

Dialogue, displacement and return -  
contexts of a journey on a two-way road:  
Anishinaabek responses to all-weather roads through  
Waabanong Nakaygum: memory and continuity on the eastern  
shores of Lake Winnipeg and beyond

by Alon David Weinberg

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## Abstract

East of Lake Winnipeg is what conservationists call the ‘east shore wilderness’ / ‘heart of the boreal.’ The largest contiguous tract of unindustrialized boreal forest on Earth, this area has been the focus of 15 years of discussion and planning in Manitoba. The area is also designated *Waabanong Nakaygum*, a homeland to the Anishinaabek of this bush-meets-lake region. *Waabanong* has seen limited access during the industrial period of personal mechanized mobility due to a lack of constructed all-weather roads. However, an older pattern of travel and mobility does exist across the land, for centuries constituting traditional Anishinaabek patterns of land use and trade. As all-weather roads are being constructed along Lake Winnipeg, oral interviews will examine the question: will the older trails remain in the collective culture of the people or shall the north-south cultural and economic flows replace the east-west bush history traced by the rivers that wind through?

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Dedications.....	v
List of Photos & Maps.....	vi
Chapter 1 - Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2 - Remembering Places: Traditional and Geographic Spaces.....	41
Chapter 3 - Matrix of control, matrix of engagement: the linear march of progress - On the processes of development east of Lake Winnipeg.....	82
Chapter 4 - Land/Economy – <i>Ayangwaam</i> for the Generations.....	105
Chapter 5 - Adapting to the Unknown: the Road Ahead.....	126
Bibliography 1- Primary texts: list of oral interviews.....	143
Bibliography 2- Written Sources.....	143
Appendix A: U of M Research Ethics Board (REB) approval.....	147
Appendix B: Research Letter of Introduction.....	148
Appendix C: Letter of Informed Consent.....	149

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## Dedication

I dedicate this work, this journey away from colonialism, to all those who have been displaced by modernity and its massive scales of earth-moving and value-burning, and have managed to find a shred of memory to hang onto, like an overturned canoe in a rapid, and find their way back to some semblance of home.

This work is in honour of the memory of Garry Raven, who built such a home at Raven's Creek for people from many displacements seeking a connection to the land, to the people of this land, and ultimately, to themselves.

This work is a result of the virtues of my grandparents Dov and Yocheved who came to this far away land and worked their butts off, unaware of the many layers of colonialism that surrounded them, knowing only that they were safe after reeling in terror and turmoil for much of a decade. They chose a love of life and freedom while all around them a culture of death and destruction had flourished.

These words are offered for the merit of my parents Bella and Danny, who also worked their butts off as strangers in a strange land, so that their family could enjoy the fruits of freedom, the rain of abundance, and walk in the creative spaces afforded by having enough to eat and a good roof over one's head.

Throughout this process I give deep respect to those who not only write but choose to stand up in defence of mother Earth, of older cultural memory, of a more human way of living with what the planet offers – and with each other. Without you we are lost in a tsunami of forgetfulness, capsized in a torrent of linear materiality: depletion and pollution of our shared treasury.

To you who are yet to come to Earth, or who are here but not yet aware of where you are and how the wheels are currently being fuelled, good luck! We are handing you a battered heritage, but never despair. Make the most of what you have and try to sew the fragments of memory into a fine quilt of culture and consciousness. Your creativity, generosity and humility will be of the upmost importance in this coming age.

May we all remember the cycles of life and learn to once again participate in its timeless wheel of giving and receiving. May the circle be healed, unbroken, and ever-nourishing to all beings.

Winnipeg, Jan.2, 2014

## List of Photos and Maps

1. Map: The ‘Heart of the Boreal’ - Wilderness Committee website –  
[https://wildernesscommittee.org/manitoba/what\\_we\\_do/the\\_heart\\_the\\_boreal](https://wildernesscommittee.org/manitoba/what_we_do/the_heart_the_boreal) -p.10
2. Photo: Garry Raven’s shared old trapping cabin in Wanipigow traditional territory –  
photo by Alon Weinberg -p.18
3. Photo: Morden Everett, Josephine Berens and Keith Berens at Morden’s community  
bush school cabin along the Pigeon River - photo by Alon Weinberg -p.20
4. Photo: rapids under the Rice River Road, on the Rice River in Hollow Water territory  
- photo by Alon Weinberg -p.22
5. Map: partial, of east side planning area, showing traditional activities in the SW area  
of the region – Government of Manitoba WNO website -  
[http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/wno/maps/social-profile/6\\_tek\\_information.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/wno/maps/social-profile/6_tek_information.pdf) -p.43
6. Photo: the linear winter road and hydro line intersects older, meandering watery roads -  
photo by Alon Weinberg -p.53
7. Photo: Ronald (Lonnie) Ross recalls by-gone days, some rather humorous, in his home  
on Berens River’s south shore - photo by Alon Weinberg -p.58
8. Photo: Charlie Bushie of Berens River with distant relative Shavon Sinclair of Hollow  
Water -photo by Alon Weinberg -p.62
9. Photo: example of a tractor with a v-blade hauling cargo across a frozen lake -  
courtesy of “The Journal of Marvin F. and Janice Barton Huffaker.”  
<http://www.islandfalls.ca/historical.articles/huffakerjournal.htm> -p.63
10. Photo: The tractor trains were used to clear the paths that would become winter roads  
– photo courtesy of “We shared each other’s gladness,” by Toni Schuetze, picture 9-4  
[http://blackpearlcomputing.com/bio/Chapter\\_9.html](http://blackpearlcomputing.com/bio/Chapter_9.html) -p.65
11. Photo: The high cost of produce, even in winter, at Berens River, when access is  
greater- photo by Shavon Sinclair. -p.66
12. Photo: Dogview, w. side of the Lake, from where the winter road crosses the lake to  
Bloodvein. – photo by Alon Weinberg -p.70
13. Photo/Map: map showing some of the coast of *Waabanong Nakaygum* and the  
Interlake  
-photo and map additions by Alon Weinberg -p.72
14. Map: “*Pimachiowin Aki*” - Heart of the Boreal website:  
<http://www.heartoftheboreal.ca/see-the-east-side/planning-area-map> -p.91
15. Photo: map of *Pimitotah*, Bloodvein First Nation band council office – photo by Alon  
Weinberg -p.96
16. Photo: Old bush skills still exist and are being improved upon – photo by Alon  
Weinberg at Carl Monkman’s place. -p.104
17. Photo: An old ‘Harvester’ boat sits abandoned in Rice River – photo by Alon  
Weinberg -p.111
18. Photo: Tree-eating machine between Hollow Water and Bloodvein River, clears room  
for road - photo by Alon Weinberg -p.130
19. Map: Map of East Side watershed; see  
[http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/wno/maps/planning/2\\_eastside\\_plan\\_area.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/wno/maps/planning/2_eastside_plan_area.pdf) -p.133

# 1 - Introduction

## A Place of Hidden Lines

We are driving on a road that is pretty much snow, gliding across a white blanket that is only getting thicker, and it is only the fact that we are driving forward on it that tells me this invisible surface of drifting white sheets is called 'road.' I shouldn't say 'we' are driving, for I would not dare to take on such a surface behind the wheel of a large motorized machine, nor would I endeavour to travel across this kind of land: boreal forest and muskeg, especially this section between Poplar River and Berens River First Nations – in any machine of which I were the one designated to be in supposed control. I am in the hands of a seasoned veteran, however, riding with the former chief of Poplar River Russell Lambert, in his large modern 4x4 truck. Neither truck nor snowmobile, nor tractor - tractors drove this land once, hauling freight, cutting narrow paths of linear direction in an otherwise non-linear boreal region now called *Waabanong Nakaygum* – would be a machine with which you would want to trust this city boy on these ephemeral roads. This region is one whose fluid paths are originally meandering waterways, rivers and creeks flowing throughout, nourishing the land with freshness, having served as roads for humans for a time beyond memory previous to the advent of the combustion engine. But alas, we are not of the stock of the old trappers and hunters that forged new pathways and followed yet older pathways – many forgotten or grown over with plants – led by currents and creeks snaking through the boreal forest, and this road, while hard to see and harder still to maintain, for now means access. It is a conduit between two worlds that are increasingly becoming interwoven together. Over the years it has become

slush earlier and more often. The disappeared road sometimes gives way to muskeg, but soon it will be a very solid road, taking the dynamic of access onto a new level.

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## **A Personal Journey**

I do not know very much about the east side of Lake Winnipeg, though it is a place, like Slovenia, that I have visited a few times and where I have made some friends. It is, unlike Slovenia, a place that is part of the watershed in which I live, a place where I would travel if I ever needed to extend or escape my life here in the heart of unsustainability, a modern Canadian city designed not-at-all for the climate, geography, or local resource supplies. An export-import town, an overgrown trading post. I am from what I call Manitoba's 'Big Pig,' Winnipeg, the capital city, seat of power, place of privilege. I have this privilege, the privilege of being born in Canada. Privilege associated with being white, though I only identify with whiteness in the colonialist context of belonging to a privileged group, and my mother tongue is not even part of the IndoEuropean family of languages dominant in the history of imperialism and colonization. Still, I am armed with bourgeois education and have the social support and material stability that comes with it to consider myself privileged. And the problem with structural privilege is there is always an un- or underprivileged group that produces it in juxtaposition.

This place Winnipeg, what is it? It is a place in the heart of the continent and the middle of nowhere. The only home I have ever known. But what does it mean to be home in terms of place, and have I truly known it? Let us hold these questions. They are



not answered linearly - they are answered on the journey, by the journey, through the journey. Like the timeless folkloric archetype, only by leaving home is it possible for one to really return home and know it consciously. I travel north to discover the south. I travel to the east side of Lake Winnipeg because I have summered on the west side. I travel to the bush to know the city. I spend a bit of time in an Anishinaabek community to begin to fathom the colonialist society in which I have been raised, even if my immigrant grandparents have come later to this land. Still we keep coming to this country, but how many immigrants arrive in a full sense to this land? How many continue to dream of other lands? I grew up dreaming of another land, the land of my father and of my Fathers: Israel. Zion. The great return. Am I still part of the arc of that old longing, or has the age of ecological ascendancy – a priority of necessity – forced me to dig in here? If so, I need to know whose land I am digging into, and by whose land I do not mean land, the domain of deeds and titles, but a land of story and of survival, of biodiversity and of history. When the ecological crisis moves in to our corner of the square planet, where am I? Where are any of us? Maybe the answer to this question *is* the great returning. But I would settle for a simple arriving.

