecosystems. Logic and historical precedence only show that if people like the Anishinaabeg of Poplar River have been continuously accessing resources from this part of the boreal forest for the last few hundred years, at least, then by today's standards, they have done a very good job at ensuring their land use and harvesting activities as well as the local landscape remain sustainable.

Although I have identified some forms of *aki gikendamowin* in Poplar River in Chapter 5, the examination of those practices, against and in collaboration with, extrinsic powers is necessary to better understand the need for a multi-faceted interpretation of Aboriginal and treaty rights. Indigenous resource stewardship as opposed to state-controlled management systems is analyzed by experts in the field like Anderson & Bone (2009), Berkes (2008) Nadasdy (2003 & 2009), and Usher (2009). Whereas Usher (2009) and Anderson & Bone's edited version, *Natural Resources and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (2009) focus largely on this relationship in the context of development and implementation of 'traditional knowledge' into environmental assessments and project impacts more effectively, Nadasdy's (2003 & 2009) and Berkes' (2008) work centres around co-management and how the process can improve.

In spite of the fact that in the last few years, co-management has become the new form of wildlife stewardship whereby local peoples are actively involved in the management of resources, there are a number of key scholars who have critically engaged the concepts of co-management and joint-management to determine its degree of empowerment for local people involved in the process (Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2004; Nadasdy 2003& 2009a & b; Notzke 1994; Pinkerton 1992; Singleton 1998). Cooperative management or co-management, also referred to as joint-management in some cases (AFN 2014), is a process to fairly include Aboriginal people, as distinct peoples, in the cooperative

management of local resources, especially wildlife, and to improve their position by "granting them a significant role in their own governance and a say in the management of local land and resources" (Nadasdy 2003: 1). Berkes (2008) identifies ways in which incorporating local understandings of resource dynamics is essential, because in the case of the James Bay Cree, these resources are controlled by complex human-animal relationships that revolve around issues of respect (2008:103). Through numerous case studies, Berkes identifies ways in which antagonisms over resource management can be overcome by incorporating traditional ecological knowledge into positivist management practices; the author makes a strong case that these power animosities can be overcome by broadening the Western scientific base of ecology where holism, ethics, social, political and spiritual perspectives are encompassed.

Nadasdy (2003) on the other hand, remains quite skeptical of co-management. He argues that co-management ultimately perpetuates unequal relations of power between Aboriginal peoples and the State. In *Hunters and Bureaucrats* (2003), the author examines the efforts to redress the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the State in Kluane National Park. The cooperative process, Nadasdy claims, in attempting to involve the 'participation' of traditional knowledge and Aboriginal Elders into its schema, ends up bureaucratizing all these components into the centralized state management. Far from representing the alternative it was claimed to be, co-management oftentimes uses rhetoric to 'empower' First Nations who oftentimes tacitly accept the assumptions that underlie rules and regulations of the bureaucracy (Nadasdy 2003 & 2009). Co-management, Nadasdy writes, "much like participatory development elsewhere in the world, has empowered First Nation people to participate in existing processes of state management" (Nadasdy 2009: 34). With no real intention of trying to integrate TK with science, Nadasdy presents the views of the First Nation members who have come to see co-management as lip-service because it was politically advantageous to agree to it. The author's

criticism extends to the fact that First Nation's advisory bodies "make recommendations, not decisions" as it is only used to confirm the knowledge produced by wildlife biologists and legitimate decisions made by bureaucratic managers (Nadasdy 2009:32-34). Essentially, ignorance of Aboriginal knowledge and the tacit yet, unbeknownst, acceptance of Western values in many of the decision-making processes, causes co-management to be lost in its own bureaucratization. I saw a similar process at work in regard to hydro development near Fox Lake Cree Nation in Manitoba. In this case, co-management of impacts related to hydro development was viewed as a legitimate way of including the partner Cree Nations in the Keeyask project. McLachlan, one of the Expert Witnesses in our work with the Concerned Fox Lake Grassroots Citizens (CFLGC) writes that the process of decision-making and engagement between Hydro and the First Nations Partners

> was generally portrayed as a collaborative process, especially by Hydro. Yet many in the public hearings explicitly spoke of the shortcomings of the process. Consultation was in at least some cases rushed and did not provide community members adequate time to make sense of technical information, much less respond […] People also commented on the endless numbers of meetings and workshops, where concerns often went unaddressed, agendas were often set ahead of time with little or no community input […] these under-attended meetings were often passed off as adequate consultation. […] [S]ome community members felt that this process was not inclusive, that it was patronizing, and that it often excluded what was being related, especially if it contradicted the mission of the scientists selective hearing on the part of the consulting technicians and scientists and by Hydro was seen as endemic and undermined trust and respect (McLachlan 2013:5-7).

McLachlan's stance comes directly from community members involved in the process, many of whom actually testified at the CEC meetings that their knowledge of adverse impacts was ignored. Hearing their stories of 'TK integration', 'active participation' and the 'affirmation' of local knowledge in the development of more hydro projects, provided me with a personal recognition that co-management is more often than not, just 'lip service'. McLachlan (2013:40) agrees and proposes his 'three-track consultations process' in this recommendations for the Clean Environment Commission on behalf of the CFLGC:

> The process that underlies the consultation and outreach with community members as it relates to the Keeyask EIS should be investigated. Story after story indicated that many were not free to communicate their concerns in public. This was especially true for dissident voices, that were either critical of past projects, critical of the way that Hydro and its consultants were conducting their research […] or critical of the need for the project as a whole or its potential adverse impacts on the environment and any affected communities. […] A three-track process should be established […] Although there is some engagement between the two knowledge systems (western science and ATK), this has played a minor and mostly implicit role thus far, largely in the form of hiring or helping locate the otherwise purely scientific activity in the field. In contrast, cross-cultural work that actually shapes and strengthens the science should be explored, such that the science can be focused on impacts that have been experienced by community members or that are seen as occurring in the future.

Such a three-track process could be critical in areas where resources are exploited, and the notion that co-management plays simply an 'implicit' role in hydro development provided me with a better understanding of Poplar River's aspirations and the precedent-setting uniqueness of the Pimachiowin Aki nomination and the Asatiwisipe Aki Management Plan.

Through the World Heritage Site nomination, [I]CCA and the other protective measures over their traditional territory, Poplar River has shown the larger mainstream society that it is very possible to *incorporate science and Western structures into the Indigenous ways of 'managing' the landscape ecosystem*. But, as part of the World Heritage Site nomination, Manitoba's East Side Traditional Lands Planning and Special Protected Areas Act, and through [I]CCA and the Asatiwisipe Aki Management Plan, Poplar River, may be bound by some limitations, data conflicts and/or possibly jurisdictional decision-making. Through its Poplar/Nanowin Park designation, the community will embark on a 'co-operative' process in ensuring that natural ecological processes are sustained. The community will

> cooperate with the [provincial moose managers and biologist] surveys, participate in them, and work in partnership with provincial government wildlife officials to conserve moose populations and supply information that they request, as long as our traditional laws, practices, treaty and Aboriginal rights are fully respected (AAMP 2010:36).

In Chapter 5, I have illustrated some examples of how Parks Canada manages their World Heritage Sites and what policies they have regarding Aboriginal people. Although in the case of Pimachiowin

Aki, each First Nation will be looking after their respective traditional territory, and the entire site will be an assemblage of bodies governing the UNESCO area. And, because UNESCO and its World Heritage Committee have a vested interest in the 'outstanding value' of the site, there may be issues in determining paramountcy. As discussed in Chapter 3, the World Heritage Committee (WHC) has deferred their decision over the fate of Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site designation, and since it is the Committee that defines the criteria for the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List, it too, has an invested interest in the 'property'. Consequently, the organization will 'monitor' the site in question to ensure that its integrity is maintained. If an 'outstanding universal value' is established for a site then the site managers have to maintain this component; this is true of other sites as well. So, if Poplar River First Nation agrees to an 'outstanding universal value', then they are expected to fulfill what they said the site represents. This 'outstanding universal value' may narrow Poplar River's self-determination because if there is "evidence that the property has deteriorated to the point where it has irretrievably lost those characteristics which determined its inscription on the List" (WHC 2013:§176d), the Committee may decide to remove the property from the List.

Of course, I am not implying that Poplar River or the other First Nations will irrevocable damage the soundness of the landscape, but, seeing that the WHC failed to see the cultural wealth within this vast wilderness, it may not always understand the epistemological mechanisms behind Poplar River's exercise of their Aboriginal rights. Conflicts in any well-meaning project that requires cooperation by people whose worldviews can be quite distinct, can lead to a misalignment of interests, opposing interpretations of the same data (as evidenced in Nadasdy 2009b) and hence, decisions about how best to proceed. Similarly, my example of the roe-herring fishing conflict within the borders of Gwaii Haanas in British Columbia shows that sometimes State conservation-Aboriginal rights can form a convoluted liaison. In the event that disagreements do arise, I believe that interpreting customary

stewardship within the framework of non-proprietary Aboriginal and treaty rights, is paramount. In Poplar River, the [Indigenous] Community Conserved Area represents a recognized (though not legally formalized) structure through which the community can exercise their customary stewardship and governance institutions in addition to their treaty and Aboriginal rights. However, only once the site is designated, the extent of Pimachiowin Aki's self-determination over the natural resources will be seen.

The need for alternatives

Despite the widespread popularity of co-management or 'two-track processes' (CEC-KHLP 2014) discussions of equal joint-management (AFN 2014) and more recently adaptive co-management (Armitage, Berkes & Doubleday 2007) have prompted the exploration of innovative - better, forms of co-management. From improved implementation of TK in the environmental assessments (Usher 2009), to a three-track process where the two opposing world views can 'meet' and discuss conflict (McLachlan 2013), to finally, a re-structuring of the provincial/territorial system of wild-life regulation (Nadasdy 2009), alternatives are adapted to local situations within the encompassing Canadian framework. Actually, in both *Hunters and Bureaucrats* (2003) and *The Anti-Politics of TEK* (2009), Nadasdy illustrates his experience of discussing the idea of complete de-centralization of natural resources management with a Kluane First Nation member. The hunter, in proposing such a possibility, quickly answers his own hypothesis by saying that the government "will never accept that. It is beyond their comprehension" (2009:30). Although in many Canadian cases and across the globe, stories of successful co-management practices are documented (Anderson & Bone 2009; Armitage, Berkes & Doubleday 2007; Berkes 2008; Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2004; Freeman & Carbyn, eds.1988; Menzies, ed. 2006; Notzke 1994; Singleton 1998; Usher 1976), undeniably, disillusionment with State regulations and its 'TK integrative' co-management process has left some Aboriginal people feeling very disempowered and even cynically accepting of the political situation in Canada. Because

in many of these TK-integrative forms of co-management, the overarching State natural resource management system remains essentially unchallenged and unchanged, grounds can be made for new perspectives and governance arrangements to approach these diverse socio-ecological complexities in a decolonizing way.

Indeed, it is time to look for alternatives.

It is time to move past co-management. At the very least, there is a need to go beyond the "integration" of TK into the totalizing State-based framework and provide Aboriginal people with alternative yet effective means of ensuring their local community needs are met while also bolstering Aboriginal and treaty rights (Kulchyski 2005; Nadasdy 2003). Hinting at the "radical break" needed to really empower First Nations in the Kluane, Nadasdy again, depicts a personal experience where First Nation members of a Yukon-based co-management board of dall sheep voiced their exasperation at the existing institutional structures. Outside of a board meeting, one Kluane First Nation hunter, "bogged down by the glacial pace of bureaucratic change" stated that if the government really wanted to save the sheep, "it would do well to devolve control over their management to the First Nation" (Nadasdy 2009:30). Likewise, an Elder from Fox Lake, Noah Massan, with whom I worked for as part of the CFLGC, mentioned to me that the best protection of the alarmingly low [woodland] caribou populations is to not damage his trap line any longer and let him take care of his land (Noah Massan 2013 pers. comm.). Unlike some of the Elders in Fox Lake who are now 'restricted' to go out to their trap lines, Abel Bruce often said that he is happy when he can 'just go' to his trap line for a month and no one bothers him. In telling him about my work with Fox Lake, he stated that:

> we have to bring these things [traditional forms of land management] back. No wonder the government is after us now today.[...] Idle No More. You see, they have to know it, them over there. And over here too. They have to know it. You come down all the way from Winnipeg to ask me these questions, and here I am giving it to you to take them back, [to] your home town; pass the message around. Look at what I just finished telling you. Trapping was the most important [and] the reserve (Abel Bruce 2013).

Working with the Fox Lake Elders during my doctoral degree furthered my convictions that institutional changes need to be made in regards to resource management.

There is undeniably a need to go beyond the "integration" of TK into the larger resource management and co-management systems. Although many researchers recognize the existence of traditional knowledge and the collision of the two distinct worldviews in their management systems, the discussions tend to be limited to meeting a need for equivalency of traditional knowledges in policies, in co-management, in development projects and all other well-intended but ill-defined policies. The case for integration, implementation or interpretation of traditional knowledge and Indigenous resource stewardship systems in environmental assessments and [co-] management systems within appropriate institutional frameworks, is regularly made. But few scholars thoroughly discuss the urgent systemic need to remedy the deficiencies of the current State system; and fewer regard customary stewardship as a form of Aboriginal and treaty rights. Legal recognition for this right is especially important when conflicts arise and, in instances when a clash of views occurs in the co-management process, paramountcy is rarely accorded to Aboriginal peoples. The roe-herring fishing conflict within the borders of Gwaii Haanas in British Columbia for example, ended with fishing rights accorded to commercial fishermen - in spite of continued protests by local First Nations (Vancouver Sun 2914). Therefore, as part of the larger framework of rights recognized through the constitution, Canadian courts and especially inherent rights, resource stewardship that I am referring to, is part of the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of Indigenous people. Existing in the knowledge, epistemology and cultural oral and written expressions as well as the *act* of stewardship (including the exercise of harvesting rights), these ICH elements are all integrated into Indigenous peoples' customary stewardship. The customary stewardship and governance practices and institutions of Aboriginal

people were never extinguished and thus continue to be part of the preponderant rights rhetoric that should be more examined in the context of resource management.