When I started to get to know more Aboriginal people, it happened through ceremony, a seeking born of a need to connect more to the cultural forms of this place. The first elder I met began the conversation by asking me if I know who I am. He was subverting my phenomenalization and fetishization of Aboriginal culture. Actually I was about to hitchhike to meet a friend from the east in Saskatchewan's Qu'appelle Valley, and so, having been exposed to so little Aboriginal culture, so few Aboriginal people (where

were they all? Now I see the question is 'where was I?'), that I wanted to know about any protocols I should follow when going. I looked up 'Aboriginal' in the phone book one Sunday and left some answering machine messages, and heard back Monday morning.

An elder told me – or maybe I read it – that it is important for indigenous people to remain close to the graves of their ancestors, that they can take care of them and remember them by. At this time I realized that nobody in my direct line had been buried on Turtle Island - North America - anywhere. Most of my grandparents were still alive, and my geographic options for where to live were completely open, my connection to here not so strong yet, or at least not yet consciously. My grandmother, Yocheved, passed away in the fall of 2001. She was buried in a Jewish cemetery down Main St., just north past the perimeter. It was a smoky, warm, breezy fall day early in October. As my mother's mother's body was being lowered into the Earth, a solitary goose flew overhead, and honked. 'Have a great journey,' it wished her. I watched the undertakers who had dug the hole into which my grandmother's spent body was being lowered, as they stood in silent respect during the ceremony. They were both Aboriginal men. 'Welcome to this land,' they said in stoic silence, to my grandmother, but also to my whole family. I am not sure if the others heard the greeting, but I did and here I am.

I thought of hers and my grandfather Dov's crazy journey through life, from simple childhoods as Polish Jews through the brutal years of the Holocaust spent mostly under Nazi occupation in a Lithuanian ghetto, to their arrival in contested, British-occupied Palestine, their participation in Israel's founding and its accompanying first war – to their eventual reunion with older surviving siblings of my grandfather here in

Winnipeg, living the lives of hard-working immigrants, running their bakery, Miracle, on Main at Bannerman, eventually retiring and spending lots of great summers with us at Winnipeg Beach, west side Lake Winnipeg. As my grandfather's body was laid to rest on a blustery, snowy cold January day over 2 years later – exactly the kind of day he had told us he would not be buried on having attended together relatives' winter funerals – but especially on that day when my grandmother was welcomed to Turtle Island - I felt like my journey to this place had begun more consciously and earnestly. I knew now what it was I was seeking: a just home, a familiar home, a home I could be part of, one that consciously understood and expressed its histories and acknowledged and respected the founding peoples who had preceded the formation of a Canadian state. I also knew I did not want to belong to a country that practised either genocide or ethnocide, or really killing off of anything that was alive, positive, and existent. I was beginning my journey of true belonging, a belonging that no passport could validate or assign.

As for the east side, land of boreal, *Waabanong Nakaygum*, the East Shore 'wilderness,' how could I know much about it? I have visited in the capacity of an academic tourist, coming out of the centre, Winnipeg, and going up the winter road. Non-Aboriginal people, city-dwellers, southerners have asked me what I am up to and I tell them my thesis topic, tell them where I have gone. I am treated like an adventurer, or some kind of social justice warrior. 'Good for you,' people say, perhaps a tad envious, but if so, perhaps with a stronger feeling that it is good someone else is travelling into such desolate wilderness to look about, while they remain comfortable and complacent at the centre of 'western' comfort. Shire folk we are mainly, creatures who accept the terms

handed to us without questioning too much the unfolding of the conditions that have brought us here, or rather, that has brought here to us. As the currently controversial t-shirt being worn on Winnipeg buses says: 'Got Land? Thank an Indian.'

## **An Apology**

Please excuse me if this entire thesis reads as an introduction. The origin of this way of writing is two-fold:

### **Immigrant-native**

Firstly, I am the first born in my family on this land, Turtle Island, and grew up in an ethnically-insular and ecologically-alienated environment typical to (sub)urbanized immigrant groups of the New World and in particular Canada. Outside of melting-pot erasure and total assimilation, the Canadian experiment provides us with the opportunity to live in a bubble: when one is sworn in as a Canadian at a citizenship ceremony, one is not so much being welcomed to the ground floor of Canada, a land, nor are the original hosts that so graciously assisted the original European explorers in surviving some harsh winters - not to mention leading them inland to conduct their trade-based economy - present to welcome immigrants to the land. A more horizontal ceremony might include drums as a way of saying 'now you are here.' Rather, one is welcomed into the state, as a papered citizen<sup>1</sup>, into the society-at-large (nebulous at best in this sparse and fragmented country), and mainly into the economic opportunities of a new world economy, often as a general labourer brought to do the work the older citizen-groups of the land find undesirable. The harsh winters get to us too. After a while they become part of us. Most

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1 See Jacques Derrida, *Paper Machine*.

are constantly searching for escape, but for me, the cold wind, the *Keewatin-ow*, was a way in. It became familiar to me after enough years, particular, rare and extreme among places on Earth. It offered the first wakeful trace of what I have called an ecological identity. Ecological identity is vital if we, as a species, are to: i)stop repeating the conflicts and wars of ethnicity, religion, and nationalism that have plagued humanity for quite some time now; ii)develop particular cultures that can operate in opposition to globalizing cultural forces, most of which are spread through neoliberal economics and produce automotonic homogeneity. iii)connect, harmonize and become one with a place, in all its particularity and peculiarity, on a deep enough level to care about it, so we can be moved to stand up for the integrity of its lands, air, water, peoples, and biodiversity. Otherwise, we are doomed to be the tragic fool referred to in the Native American poster, realizing too late that 'man can not eat money.' This thesis is but part of my introduction to the country in which I was born.

### **A ramblin' Jew**

Secondly, there is an old Jewish saying that cannot be more true in this case: 'Before I speak, let me first say a few words.' My grandparents came to this country in 1952 not quite refugees but also not quite having recovered from a refugee experience that came from being trapped inside the barbed wire fences of Nazi-controlled Europe for nearly 5 years, having escaped the ghetto the day before it was liquidated, late in the war. The bakery my mother's father established in 1955 on the corner of Main St. and Bannerman Ave in Winnipeg was called Miracle Bakery, a reference to their miraculous escape from being murdered by the Nazi death machine. These immigrants, including

my mother upon return in 1973 with my immigrant father, worked really hard within the wage economy and later the world of small business ownership, and knew very little of the land outside of their urban-labouring condition, excepting summer trips to the cottage a block off of the western shores of Lake Winnipeg. There, unlike on the eastern shores at posh places like Victoria Beach, Jews had been permitted to purchase cottages.

There, sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s, my father and I tried fishing off the pier in the marina across the street, just south of Boundary Creek, which I recently learned marked the boundary of the original postage stamp Manitoba. As a big part of my love for the outdoors and a sense of place was formed thanks to the song of the blackbirds that still inhabit the creek that runs alongside and behind the cottage and the sound of the waves of Lake Winnipeg lapping its western shores, I can now say that I spent my summers on the northern edge of the original Manitoba – but then those were but lines on a map. Anyhow, our fishing adventure was cut short, literally, when the line got stuck in the rocks and instead of cutting the line, my father and I stubbornly kept trying to get it out, cracking the rod instead. When I caught a pickerel, or walleye, at Grassy Narrows last year, some thirty years later, I think it was my first fish all these years. It felt good, and tasted even better. While I maintain at home a strictly vegetarian diet, it seems that catching that fish was one step towards decolonizing my alienation from the land and my late modern dependence on the market economy of labour-wage exchange. I am not sure I could catch enough fish to survive if I had to, but then the grocery stores are still stocked, the soil still fertile enough for squash to thrive in.

It is all about context, and how we are given meanings and make meanings from

the relationships in which we find ourselves embedded – along with those we choose to seek out or deepen, and those which we reject.

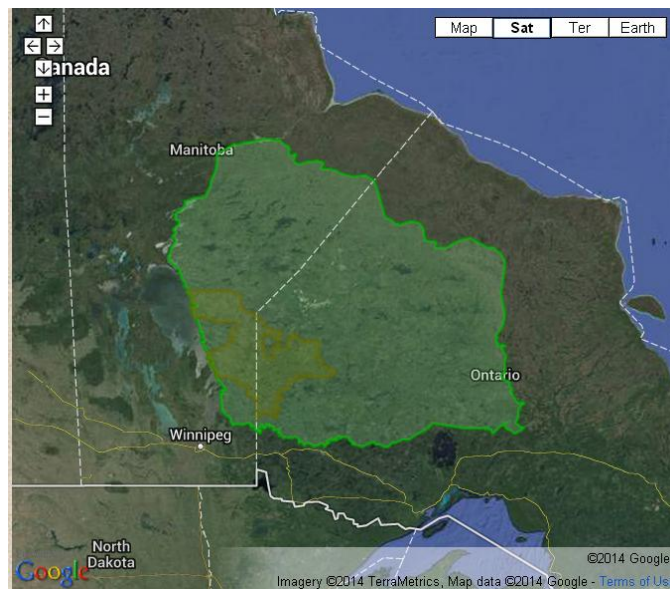
A white South African man I met about 4 years ago at a backyard winter bonfire in a residential neighbourhood in Winnipeg exemplified something I had been trying to articulate about my native-born but fundamentally immigrant positionality in Native Studies, why I had been drawn to a field that would allow me the 'walkabout,' to borrow from Aborigine terminology, that my parents and grandparents had never taken. This white South African, old enough to have perceived Apartheid's last years as a child, had married a Canadian woman and moved here. He found out I was in Native Studies, and asked me if I knew who the head elder of the area was. I explained that I did not if there was such a hierarchical or formal 'head elder' and asked why he was interested. He replied that he wanted to meet someone reflecting in some way this authority so he could ask for permission to be on this land.