Manitou omiigiwewinan: 'the Creator's gifts' and proprietorship

> *Last night, I dreamt of walking along a beach, with the clear water ankle-deep, cooling my toes. Suddenly, there was this big snake that appeared near me, and as I ran, the big snake started multiplying into tiny garden snakes. Eventually, the big snake was replaced by numerous little ones that all swam alongside of me in the water; naturally, I ran scared. The next morning, I shared my story with my husband John who came up to Poplar River with me that year. Excited, he told me that he too had dreamt about snakes that night. As we shared our dreams, John told me that snakes represent health and well-being. He said that when he smoked his pipe the day before at the Poplar River rapids, he asked for our safety and protection. That night, when we both dreamt about snakes, it was a confirmation that we were "being protected". He informed me that here in Poplar River, the water is very powerful* (Pawlowska-Mainville 2010, notes).

Due to the fact that the discourse of capitalism and materialist tenure continues to obfuscate much of the current discussions about the management/stewardship of natural resources, with each visit to Poplar River, I understood better the concept of *ganawenjigaade,* the Anishinaabeg 'land-care approach'. Rather than the give-and-take exchange of a commodity, the Anishinaabeg view the land as 'a gift' that is shared through reciprocity:

> Pimachiowin Aki, in Ojibwe language, means "the land that gives life." The term Pimachiowin speaks to life in the fullest sense: a good life in terms of enjoying longevity, good health, rewarding livelihood and freedom from misfortune. Aki ("land") includes all that is spiritual, living and non-living: the Creator's gifts of sun, water, wind, rain, fire, rock, plants and animals that ensure the survival and well-being of Anishinaabeg. The Anishinaabeg acknowledge that the very gift of life depends on maintaining relationships with Gaadebenjiged, the Creator, and respecting an animate association with the land: "we are part of Aki: Aki is part of us" (Pimachiowin Aki 2012:14).

Precisely against such an idea of 'ownership', my work and discussions with the Anishinaabeg from Poplar River have taught me that it is more about *minigoowiziwin*, 'gifts'. Since the animals, the medicines, water and all food harvested are 'gifts' given to the people so they can live, the hunter who

kills does not ‘own’ the animal. Correspondingly, the medicine man does not ‘own’ the land and plants he uses; they are gifted to him as much as the knowledge he has to use them was gifted to him.

The values embedded in the cultural structure of the customary stewardship system are precisely against the notion that resources are ‘owned’ by the harvesters; it is the animals, the medicines, and the fish that give themselves up to the harvester, and scholarship on traditional knowledge across Indigenous people in North American has shown consistency in this set of beliefs (Anderson 2005; Berkes 1988 & 2008; Feit 1988,1995 & 2005; Menzies, ed. 2006; Nadasdy 2003 & 2009; Notzke 1994; Tanner 1979; Usher 1976 & 1982). Berkes (1988 & 2008) Feit (1988,1995 & 2001) Menzies (2006, ed), Nadasdy (2003 & 2009) and especially Tanner (1979) have attempted to articulate the stewardship system and the socio-ecological and even spiritual interdependence existent within cultural practices. Anderson (2005) argues that Indigenous people have been pigeonholed by social scientists into one of either two dichotomous categories, ‘hunter-gatherers’ or ‘agriculturists’ where

> [t]he image evoked by the term hunter-gatherer is of a wanderer or nomad, plucking berries and pinching greens and living a hand-to-mouth existence; agriculturist, at the other extreme, refers to one who completely transforms wildland environments, saves and sows seed, and clears engulfing vegetation by means of fire and hand weeding (Anderson 2005:125-126).

In regions like northern Canada, specifically, in the boreal forest, the hunter-gatherer discourse is often applied to render claims to land ownership by local Indigenous peoples as illegitimate (also Feit 2005). Yet, the richness of the scholarship tells us that traditional knowledge and local stewardship practices are there; a closer examination and an openness to non-materiality however, is needed so that the rights discourse can be expunged from the capitalist agrarian-property perspective. In this way, the intangible elements of Anishinaabeg customary stewardship can be made and perhaps conceived as tangible rights

through Western, written laws. This is paramount for communities that have development project exploiting (or proposing to exploit) the land and resource of the area.

Although forms of Aboriginal ownership and rights to land and the resources are today recognized, the interpretation of those rights continues to be formed within the Lockean basis of tenure, property and capitalist materialism. Locke's theory of property argues that when an effort or labour is put into transforming nature, the objects then become personal property and the owner can do with them as he/she sees fit (Bishop 2009; Locke 2013; Jennings 1975). Through his understanding of natural law and natural rights among the Iroquois, Locke did not believe that hunters had identifiable and assigned territories or cultivated ground. Additionally, the capitalist material discourse of tenure signifies that economically, native North Americans who hunted and gathered owned the animals they killed, but not the land they hunted on. Aside from Eurocentric bias, the 'civ-sav dichotomy' (LaRocque 2010) and the theories of original appropriation (Flanagan in Bishop 2009), arguments continue to be made through the Lockean understanding of ownership and materialism. The literature, specifically Anderson & Bone's *Natural Resources and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (2009) was limiting in my attempt to view natural resources 'management' in the way the Anishinaabeg (and Cree) have taught me, that is, in the non-proprietary and non-material way, respectively. Ernest told me once that "we don't claim to be the owners but we have always lived here" (Ernest C Bruce 2008). The edited volume, although an important reading component to those working in the field of Aboriginal or environmental studies, was

Image 6.2 *Bird's eye view of the Poplar River cultural landscape. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

reflective of "community capitalism" where natural resources, including lands and forests, are seen as assets to be developed in the market economy (Wuttunee quoted in Anderson & Bone 2009:vii). The numerous cases, articles and commentaries take the view that 'natural resources' in Canada are largely understood to be 'property' which many Indigenous people can claim rights to (Bishop 2009), can develop 'with a red face' (Newhouse and Inkster 2009), co-manage with the State (Nadasdy 2008) or integrate into the environmental assessments (Usher 2009). Bishop (2009:13) uses the capitalist argument to support group ownership whereby Indigenous people came to 'own' the land and the resources according to their own rules. He insists that

> consistent Lockean arguments from natural law in fact show that North American Native people had already appropriated both farm land and hunting grounds, and hence that most (or all) of North America was private property at the time of contact (Bishop 2009:16).

By the same token, Notzke's *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada* (1994) reviews past and contemporary forms of Aboriginal wildlife management and sustainable resource use across Canada. Although the book is absolutely indispensible to the field of Indigenous and environment studies, the limitations of the argument are present through the belief that all sanctions, control mechanisms and influences "are totally out of control of local user groups [and thus have] demonstrated to aboriginal people the feasibility of coming to an understanding with state-mandated wildlife management" (Notzke 1994:153).

A case for these views can be made, and the reality of Canada as a settler state with many outstanding land claims cannot be denied. Access to land through claims, various agreements and tenure systems are an important component of Aboriginal justice. Utilization of the wealth gathered from the resources through non-renewable and other resource-exhaustive projects is an important component of Aboriginal and treaty rights that constitute part of public policy and economic development. My disagreement with the premise of proprietary rights however, is specifically taken

from the Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg epistemology that the land, destroyed already in so many places, is 'a gift' whose safeguarding is the community's responsibility. Byron Mitchell, a young First Nation member who aspires to become a minister, illustrates how the role of the people is to care for 'God's gift:

> our way of life is based on our beliefs and principles that we have. It's very similar to, uh, Native culture, we have the same principles. Like say, Elders, is one thing, we have to respect our Elders, and Native people, I know in the past, that Native people, that was very big for them, was to respect their Elders. And to learn from them about how to live. That itself is very important for our young people too. There is a lot of our Elders, there is not very many of them left. A lot of that knowledge could be lost. That's one big thing that Native people were really big on. And the Creator, the Native people talk about a Creator. That's one thing why Native people are so in touch with the land - it's because of the Creator. Because they are one with creation, and I believe that God that created all things. I believe that God created the earth, and heaven, the sea. And because God made all of this, I believe it is our responsibility to keep it, to preserve it as much as we can (Byron Mitchell 2008).

Although the Government of Manitoba has set a precedent criterion for recognizing resource stewardship of Aboriginal people through the East Side Traditional Lands Planning and Special Protected Areas Act in 2010, I am joining those voices who contend that it is necessary to begin a discussion of Aboriginal and treaty rights that reflect more than the proprietary and usufructuary perspective. Like the notion of food sovereignty that is largely embedded within the Western capitalist agrarian understanding, the interpretation of Aboriginal people's rights to natural resources is also much embedded within this Eurocentric framework. The rights discourse has been largely embedded in possessive capitalist materialism. I believe it needs to be taken out of that cage and should include the perspective of non-tangible rights, such as those of Indigenous management practices in the boreal forest that arise from culture-based knowledges.

Discourse of tenures and trap lines

> In Poplar River, stewardship of each trap line is inherited through a specific allotment system where the owner of a trap line has gained the responsibility to look after the land

> and resources. That responsibility is given based on having earned it through lineage and continuous time spent on the land. Oftentimes an uncle, father or another family member inherits the trap line; in some cases it can be a non-related individual who nonetheless must possess years of knowledge and experience to be a head trapper. This is because it is only when a harvester 'knows the land' that sustainability can be attained (Abel Bruce 2011, pers. comm.).

The land as the basis for identity, self-respect and pride is evidenced in Native concepts and relationship with the land, therefore the notion that "both before and after [Treaty] the title to the lands in suit was in the Crown and not in the Indians" as claimed in the *Millings* case, began a Eurocentric and unjust precedent. The *R v. St. Catherine's Milling and Lumber Company* (1888) was the first case that substantially discussed the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and Indian interest in land. At issue was the Province of Ontario's challenge of the Lumber Company's timber permit, which was located on treaty land held by the Ojibway Indians. The *Milling's* case decision claimed that Aboriginal title was granted by the Crown through the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and Indian interest to land was considered to be a "personal and usufructuary right dependent on the good will of the Sovereign" (*R v Millings* 1888) and which could be extinguished at the pleasure of the Crown.

The case greatly circumscribed the nature of Aboriginal title to their traditional lands and as arising from the Royal Proclamation. However, it is my strong conviction that the 'right' to take care of natural resources extends past Aboriginal 'usufructurary' rights of 'enjoyment'. The interpretation of rights articulated in the different Supreme Court of Canada cases can offer some insight into the rights of Aboriginal peoples. For me, it is specifically, the notion of intangible cultural heritage and how Aboriginal rights are not a mere extension of Aboriginal title. The *St. Catherine's Milling* case played a pivotal role in the injustice of Aboriginal rights as limiting to tenure, but I believe that the 'personal and usufrucuary' right to that title included stewardship of the territory. The *Milling* case ruled that Aboriginal title had no pre-existence, but was created by the British authorities through the Royal Proclamation. But this proprietary concept of ownership, it can be argued, is inaccurate in that many

Aboriginal people view their relationship to their territories as a mutual, reciprocal care-taking rather than a model of managerial work (Borrows 2002; Ernest C Bruce 2011, pers. comm.; Henderson 1997; Kulchyski 1994; Russell Lambert 2008). The judicial interpretation of the case that Indian tenure is usufruct can be interpreted to mean that the common 'ownership' is really an extension of the social relationships and resource/land use of Aboriginal peoples. Along with 'enjoyment on behalf of another' or 'in common ownership', usufructuary property rights imply that a holder must be responsible for not damaging the property – i.e. be a steward of it. In this case, Indigenous resource stewardship as a monitoring mechanism, especially in areas where projects are occurring, can be effectively argued.

According to the many narratives of Aboriginal people in Poplar River as well as through my work with Fox Lake Cree Nation and, as articulated in Berger's *Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland* (1975), land is one of the most important sources of identification for Native people. *Calder v Attorney General of British Columbia [1973] S.C.C.* also dealt with Aboriginal title but unlike the *Milling's* case, the courts found prior occupancy as the source of that law. In *Calder*, a group of Nisga'a communities were suing the Attorney-General of BC for a declaration that "aboriginal title, otherwise known as Indian title, of the plaintiffs to their ancient tribal territory […] has never been lawfully extinguished" (*R v Calder* 1973). In this landmark case, the judges unanimously agreed that the Nisga'a title to land had existed at the time of the Royal Proclamation. This case is important in that the justices acknowledged that Aboriginal title derives from prior occupancy (and not Western laws and proclamations), and if traditional land use systems were based on social and cultural practices (which were followed by the establishment of trap lines) then, naturally, Indigenous resource stewardship that had existed prior to Canada's Sovereignty is actually the source of Aboriginal 'title'. Social and cultural structures that shaped the way the land and resources were used since time

immemorial are continuously used in Poplar River (and to an extent, many other communities); this signifies that unless 'clear and plain' extinguishment (*R v Calder* 1973) is proved, customary governance over the traditional territory continues to be in full force.

The judges in *Calder* also confirmed that pre-existing occupancy created an inherent title and rights to lands because "they were here first", which could not be modified or extinguished by legislative acts (Henderson 1997:24; Kulchyski 1994). Although *Calder* argued that the prerogative of the State ensures Native people have no authority to regulate the allocation, harvesting and utilization of wildlife in accordance with their customary laws (Usher 1982:36; Notzke 1994:113), Aboriginal title to land can be viewed as based on [in]tangible heritage. Henderson (1997:28) argues that withdrawal of such 'heritage rights' can threaten the ability of an Aboriginal community to maintain a culturally distinct way of life (Henderson 1997:28), and hence why Aboriginal resource stewardship is as much based on land as it is on *mino bimaadiziwin*, 'the good life'.

Image 6.3 *Harvesting medicines in deep snow. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

While the extent of usufructuary rights continues to be debated/able, the colonial notion of 'Crown land' within the proprietary discourse represents many jurisdictional difficulties that First Nations experience with natural resources and their respective provincial or federal management practices. Consequently, access to lands for subsistence, for cultural purposes, for different forms of economic development may provide difficulty for Aboriginal people to 'enjoy' the natural resources. One community member has stated that even though the Manitoba government may issue many acts, bills and laws 'permitting' Poplar River First Nation members to exercise their activities on their trap lines, the persistent idea that this is still 'Crown land'

is very difficult to overcome (Pawlowska 2012, pers. notes). Leaders and harvesters from many First Nations know firsthand how complex resource stewardship can be - both, the province and the federal government have much to say about how the resources located on traditional territories are to be administered. And, the community of Poplar River may also have UNESCO and/or the World Heritage Committee as an additional interested stakeholder to their Indigenous Community Conserved Area initiative.

Abel Bruce tells me that when the government made a promise to the Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg,

> they made a promise: as the sun rises, as the river flows, the that's when the government will help the people out. And see what's going on now, we hear what's gonna be. As long as the sun comes up, as long as the river flows. See that river flowing, that how you are going to help the people. […] Sometimes you hear people talk, 'what's the use? What's the use to bring back the past? What's the use to do this?' We have to do it. We have to squeeze them, to do something with it. Mix it up. Just like you make a cake, you mix cake, pudding, stir it up, mix it up. That's what we have to do (2013).

When Poplar River created their Asatiwisipe Aki Management Plan, the people have included all the landscape components they could think of into their Community Conserved Area; likewise, when thinking of Pimachiowin Aki, the notion evokes all aspects of the landscape as well as the cultural heritage of the five First Nations. Because of this interconnectedness between Aboriginal people and their way of life, which in many cases continues to be land-based, it is important to go past the term 'usufructuary' rights and permit the inclusion of the conscious choices it takes to ensure ecosystem sustainability - the knowledges, experiences, 'research', 'data collection' and observation of *aki* over generations. All those elements are part of Anishinaabeg [in]tangible cultural heritage and are embedded in aspects of resource stewardship.

The persistence of Eurocentric usufructuary rights against Crown sovereignty, and the illegitimacy of the harvesting mode of production against agriculture is further evidenced in the belief

that unlike 'scientific' knowledge, Indigenous resource stewardship is solely based on 'primitive' technology and control against starvation (Blaut 1993; LaRocque 2010; Notzke 1994; Freeman & Carbyn 1988, eds; Sahlins 1972; Wolf 1982; Usher & Bankes 1986). The persistent view of property-less nomads who did not alter the landscape is based on the agriculturalist and capitalist understanding of the world and of understanding sustenance. In other words, through colonization, Aboriginal peoples in Canada have been dispossessed of their *lex loci* – Latin, for the 'law of the place'. In Poplar River, the Asatiwisipe Lands Management Plan can be seen as a written document of the local *lex loci*, whose trap line system is based on kinship. In many cases, like in the case of Fox Lake First Nation, the local trap line system that continues to exist in the minds of the trappers, hunters and trap line holders, has been ignored and replaced by the government and/or industry interest to land through imposition of the Registered Trapline System (RTS). As such, in Manitoba, "lines cannot be sold, inherited, or handed down […] they are awarded through competitions held in co-operation between the local trapping organization and Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship" (Manitoba 2014). Although family relationships are taken into account, there have been numerous instances of altered local peoples' traditional trap line boundaries to those that best benefit industry, government or non-Aboriginal needs (Abel Bruce 2013, pers. comm.; Ernest C Bruce 2010, pers. comm.; Ed Hudson 2012, pers. comm.; Noah Massan [FL] 2013, pers. comm.).

In Poplar River however, the trap line system continues to be largely based on kinship; again, rather than being 'owners' of the trap line, each head trappers sees himself belonging to the land because the community acknowledges that he or she (in Bloodvein, there are female trappers too) is a good and responsible harvester (Abel Bruce 2013, pers. comm.). It is a head trappers responsibility to ensure that the land is healthy not only because of the cultural protocols of caring for the land that it is simultaneously 'gifted' from the past yet borrowed from the future, but also by the fact that the land

and the resources nourishes people in the form of sustenance and *mino-bimaadiziwin*. The responsibility for the gift that is *aki*, means that one must make sure that animal levels are sustainable, resources are not overused, and that others do not desecrate important sites or family cabins (Abel Bruce 2013, pers. comm.; Ernest C Bruce 2011, pers. comm.; Noah Massan 2013, pers. comm.). The connection between people and the land is based on interaction, knowledge, travel, naming and harvesting – and of course occupancy – but not in the abstract proprietary sense, but in the sense that local and traditional social relations direct resource and land use. Those who cannot demonstrate responsible use and knowledge of an area - expressed through stories based on both personal experience and the legends based on the collective experience of the group, "clearly do not have rights in it" (Usher & Bankes 1986:13).

In Poplar River, the trap line boundaries are partitioned by geographical landmarks and every head trapper knows the area intimately. Abel Bruce, the line holder of Trapline # 4, knows where every stream, river, good harvesting sites and each rapids are along the Mukutawisipe. He has spent most of his life trapping:

> this is what I am doing. My uncle gave me his trap line. His name was Philip Bruce. Now I use it the way he was using it. It was in the 1980s that he gave me his trap line. He said: Keep it clean, use it. It is beautiful, take care of it like it's your life. Your life is important to you, take care of it. It's like your life, if you take care of it, it will stand for you. Ancestors are over there, they were there taking care of it. They took care, now we are doing it for them like they did [for us] (Bruce Abel 2011).

Abel articulates the heritage that is embedded in his trap line; the intergenerational nature of the knowledge and the responsibility that is associated with maintaining the land - and the knowledge about how to care for the land, *ganawenjigewin*, in the Anishinaabeg way. The interdependence and reliance on the land – and yet being Anishinaabe is not only rooted to the land, but is best understood through the local, cultural and familial trap line system. Usher & Bankes (1986:13) illustrate the definite non-proprietary conceptions about Aboriginal territorial rights:

> There were no attempts to alter or partition the landscape or to appropriate sections or features of it in a manner that would exclude other members of the group. The land and its resources were thus the communal property of the group: no one could either claim exclusive access or be excluded access. To the extent that people articulated their relationship to the land, they saw themselves as belonging to it rather than it to them. Traditional cosmology did not share with western thought the clear subject-object distinction between man and nature, the idea that nature is insentient matter for man to dominate or master. The land was home and sustenance, but could not be reduced to individual possession and could not be alienated. Land was not a commodity or a factor of production. Nor were animals property – rather, animals existed in a relationship with man that man could to some extent control through knowledge and deliberate action.

Although illustrating Inuit property rights, the significance of the interdependent relationship of the Anishinaabeg on the boreal forest can be evidenced. The local *lex loci* of the Anishinaabeg in Poplar River may be simply viewed as 'granted' by the province in the form of the registered trap line system or title; however, because Anishnaabeg *lex loci* has existed since time immemorial, prior to occupancy and continues to be integral to the existence of the people, it is better to interpret Indigenous resource stewardship as a larger component of Aboriginal and treaty rights, and not land tenure.

Aboriginal and treaty rights rhetoric

> *We had to start documenting everything. We had to go occupancy studies to prove that our people had been there for thousands of years and everything that was thrown at us, to make it more difficult for us… But having that guidance from the Elders really kept us on the path to reach our vision to try to keep that land the way it is. [ ] So we see this as a journey of a people that go towards a healing, that security of land protection. And to this day we are still working with the government and there's been ups and downs, and we are still happy with what we got in the end. This Bill 6 is something that is a new beginning, it is still ...we'll see I guess what the end result will be* (Sophia Rabliauskas 2009).

Many Aboriginal people in Canada view their Aboriginal rights as inherent, collective rights which flow from original occupation since time immemorial. Embedded in those rights, are all forms of pre-contact social orders such as the right of independence through self-determination in respect of governance, land, resources and culture. On top of those Aboriginal rights, are also treaty rights; both

of which are 'recognized and affirmed' by Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. Additionally, the Supreme Court of Canada (S.C.C.) has interpreted the meaning of this spectrum of 'existing', 'recognized' and 'affirmed' rights. My position that customary stewardship should be included in this spectrum of rights can be articulated through the idea that Aboriginal people are the "rightful occupants of the soil" but especially that they can use it to their own discretion based on inherent and treaty rights as Aboriginal people. Macklem (2001:183) writes that Aboriginal practices like hunting, trapping and fishing treaty rights

> ought to include *right to engage in practices reasonably incidental to hunting, trapping, and fishing*; right to hunt, trap, and fish for commercial purposes; and the right to expect that hunting, trapping and fishing will continue to be successful, measured by reference to the fruits of past practice" (Macklem 2001:183, emphasis added).

Although resource stewardship is more than 'incidental' to harvesting rights, the numerous Indigenous cultural and traditional values and guidelines that ensure sustainable harvesting are very much the key to *mino-bimaadiziwin* of land-based people like the Anishinaabeg in the boreal. In fact, from the Indigenous perspective, it is the Western concept of rights that is very much 'incidental' to customary stewardship, because it can only protect what Aboriginal people experience on a daily basis. Below I discuss a few S.C.C. cases that I view as the most imperative to my argument that resource stewardship is an Aboriginal and treaty right.

R. v. Sparrow [1990] S.C.C., was a landmark decision because it articulated an initial interpretive framework for "existing" Aboriginal and treaty rights and the judges set out criteria to determine whether governmental infringement on Aboriginal rights was justifiable. In 1984, a Musqueam band member Ronald Sparrow was arrested for fishing with a net longer than was permitted by his food fishing license; the fishing limitations were regulations set out by the government. Sparrow's arrest was viewed as a threat to Aboriginal peoples' [collective] rights and thus, the Musqueam argued that they: retained the right to fish on the territories they had inhabited and fished on

for centuries; that their rights to the land and its resources had never been extinguished by treaty; and, that Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 reinforced their rights to fish. Moreover, the Musqueam argued that infringement on Aboriginal fishing rights was invalid, unless justified as being a necessary measure of conservation - but that the Musqueam net-length restriction was not for conservation reasons. The Court of Canada in this case, held that Sparrow was exercising an "inherent" Aboriginal right that existed before any Canadian legislations and was thus guaranteed and protected by Section 35. The courts also set out the 'Sparrow test', to determine whether a right exists, whether a legislation interferes with the right, and whether government infringement on Aboriginal rights is justifiable – providing that these rights were in existence at the time of the Constitution Act of 1982.

The "Sparrow test", was designed to help set out a list of criteria that determines whether a right is existing, and if so, how a government may be justified to infringe upon it. The government may infringe upon a right under certain categories but it is the aspect of what might justify an infringement upon an Aboriginal right that interest me in the context of resource stewardship. An infringement might be justified if (1) it serves a valid objective (like conservation of natural resources), (2) there has been as little infringement as possible to achieve the desired result, (3) fair compensation was provided, and, (4) Aboriginal people were consulted or at least informed (*R v Sparrow* 1990). As outlined above, in many cases where traditional knowledges are part of the resource issues, it appears that knowledge and data that gathered through Western scientific methods overrides them. Aboriginal people are indeed often consulted (or informed) about resource 'management' or exploitation impacts, but their knowledges are usually infringed upon by Western science and management systems. My belief is that 'traditional knowledge' embedded within Indigenous resource stewardship is viewed as mere 'knowledge' or collective/cultural 'opinion' rather than something that arises out of governance and self-determination. Whereas 'knowledge' can be easily nullified without any legal means, 'governance'

or self-determination of a Nation, cannot be ignored. In fact, if the Sparrow Test was to be applied in natural resource development projects, I believe that many governments and industries would be guilty of infringement on the resource stewardship rights (and not to mention the intangible cultural rights) of Aboriginal peoples. Local systems of caring for the land based on cultural and social relations are often completely ignored - this I saw for myself during my work with Fox Lake Cree Nation where imposed trap line systems, bureaucratized 'environmental monitors', and 'experts' insisting that Aboriginal harvesters are the main cause of wildlife decline in project areas were the metanarratives (please see CEC Keeyask 2013 hearings).