This kind of immigrant-initiated decolonization would more greatly approximate both the spirit of the Treaties and the highest potential of Truth and Reconciliation, far greater than the double-tongued apology of the Prime Minister of Canada in 2008. Some future prime minister may very well have to apologize to First Nations for the rest of this government's repressive, resource-exploitative, pollution-creating policies and their effects upon the rights, bodies and cultures of indigenous peoples in Canada. But we, the ones living here as of recently, and those whose families have lived here for generations, along with those still arriving in 'Canada' will need to take the initiative to find out where we actually are, who are the ones that have been here longer and hear their stories and

perspectives on what the development of this country, or at least various local lands should look like, lest we repeat and re-inscribe an objectifying or ignorant pattern of development that continues to dispossess, displace, and destroy the indigenous communities of this land. For me this journey is one of arriving again in a good way, of practising guesting in and on this land, of moving in more formerly, not simply reaping the privileges of citizenship in the state of Canada.

### **'Why the East Side?'**

I used to canvass door to door for environmental groups: first the (Western Canada) Wilderness Committee, and later the Boreal Forest Network. I recall showing people maps that were filled with green east of Lake Winnipeg and north of Hollow Water; 'the largest contiguous boreal forest in the world without all-weather roads or industrial development' we would say triumphantly, introducing suburban Winnipeggers to a Manitoba few of them knew, at least by way of fact and map.



1. Map of the 'heart of the boreal' typical of what is shown during the canvas.



Many would be pleasantly amazed to learn that Manitoba was more than a prairie province, that it yet contained great swaths of undamaged “wilderness,” and then many would be shocked to hear that all-weather roads were being planned to 'open up this area, including for industrial development<sup>2</sup>.' This was around 2002-2006, before *Pimachiowin Aki* had formed to promote a world-heritage site in *Waabanong Nakaygum* and before the big Bi-pole 3 fights had begun, with western Manitoban farmers, retired engineers, and Progressive Conservative politicians crying for the line to transverse the east side of the province, and First Nations activists and environmental groups opposing such a plan to cut through what we in the latter group used to call 'pristine wilderness.'

Occasionally I would stumble into meaningful conversations with thoughtful people, some of whom had connections to the north either having worked there or coming from there or working in fields that somehow serviced the Aboriginal community at large. I remember, vaguely, that a couple of people asked me what the First Nations people of the east side thought about the road. And I remember this question stuck with me. It began to shift my perspective on the east side as a wilderness and towards understanding it as a homeland to several thousand Anishinaabek, *Mushkegowak*, Oji-Cree and Métis people, covering around 16 First Nations and northern communities.

McCormack contrasts the concept of 'wilderness' as a name given to places where the resources of the region have not yet been dragged under the systematic manipulation of industrial machinery and production-based, growth economics – with that of

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<sup>2</sup> Source of map: [https://wildernesscommittee.org/manitoba/what\\_we\\_do/the\\_heart\\_the\\_boreal](https://wildernesscommittee.org/manitoba/what_we_do/the_heart_the_boreal)

'homeland,' noting that the colonialist binary was between 'wilderness' and 'civilization.' Thus, indigenous peoples living in places not as industrially developed as Europe or the European-settled Canadian urban centres mainly of the south, would have been seen as uncivilized and wild, like the lands they inhabit. She posits a contrasting viewpoint, noting

...what a profound concept the term 'homeland' is to Native peoples. It encompasses their personal and cultural identities, their histories, and their religions. These are embedded within complex oral traditions. The place names for geographic features contained within the oral traditions embody the relationships among people, the land, and the spiritual world. They also provide the method for remembering this information and reproducing it over time by transmitting it from one generation to the next<sup>3</sup>.

'Homeland' for indigenous people seems to embody a merger of anthropocentric and eco-centric thought. In a homeland, people are not separate from the living systems in which they are embedded, often with reciprocal caretaker roles. Both ways of thinking merge when looking at responses to colonialism, as the same forces destroying Earth's natural systems through a kind of single-minded, profit-driven mechanical quantity-based industrialization, having forgotten longer-serving human and ecological qualities and as such violate Indigenous peoples' abilities to govern themselves and live in a healthful, sustaining relationship with the land and with the larger society that surrounds and alternately absorbs and rejects them. Through becoming aware of and helping to launch some solidarity work around the Grassy Narrows First Nation struggle to reclaim their lands, their health, and their Aboriginal rights from industrial logging and the legacy of a mercury spill that continues to have negative health impacts 40 years later, I realized that

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3 Patricia McCormack, "Native Homelands as Cultural Landscapes," 28

before adopting a collective eco-centric ethos as a society, there are still several stages we need to take anthropocentrically in dealing with the structural injustices and acts of what Fort Chipewyan community activist Mike Mercredi called (in reference to the tar sands, though this could apply to the whole impact of modern industrialization on indigenous ways of life) a 'slow industrial genocide.'<sup>4</sup> If the problem is entirely anthropocentric, human-caused, and relating to the depersonalized, deep-structure, nearly deified status of 'the economy,' which, in the neoliberal globalized terms of today means capitalism and growth economics, a great part of the solution will be a shifting towards rebuilding our eco-literacy in relationship to Earth's living systems, understanding these systems as being the real bank accounts that finance a long-term sustainable economy. At the same moment we need to support and maintain a growing human agency and particularly support indigenous agency in decolonizing their material situation: gaining sovereignty over traditional territories, building and participating in a viable and sustaining economy on their own terms, according to their own cultural values and not those imposed by the state or by EuroAmerican values.

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## **North by East**

I am a passenger in this land, a kindergartener still learning how to read, completely in the good hands of someone who is older both individually in years in this case, but more broadly speaking older in relationship with the terrain. The former chief of

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4 see "Canadian Tar Sands Resistance" at the Indigenous Environmental Network site: <http://www.ienearth.org/what-we-do/tar-sands/>

Poplar River, Russell Lambert, is driving me home, and I am learning a lot. Someone in their element, knowing mostly what to do, and having developed a culture both of survival and of leisure in and of this land: the complete opposite of me and of most others whose forebears were not from this land and for whom this country – call it Canada or Manitoba – means its cities. Riding, not driving, south one St. Patrick's Day in a winter that has run a full, long course, producing no fewer than 3 snowstorms between February 28<sup>th</sup> and March 17<sup>th</sup>. The snow is thick everywhere.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> I first was driven by a Cree man from Fox Lake, way up in Hydro/Nelson River country, to Bloodvein First Nation north via the Interlake and east across the lake itself, frozen solid and cleared for travel. He too had a truck and was curious to travel this way, and I paid the gas. Coming home – to the city, to which I have come to realize I am native, maybe even indigenous to cities and towns as a whole, a sad conclusion – this March 17<sup>th</sup>, the snow continuing to make this ephemeral road at once impossible to know and in complete contiguity with the white-blanketed muskeg all around it, I think to actually suggest to Russell Lambert to veer a bit to one side, under some illusion I actually know where is the road. I cannot even say *what* the road is, so why would I think to know *where* it is. The generosity of my ride, or maybe a hint of his own unknowing (the snow had started the day before, continued all night, took a break and then continued throughout the morning as the winds picked up and rearranged the position of the snow), permits him to indulge me a little bit, moving over a couple of feet. Within a few moments we are stuck deep in 1.5 m high snow, tires grinding to a halt, machine stopped by the accumulated white barrier.

Stuck. Chains needed. How to pull out? Of course on a day like today, the more prudent members of the community - most of them when it comes to winter travel – travel together in loose convoys. Soon another truck happens upon us, its occupants get out, and a few chain hooks and engine revs later, we are out and back on the road. I admit to having felt the isolation of the north during that week in Poplar River, all the more so because I was there alone and did not previously know any members of this community. I perhaps indulged in the CBC more than I would have liked, though the number of visitors did increase as the week progressed. Still, I was headed south and that meant home. That's the problem with being a tourist – one is always heading back home even as one is still leaving.

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Poplar River, Berens River, Pigeon River, Bradbury River, Bloodvein River, the Manigotogan and Wanipigow Rivers all feed Lake Winnipeg. This is the cleaner side of the lake, though when you get down south to the Winnipeg River, as in Winnipeg itself, things get a lot less clean, less clear, the ecology more disturbed, industrial, and foreign to a trapper of the bush. A gold mine upstream from Hollow Water also makes the health of the Wanipigow suspect.

I first got to know the boreal from an Anishinaabek perspective based out of a place called Maskwa Project, on the Maskwa River, which is upstream from the Winnipeg River just upstream from the Powerview Dam, on the edge of Sagkeeng First Nation, where I first attended a sweat back in 2000. At Maskwa I met the future chief of nearby Sagkeeng First Nation fishing off of the dock with his son. He explained to me

the river was part of their traditional territory. Later, I heard through environmental circles of a guy called Garry Raven, about an hour north of Sagkeeng in Hollow Water.

## **Garry Raven**

Raven's Creek was the name of his land, situated upstream of the main community site on the Wanipigow River, and it was a welcoming abode where we would sweat and occasionally camp, holding gatherings where we discussed the land and would sit around listening to people talk about Anishinaabek traditions, their relationships to the land, the need to educate both their own youth and people from all over the world about the Anishinaabek heritage and practises of the boreal. Garry understood that a huge part of decolonization was education and knowledge, and not just an abstract knowledge but a knowing of which medicines to pick and when, which songs to sing, what kind of lodge to hold, and many practical things he himself had remembered after his earlier personal fragmentation under the influence of 'the white man's ways.'

Garry welcomed everyone in an open and friendly way. He told us that the teachings of his people, and their relationship to the land, was meant to be shared with people no matter what nation one was from - the red nation, the black nation, the yellow nation or the white nation. He appeared in a National Geographic feature about the boreal and was instrumental in putting forth of a vision to protect the boreal forest, for Anishinaabe people to learn again how to use the forest according to traditional principles of reciprocity and respect, and he imagined the Raven's Creek model on a bigger, better-resourced scale. This vision directly gave birth to the *Waabanong* Cultural Interpretive Centre being built by the Government of Manitoba on crown land just beyond the Hollow

Water community, at the base of the Rice River Road, first leg of the new all-weather PR304 north. I last spent time with Garry at a weekend gathering one September whose goal was to discuss east side issues, including the road, the bi-Pole, the proposed world heritage site, and anything else people wanted to put out there. Garry was very democratic and treated everyone, native or non-native, with the same respect. That weekend happened to be Jewish New Year and I was conflicted about spending it away from family and my community, and the prayer typical of that high holiday, but after a weekend in which I sweat, picked medicines in the warm water, and spent hours listening and speaking in the circle that had been convened, I felt like my whole body and spirit had done way more praying than I could have done in any synagogue.