Furthermore, the courts held in *Sparrow* that Section 35 affords Aboriginal people constitutional protection and that a "generous and liberal" interpretation of rights is demanded to "affirm" those rights (*Sparrow* in Kulchyski 1994). The recognition and affirmation of Section 35 was interpreted to limit the government's interference (and I think this should include industry) with Aboriginal rights and oblige consolidation of its fiduciary duty towards Aboriginal people. As per the judges, the liberal interpretation of 'existing' rights must be "interpreted flexibly so as to permit evolution over time", which I am arguing, must nowadays include the local and cultural resource stewardship practices arising out of heritage and traditions but also interwoven with contemporary knowledges and mechanisms. In fact, Poplar River's lands management plan is the outcome of customary governance and traditional stewardship practices but articulated in a written document; the community's use of the UNESCO World Heritage Site as a tool to meet local needs is also an affirmation of existing Aboriginal rights exercised flexibly. The right to manage resources upon which these Anishinaabeg continue to be dependent on *today* to secure *mino-bimaadiziwin*, 'the good life', is an affirmation of their land-based indigeneity and unextinguished rights as Aboriginal peoples. Community-based resource management practices must be placed in equal reference to other

interpretations of Aboriginal rights because their affirmation and recognition as discussed in *Sparrow*, will incorporate the government's responsibility to act in a fiduciary capacity with respect to Aboriginal peoples. Resource management as an Aboriginal right will also import some restraints on the exercise of Sovereign power and may even help with subsequent negotiations, including land-claims.

One of the most pertinent cases to my contention that Indigenous resource stewardship is an Aboriginal right is *R v Van der Peet [1990] S.C.C. Van der Peet* is another precedent-setting case that is pivotal in discussing the 'practices' of Aboriginal rights. The appellant, Dorothy Van der Peet, a member of the Sto:lo First Nation in British Columbia, was charged with selling salmon that had been caught under a food fishing license. Such a license permitted Aboriginal people to fish solely for the purposes of sustenance and ceremonial use, and prohibited the sale of fish to non-Aboriginal people. *Van der Peet* challenged the charges, arguing that as an Aboriginal person, her right to sell fish was protected under Section 35 of the Constitution Act. Following along the lines of *Sparrow*, the case examined the meaning of Aboriginal rights of Section 35. The courts argued that while Aboriginal rights must be reconciled with Crown sovereignty, the distinctive features of those rights are

> the practices, customs and traditions which constitute aboriginal rights are those which have continuity with the practices, customs and traditions that existed prior to contact with European society. Conclusive evidence from pre-contact times about the practices, customs and traditions of the community in question need not be produced. The evidence simply needs to be directed at demonstrating which aspects of the aboriginal community and society have their origins pre-contact. The concept of continuity is the means by which a "frozen rights" approach to s. 35(1) will be avoided. It does not require an unbroken chain between current practices, customs and traditions and those existing prior to contact. A practice existing prior to contact can be resumed after an interruption (*R v Van der Peet* 1996).

In order to 'assess' the Aboriginal rights in question, the Courts also held that the perspectives of Aboriginal peoples themselves and the precise nature of the claim as well as its significance must be taken into consideration. Prior to *Van der Peet*, Aboriginal rights were seen to derive from the prior

occupancy or Aboriginal title, but unlike the proprietary arguments which based Aboriginal rights solely on title to land, *Van der Peet* is specific about the fact that Aboriginal rights are also "practices, customs and traditions". These "practices, customs and traditions" are unique in the fact that they arise out of *activities* particular to Aboriginal people. And resource stewardship, which is embedded in the cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples - emanates Aboriginal rights.

Since *Van der Peet* defines "practices" as an Aboriginal right, then resource stewardship is clearly such a practice. In this view, Aboriginal resource stewardship is based on a continuous, performative intangible cultural heritage element: as long as Elders and harvesters like Abel Bruce continue to 'perform' the practices, customs and traditions of the 'people of long ago', and as long as they transmit these cultural elements to future generations, resource stewardship in Poplar River will remain a part of Aboriginal rights 'as long as the sun shines and the river flows'. This signifies that, like the intangible cultural elements that often occur 'in the moment' that they are happening, resource stewardship is also grounded in the 'embodied practices' like knowledge, spoken language, dance, sports, rituals (Taylor 2003:19). Essentially, as I argue in Chapter 3, all the [in]tangible cultural heritage elements of Indigenous peoples - including resource stewardship - must be incorporated into the larger framework of Aboriginal rights to ensure justice for Indigenous people. Arguably, the Supreme Court of Canada's emphasis on the integral 'customs, practices and traditions', bring such [in]tangible cultural heritage elements into Canada already through the Constitution.

Resource management or customary stewardship is the 'act' of caring for the land or managing specific resources on traditional territories and unoccupied Crown lands. This 'act' exists in the collective cultural living heritage of First Nations members that manifests during the 'production' it is happening. Resource management, *ganawenjigaadewin* arises out of *aki gikendaamowin*, 'land knowledge' that has been passed down from generation to generation about how best to sustain the

landscape ecosystem that people depend on for sustenance. With the intent that future generations can live off the land, can trap, hunt, fish as well as continue traditions and cultural practices, these are *conscious* measures taken to ensure that *aki* integrity is attained. It is the specific knowledge that is consciously *acted upon* and which is anchored to the specific area of the individual knowledge-holder, that constitutes a large part of the Aboriginal right. Just like *knowledge* about blueberry bushes growing in the sun is part of the community life, resource stewardship also includes the conscious *act* of burning trees to make space for the wild fruits, that is an Aboriginal and treaty right; it is hence, a larger view of 'harvesting rights' that tend to limit Aboriginal people to subsistence. So, those management practices that aboriginal people *know of* and *do*, such as burning trees to make blueberry patches, cultivating shrubs and trees, diversifying crops, hunting, trapping, fishing restraints, protocols and quota – and all the other methods used make the land viable for the people to live off of physically and culturally, constitutes a part of rights that were never surrendered. Based on local Anishinaabe and Cree knowledges, these unsurrendered aboriginal and treaty [intellectual] rights are an extension of the self-determination and cultural practices and knowledges that exist within Poplar River First Nation members, as Indigenous people. These tangible and intangible heritage elements are a *series of acts* carried out by individuals and thus cannot be given up as a tangible thing through documents, including treaties.

Poplar River is a Treaty Five adhesion signatory, and if the context of this treaty would be re-examined from an intangible cultural heritage (ICH) lens, the protection of rights guaranteed in the treaty would necessarily have to include [natural and cultural] resource stewardship practices. In Treaty Five,

> Indians inhabiting the district hereinafter described and defined, do hereby cede, release, surrender and yield up to the Government of the Dominion of Canada, for Her Majesty the Queen and Her successors for ever, all their rights, titles and privileges whatsoever to the lands (Treaty Five 1875/2014).

If taken out of the proprietary rights discourse, extinguishment embraces "rights, titles and privileges" *to the lands* only. Although activities like fishing, hunting and trapping are ensured through the treaty, the additional fact that "wheat, barley, potatoes and oats to plant the land […] for cultivation" as well as oxen, bulls and cows were promised to Aboriginal people, implies that activities ensuring a sustainable mode of production were foreseen by both parties. As I argued in Chapter 4, if we are to remove the capitalist agrarian bias that is imposed on hunters, trappers and gatherers, then the underlying argument is that Aboriginal people are expected to continue land-based activites that sustain their *mino-bimaadiziwin*, 'good life' and self-reliance.

Re-reading the treaties with an ICH and a non-agrarian lens shows that, since Aboriginal people have been looking after the land and the resources since time immemorial, and since it was implied that their way of life should not change after the treaties, then, playing an active role in resource stewardship is a right that continues to exist. To view these harvesting rights as mere property that can be extinguished, is to reduce Aboriginal and treaty rights to an irreducible minimum, which is why in *R v Badger*, S.C.C. (1996), the courts ruled that the context in which the treaties were negotiated, conducted and committed to in writing must be considered. Here, the appellants were status Indians who were hunting moose for food on privately owned lands falling within the tracts surrendered by Treaty Eight. The Cree were charged under the Wildlife Act; the meaning of treaty rights was deliberated and the decision guaranteed treaty rights subject only to two limitations, geography and conservation. The decision was significant in that any "ambiguities or doubtful expressions" must be "resolved in favour of the Indians and any limitations restricting the rights of Indians under treaties must be narrowly construed" (*R v Badger* 1996). This means that if treaties are to be interpreted in the sense that they would be naturally understood by Aboriginal peoples at the time of the signing, then the translations of those documents and their meanings would be made in a verb-based Indigenous language like Anishinaabemowin. At the time

of treaties, Aboriginal people would naturally understand management of resources to be an encompassing component of all harvesting rights promised in the negotiations and non-surrenders. This means that all non-material form of Aboriginal [harvesting] 'rights' - the actions, knowledges and practices that make up the ICH of the society in question, would encompass *ganawenjigaadewin,* 'land monitoring/care approach' as part of that understanding.

To conclude, the fact that traditional, local, Indigenous and community knowledges and resource management practices 'exist' in the boreal forest is already known, and largely accepted. Much scholarship dealing with Aboriginal peoples' hunting, trapping and fishing rights argues that traditional territories are both biological and anthropological entities (Tanner 1979; Feit 1995; Berkes 2008; Brody 1975; Kulchyski 2005). Testimonies in RCAP (1996) and in the Report of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry (1975) also show that intensive use of and dependence on the land is effective in the land's richness in resources and Aboriginal people's understanding of 'the good life'. As a people dependent on the land and resources, sustenance of their traditional trap line territories and the wildlife is essential to their survival as *Indigenous* peoples. As Indigenous people, Aboriginal and treaty rights need to play a primary role in the stewardship of the land and the resources. This customary law recognition is enshrined through pre-existent management systems of Aboriginal peoples, where "the role of courts and constitutions is to recognize what always already pre-existed: namely that Aboriginal peoples have special rights by virtue of their prior occupancy of the Americas" (Kulchyski 1994:7). As such, Aboriginal people's interest in their lands will affect Canada's use and management of the land and resources. The Poplar River First Nation narrative tells us that Aboriginal peoples as not merely 'users' of the lands and resources, but also that their Anishinaabeg epistemology and customary stewardship can influence the larger interpretation of Aboriginal and treaty rights - and consequently, de-construct the State apparatus rather than re-construct one of its tentacles.

CHAPTER 7
Gaawiin bookoshkaa, 'no longer broke': community economic development

> *We been reminded by the Elders too, they said pursue it that way to protect it, but be careful not to paint yourselves into a corner and lock the future so that the next generations might not be able to gain from it. So we have to be careful not to put ourselves in the corner, otherwise we are going to jeopardize the future generations; then they will look back to that and say, 'why didn't they think of us'? That's why when I make references to the future, that's why I always mention the next several generations* (Ernest C Bruce 2008).

In *Capital*, (1867/1930: 6) Marx distinguishes between use value and exchange value in the capitalist mode of production:

> The utility of a thing makes it a use value. [..] A commodity, such as iron, corn, or a diamond, is therefore, so far as it is a material thing, a use value, something useful. This property of a commodity is independent of the amount of labour required to appropriate its useful qualities. When treating of use value, we always assume to be dealing with definite quantities, such as dozens of watches, yards of linen, or tons of iron. […] Use values become a reality only by use or consumption: they also constitute the substance of all wealth, whatever may be the social form of that wealth. In the form of society we are about to consider, they are, in addition, the material depositories of exchange value.
>
> Exchange value, at first sight, presents itself as a quantitative relation, as the proportion in which values in use of one sort are exchanged for those of another sort, a relation constantly changing with time and place. Hence exchange value appears to be something accidental and purely relative, and consequently an intrinsic value, *i.e.*, an exchange value that is inseparably connected with, inherent in commodities, seems a contradiction in terms.

In Marx's view of political economy, there is a big difference between the two forms of value. The distinctive notion of exchange values, market commodities and its counter thesis, intrinsic use value, is one narrative that I often identified in *asatisiwipe aki*. Whereas most of society is willing to exchange a tree, a river, a person or anything of use on the market for capital, Poplar River sees the inherent use-value of the boreal forest and their people. There are some things that simply cannot be exchanged or forfeited for capital:

> Protection of the land is the key to our very future. Therefore, to suggest that our traditional lands need not be protected, or that only a part of our traditional territory needs to be protected, is to suggest to us that our lives can be threatened; that our children's future can be compromised or forfeited for some other purpose. It would be disrespectful and immoral for society at large to compromise what we, the Poplar River Anishnaabek, know and assert as the need for life (AAMP 2010:3).

The world view regarding the boreal forest for the Anishnaabeg is one that sees inherent use value in their surroundings. The trees are not worth enough money to be given up to foreign logging companies; the terrain cannot be calculated to sufficient currency from the mining companies; the land cannot exchanged for a industrial project that will ruin local ecosystem function and community *mino-bimaadiziwin*. The community emphasizes that the value of their culture and the knowledge, language and traditional practices that empowers the exercise of their land-based rights, is priceless.

In order to better understand Asatiwisipe Anishinaabeg desire to use the World Heritage Site designation as a mechanism to meet the needs of local members, it is imperative to evaluate the extent of sovereignty that the largely invisible harvesting economy brings to this remote community. The exercise of hunting, trapping and fishing rights, specifically, the harvesting mode of production, represents for many in this region of the boreal, a form of supplemental income. The harvesting mode of production can be useful in reasserting traditional values in Poplar River; this can be completed by rejecting the Euro-centered capitalist, agrarian and material lens through which Indigenous heritage is often interpreted.