That December I stayed at Maskwa Lodge for a few nights, and when it was time to leave, I thought of turning right towards Hollow Water to pop in on Garry but put it off, turning left towards Winnipeg instead, needing to get home. Home: always needing to get home, always on the European clock. Never knowing where home really is. Sadly, I did not get to see Garry again until his funeral memorial at the Thunderbird House, as a month or so later he suddenly passed away, leaving a massive network of community and so many unfinished visions and projects behind to be picked up by others who shared the same convictions about humanity's ability to live cooperatively with the Earth, to give back as we take and to leave behind intact ecosystems for those still coming.



2. Garry Raven's shared old trapping cabin in Wanipigow traditional territory

### **Louis Young**

I met Louis at Garry's and I think our first conversation was inside the sweat lodge, after it had ended and the door was open, when only he and I remained, about the bible and a certain character in the bible. It was a very open-minded conversation and we have since had several more. Louis was my initial connection to Bloodvein and when I went there in February of 2011, it was with his brother-in-law, originally from Berens River, that I stayed. I did over 3 hours of recorded interviews with Louis, and he has



been an outspoken citizen, appearing at many events when asked, always willing to share an Anishinaabek perspective and a story. Travelling up the east side of Lake Winnipeg is like playing social dominoes. I met Garry and through Garry got to Louis. Then staying with Norman Berens, I met Keith Berens, one of many Berenses who had come down from Berens Lake to go to a fishing derby my last day in Bloodvein, out at Round Lake. Keith and I drove late at night on a dark winter road lit up only by the lights of his truck, on a crisp, cold, windless winter night. When we stopped to pee and smoke around the Pigeon River, I felt a deep, penetrating quiet and was amazed to look up and see endless stars. Seeing as how we were travelling in a truck and on the road, and as how I had yet to really go out anywhere on the land, this still felt like the middle of nowhere. Having been back to Berens River now twice, I realize the significance of the Pigeon River, and know now that the place we had stopped is a place greatly used by the people of Berens River. Not far from there is where Morden Everette built his two story wood cabin at a place he uses to teach youths how to live on the land.



3. Morden Everett, Josephine Berens and Keith Berens at Morden's community bush school cabin along the Pigeon River.

The main three communities where I did interviews - Bloodvein (*Miskoosipi*), Berens, Poplar (*Azaadiwi-ziibi*)- are each at the mouth of a river by the same name, and the First Nation reserve at the Manigatogan's mouth is called Hollow Water (*Wanipigow*). These first three were the sites of most of my interviews, along with in Winnipeg with people from these communities, though I did a few other interviews at Hollow Water and Little Black River about the *Waabanong* Cultural Interpretive Centre. The journey to *Waabanong Nakaygum* really first began to be conceived at Hollow Water, formerly called Hole River, and earlier than that called in Anishinaabemowin *Wanipigow*. Ah, but

what is the use of the Anishinaabek name for something, a reserve, that is foreign to the Anishinaabek heritage and an invention of EuroCanadian agents treating with their 19<sup>th</sup> century forebears and then deciding that what they had agreed upon meant the Indians would have to stay put in one place so that the rest of the land could be claimed, settled, used, flooded, railroaded, mined, logged, hogged, owned? The word for reserve, '*iskonigan*,' itself means 'the leftover (land).'<sup>5</sup> But then, the respect of a language, a culture, a heritage that is not articulated in English requires at least a few words, an encouragement of reclamation, subversion, and resistance to assimilation. The non-linear, east-west flowing old watery roads, ever-changing, and the solid rock and linear cut of the machine-road are geographically, politically, socially, culturally, ecologically also in contrast. But life is not lived in dichotomies and if I have learned one thing through my travels up the east side, it is that people adapt, people make the best of situations, people face and deal with challenges as they arise, they make accommodations. Coming from a systems-approach I have learned through ecological investigations and experiences, my plan was to ask community members about an all-weather road being built up the east side, and how they planned to respond to its challenges and opportunities. But the road is not yet built to any communities – a bridge over the Bloodvein River will soon bring PR304 to Bloodvein - so getting people to answer about planned adaptation was a little bit like putting the cart ahead of the horse. Planning was not dominant mode of looking forward I encountered up north, especially

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5 This is the Cree word, and I am indebted to James Kweskekapo of Norway House, a fellow Native Studies graduate student, who pointed this important word's meaning out in the context of work we work doing as research assistants transcribing interviews from northern Manitoba communities about the oral history of treaty 5 adhesions.

when the social and cultural impacts of the road being imagined are complex and hypothetical.



4. Rapids under the Rice River Road, on the Rice River in Hollow Water territory

### **This Place**

How did I come to want to visit this place, *Waabanong Nakaygum*, to think about it, to want to get to know more of it, to wander into it beyond the boundaries of my known sense of place? The answer began in a valley in Umbria, Italy, at a farm called *Pratale*. There, in a treasure chest of a library, in the cold of a late February snow, 2001, I drank wine, read, ate, slept and learned for about 3 or 4 days and nights. One book pulled off the shelf for me by one of my two hosts, Etain, a transplanted English woman

studying the land, the stars, the history of the human in relationship to both, and much more, gave me *Turtle Talk: Voices for a Sustainable Future*. There, far from home, the flat prairie land of rivers and bitter cold winds, mosquitoes, fish flies and a North American machine-based city, in a deep valley of meandering streams, steamy heat (much of the year) and almond trees, I discovered the importance of the concept of place and home, and the conceptual framework held by some settler-colonial-descended back-to-the-landers on Turtle Island, called 'bio-regionalism.' One of its major exponents, poet, and student of Zen Buddhism, Gary Snyder, is interviewed in this small little book. He says:

..what it really means is that you have people who say 'I'm not going to move.' That's where it gets new. People say, 'I'm going to stay here, and you can count on me being here 20 years from now.' What that immediately does is make a politically-empowered community possible...Bio-regionalism is, from a Marxist standpoint, the entry of place into the dialectic of history.<sup>6</sup>

The idea of being committed to being somewhere for 20 years might not be too radical to an Indigenous person with a strong connection to home, but for Snyder, coming out of a culture that sought to uproot the colonial, white conservatism of property and possessiveness through mobility (he ran with the Beat poets for a time, and a character in a Jack Kerouac novel is based loosely on him), this sense of commitment can be seen as radical, but more so I think it is politically fertile. I met a radical leftist French activist living in Winnipeg two years ago. I gave him a tour of the neighbourhood of North Point Douglas in Winnipeg one day. Two weeks later he emailed me saying he had decided to go back home and continue the struggle in France, as he felt was his responsibility.

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6 Gary Snyder. "Regenerate Culture," 18

Aboriginal elders often speak of prioritizing the discourse of responsibilities in complement to or even prior to that of rights. I read *Turtle Talk* in Italy nearly 13 years ago and realized all these beautiful organic farms and hill towns in Italy could never fully be my home, as the north wind probably just didn't blow that strong and cold in Umbria. But I was still undoing the dominant paradigm I had learned at school as a privileged native son of immigrant stock. If every place can be a place, then we are all called to get to know somewhere really well, slow down, and dig in. As Winnipeg is a prairie city surrounded by agribusiness and polluted waterways, I figured it might be good to know a little more about Manitoba's better half, the boreal half.

“Thick description,” Clifford Geertz's methodology of interpretation, emerges from a realization of the detailed layers of context, lived and abstract, which comprise a person and a people's culturally constructed meanings. Writes Geertz: “The concept of culture...is essentially a semiotic one. Believing...that man (sic.) is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.<sup>7</sup>” If one accepts that the turn to interpretation is about processing and trying to make sense of particular cultural details, then vis-à-vis relationship with another culture, one might come to see and understand one's own interpretive lenses and conceptual framework, an act at least as, if not more important than understanding – or thinking one understands – the culture of the other. This is a vital process if one wishes to decentre the researcher and to subvert the power that the

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7 Clifford Geertz. “Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” 5.

academic centre has often held over the indigenous margins. It also personalizes the academic journey, diluting the old distinction of researcher and researched, until eventually it becomes obsolete, while making the decolonization of research a shared project of those both in and outside of academia.

To begin to understand the other is to begin to understand ourselves as others, to see more clearly our own contexts as we move outside of, or perhaps extend them. Travel in bush/boreal country is not common for an urbanized Jewish Canadian, who has begun to think of himself as indigenous – to urban centres. One can best glimpse the centre from the periphery. An inversion: author Guy de Maupassant, famous for criticizing the monstrosity being built that became the Eiffel Tower, was called out one day for being a hypocrite after being seen day after day eating his lunch in the posh restaurant inside the tower. 'Madame,' he said to his detractor, 'please kindly show me another place in Paris where I can enjoy my lunch, look out the window, and *not* have a view of the Eiffel tower.'<sup>8</sup> If we don't want to apprehend the centre, in all of its layers and contexts of meaning and cultural forms, we must remain at the centre. Given the monstrosity being produced by the dominance of capital's power everywhere, remaining at the centre without questioning its logic is more or less to be either its victim or complicit with its dominance. Ironically, in Winnipeg, it is the downtown core, or centre, that is home to many of the most marginalized people in our society, many of whom are Aboriginal people displaced by socially-generated personal circumstance or through the slow industrial genocide – such as hydro flooding – or more directly victims of the

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<sup>8</sup> From the European oral tradition

control-based social system that could not accept difference at the margins. This ironic blending of margins and centres is part of the theoretical discussion, drawing from Marshall McLuhan, through which I will consider the all-weather road and the relationship it establishes between Winnipeg and the north.