Intangible statistic, tangible value

Marx argued that in order to carry out production and exchange, people have to enter into definite social relations. For Marx, productive forces refer to the means of production such as the tools, instruments, technology, land, raw materials, and human knowledge and abilities in terms of using these means of production (Constantinow 1955; Tucker 1978). Cooperative work relations, relations between people and the objects of their work, and the relations between social classes, were components that determined the increase (or challenge to) to the development of human productive capacities. In Poplar River, these productive human capacities have created two economies, a formal and an informal one. One is material – the visible economy where formal wage is noted, calculated and

paid to the First Nation members for their labour. From these, few conventional jobs are available in the community and include fishermen, band workers and administrative personnel at the Band Office, the Health Centre, and the Elders' Lodge. The Northern Store and community infrastructure such as school, road, and sewage and garbage dump maintenance is also administered out of the band office. The other, invisible economy, exists in addition to the larger employment sector and takes the form of the traditional Indigenous economy, where individuals harvest from *asatiwisipe aki* for sustenance and additional income. This harvesting is not 'employment' in the formal sense because no hourly wage is given; it is not formally written nor bureaucratized within the national statistics either (Statistics Canada 2013). But it does consist of very tangible and often arduous labour:

> If you really want something, if you really want money so bad for yourself […] Even me I don't have a job, I go hunt what I want. Sometimes I go set traps. I set about 25 traps a day, 25 traps a day. Maybe I go over 40. And, there is nothing here. First trap you go, there is nothing here. If you go to 5th, 6th trap, there is nothing there. Maybe you go to about 20 traps a day, you go to see about 20 traps a day. Next day you go and 20 again and all that. Then you know, there is nothing there. There is only one I got for today. And it sort of makes me happy when I get that one. That one for a day. Sometimes I get one marten a day; maybe I get one fox a day. That's what it is, to hunt, just to make your life. Just like you make up your life […] but you have to try harder, the more fur you get, the more money you get. That's what it is now. Sometimes I get one rabbit a day, set snares, rabbit snares and you can just get all the fur that you want. It takes time (Abel Bruce 2013).

Essentially, whilst many of the Poplar River First Nation members work in the capitalist mode of production by being cashiers at the Northern Store or janitors at the recreation rink - they are also participating in the economy as hunters, trappers, [small and large scale] fishermen, and 'tradition holders' among numerous other activities.

> *Norway Bittern: No hydro 10 years ago. First home, government home was 10 years ago. Fishing in spring 10 years ago. Also trapping in winter. Community 10 years ago. Its better now. No welfare 10 years ago. Some help now from welfare. Would like to have water system or wells of some kind as the water is bad here. Hudson Bay store. Ten years ago we couldn't buy furniture just grocery. Now we could buy anything: clothing, furniture, ski-doo, tv set. So, the community is way better now than it was 10 years ago* (Francis Valiquette 1977).

The fact that a 'double' and somewhat invisible economy exists in Poplar River can be

demonstrated through the most recent statistical data on the community. In 2011, the registered population of the Poplar River Indian Reserve 16 was 848, out of which 45 individuals were unemployed and 485 were employed; 180 people made less than $5000 that year, which brings the First Nations unemployment rate to 19.3% (Statistics Canada 2013). This is an interesting statistic because in reality, many – but not all, of course - individuals are involved in some kind of work. The labour of some individuals often includes going in-land to cut wood for oneself or others, wood that may be used to create picnic tables or to make extensions for their houses, for firewood, for building or even given to others for similar projects. Other non-wage employment includes cutting the lawn for the local church in the summer and shoveling the snow there in the winter; additionally, driving people to the health centre, to church, to the band office or the store also constitutes 'work' even though the individual may not be recognized as employed by Statistics Canada. In fact, in spite of the high level of unemployment that is officially recorded, many are doing *some* kind of work. Most of that labour is related to the community or to the land: visiting the Elders at the Lodge, assisting those who live in their own homes, 'taxi' driving, drumming, rapping at festivals or babysitting; running a sweat lodge or harvesting the natural resources from the trap lines. Harvesting – the act of going out to hunt/trap/fish, is only part of the labour: ensuring that gas is in the ski-doo or boat, maintaining equipment, supplying mechanical work and obtaining lifejackets, bullets, and even assistants, can qualify as 'modes of production' to the individuals from a remote community like Poplar River. Numerous people often take off from their job (or take vacations in the fall) to go geese, moose and other wildlife hunting; large percentage of

Image 7.1 *Hanging up Christmas lights at the Elder's Lodge. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

families take time off mostly during the winter to travel south for provisions and to prepare feasts for weddings, birthdays and other celebrations, many of which occur during the months the winder road is open (Ernest C Bruce 2010, pers. comm.; Francis Valiquette 2010, pers. comm.; Byron Mitchell 2011, pers. comm.).

Furthermore, traditional resources continue to play a role in this 'invisible' economy: when in need of some medicine, some Elders take Labrador Tea, *wiike*, or like Abel, *okandimoo*. When hungry, even the kids fish in the nearby Poplar tributary. I contributed to this mode of production when, with immense excitement, I brought Jean Nanawin a pickerel. (It is impertinent that I mention it here that it was my very first fish –ever – and I caught it right behind the Nanawin's house on my first throw of the line). Such pickerel, can be considered 'surplus products' that are accumulated through non-wage labour. Harvesting from the local resources, particularly moose, plays a significant role in the Aboriginal mode of production. It is precisely though the uniqueness of local cultural values that moose meat exists as the material form of an informal economy: rather than sold like a commodity, the harvested meat is distributed to other members of this First Nation. This signifies that, through Marx's understanding, the mode of production (the hunter who goes in-land) and 'surplus' products (moose meat) are generated, but also, that these 'products', are transferred to those who did not or could not hunt. Whereas some members choose to *voluntarily* contribute to the obtaining of meat by helping to pay for gasoline or through providing knowledge of hunting skills, the meat is seen as an essential part of the cohesion of community members, hence, its non-commoditized traditional usage nevertheless contributes to community economic development.

Economic growth as a means to development cannot be denied or avoided. Whether it includes slower production and growth like in Canada and United States, or it moves with immense rapidity like China, money is also desired in Poplar River. By discussing the hunting, trapping and gathering mode of production, I am not denying that the community has poverty and suffers from substance abuse and

social issues. The community recognizes the fact that their youth are presented with other options and pressures, and thus protection of the land through the UNESCO nomination is explicitly envisioned as a means to revive traditional values and economies (AAMP 2010:37; Pimachiowin Aki WHSN 2012). Indeed, although economic growth is seen to be a pivotal means to achieving societal improvement, it diverges into two forms, where one view sees it as an end in itself by raising income and consumption levels; the other perspective understands economic development as an effective means to one or more ends, such as creating jobs and reducing poverty (Buckland & O'Gorman 2013; Canadian CED Network [CCED] 2014). What's more, economic growth does not necessarily guarantee poverty reduction; not only because income and job creation may be concentrated among better-off portions of the population, but also environmental sustainability and small-scale community capacity may be undermined. This is precisely where the deciding point human societies must come to: fall into the 'progress trap', or escape it.

Poplar River knows that human settlements, roads and commercial resource industries "have destroyed or significantly reduced the ecological integrity of boreal regions in much of the rest of the world" (AAMP 2010:3) and has as a consequence, decided that community *mino-bimaadiziwin* will ensue through other forms of economic means:

> we are located on the East Side, and the best business for us is tied now to our Lands Management plan. [It] is eco-tourism and there is a very low possibility for tree-harvesting 'cause it is not really in our best interest to pursue [this]. We want to preserve the land the way it is (Ernest C Bruce 2008).

Noel Bruce also articulates the future he envisions, politically, economically and ecologically:

> we want to enforce future by-laws [...] if we get enough money, eco-tourism...the plan is to have fishing, independence. We want to become independent [...] in terms of money, we're trying to have our own money to run programs to have opportunities [...] self-government (Noel Bruce 2008).

Through self-determination, not only will local knowledge-carriers be recognized and supported, but the creative and managerial possibilities for land and natural resource stewardship along with

individual skills and information, would contribute to community empowerment through security and independence.

As part of the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site nomination, the First Nations requested a study to determine the 'wealth' of the boreal forest on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg. Consequently, in 2008, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) performed an eco-system assessment by measuring benefits provided by natural landscapes, including an economic analysis of how much money the boreal forest pumps into Manitoba's economy through fishing, camping, trapping and from the value of the rivers that power northern hydro dams. In addition to the $95M/year that the landscape of Pimachiowin Aki adds from fishing, water treatment and power for hydro, the natural assets such as carbon sources from forest and peat lands have an estimated value of $2.7-$17.5 billion annually (IISD 2008:2; Pawlowska 2009). The forest-generated oxygen supply, the methane sources that could initiate alternative energy and the ecosystem service benefits under 'parks' and forest fire management are an additional amount that can be translated to billions of dollars each year. Elsewhere (Pawlowska 2009) I have argued that although portraying the transformative process of Indigenous epistemologies over land to a Western economic mode of thinking, the members of Pimachiowin Aki Corporation who requested the study, understood the importance of translating the value of the land as they see it, into a language understood by most Canadians in order to protect their territories and bolster the province's pitch for the World Heritage Site.

A CED framework for *asatiwisipe aki*

> *We would offer here outdoor excursions, day trips, or even a couple of days or week packages. We'll have points of entry from the community, or points of entry at Weaver Lake or possible points of entry at Wrong Lake. And [we'll] create road that they can follow, like safe roads. And also getting basic education about how to properly handle the river, how to have safe portages so that they can have a safe journey. They would check in and check out on their way back out. There are some things you can't do and there are certain things that you can do. Now most of the permission has to come from the community if you want to go hunting, you'd have to go out with a member, and you can either take, like, some of the meat, like if you kills geese and other wild game but I think*

> *that a majority of the game would have to be left behind. It has to be taken by a member so it is not wasted* (Ernest C Bruce 2010).

Many of the critics of the World Heritage Site tend to be highly skeptical of the forms of economic development that the First Nations communities hope to achieve. Some of the criticisms of the World Heritage Site initiative include the consequences the nomination has had on the BiPole III transmission line project and the fact that the east side of Lake Winnipeg will have an all-weather road going up the First Nations communities, including Poplar River. Specifically the all-weather road that many view as a multi-lane paved highway is the focus of the negative reactions to Poplar River's protective measures. But, the road will be a pounded stretch of gravel whose single-lane will be largely unmarked; it will not even be a provincial road. Many community members are excited for the road to come through as it will allow people to travel to other communities, and especially Winnipeg and its multiplicity of stores. The community is not anti-development or anti-economic 'progress'; like many other people today, the youth want things they see on television, and the parents want things they need at a fraction of the price they would pay at the Northern Store or by means of specialized delivery. Everyone in Poplar River that I talked with wants economic development; some see it occurring in different forms than others, but all claimed that the local land is beautiful and any development should be done with the well-being of the community *and* the environment in mind (Ernest C Bruce 2008, pers. comm.; Willard Bittern 2008, pers. comm.; Sophia Rabliauskas 2013, pers. comm.; Byron Mitchell 2010, pers. comm.). Byron Mitchell, a young man of thirty at the time of the interview, claims that

> We have lots to say here. It's such a beautiful place, it's a beautiful place. I believe a lot of people would like to see, they will want to come to a place like this. [...] even just to see them when you travel, when you go to the lakes. We travel by boat, and they come out. It'll be good for them to go and learn about our way of like, in a way, respect [us] (Byron Mitchell 2008).

In numerous personal conversations about my involvement with Poplar River, many people from Winnipeg argued that eco-tourism in the area – the remote boreal forest - will not be successful.

However, I strongly disagree! The proposals and initiatives of ecocultural tourism set out by this First Nation are well-developed, flexibly conceptualized, and the people are eager to begin receiving tourists with whom local values and the Anishinaabeg culture can be shared. It should be noted that in the future, as the world grows more culturally homogenous and as natural settings are increasingly reduced, the market for ecotourism will likely increase. Willard Bittern, when he took me out on his ski-doo up the Poplar River, told me that this is the trail he would take to show people the landscape; the area is rich in terms of both culture and natural wealth as this is the trail that people historically and today, take to travel to and from Negginan (Willard Bittern 2009, pers. comm.). When assessing Poplar River's [I]CCA initiative from a community economic and sustainable development perspective, the community model is not only immensely conceivable, but also within the realm of long-term economic success. Byron tells me that

> I believe, I respect what they [leaders of Poplar River] are doing, protecting the land. But in a way too, I believe in ups and downs. But, the land here is very rich land. We have a lot of animals, a lot of trees and plants. There's been lumber companies trying to come in and cut down a lot of the trees. [I'm glad] that we have - we found a way to protect the trees from being cut. But I believe we need to move forwards. I believe they are working on that, a road here. A road will do a little bit, 'cause everything here is expensive and everything has to be flown out by boat and planes, and people around here are not very wealthy. But I know the prices on everything will drop, on groceries, it'll be easier to travel, to come into the reserve […] I believe there is a balance there. If we take a little bit too much to one side, we can make a mess of what we have. And if it's too little, then people kind of suffer because they don't acknowledge that they could have, to help their way of life a lot. Education is very important. High school is just a door to other opportunities. Young people need that; they need a dream, they need a dream to chase. It seems that they need to learn how to dream (Byron Mitchell 2008).