Another theoretical consideration is the persistence of memory, and the ability to access collective memory as a tool for resistance of imposed, external and/or totalizing forms of power. Against a horizon of bureaucratic structures, laws, reports, contracts and negotiations, the east side of Lake Winnipeg is being transformed by construction. A new line is being cut into the bush, though in some cases the old winter roads are being used, and forging the long fingers of city-driven civilization north. When the world becomes a smaller place in terms of the greater access to and intersection of divergent cultural forms, the culture at the margins has few material tools with which to resist. Before you think I am talking about this resistance or these roads as belonging to the Anishinaabek people and to the Manitoban power structure, respectively, I want to clarify that I am talking here about structures that are derived from the two societies, but that the agents do not necessarily line up so neatly. Much of the progression of negotiations and discussion on the east side that took place over the last decade heavily involved and included First Nations representatives, though I spoke with grassroots people in Berens River and Bloodvein who felt: i)that they had never seen or been to a meeting, at least not for a very long time (Andrew Everette <Joe>); and, alternatively, ii)they had gone to consultation meetings about the road, but they were more or less told what was happening and asked for comment <Martina>. In peer support, when one learns the skill of active listening,



one is taught the difference between asking open questions and asking closed questions, the latter anticipating or hoping for a specific answer, but the former genuinely seeking to understand and hear the other. This lack of clarity about the decision-making process around the all-weather road – and it came from a pretty knowledgeable insider source who had been actively involved in and supportive of the East Side Planning Initiative – makes me suspicious that the provincial government either has had its own agenda in mind, or else continues to inscribe the agenda of the power structures of the centre that it has institutionally inherited and failed to deconstruct and subvert. That no organized opposition ever spoke up against the road in any measurable voice is more a testament to the complexity of the road and its potential benefits than to any agreement, explicit or tacit, that the all-weather road expansion to Berens and Bloodvein ought to proceed. Some of the people I spoke with chalked it up to the inevitability of progress, as the road had been discussed for decades.

In this paper I hope to open a few more questions around centres and margins; linear versus cyclical patterns of development; and the activation of an ecological, culturally-based memory as a pedagogical tool to facilitate intergenerational cultural continuity. In the face of increasing threats to that which makes Anishinaabek, boreal culture unique, threats arising from cultural and material encroachments arising from the shrinking of the centre-margin gap – the assimilation of the margin into the centre, the enticement of Winnipeg to the youths of Bloodvein, Berens and Poplar River – a countervailing worldview needs to become more prominent. In *Waabanong Nakaygum* the template already exists and can still be accessed, I maintain.

## **Method and Methodology**

The primary texts upon which my analysis of the contexts for making sense of perceptions of the coming changes in *Waabanong Nakaygum* were the interviews I conducted.

I approached my research trips with little formality and prescription. Sometimes this led to what might seem from the outside to be an inefficient use of time, but then I considered why would anyone want to share stories and political, social perspectives with some (white) guy from down south they had never before met. And I truly was a stranger in a strange land.

When I arrived in Poplar River in the second week of March 2011, the annual late winter Sasquatch Days were just beginning. I met Rose Klippenstein, whose daughter Katherine, whom I had met in Winnipeg, had put us in contact. Rose met me and let me know I could stay in the back of the Catholic Church, as the itinerant priest, Father Riel, was travelling at this time, likely in Bloodvein, Little Grand Rapids or Pauingassi. She told me there was an event at the school that evening, and gave me a quick orientation of the community centre. Poplar River is quite spread out, on both sides of two rivers, the main one being Poplar, but it has, unlike Berens River, a more distinctive community hub, comprising the school, the Northern store, the nursing station, the Catholic Church (all opposite the mouth of the river, on the northern side) and a few other buildings. Bloodvein similarly has a centre but is smaller, less spread out, and build tight up along the shores of Lake Winnipeg. Anyhow, I arrived at the school that evening and walked in. There were students and there were community members – it was open gym but in the

lunchroom outside it someone was setting up karaoke. I found Rose and she introduced me to some people she was sitting with. Later on I karaoked to the Doors' "People are Strange." Maybe not the best song with which to break the ice, but I highly recommend partaking in karaoke on the first night in a community as a sound research method, especially if one is an outsider without family or cultural ties to the community.

I also relied on my connections to introduce me to different people. In Bloodvein, Martina introduced me to some of the community elders, and served as my interpreter. I met some other people and interviewed them on my own, primarily Melba and Marty who were working in the "blue garage" on the community's land use plan. I was brought to elders and traditional land users as my contacts assumed I would want to interview them, as these are the people most identifiable as bearers of the community's history. That said, it was not all history I was after, and my general thesis outline brought me into territory that was very much current - topics that were very much political, still part of community chatter. I had invited myself to listen in to a conversation still happening at kitchen tables of ordinary community members - yet who was I to be up there asking such questions out of the blue?

So the default became to talk about trap lines and history of land use, when much of my concern was originally about present attitudes and future land use decisions. Through listening to elders, many of whom were and some still are land users, the longer arc of relationship with the boreal geography came into focus, providing a richer context to understand the perspectives they and others shared on the present. The challenge of such a thesis is that 'I don't know' not only has to be considered an acceptable answer

from people – both because of said political nature and subsequent reticence to share too much with an outsider, and because for many they really do not know what is coming down the road, literally and figuratively – but it must also be accepted as a very fertile answer. It is not a dull 'I do not know,' obscuring some hidden truth that is current, but rather a very revealing 'I don't know' that, in its expression, tells a lot about the people being interviewed as individuals, but also about the community as a whole and where it is at right now in its own history and development.

The act of writing down what are oral narratives seemed like a great challenge to me, intrigued by both the power and the social form inscribed by the oral form of communication. There is an informality to the oral tradition of sharing information that somehow, maybe through its informality, creates a more democratic and possibly consensus-based approach to decision-making. As my contacts Joe and Lena talked about in Berens River, there had not been a community meeting in a very long time, but that did not mean people were not chatting about the all-weather road over coffee at kitchen tables. The more one visits and get around, the more one is bound to learn, the more one's pulse can be on the general range of views of community members. I mainly refer to members of the First Nation (in this case Berens River, with its very spread out layout and lack of a clear centre) – almost all electioneering happens through this circuit of visiting – but also hint at the non-formal, non-rigid method by which I decided with whom to speak about the road.

Also, there were those less inclined to sit down and do a formal interview, though they might offer coffee and start discussing some of their views. These tended to be both

more politicized people, which is not to say that they were more actively involved in the formal political processes of their communities - cynicism exists about politics among grassroots people no less than in our general society, where 40% of potential voters have ceased to cast ballots – but more so that they were people both with stronger opinions and greater stakes in decisions being made about the community's future. Primarily I am thinking about some of the trappers I had met in Hollow Water and Bloodvein who shared some of their views with me but refused to go 'under the mike,' so to speak. Occasionally I have referenced them, either by name or anonymously, depending on the potential controversy that I feel naming them could generate. Generally, this situation is the exception.

Despite the problem of non-native bio-regionalists' voices threatening to replace indigenous voices with similar discourses of place and land, especially in regions of Turtle Island where the indigenous presence is weaker or the voice is all but dissipated, there is a great potential for an ecological identity to serve as a unifying narrative more in line with the original spirit of the treaties to share land in an equitable way. The ecological frame is so large that sometimes it can erase historical differences through a stressing of structure to the point of the disappearance of agency<sup>9</sup>, eliminating the historical injustices from the discussion in an effort to 'wipe the slate clean and start again.' Furthermore, an unwanted effect of a universalizing structural discourse like bio-

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9 I am indebted to Dirk Moses for articulating the importance of agency versus structure-based analysis. His context pertains to considering liberal versus post-liberal theories of genocide, but I have found this framework transferable to other contexts involving systems and the roles of both individuals and collectives like peoples and states within them. See Dirk Moses. "Conceptual blockages and definitional dilemmas..."

regionalism or a systems-scale frame like the ecological crisis could be the loss of empathy for the particularity of human experiences of suffering, victimization, and the injustice of displacements both directly and indirectly the result of unjust systems and policies. Hence one must walk a careful line between a structural-based view like ecocentrism, and anthropocentrism, the former of which can provide common cause and a greater sense of shared human purpose, but may also in itself forget that people are the ones who design systems and also have designed systems act upon their bodies and spirits, as was the case with the Indian Act reserve system and the Residential School system. The latter, anthropocentrism, reminds us of the particularity of a situation, and the requirement of history to hear and know the voices of those who directly and less directly have been impacted by state policies, industrial activities, and more broadly civilizational inertia of one kind or another – like roads themselves – while leaving space for resistance. But it also can keep us locked in the patterns and traumas of the past, making the lessons of history particular to peoples, reifying victimhood and failing to transpose the possibilities of similar problems or injustices occurring over and over again in the same political context or elsewhere.

Snyder's sense of 'I'm Staying,' however, seems to exaggerate an operatively more-than-cartoon notion of indigeneity by conjuring up a sedentary settler model that could sit uncomfortably with an indigenous person raised within the confines of the colonially-constructed reserve. Staying does not have to literally mean fixed in one place, though dialectically one can understand this impulse among ecologically-minded settlers seeking to end a pattern of personal and inter-generational displacement.

## Centring and Decentring - community/bush

John Borrows, in his lecture at the University of Manitoba<sup>10</sup>, talked about the place-trap compared with the place-less trap in the history of European colonial law-making, at once constructing indigenous people as having no fixed address, thus being able firstly to possess and control both them and their lands, and then, later, through harmful interpretation in the implementation of treaties, creating defined boundaries and giving the chiefs local control only within them – i.e. on the reserve, and worse, requiring at times in the Indian Act history passes for all Indians to go on and off of them. Hence it is important to consider *Waabanong Nakaygum* as a large land area, accounting not only for seasonal iterations of traditional land-users, but also the familial relationship web that moves across and covers much of the region, from the communities like Berens River and Bloodvein along the lake, upstream to communities of Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi, relatives of each being found both up and down the river, but more settled as of late. Additionally, there are links in Bloodvein to Cree people from the Fisher River in North Interlake and in Poplar River to communities like Norway House up around the tip of Lake Winnipeg. An interesting history would look at the communities and land use patterns along with the industrial developments on, in and around Lake Winnipeg as a whole and try to understand the variances of its history effected on the boreal Anishinaabek of eastern Manitoba and NW Ontario.

Trappers bear perhaps a heavier burden, as land users, in knowing of decisions being made that will affect the traditional territories, but also for them their culture as

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<sup>10</sup> Borrows, John “*Canada’s Indigenous Constitution: Living Traditions and Human Rights*”. U of M, Jan26, 2010

Anishinaabe people remains centred in the bush, away from the reserve and its social and political limitations. If First Nations are the foundational people of Canada that speak (though decreasingly, as witnessed by the rise of the Idle No More/Defenders of the Land movements lately) from the margins, then trappers in many ways play a similar role in the life of First Nations communities. Some may have other roles on the reserve that situate them at the heart of the community's daily life and operations, but for the most part the trappers I met who shared informally with me are more solitary individuals, and they see and experience the changes that happen ecologically and economically to and on the land most directly.