In essence, what the community aspires to achieve is economic development that is sustainable, non-destructive to the local cultural and natural landscape and led by the community itself (Ernest C Bruce 2008 & 2009, pers. comm.; Noel Bruce 2008; Russell Lambert 2008). This form of sustainable community economic development must therefore be a process whereby stewardship must be given a comprehensive socio-environmental and economic interconnectedness. Typically, community economic development (CED) is a combination of interdisciplinary areas that take into account

economic growth while also addressing problems such as poverty, involvement of local peoples, and environmental issues. It is more than just an attempt at exploiting resources to yield maximum economic return, and the Canadian CED Network defines the term as:

> action by people locally to create economic opportunities and better social conditions, particularly for those who are most disadvantaged. CED is an approach that recognizes that economic, environmental and social challenges are interdependent, complex and ever-changing. To be effective, solutions must be rooted in local knowledge and led by community members. CED promotes holistic approaches, addressing individual, community and regional levels, recognizing that these levels are interconnected (CCED 2014).

Along with scholarship on sustainable development, much of the community economic development literature focuses on addressing social problems (Alfred 1995;CCPA 2014; Loxley 2007 & 2010; MRA 2014; Silver 2006) and the ways in which communities can boost their economies by participating in the larger import/export markets (Buckland and O'Gorman 2013; Loxley 2007 & 2010). Although there is a wide spectrum of views from 'capitalism with a red face' that is developed alongside natural resources development (Newhouse 2009; Anderson & Bone 2009), to anarchist Indigenism where a rejection of alliances with legalized systems of oppression and non-participation in the institutions before a re-structuring of the colonial and state power relationships are made (Alfred 2009:46). For Poplar River, the econo-political philosophy as presented by Loxley (2007& 2010) could be useful in highlighting this community's sustainable forms of development. Loxley argues that misalignment between what the local economy is producing and what local residents need, is what causes community underdevelopment. A convergence of interests whereby local economies are geared towards social transformation, meeting local needs and a revival of Aboriginal values and relationship

Image 7.2 *Sustainable endeavours are part of community economic development. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

to the land, could in fact, transform northern Canadian and Aboriginal realities. Some of the pivotal features of local development that Loxley describes consist of bottom-up, women-driven and Aboriginal capacity-building community economic development strategies.

Furthermore, in *Perilous Passage* (2005) Bagchi discusses different forms of [economic] development but he differentiates between development for capital and development for humans. In his thorough investigation of the ascent of capitalism, he argues that in almost every nation that technological modernism took root, early industrialization has lead to the suffering of local populations. Although benefits may have been experienced generations later, military conquest and its perpetual presence was the key feature in producing the conditions of domination that was favourable to capital accumulation. This miserable quality of life was on a global scale, and Bagchi critically assesses the so-called success of capitalist production. Recognizing the violent and tragic characteristics of 'progress' and 'modernity', Bagchi demonstrates that rather than production of commodities in the form of goods and services, rather than accumulation of capital, the most important aspect of development is human development. Human development, he argues, is the sharing and distribution of essential human necessities, to ensure all populations a healthy and secure life: "Most people would agree that preserving a human life is better than destroying it […] people should live a healthy life and should be capable of doing the work that is needed to make a living or that makes a life worth living" (Bagchi 2005:6). What's more, human creativity in the form of education, including literacy and experience of individuals to make their own decisions about improving the world are also included in Bagchi's notion of development for humans. Similarly, Poplar River First Nation believes that protecting their land by protecting their traditions and their community-based way of life through sharing and harvesting, and a continuance of the diverse elements of their cultural heritage, is a way to ensure a solid identity and future for the next generations. In her notebooks, Francis Valiquette outlines what she considers to be a mentally healthy person:

> (1) has values and stands up for himself; (2) trusts himself to make decisions without feeling too guilty or sorry (3) can see, do, think (4) can be close to people and have relationships (5) be productive (6) can make sense of the world (7) feels okay about himself (Francis Valiquette 1977/2012).

Moreover, in conducting a community economic development assessment of the Keeyask Generating Station in Fox Lake, Manitoba, Buckland and O'Gorman identified the five common principles that need to undergird sustainable and capacity-building projects.

> **1)** *Project management must be holistic given the inter-connectedness of the socioeconomy and the environment*: The economy is intimately interconnected with human development including the local and environmental settings. [...] Holistic planning includes all stakeholders in important decision-making including those who are less vocal. It continues through project implementation to include monitoring and evaluating so that project and community deficits can be addressed and project and community assets can be strengthened.
>
> **2)** *Small is beautiful, and once established, scaling up may be appropriate*. For communities to gain control over their lives it is important that organization scale is small, at least to begin with. Once an effective model is established, scaling up may be possible, and be consistent with community ideals.
>
> **3)** *Protection of Environment and Community Interests*: Economic decisions must be guided by the need for environmental and community health. A healthy economy cannot continue if it is achieved at the expense of community vitality and environmental health. Conversely a vibrant community and environment lay the groundwork for a strong economy.
>
> **4)** *Participation in Decision-Making of Less Vocal Stakeholders*: Decision-making must take into account less vocal stakeholders such as community residents and future generations. These stakeholders are critically important to the success of projects and yet their interests are often marginalized.
>
> **5)** *Building a Dynamic and Growing Local Capacity*: [...] development leads to a growth in the capacity of individuals and communities to identify and work toward their goals. This is consistent with the sustainable development literature, particularly as articulated in Manitoba (Buckland & O'Gorman 2013:10-11).

The Asatiwisipe Aki Management Plan (2011) echoes Buckland & O'Gorman's arguments in that the growth of local capacity can be realized. The community's decision to protect the land is essentially the community's main interest - not only for environmental reasons, but for socio-cultural reasons. As the biggest stakeholders, Poplar River must determine of level of decision-making within the World

Heritage Site framework and find solutions to deal with community issues resulting from colonialism. Poplar River First Nation members have articulated their own interpretation of CED, social capital and sustainable development, and reflective of these is Poplar River's main initiative of eco-cultural tourism which, if well thought out, can flourish immensely. These are all part of the comprehensive World Heritage Site project whose socio-ecological complexity and *ganawenjigade,* 'cultural framework of resource stewardship' will now be used to guide Poplar River into a modestly growing community with a wide array of economic development possibilities.

Economic opportunities for Poplar River

> *In the summer of 2010, I had the opportunity to play a baseball game and afterwards go for chocolate-vanilla swirled soft ice cream afterwards; in the winter of that same year, the home-made pizza at Bunny's is a comfort food that prepared me for the long walk home in forty below. On both of these occasions, I supported local businesses where I also chatted with a number of individuals about their hunting trips. One thing that many people mentioned, was that hunting costs money. Asking them to elaborate, some of the answers I received were, that you need equipment first: guns, bullets, gun-license, ski-doos in winter, boats in the summer, and of course, gas. Gas plays one of the largest expenses in Poplar River. Ranging from $1.50 to even $1.84 per liter (as it was in 2010), gas is a very desirable commodity* (Pawlowska-Mainville 2010, notes).

The community's determination to conserve the area not for conservation's sake, but rather, for revival of the traditional Anishinaabeg harvesting economy, where Elders, youth, harvesters and head-trappers will play a direct role in the management and development of the local economy, represents a "life project". Blaser (2004:8) discusses "life projects" of Indigenous peoples as projects of resource conservation as well as *community conservation* where protection of resources directly affects the preservation of a people. The re-shifting of governance over the cultural and natural resources within *asatiwisipe aki* has allowed Poplar River to differently respond to, accommodate or resist specific agencies of the capitalist agrarian discourse, notions of culture and the normative discourse surrounding 'progress' within Canada's colonial totality. The Asatiwisipe Aki Ma Ma Wichitowin, the community board, is a lands stewardship structure that adopts the principles of the CED human capacity model

through which the Asatiwisipe Aki Management Plan and eco-tourism will be carried out.

There are numerous economic possibilities that Poplar River can explore within their protected cultural landscape and [I]CCA framework. Specifically, eco[cultural]-tourism and 'adventure' trips are at the forefront; their essence has already been identified in the Asatiwisipe Aki Management Plan. Ernest C. Bruce, the political advisor to the community describes to me one of the possible 'experiences' that can be offered:

> I guess the main attraction would be the land itself. The untouched land, how the ecosystems that are there, that have been there for thousands of years are still there. They have been untouched by development. And we've never had any tourism there, so everything that's there, it's the way it was thousands of years ago, and it's something that we can maintain. We can go from the Poplar River area point of entry and exit from the Wrong Lake area, because you can follow the river system and you can look at all the river systems and all the different arrangements and trees that are there. There was this one guy who said, "I was very surprised to find many birds, poplar and pine and other sources of trees that were in one area". So, "that tells me", he says, "it tells me, this environment of the trees, that have grown up here, has taken thousands of years to evolve into that point". So it's something that has been there for thousands of years and its something you will never see anywhere else in the world (Ernest C Bruce 2010).

Eco-tourism activities guided by local peoples would build capacity, strategic partnerships and provide alternative livelihoods. The World Heritage Centre actually works with the tourism industry to support these initiatives mainly through: (1) training local community members (2), aiding communities around the sites to market their products and use the WHS as a lever for local economic social and cultural development, and (3) using tourism generated funds to supplement site conservation and protection costs, among numerous others (UNESCO 2008 quoted in Pawlowska 2009). Since *asatiwisipe aki* is composite of trees, rivers, swamps and animals, in other words, an 'inhabited wilderness', eco-cultural tours would provide the visiting public with the often "missing" variable of the landscape: Aboriginal people (Bordo 1992; Pawlowska 2009). This will enable local and Indigenous people to interpret the spaces in the present environment. These 'unidentified' places will become symbolically identifiable spaces, a territory occupied and possessed by an uninterrupted Aboriginal presence.

Image 7.3 *Crossing Poplar River in early winter. Local knowledge holders can offer ecocultural activities like canoeing. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

Correspondingly, the Anishinaabeg Cultural Interpretative/Visitor Reception Centre will "serve as the hub for Anishinaabek cultural heritage interpretation and preservation, as well as the operational headquarters and visitor registrations/reception centre for the protected area" (AAMP 2010:47). The centre along with the land-based experience with Anishinaabeg community members will enable the public to become educated about the culture, the traditions and contemporary issues surrounding boreal Indigeneity/Anishinaabeg-ness within the Canadian context. The extent of eco-cultural tourism in the community will have to depend on research, careful monitoring, deconstruction of tokenism, flexibility and of course, public interest, but as part of the designated World Heritage Site, the potential to experience "living Anishinaabeg heritage" in Poplar River is immense. Ernest C Bruce explains:

> I think the potential for economic development is not yet been seen as a whole, the potential for economic development is endless, and I think Poplar River will have to focus on that one area because ecotourism leads to other things. You can go into partnerships with the provincial government, you can go into venture with the private sector, you can go to ventures with the public sector, with people that want to invest their money and get back a gradual return so that it is a guaranteed return. And there is a lot of work that needs to be done still, and what the community lacks is people in the area of the business development - it really points to business development, and the people are really working towards that chapter (Ernest C Bruce 2010).

Because intangible cultural heritage bridges past, present and future, if well safeguarded and maintained, it can also fuel the social and economic creativity in a community. In discussing some of the economic development opportunities that ICH can bring to a community, Cominelli & Greffe (2012), illustrate how new technologies can also foster innovation of traditional skills embodied by

crafts people. In France, for example, the artisanal skills of porcelain workers were used to make 21st century prosthetics. Likewise, the Daykat Ikat weaving, the symbol of culture and identity of the Kallimantan Indigenous women in the Indonesian Borneo became the significant economic resource to raise the standard of living for the women. Similarly, other ways for Poplar River to use their knowledge and skills to enhance their economy could include developing ways that merge both, traditional modes of production and market economies. Already, the 'Poplar River experience' offers backcountry campsites and tours where visitor access and travel will be along the main stretch of the Poplar River. Designated camping areas will be dependent on both, ecological integrity and cultural teaching (AAMP 2010). Relying on the Elders to 'guide' visitors on land-based tours, show them traditional skills and cultural harvesting techniques can truly be an experience of 'life on the land'.

The idea of 'Living Heritage' as discussed in Chapters 3 and 5 could definitely be the key in the best of, capacity-building and eco-cultural tourism. As the key ingredient in their initiative, economic development in Poplar River could be achieved through Elders and traditional harvesters. Traditional knowledge and cultural heritage does not exist without individuals who embody it. Recognizing 'Living Heritage' differs from archaeological digs in that, although nets, traps, guns and ancient tools and ceramics can be found in many museums and are often viewed as the only source of heritage, it is the Elders and knowledge-holders that can attest to the most suitable locations for setting traps, to making and placing nets and, what the teachings the landscape can give. The necessity of wage labour unfortunately often forces people to replace their hunting skills with bureaucratic paperwork at an office or an urban establishment. But most hunters, trappers and fishermen employed at the band office in Poplar River, wish they would have more time out on the land. One person stated that his temporary position as a "paper shuffler" makes him unhappy and that he would rather be out on his boat, fishing. Kate too, a community member who goes out on the land with her family on the weekends to fish, set snares, and collect blueberries in the summer could be Living Heritage. She informs me that she would

like do these activities for longer periods of time but cannot as she needs her job at the Band Office (Kate Douglas 2011, pers. comm.). Undeniably, most people I spoke with prefer to be out on the land either fishing or trapping, but the inevitability of the need to pay bills and maintain the limited employment that is available in the community, ensures that hunters, trappers, fishermen, stay enclosed within the bureaucratic walls of the capitalist economy.

The tragedy of this 'entrapment' is that the rare skills of wildlife harvesters, fishermen as well as gatherers are locked into irrelevance by a general public that does not understand the hunting, trapping and gathering lifestyle. Not only are these skills becoming more and more difficult and more infrequently passed down to younger generations, but also their irrelevance is reproduced through the public's erasure of not-yet-assimilated traditional Aboriginal cultures and economies. Efforts should be made therefore, to ensure these Living Heritage carriers can continue their practices, and that they are provided with means to transmit the skills and knowledge they hold to the youth. Through the [Indigenous] Community Conservation Area, Poplar River First Nation has begun at the grassroots level, to safeguard their 'living' heritage. Many individuals in Poplar River too, have already started thinking about how to participate in future opportunities. I have heard projects like restaurants and small businesses being conceived, and Clifford Bruce, the current chief, is building a café along Poplar River; some youth are hoping to get training in the tourist industry. Sagatay Lodge can provide space for overnight stays for the time being, but I know that some are thinking of building lodges or cottage-like housing to cater to the tourists. As well, the beautiful sewing and beading skills that are made into crafts like moccasins, mukluks and

Image 7.4 *Locally made moccasins, mittens and watch-warmers Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

gloves can be part of the ecocultural outfit. Jean Nanawin beads really beautiful watch bracelets out of hide, and the pair of moccasins I received from the family are trimmed with pure-white rabbit fur that was caught right in the community. The moccasins I was gifted were made through the harvesting form of production and have also been fashioned through craftsmanship that local Aboriginal women have been practicing for generations.

Yet, other opportunities are possible here! A revival of the fur industry, harvesting of non-timber products from the boreal forest like wild rice, maple sap, mushrooms, herbs, pine cones, honey, berries, and all other botanical products could represent an option for Poplar River. These products continue to be highly desirable. The *mashikiki*, 'medicine' knowledge of the men and women could be another way of yielding revenue while also taking strategic advantage of the organic trend. According to Natural Resources Canada, traditional non-timber forest products industries have the potential to contribute $1 billion to the Canadian economy and, if exported, edible mushrooms alone could contribute as much as $115 million to the Canadian economy (NRC 2007; Pawlowska 2009). All these renewable resources can be used as food, medicine, ornaments, health and personal care; basket weaving, canoes, spices and any decorative use of these products can be commercially traded in Manitoba, Canada or even internationally.

Robin Marles et al. (2000) and Marles (2009) illustrate the numerous plants that have been traditionally used by Aboriginal people of the boreal where, in many places this extensive plant knowledge has began contributing to community economic development. In fact, the forest industry produces about $70 billion in shipments of non-timber forest products to the United States. Due to the fact that boreal forests have long been important for the land-based activities of Canada's Aboriginal peoples, "including gathering fruit, vegetables, and beverage plants, medicinal plants, and materials for technology and rituals, plus hunting and snaring for meats and furs" (Marles 2009: 244), Indigenous knowledge-holders or Living Heritage can be seen as significant factors contributing to the economy.

In such cases, Aboriginal people could be responsible for much of the production: from knowledge and identification, to use and processing, to teaching and distribution. This could provide great employment opportunities within a community like Poplar River and have relatively low financial input. Again, the knowledge-holders would continue to be the 'source' of continuing intangible cultural heritage without needing to disclose any of the knowledge. *It is highly important that all aspects of intangible cultural heritage including 'intellectual property', 'community property' or 'collective knowledge' are carefully deliberated within the context of law and economics prior to any commercialization!*

Relying on *asatisiwipe* knowledge-holders, the community can look into non-timber forest-generated products as an additional form of their ecocultural tourism initiative. Any visitor coming into the community, may be interested in not only experiencing the land, the people, and perhaps even the food, but they may also be keen on bringing home herbal medicines, natural health products, organic cosmetics and even forest snacks like wild rice, fresh or dried berries or mushrooms. Additionally, some of the ideas that could also be considered in the future could include nutraceuticals (food that is sold in pills or powders), cosmeceuticals (cosmetic compounds), agrochemicals (biological control of pests or weeds), fine chemical or even ritual herbs (Marles 2009; Marles et al. 2000). In conversations with Abel, Water, Jean and others like Richard Morrison and my husband, John, it appears that the Anishinaabeg and Cree have extensive knowledge and skills that should to be brought forth (Abel Bruce 2012, pers. comm.; John Mainville 2013, pers. comm.; Richard Morrison 2011, pers. comm.; Walter and Jean Nanawin 2012, pers. comm.). After all, the Poplar/Nanowin Park as an [Indigenous] Community Conservation Area is a relationship between a people and over 8000km^2 of landscape and the biodiversity is boundless.

The area of *asatiwisipe aki* consists not only of lands, rivers, plants and animals that sustain the integrity of this landscape, but also of sacred and cultural spaces and many talented individuals. One

can purchase the most beautiful mukluks, moccasins, gloves; and can buy gorgeous fur from a local trapper. Moose meat is often served for dinner here: boiled, fried and made into stew. Wild rice is hand-picked by many families and the taste of wild goose and wild rice stew, slightly salted, is unforgettable. Difficult to forget is also the history of these communities, the stories the local First Nation-members tell of the reserve policy, of the old Indian agents, of the welfare system, of residential schools. The numerous narratives of government intrusions, of good and bad missionaries, of new roads, schools; the appearance or lack of a grocery store, the prices of gas and apples; diverse interpretations of treaties, health care and Canada's sovereignty are told here to the willing ear. A UNESCO designation would enable many to experience not only this rich cultural landscape, but also numerous counter-discursive narratives of the local Indigenous people. This First Nations-led venture can perhaps be viewed as an ongoing project of decolonization for both colonized and dominant bodies.

> *Over the past few years, the community has held their healing camps at Weaver Lake. The camps were places and opportunities for the young people to re-learn some of the bush skills; it was a place for them to see how their Elders, their ancestors have survived in the boreal forest for generations relying on local knowledge. It is a place where the youth can experience and again become interested in cultural practices. Those practices are later included in the Sasquatch Days in winter or in the activities of Treaty Days where prizes for setting traps, snowshoe races, canoe races, moose, duck and even sasquatch calls are given to the best. Weaver Lake camps were also places of healing for those who went to residential schools. It was an opportunity for them to finally have a safe space to open up and talk about things and situations that they may have never shared with anyone. Weaver Lake healing camps are the beginning for the community to return to* mino-bimaadiziwin. *Over the past few years, the land was used for this purpose but for now, there are no more camps. We have to let the land heal, tells me Sophia* (Pawlowska-Mainville 2010).

Benjamin's understanding of stories interpreted in translations of their meanings, the concept of narratives, embraces the idea that specific localities can only be understood in terms of people's perceptions of them (Benjamin 1955/2007). The Anishinaabeg here therefore, ground topographical narratives as a social reality, a narrative of rights, of lands, of legitimacy, and it is through such stories of colonial politics, traditional economies, spaces and history, that they deconstruct not only the colonizer's authority of the colonized but also challenge the dominant perceptions of historical

narratives. Those narratives are fluid because if the landscape is changed, the stories change; and my role was to recognize that stories of spaces can always create new narratives - despite the challenges of working within the metanarrative of progress. These narratives can also be recognized by visitors to Poplar River!

A question of challenges

> *[Eco-tourism] could be good if it is managed properly, without discriminating anyone. Like here, in the community there is people who don't want things to happen, and then there's other people who do want things to happen. Not to discriminate everyone from the plan, but have some kind of agreement to it. Get them, get everybody involved is what I am trying to say. Eco-tourism, like, there is people that know the land, but they don't have to, like not the way these guys [that] grew up here and have a lot of knowledge about it. Like sometimes, I see, like, a little favouritism around here, so that's what I mean about that. Like, get everybody's input. There is a lot of knowledge in people that grew up here and they know the land better than anybody else* (Freddie Bruce 2008).

Oftentimes First Nations communities get coerced into accepting 'progressive' projects that are presented as opportunities for employment, for economic development and an escape from the 'past'. Using the dominant narrative of development with a dose of employment possibilities, the argument is that resource extraction projects like logging or mining or the BiPoleIII transmission line project, will provide community members with abundant employment. The narrative of separating Aboriginal people from their traditional economy is somewhat like Marx's idea of alienated labour, where, under the economic system of private ownership, society is divided in to property-*owners* and property-less *workers* (Tucker 1972:56). In this arrangement, the worker suffers impoverishment and experiences alienation from his activity of production, from the fruit of his production, from his human identity and from other men. These forms of estrangement occur because the work and the products made are separated from him and thus regarded as hostile. Since these things are appropriated from him by the capitalist, it seems like everything he makes, contributes to a world outside of him; a world to which he does not belong. In all, the importance of his being shrinks in comparison to the great projects and

objects which he helps create but does not possess. As such, the productivity of the worker appears as an unnatural act of his potential and personal creativity, and each moment on the job signifies a loss of his self and a loss of relationships for a man who enriches at his expense (Tucker 1972:57-67).

Image 7.5 *Drilling a hole in the ice manually is hard work! Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

In Poplar River however, the [I]CCA initiative whose crucial feature is precisely against separating the 'worker' from the fruits of his 'labour' signifies a valorization of things capitalism despises; with the conservationist goal and community sustainable development, Poplar River represents an economic model spearheaded by the community for the community. But it will not come without challenges! Addressing local social and economic difficulties within each of the members and the collective will be a demanding process, but not insurmountable. Even though poverty and affluence have been "recognized as being a precondition for establishing sustainable environmental management" (Lockwood et al. 2006:41), the many capacity-building opportunities that are available are a good commencement to dismantling community and colonial problems. The First Nation, like many other Aboriginal communities, suffers from the effects of colonization, oppression and numerous racist policies. The community is not immune to the ills of the larger society either. In addition to the common social issues, Poplar River must discern ways to participate in the larger Canadian society and economy in a way that also suits their aspirations. Effective collaborations between Poplar River traditional knowledge and State-sanctioned positivist data as well as external interference from governments and UNESCO, especially in the context of Aboriginal and treaty rights could be problematic; the extent of cultural tourism, cultural intellectual 'property' and self-determination, could also become obstacles. Ways of dealing with regulations must be established early on. Determining

whose data is more accurate, whose needs the research may serve and, figuring out a balance between cultural pluralisms, terms of negotiation and subsequent consensus are a just few of the frameworks that may need to be circumvented (Pawlowska 2009). I have proposed in Chapter 6 to view Indigenous resource stewardship (and hence the data, knowledges and findings accumulated by the Aboriginal group in question) as a part of Aboriginal and treaty rights, which, together, will be paramount to resource management conflicts, should any arise.

Undoubtedly, the strengths of this unique nomination in Poplar River will include individual attitudes and aspirations, but also awareness, support and funding from local, national and international sources. The future of this community holds many perspectives and their realization can be reached in part through an emergence of new paradigms where traditional philosophies meet contemporary mechanisms. By relying on traditional values to safeguard their stewardship of the land and resources, by relying on their own understandings about employment and economics, by investing in local teachings, Poplar River First Nation illustrates that sometimes, the future will inform the past - and no legal system or law can ever create anything better. Able Bruce explains:

> If it wasn't for them [the people from long time ago] we wouldn't know anything. Yeah, we all come from the past. That's where we all come from. This is where I come from too, I come from here [points to heart]. That's where I come from (Abel Bruce 2013).

CHAPTER 8
Wayeshkad, 'in the beginning': this is a prelude

> *I would probably always remember this place, if I did leave. It will always be a part of me, who I am, my upbringing. Down the line, I am not sure where I'd be, but it will always be a part of who I am* (Byron Mitchell 2008).

Since the outcome of Pimachiowin Aki's designation as a mixed-category UNESCO World Heritage Site will occur only after this dissertation is complete, I cannot examine Poplar River's standing within that global framework; I could only contextualize some of the advances made in the nomination. As I write this, the decision is still deferred, and hence, the possibilities, outcomes and aspirations for Poplar River First Nation members as the main ingredient within their [Indigenous] Community Conservation Area and Pimachiowin Aki, are endless. Therefore, this project cannot have a conclusion; it can only be preface to what can be seen with time.

In my last eight years of working with Poplar River, many of the First Nations members have shown me a bit of their lives as a land-based people who continue to depend on the resources of the local boreal forest for *mino-bimadiziwin*, 'the good life'. That is why they are determined to protect the space that provides not only sustenance to the people, but also ensures cultural continuity. On many levels, the designation of the Indigenous-led mixed-heritage Pimachiowin Aki site represents a modern form of this First Nation's exercise of their Aboriginal and treaty rights as well as form of self-determination. Poplar River's Community Conserved Area initiative involving the exercise of traditional practices within a community-managed conservation area can be seen as a re-conceptualization of the nature-culture dichotomy that aggressively prevails many of today's policies and perspectives about 'parks' and 'development'. Poplar River's endeavour to escape the ecological damage that continues to erode much of the boreal forests across the globe is not only an action to save the 'lungs' of the North America, but also a revival of Indigenous resource stewardship – as a practice and as a form of econo-political governance. Both of these serve as a pronounced experiment to escape the 'progress trap'.