Centring Anishinaabek voices to me meant I had to present them as the primary source for my thesis, to take their words as the main texts I would be working with. That said, it did not feel entirely right or true to the validity of the oral tradition *in and of itself* to simply write down the words that were shared with me in conversation. So often the case is that the words spoken by First Nations become that which is written about from the centre – the urban-based universities, for instance, or policy spaces within Government – divorced from the geographic, linguistic, culturally lived and breathed contexts from which they have emerged. Thus I had hoped to present the narratives shared within this thesis as sound recordings so that one could truly hear and have centred the First Nations voices themselves. Rather than transcription being the main channel for conveying these voices, I was going to let the voices speak for themselves.

Why then did I not do this, and decide finally to present the voices as transcriptions in the end? Three main reasons - one an unfortunate logistical



circumstance, one a question of relying on translation of interviews in Anishinaabemowin, and one perhaps more as a result of theoretical epistemic consideration – prevented me from following this approach. The first case pertains to a key interview I did that lasted well beyond 90 minutes, with former Bloodvein First Nation chief and a key character in my decision to go to Bloodvein and spend some time there, namely Louis Young. Louis has a particularly rich way of communicating, and is never at a loss for words, for humour, or for offering fresh perspective on a topic. We met twice well before my first trip to Bloodvein and my interviews with him lasted around 90 minutes each. Unfortunately, there was a crash in my relatively new external hard drive, and data was lost that could not be retrieved, even through exhaustive technological interventions. Fortunately I had already transcribed the interview in full, and the text was still available to me. I could not think of doing a piecemeal job presenting some but not all of the voices of interviews and especially missing out on Louis's words did not seem right to me, nor did I have the heart to ask Louis to do the interview again, let alone to read from the transcription, as stylistically much of the spontaneity of his manner of expression would have been lost.

Secondly, I had about 4 interviews that were conducted in Anishinaabemowin, and interpreted by Martina Fisher. While Martina is clearly fluent in the language, I realized that the constant interplay between the people being interviewed and Martina, including her own interventions in the narratives in the midst of translation to offer me greater context, meant that the editing process of the sound files would have left them in very unrepresentable and a highly choppy format. I did not want to undertake such a

process of cutting up one's flow and presenting it as their words, but more so I did not have the resources to fully engage with the original Anishinaabemowin text, not being a speaker myself. In these cases, what I have presented within the body of this paper generally are presented as third person information shared, as it was hard to know exactly what was literally being said versus the more broad sketch of the interpreted.

Finally, I realized through listening to all of the 15 or so (some people were interviewed more than once, and some interviews included more than one person) interviews that there were serious themes emerging through the texts regarding the overall situation of the people in the communities of *Waabanong Nakaygum* vis-a-vis the changes that have happened and continue to happen in their communities, and especially regarding access, mobility, and the overall arc of development of the region, especially in light of the intense attention that has been paid to the region by the political forces of Manitoba over the last decade. Through the emergence of earnest concerns over mobility, cost of living, economic opportunities and a lack thereof, concerns over the land, general social concerns, etc. I realized that the form of communication was important mainly insofar as it reflects upon the traditional Anishinaabek cultural forms, but perhaps remains secondary to the issues conveyed. I settled back into a more analytic framework and focused instead on the process of interpreting the narratives as texts, which for me mainly means giving context to the voices as best as I could, having learned through my journeys a bit about the geographic and historic character of the region, along with the provincial policies affecting it. I do, nonetheless, still believe strongly in the power of the voice, and am hoping to produce a radio documentary in partnership with

one or two members of east side communities, and to make this the product I will try to share more popularly, both within the communities of the east shore of Lake Winnipeg and here, in the power centre, where more voices from the north/east need to be heard.

### **One more word before I forget**

The intersection of a people and a land over a long time produces knowledge and a culture that are delicately woven with and completely dependent upon the abundance that the land has to offer. Animals, plants, medicines, places, ceremonies, seasons all form the tapestry of culture that is at once ecological and particular, and at the same time part of a deeper human semantic of being alive on Earth. Such a deep pattern takes centuries to be formed and yet, as recent history has shown, outside interference into a tight system can break this pattern down more quickly than it was formed; the colonialist period of the fur trade and later the post-confederation period of the Indian Agent and the Indian Residential Schools, followed by that of government paternalism, post-residential school abuse trauma and self-medication, and the shift towards a resource-exploitative economy all must be seen as layered over top of the older pattern - sometimes replacing it and often contradicting it. With some memory of an older sense of being of the Earth, it may seem natural to know the story of the land on which one lives, to participate in the ecology and culture of place, and yet from the perspective of Winnipeg – a cultural, urban centre amidst a sparsely populated prairie and adjacent to an even more sparsely-populated boreal region - the area beyond the perimeter is so often associated with holidays or vacations by a lake. What is hidden from the dominant society is inherent in the being of Indigenous people still connected with place, with the land, and with the

stories that have survived and been carried through, against all social odds, to today. I speak as a settler, albeit a late-comer, the first generation of my family born on this land. I come from a family of survivors, grandparents trapped in the Nazi prisons of World War II. Born free in a vast land of plenty, I have discovered another population of survivors, the First Nations people whose very existence is a reminder of Canada's efforts to destroy their culture and of their resilience and proud defiance. This project is one of my efforts to make sense of the place where I was born, raised and hope to stay, as now the generations have been extended through the birth of my first son between the time this project was started and this document completed. What collected memory of this place will he grow up learning – what will I be able to learn and experience and pass on to him? How will the extension of the fossil-fuel-based infrastructure in Manitoba impact his sense of place and will the imagination of an older, less energy-intensive way of life come to his consciousness, let alone to those who will yet be born on the east side once an all-weather road is built?

Jane Jacobs discusses the dynamics of cultural amnesia, referring to intergenerational changes and their ability to not only erase knowledge previously taken for granted by a community, but also to eventually erase knowledge that there is something to remember, that something has been forgotten. Discussing, as one iteration of a series of similar erasures of culture by the contemporary fossil-fuel-based, modern infrastructure, what happened in the urban context to culturally-rich neighbourhoods when they were overrun by the automobile, Jacobs describes a mechanism of loss that can be applied to most cultural forms overrun by outside-driven developmental models:

Of course, many people have opposed what was happening to former communities: thousands upon thousands have poured ingenuity and energy into opposition. Some who are fortunate enough to have communities still do fight to keep them, but they have seldom prevailed. While people possess a community, they usually understand that they can't afford to lose it; but after it is lost, gradually even the memory of what was lost is lost. In miniature, this is the malady of Dark Ages<sup>11</sup>.

This pattern of loss and the forgetting of loss epitomises 'displacement' in the true meaning of the word. In this regard I am driven by an awareness that the social and cultural form of Jewish life in eastern Europe into which my four grandparents were born was so thoroughly upended and overturned to try to learn about and express solidarity with the dynamic of cultural loss experienced in this place by Aboriginal peoples, and to consider the furthering of this dynamic by extending the infrastructure of the south into formerly bush-dominated cultural spaces. That said, the trick to cultural continuity is not to expect a static culture, but rather one that includes some memory of past ages and somehow includes it in the life of the people contemporarily, be it by virtue of what was learned or through some cultural practises being maintained and taught. Louis Young began our first interview by reminding me of the dynamism that is traditional culture, saying: "You see, I come from an oral tradition, but I sit here with a pen and paper and I write down what we're talking about. Traditions you know...what we do today, what we call tradition may be different from ten years ago and certainly different from 25 years ago and vastly different from 100 years ago."

Coming lately to be of this place, I hope to stay, however, only if another story can be heard by more people, if a new future that breaks from the pattern can be

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<sup>11</sup> Jane Jacobs. *Dark Age Ahead*, 38

fashioned from the rubble of the misguided, cruel, and selfish policies imposed upon the Indigenous peoples of this land by the dominant ethnic, religious, and social classes. This story is one of contradictions, contradictions to which we all belong but sadly to which too few have awoken. This story's name is 'Manitoba,' and it is one little part mine to hear and to help tell. The very name inscribes a sacred place, where the Creator sits (*Manitou apee*) or dwells, and so the words shared with me, the relationships formed through this journey of discovery, must also be sacred.

I am a mix of dumbfounded and honoured to be on this journey, but ever grateful for the opportunities to challenge my centre and dance with my margins, in hope of becoming, one day, a whole *mensch* in relationship with other whole *mesnchen*. We can choose to create relationships based on integrity, based on sacred intentions, as were the treaties made, in good faith, by the hosts on this land. Now we must (re-)learn to be good guests, for eventually we too may be asked to co-host, as more and more people keep travelling to and through these lands.

## 2 - Remembering Places: Traditional & Geographic Spaces

'You can't live in the past, you know.'

And I say to him, I can go outside and pick up a rock  
that's older than the oldest song you know and drop it on your foot.

The past didn't go anywhere, did it?  
It's right here, it's right now.

well I always thought that anybody who told me I couldn't live in the past was trying to  
get me to forget something that if I remembered it would get them in serious trouble...

Time is an enormous long river  
And I'm standing in it  
Just as you're standing in it  
My elders were the tributaries

and everything they thought and every struggle they went through and everything they  
gave their lives to and every song they created and every poem that they laid down flows  
down to me and if I take the time to ask and if I take the time to seek if I take the time to  
reach out I can build that bridge between my world and theirs, I can reach down into that  
river and take out what I need to get through this world.

Bridges, from my time to your time as my elders from their time to my time...

-Utah Phillips, "Bridges"

### Two patterns of development: internal and external

The east side of Lake Winnipeg, *Waabanong Nakaygum* in Anishinaabemowin, is  
a place of contradictions. There are contradiction between two different systems of  
perception and interpretation, between the world views of land-based Anishinaabek with  
memories of living in, spending many seasons in and making a living from the bush and  
those of the majority of today's younger generation living in or coming from the east side  
communities. There is a bush/reserve dichotomy, the rebalancing of which requires  
seeing a community as the sum not only of its reserve lands but also of the traditional  
territories. One can even move beyond these jurisdictions on the east side to understand a  
perception of place that includes much of the boreal region in Manitoba and into Ontario,  
at least as far as one can follow rivers and in fur trading days as far as Anishinaabek

people would routinely travel. This latter understanding effects a regional sense of belonging not yet fully developed but possible through the coming shift in access and mobility through the all-weather road network. Similarly, those who have a specifically Anishinaabek land-based ethos and worldview interpret their homelands from within a thick matrix of contexts, creating sets of meanings very different than those generated by people and institutions – like government – who experience these lands and communities from an external perspective, myself included. It is my position as a non-Aboriginal outsider that allows me to experience and thus reflect the scale of difference and alienation I have from Anishinaabek territories, land use practises and reserve experiences, a useful endeavour if one is trying to consider possible epistemic gaps and failures in knowing and understanding expressed in state policies over these lands and the people inhabiting them, and to try to express empathetic solidarity in the space that this gap creates.

Despite these changes and gaps from the generation that came out of the bush and the one born into ‘the rez’, or even urban life, it would be mistaken if not malicious to suggest that traditional Anishinaabek culture is dead, for traditions are non-static, evolving, multi-layered, and complex. Comprised ecologically of perhaps the world’s largest contiguous tract of boreal forest without large-scale industrial development,<sup>12</sup> including the absence, so far, of all-weather roads, the Manitoban east side as included in the Manitoba Government’s East Side Planning Initiative covers 82,000 square kilometres, one eighth of the province’s land mass, and is the homeland of 16 First

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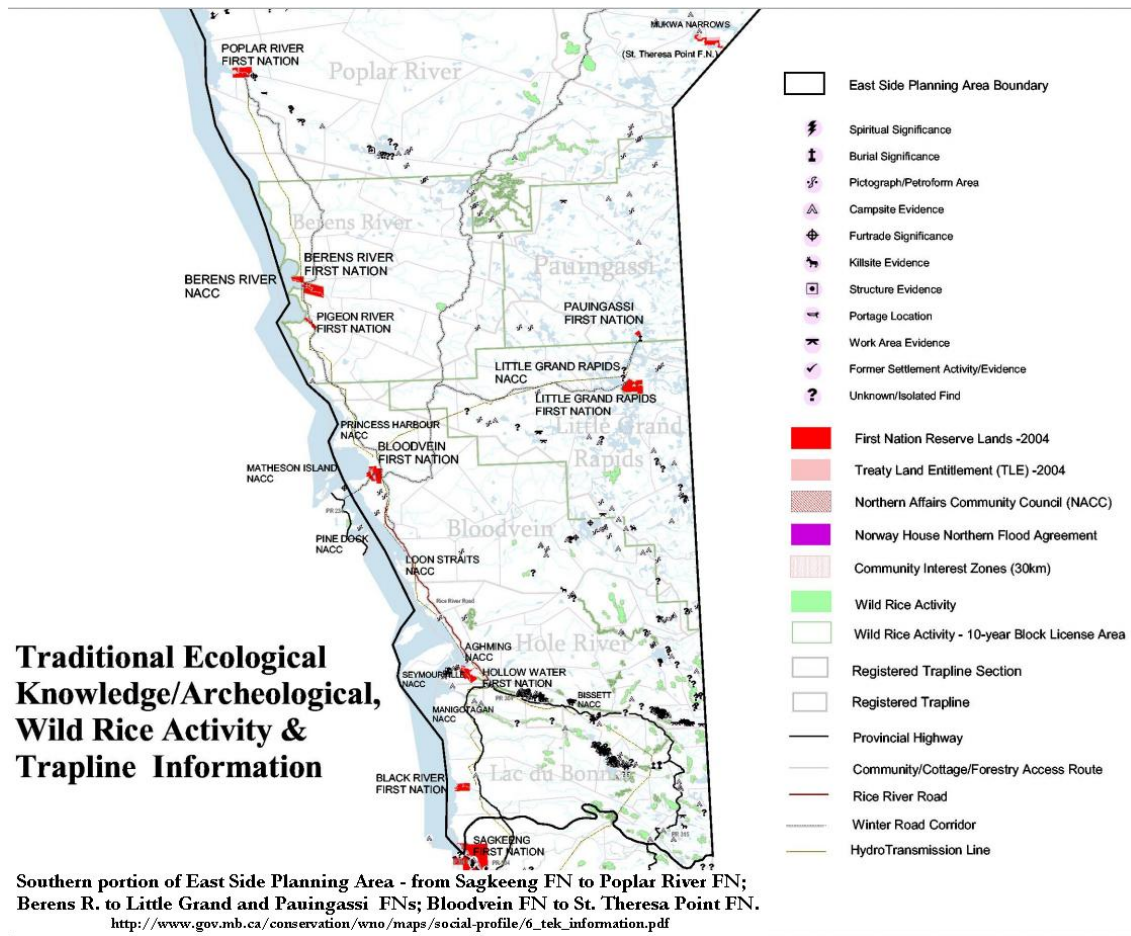
12 See the following maps:

<http://www.heartoftheboreal.ca/see-the-east-side/planning-area-map>;

[https://wildernesscommittee.org/manitoba/what\\_we\\_do/the\\_heart\\_the\\_boreal](https://wildernesscommittee.org/manitoba/what_we_do/the_heart_the_boreal)



Nation communities.<sup>13</sup> More will be said about the semantics of the Government's delineation of this territory in the next chapter.



5. Partial map of east side planning area, showing traditional activities in the SW area of the region.<sup>14</sup>

This area is in acute focus at this time, and has been over the last decade or so, as the Government of Manitoba has been forging ahead in partnership with east side communities to extend the Rice River Road, build a bridge over the Bloodvein River, clear bush and blast rock to extend PR 304 north to the communities of Bloodvein and Berens River. The road to Poplar River is expected to follow. Government-funded

<sup>13</sup> “‘Promises to Keep’: Towards a Broad Area Plan for the East Side of Lake Winnipeg.” Government of Manitoba, 2004

<sup>14</sup> See WNO website [http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/wno/maps/social-profile/6\\_tek\\_information.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/wno/maps/social-profile/6_tek_information.pdf)

projects of opening all-season road access to and from these communities is laying down the early grid-marks of a matrix of industrial development that could eventually open up the entire east side of Lake Winnipeg to further external-driven development, among other options to be explored in the discussion of land-ecology and economics. What the development will look like in the decades to come will be determined by a nuanced dance of policies and wills among First Nations, the Government of Manitoba, industries with claim to timber and minerals in the area, and environmental groups seeking to protect this massively intact boreal forest. The very idea of development needs to be questioned, and the politics of its definition and the agency seems to be the fulcrum around which the area's future will unfold. Growing this critical space around development – especially pertinent in today's Canada, bent on a one-dimensional definition of development that is based on resource exploitation in the service of growth economics, including the potential for the exploitation of mining claims in the east shore boreal of Manitoba<sup>15</sup> - Peter Puxley questions the instrumental use of reason inherent in dominant uses of the term 'development.' Instrumental, or machinated, reason only serves to objectify and thus dehumanize people and the land, and the model of development – exploitation of natural resources on and beneath traditional territories – requires a process of consciousness-raising decolonization to counter it. "A society whose ideological underpinnings are no longer the object of other than 'academic' consideration, while its ideology demands reasons merely in the service of efficiency, is a society out of control from any humanist perspective<sup>16</sup>." Listening to the stories and perspectives of people from east side communities can offer both a glimpse of the inner conflict and contradiction around the

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15 See Government of Manitoba Mines Branch claims <http://web15.gov.mb.ca/mapgallery/mgm-md.html>

16 Peter Puxley. "The Colonial Experience" in *Dene Nation: The Colony Within*, p.105

process of development, but also - and especially among people who have experience in the bush, or deeper within an Anishinaabek epistemic space – can provide an alternative, self-determining understanding of development. Within which understanding of development the all-weather road being built fits in is a question this paper seeks to ask – whether its advent is internally- or externally-driven, or both.

The matrix of development plans on the east side is comprised of the geographic and the political; the latter will be examined with reference to Anishinaabek agency expressed, or not, within the large file of bureaucratic documentation - policies, agreements, legislation, and reports of various kinds – that have been produced by and for the Government of Manitoba over the last ten years. Interviews with people more in contact with the main proponent and coordinator of the all-weather road, the Manitoba Government, reveal a much different perspective on the process than those with grassroots folk not involved in governance, revealing another layer of insider-outsider complexity in perception and interpretation. While the matrix of control/engagement involved in the East Side Planning Initiative (ESPI) will be the subject of the next chapter, we turn here to the idea of an older, deeper, Anishinaabek bush episteme, or a worldview that has memory and roots in cyclical, pre-machine land use and social patterns.

### **The specific but not fixed nature of Anishinaabek cultural places**

Regarding the political and legal implications of understanding Aboriginal people in the context of 'place', I took a fair warning from Aboriginal legal scholar John Borrows when he spoke at the University of Manitoba's Robson hall, January 26<sup>th</sup>.<sup>17</sup> Borrows

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17 John Borrows, "Canada's Indigenous Constitution: Living Traditions and Human Rights". Talk U of M, Dialogue, Displacement and Return - Contexts of a Journey on a Two-Way Road – Chpt 2: Remembering Places 45

spoke of how two contradictory definitions of Indigenous people have been employed in various legislative moments to seek to limit the rights of Indigenous peoples. On one hand, Indigenous peoples have historically been defined as nomadic, as having no place to which they can claim full ownership, perhaps never having constructed homes with underground foundations.

Regrettably, the concept of occupation is often applied in an ethnocentric manner to read Indigenous people out of occupation. This seems to be the situation in the Supreme Court of Canada's case of *R. v. Marshall*; *R. v. Bernard*, where the Mi'kmaq people were regarded as too nomadic to establish effective organization sufficient to achieve occupation at the time British sovereignty was asserted.<sup>18</sup>

Under European systems of title, not belonging to a specific place, with fence-worthy boundaries and strictly documented property lines, meant title to land would be conveniently impossible to recognize. The reserve system can be seen as an effort to enshrine the idea that there is a land owned by natives, and it was made to be marginal and limited in size<sup>19</sup>, so that the outside lands beyond the boundaries of the reserve could become available to the state and the interests it represents - for settlement, for transportation infrastructure, and increasingly for resource extraction.