By using global mechanism like UNESCO World Heritage Sites and the concept of [I]CCA, the community members are persistent in meeting their local needs. While safeguarding their lands and culture, the community is striving for 'development' and some of the benefits that the larger society enjoys - but without forfeiting their future. I have followed Poplar River First Nation's process in attempting to establish a UNESCO World Heritage Site on their traditional trap line territory for the past few years and I have relied on listening to narratives, interviews and frequent visits and pleasant tea times to write this dissertation. My friendships with numerous individuals have made this project mean more to me than the letters typed onto a page; the sincere friendships I made with some are tighter than the sheets of paper bound by a university degree. In examining Poplar River's existence within the Pimachiowin Aki nomination as a natural and cultural World Heritage Site; in exploring intangible elements of Poplar River cultural heritage; in personally embodying the diverse meanings of *aki miijim;* in analyzing the material conception of history, law and geography; in suggesting that Indigenous resource stewardship is an Aboriginal and treaty right, I have been given the chance to see what many, including the World Heritage Committee, often fail to recognize. Perhaps still rooted in Eurocentrism and materialist myopia, the WHC could not in 2013, recognize the cultural Anishinaabeg uniqueness in *asatiwisipe aki* and *pimachiowin aki*. Those intangible cultural heritage elements embodied in local peoples, the Living Heritage, whose immensely valuable knowledge gathered from generations of interaction with the surrounding *aki*, whose resource stewardship family-based trap line system, and whose local food ethics of sharing and gift-giving, have more than met UNESCO's 'outstanding' cultural requirements.

Image 8.1 *Building a fire in the bush. Travels to Mukewasipe was the most unforgettable experience. Photo © A. Pawlowska-Mainville.*

In "just living [their] life" (Abel Bruce 2013, pers. comm.), through hunting and fishing, gathering food and medicines as well trapping, craft-making and [re]writing narratives - all without destroying their environment - the members of this First Nation have opened up the possibilities of looking at 'development' in a way that does not fall into the 'trap' of the metanarrative of 'progress'. Seen as a 'gift', the land and the resources must be cared for; Poplar River First Nation members have told me that resource stewardship is a 'sacred duty' of the Anishinaabeg/Indigenous people that was passed down from the 'people of long ago'.

This doctoral dissertation is therefore posited on four main arguments:

(1) Intangible cultural heritage as suggested through UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage can be fruitfully applied in Canada to enlarge the current interpretation of Aboriginal and treaty rights. Intangible cultural heritage has not yet been well employed in Canada to date but the discourse can serve as an additional mechanism to improve the socio-political conditions of Aboriginal peoples and the current 'usufruct' relationship to their traditional lands and resources.

(2) Indigenous resource stewardship is an Aboriginal and treaty right. A new discussion on the interpretation of rights must be commenced to include the stewardship practices of Aboriginal peoples in their traditional [trap line] territories. Although the provinces and the federal government have specific roles that they play in resource management, Aboriginal and treaty rights must be included – if not be paramount, in the practices and administration of land and resource decision-making. Indigenous communities ought to have greater standing in jurisdictional clashes; their customary stewardship of the land and resources (including use) are a part of Aboriginal rights that arise out of 'practices, customs and traditions' existing since time immemorial.

(3) Much of the food sovereignty scholarship is based on the capitalist agriculturalist perspective that does not fit in with the boreal forest Indigenous hunting, trapping and gathering

modes of production and thus limits some policies and dialogue about land and resource use. Embodied in Elders and traditional harvesters and written in their long-term resource stewardship plan, Poplar River's re-conceptualization of possible economic opportunities to reflect food security and accessibility through traditional and local knowledge is an extended source of an inextinguishable Aboriginal right to a continuity of *mino-bimaadiziwin*, 'the good life' and thriving in a contemporary context. Harvesting ensures that healthy and culturally relevant food is accessible. However, this mode of production is more than an activity related to food; it is the socio-cultural aspect of people's relationship to the land and their use of the cultural spaces and practices that needs to be included in this discussion.

(4) Aboriginal land stewardship and resource use is based on a set of cultural and social relations (not 'title' to land) that can effectively establish sustainable community development and change the meaning of Aboriginal and treaty rights. Poplar River First Nation is indeed pursuing the goal of sustainable development yet they are nonetheless endorsing *economic* development of their remote community. This grassroots "life project" (Blaser et al 2004) not only ensures development for humans and maintenance of the ecosystem of the region intact, but also allows creativity of local people to formulate their own structures of economic development. Poplar River's participation in the World Heritage Project is essentially local people instigating and autonomously assessing their own level of human development.

A short denouement after all. Based on traditional knowledge of individuals looking over the land and on depending on cultural values to preserve community *mino-bimaadiziwin*, stewardship of *asatiwisipe aki* is achieved through traditional and local knowledges and cultural heritages that have been handed down through the generations. This complete knowledge system is now embedded in the community's Indigenous Community Conserved Area and the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site nomination. Poplar River's use of global mechanisms to meet local needs is a precedent-setting initiative

where Indigenous concepts of philosophy, epistemology and metaphysics are intertwined with cultural practices, traditions and customs as well as scientific graphs, charts, maps and quantitative methodologies represent a modern - written - version of the totality of this Indigenous Community Conservation Area. And, it is precisely this mix of epistemologies, which form the uniqueness that defines Poplar River First Nation as part of the larger site of 'outstanding universal value'.

In March 2013, Abel took me out to Mukatewisipe, where the edge of his trap line begins. He has told me so much about his trap line and so many stories about his life spent there that I was so privileged to see the land that after all these years, still gives him 'that look' in his eyes when he sees Mukatewisipe. That year, there was a lot of snow, and so our ride there was interrupted even once in a while when the ski-doo would get stuck in the snow and we would have to dig it out. My home-made 'trailer' was made out of ply-wood but Abel was kind enough to give me his couch cushion to sit on. The excitement of seeing Black River after hearing all these stories and watching Abel be 'at home' was well worth the wind burn I had for weeks after our trip.

As sat along the snow route on the way back, looked at a fur-bearer trap and warmed up next to the fire, we talked and enjoyed the silence of the surrounding. Abel was sharing some stories with me: how the rabbit punished that Mean Old Man, how to make a big 'poof' with coffee mate, and how to survive on the land for over a week on only fish oil. He also told me about the time he had to make a pair of snowshoes out of things he found in the bush and how he accidentally left someone behind because his snow hitch unhooked form his ski-doo – the same hitch I was travelling in! And as the fire cracked and hissed, we also chatted about stories, spirits, Sasquatch and about getting old...

It was wonderful to see the area Abel has told me about so many times, which now had more meaning than the squiggly lines he pin-pointed to on a map. Abel – like all the Elders I spoke with in Poplar River including Walter and Jean Nanawin, Ken Douglas, Albert Bittern, Marcel and Francis Valiquette and Sophia and Ray Rabliauskas each remember the each intricate details of the local landscape. They know the exact number of rapids on a river, how to cross them, the names of sites and in some cases, where others before them have treaded. When Abel humbly tells me what he knows – only because he has experienced it, he is re-living stories and experiences of 'The Old People' and their long-gained knowledge and skills that were passed down to him. These people – the Old Timers, as they are called here sometimes, are tradition bearers and knowledge-holders of the community. Not only do many of these individuals have much knowledge and personal and collective histories about very specific spots, I am amazed at their ability to remember some of these stories with such immense detail. For example, Abel still recalls the specific day of the month in 1978 that the Poplar River ice thawed for the spring. For Abel, the trapping way of life, the freedom and possibility to go to his trap line is so important to him, that it defines him. He always says that he is a trapper; that trapping is all he knows. To remove Abel from the land, or to remove the land from him, would be to cut off his heritage, his history, his knowledge and skills – his life. And, having seen the broken heart of Noah, a trapper whose trap line is continually damaged by hydro development in Fox Lake, I hope that with the [I]CCA and the UNESCO World Heritage Site designation, the Elders, harvesters and community members in Poplar River never have to experience the loss of their mino-bimaadiziwin. *Miigwech. Dziekuje.*

Appendix

Land Use in Asatisiwipe First Nation and the World Heritage Site Nomination

Agnes Pawlowska, Ph.D. Candidate, Native Studies Department, University of Manitoba

University of Manitoba

What I am trying to do?

- I am following Poplar River's progress in the establishment of a United Nations World Heritage Site
- I am looking into how Poplar River community members use the land

How will I do it?

I will keep visiting Poplar River. You might see me in the store, at the church, and around in general, so say hi and ask any questions!

I would like to speak with anyone who wants to share how they use the land! This includes the leaders, the Elders, women, young people artists and hunters and trappers.

Women's voices are often absent in research, so ladies, please share your stories to leave a permanent record of your importance!

A copy of the final research project will be provided for your community to keep for reference!

I believe...

" ... that the World Heritage Site is an embodiment of the Poplar River Anishnaabe's self-determination and it also protects the culture and future generations of this community.

What is the point of this project?

The objective of this project is to better inform non-Aboriginal Canadians about Poplar River First Nation's protection of the land.

I want to write that people in Poplar River still use the land for many different purposes: hunting, trapping, swimming, berry picking, leisure, art – anything!

I have already collected oral histories from some Elders and leaders about Poplar River and the BiPole III transmission line project through *asatisiwipe* territory (Band office and Ray has a copy of the books).

I want this project to be for use to this First Nation's community and even be made available to future generations!

I will attempt to gather this information through collaborative work where words, opinions and voices of the people of Poplar River First Nation will be presented and included throughout the entire process.

About Me?

Anishnaabemo.

How can you get involved?

If you go out on the land, if you harvest through hunting, fishing, trapping or picking wild rice or berries, look for the student mooniyaa!

If you use the land for leisure or hobby or if you want to share your traditional or local knowledge, I want to hear your voice!

If you are familiar with the land, go to your trap-line or want to share your beliefs, values and customs of taking care of your trap-line, please talk to me!

If you have knowledge about Poplar River's history and want to share it, I will listen!

If you rely on resources taken from the land: fish, meat, fur, birch bark, berries, anything else for your life, art or for fun, share your stories!

If you have an opinion about the World Heritage Site, eco-tourism, or other community initiatives, tell me!

If you want to discuss the fur industry, wild-rice harvesting, resource development or other ideas about economic development, contact me!

Contact me!!!

Talk to Ernest C. Bruce or

Department of Native Studies
204 Isbister
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Tel. 204-474-9266
Fax. 204-474-7657
www.umanitoba.ca

Informed Consent Form

Research Project Title: *Escaping the Progress Trap:* UNESCO World Heritage Site Nomination and Traditional Ecological Resource Management for Asatiwisipe First Nation in Manitoba

Principal Researcher: Agnieszka Pawlowska, Ph.D. candidate,
Department of Native Studies, University of Manitoba

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This is a consent form to interview you for a research project from the University of Manitoba.

It will tell you what the project is about and what is needed from you.

It is important that you understand your role in this project and what the project is about.

If you have any questions or concerns, please ask.

This research project will be my Doctoral thesis for the University of Manitoba. I will collect information from you in regards to "natural resource management and sustainable economic development at Poplar River and the establishment of a United Nations World Heritage Site", a project that will focus on how Poplar River community members envision their relationship to the land and how these individuals respond to the attempt at the establishment of a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Your opinion is of essential importance and it will be recorded on a digital voice recorder by means of an interview that should take approximately 40 minutes to one hour, but please do not feel limited by the time constraint. The interview will be take place one time only, unless clarification for an answer is needed. There is absolutely no risk involved with the participation in this project and you may decline any participation at any time without penalty. Should you wish, the information collected from you may be kept confidential, where, instead of your name, I will write "community member year:#" in the final research paper, hence your name will be used unless you select anonymity in the option provided below.

This project is for a student who will obtain her graduate studies (Doctoral) degree.

I will ask how you use the land in Poplar River traditional territory.

This is to see how the territory in Poplar River will be impacted by permanent protection from an international organization called United Nations.

I will record this interview unless you do not want to be recorded, which is okay.

This will take about 40 minutes.

There is no risk to this interview.

You can cancel or stop this interview at any time without any hassle.

You can remain nameless and I will never tell anyone who you are and what you have said. I will write "community member" in place of your name.

You can also choose to have your name be seen in any research reports to receive credit for your knowledge and input into this project.

To maintain an appropriate level of data security, all data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my supervisor's office; any electronic data will be password protected. Data will not be destroyed because copies of interviews will be handed over to the Band office. Future uses of the interviews may be used in my Doctoral studies dissertation.

The information you give me will be kept in security at the university and under a password.

Copies of all information will be given to the Band Office/Lands Management. (Remember, you can remain nameless.)

I may use this interview in publications and in my final research report.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

When you sign this form, it means you understand everything on this form.

It also means you agree to be interviewed by me.

You are not losing any rights to do this interview.

You can stop this interview at any time without punishment or hassle.

You can choose not to answer specific question(s).

You can always ask a question about this interview during our talk and I will answer any questions you might have.

Upon completion of this interview, you will be compensated with $30 for your time, participation and knowledge.

I will give you 30 dollars to thank you for your time to do this interview and for sharing your knowledge.

My contact information: Agnes Pawlowska, Ph.D. candidate in Native Studies at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or my supervisor, Prof. Peter Kulchyski, Ph.D., at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

You can contact me, Agnes, at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

You can also speak to my teacher at the University of Manitoba, Peter at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB) and the Department of Native Studies. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-mentioned persons or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at (204) 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

This research project was approved by the Ethics committee at the University of Manitoba and by the Department of Native Studies.

If you have more questions about this project or if you want to protest something about this project, you can contact me (Agnes) or my teacher (Peter) at the telephone numbers mentioned above. You can also contact the University of Manitoba's Ethics Department at (204) 474-7122 or by e-mail: margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca.

You can keep a signed copy of this form for yourself.

Please check off below if you **WANT TO REMAIN NAMELESS** in this research project. This means that your name will never appear in any documents and no credit will be given to your identity for your knowledge.

Yes, I want to remain anonymous: [ ]

No, I want my name to appear in this research project and in any reports/publications related to this project: [ ]

_____

Participant's Signature Date

_____

Researcher's Signature Date

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