Borrows points out that the opposite concept to nomadism has also been employed, the idea of the native as being sedentary, a notion reified in the concept of reserve and the passes legislated under the Indian Act that required permission to leave them. The idea here has been that the State thus limits Indian status as belonging to one particular band and that the band is now confined in its territory to its First Nation,

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Jan26,2010

<sup>18</sup> John Borrows. *Canada's Indigenous Constitution*, 18

<sup>19</sup> A point not lost on First Nations, who call reserves "leftover" lands, Iskonihkan, in Cree, and I have heard a similar word in Anishinaabemowin; based on a paper written for Adele Perry on the oral history of treaty 5 adhesions.

identified with the reserve lands on a map and on other Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development bureaucratic ledgers of state apparatus. Borrows commented on Indigenous identity having both historic connections to particular lands and geographies – though this particularity would encompass a great range well beyond artificially created reserve boundaries, rural ghettos on the edge of the bush, namely traditional territories – and as embodying the freedom and cultural tendencies to travel, learn, trade, meet other tribes, hunt, forge new links etc. across much greater spaces, without their status being tied to some narrow Indian Act conceptualization of indigeneity.

If we accept Gary Snyder's articulation of bio-regionalism as the universal (but implicitly a migrant's) need to know, inhabit, and connect with places in their specificity, we begin to approach, from a starting point of alienation from *place* and from our home, and native land, the idea that there is a need for a geographic space that serves a foundation for an indigenous tradition, such as that of the Anishinaabek living in the boreal region east of Lake Winnipeg. I am not conflating indigeneity with the bio-regional ethos, except insofar as to say I believe there to be is a natural alliance of the two modes of representation based on respect for and specific cultural manifestations of place, and that the outsider or im/migrant's efforts to establish and understand place opens a space both for encounter and for building shared goals, in accordance with the higher unrecognized egalitarian potential of the treaties. Eigenbrod, aligning herself with Larocque, cautions as did Borrows against “the tendency of non-indigenous scholars to construct indigeneity as 'otherness', this time based on preconceived notions of Native

cultures and peoples as 'static,' and on mystifications of a land-based ideology.<sup>20</sup> To avoid this preconception or trap, I will focus on narratives of mobility, travel and identity that are not based on simply community- or reserve- orientation, but rather will both centre the traditional territory as the long-term site of cultural production, and more broadly include wider regional circles of travel as key to Anishinaabek self-determination and cultural reclamation. I am, however, cautious not to go too far in the denial of land as a centre of culture lest this argument serve to undermine struggles for native lands and jurisdiction beyond the reserve boundaries, or to act as an apologia for efforts on the part of the state to further assimilate Aboriginal people into the general body politic of the state, denying difference and undermining and flattening Aboriginal rights, an unsavoury return to the policies of enfranchisement. This tension is especially salient given the increased urbanization of Aboriginal communities, as part of the massive global movement to cities<sup>21</sup>, which will only be facilitated on the east side by all-weather roads. Bio-regionalism, as an 'ism,' is primarily a political and cultural position, one with which I am sympathetic, even if I have not 'dug in' anywhere yet. Recall this east side journey I have been on is still only just part of mine and my family's walkabout on Turtle Island, an arriving, a grinding down of the treads on our European migrant/refugee shoes.

## **Recentring geographies and remembering places**

Anthropologists have labelled the group of Anishinaabek on the east side of L. Winnipeg the 'Northern Ojibwa' (Steinbring, following Dunning, Hallowell and co.)<sup>22</sup>, but this geographic denotation only indicates a relational expression from without the

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20 Renate Eigenbrod. *Travelling Knowledges: Positioning the Im/Migrant Reader of Aboriginal Literature in Canada*, 24

21 Mike Davis. *Planet of Slums*, 2006.

10. Steinbring, Jack--- "Cultural Change Among the Northern Ojibwa." *Transactions of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba*. Series 3 #21 1964-1965

culture and homeland, coming from some kind of populated and civilized centre elsewhere: generally non-native-dominated academies of the south. U of Manitoba history professor Adele Perry turned me on to this way of re-viewing, even inverting the language of geographic centring in suggesting to me that while today we think of Norway House as being part of 'The North,' at the height of the fur trade it was really a major hub and could be thought of as the centre or heart of Canada. Even renaming the region *Waabanong Nakaygum*, or 'east side', seems to have taken place on government maps throughout the East Side Planning Initiative process and during the negotiation of the WNO (*Waabanong Nakaygum* Okimawin Council of Chiefs) Accord. East side makes sense perhaps as a reference to the communities I visited on Lake Winnipeg's eastern shores, but for the inland communities like Pauingassi, Little Grand Rapids, Oxford House, etc. what this designation inscribes is a situation within Manitoba, a geographic fact of the colonial map and province-making oblivious to the course of rivers which extend this east side into Ontario (or rather drag "Ontario" downstream into "Manitoba").

Space itself is not merely a thing, but gives birth within a cultural trajectory to a complex of relationships among people and among peoples, and between people and: the land, the waters, the animals, plants, and spirits, and also for instance the roads, the cities, the pow-wow trail etc., out of which emerge an interconnected, dynamic and fluid series of practises, stories, economies. This forms a non-fixed, atemporal, and non-linear field of memory and identity, recognizing that any field within which meanings are generated is required to have a sense of an edge, or boundary. The meanings themselves may be specific and often emerge out of local contexts, but the cultural and material fields are always broader. The dynamic stability – one of Fritjof Capra's 'Six principles of

ecology<sup>23</sup> - of a tradition's continuity, however, requires that the edges of the field not be rigid, for fixed lines are bound to create rigidity and cultures that do not shift shape to some degree are bound to stagnate and die. Of course outside intervention can destabilize equally a cultural field or an ecosystem, the two being more closely bound up in the narratives shared with me of earlier trapping years and told by Tom Boulanger in his narrative *An Indian Remembers*.<sup>24</sup>

‘Memory-place’ is a compound concept embodying collective and cyclical processes of travelling and returning, along with seasonal iterations that one can read in Boulanger's narrative, as he tells both of daily trapping, fishing, hunting, and travelling experiences he has lived, but also conveys stories from the bush from all over the east side. To an outsider his stories tell of a different world, one specific to the climate and topography of the east side, as they involve movement primarily by snowshoes, canoe, and dog team – the primary trapper's means of travel in his day (1922 when he started to trap until he wrote the book in 1967) – but to one who knows the land as well as a trapper, there are stories everywhere on the land. The literacy of one reading Boulanger is of a different order from the literacy the likes of Boulanger practises travelling and reading the land. The meaning is experienced in a greater capacity by an insider, by the being travelling across the land, and by those familiar with the land. Sense can be made by anyone, but to fully comprehend his narrative one needs to be acquainted with the cultural and geographic contexts within which his narrative takes place.

One could say that Snyder's bio-regionalism is an articulation of a desire to become a literate reader of the land, which requires the praxis and humility of

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23 Fritjof Capra, *Six Principles of Ecology* <http://www.ecoliteracy.org/essays/ecological-principles>, also see *Ecological Literacy: Educating Our Children for a Sustainable World*, 2005, ed. Barlow and Stone

24 Tom Boulanger, *An Indian Remembers*



unknowing. It is interesting that his bio-regionalist zeal and writings came after study and experiences in Zen Buddhism, as a principle tenet of Zen is that of emptying, or in the 'Bearing Witness' concept, Unknowing. It is my brush with Bernie Glassman's praxis of Bearing Witness at Auschwitz-Birkenau, spending 5 days visiting the death camp and meditating with people of North American and European Jewish, Polish, German, French, Swiss, Israeli Jewish, Native American, Sufi and other backgrounds, that has made me want to explore the unknown, in my case, the bush, the north, Aboriginal culture. That which is thus 'real' to Snyder is material. I interpret his praxis as in effect calling for an ecological spirit to our actions that is über-materialistic, literal, and countervailing to the spiritualization of the bush brought by Christian missionaries.

It is not enough just to 'love nature' or want to be 'in harmony with Gaia.' Our relationship to the natural world takes place in *a place*, and it must be grounded in information and experience. For example: 'real people' have an easy familiarity with the local plants. This is so unexceptional a knowledge that everyone...used to take it for granted. Many contemporary Americans don't even *know* that they don't "know the plants," which is indeed a measure of alienation.<sup>25</sup>

Postmodern sensitivities teach us to be suspicious of foundations and essentialist concepts, like Snyder's "real people." Reacting to the 20th-century's totalizing and totalitarian concentrations and abuses of power, the deconstructionist ways of thinking eschew the notion that a concept can be seen as other than human or based on any foundation transcending the acts of human thought, speech and writing. To Snyder, "we live in a backwards time<sup>26</sup>" in which we must seek to remember – personally or through talking with elders, traditional land users, and memory-keepers - relationships to the land that pre-date nation states, drawing their strict lines on maps and often separating peoples

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25 *Snyder Reader*, 193

26 *Ibid*, 192

from their homelands and through that process the fields of meaning and interconnection that formed the basis of traditional social and economic lives. We can return to this concept in a later discussion of the root interconnection between economy and ecology, but for now perhaps we can accept that the lines currently drawn over the world's many local geographic memory fields have created artificial, or non-real, and hard-line borders<sup>i</sup>, where before geographic boundaries like rivers and mountains may have demarcated the territories of different localized groups of people. In *Waabanong Nakaygum*, the rivers and Lake Winnipeg, into which most of them flow, still form important boundaries between traditional land use areas. The lines drawn by large centralized powers on maps are both metaphorical and literal, and more importantly seek to and often do replace or at least suppress over time the older geographic spaces that serve as the axioms of cultural places. Historically, the Manitoba-Ontario border did not exist, and the winter roads travelling north-south with their orientation towards Winnipeg in what is now Manitoba have altered an older pattern – still present with tractor trains – that ran from east to west. Remnants of this older, bush-oriented pattern, with its dependency upon the rivers as the roads of the people, can still be seen in the genealogical and familial relationships between communities further east, or upstream, like Little Grand Rapids or Pauingassi, with Anishinaabek people from the communities of Bloodvein and Berens River, at the mouths of rivers originating in what is now Ontario. While one can remain suspicious of a return to foundational thought, if one is to entertain at least a remembering and re-inscribing of timeless foundations, it would seem worthy to consider the ever-changing but geographically elder contours of the land as a good starting point for basing one's thoughts on the cultural history of *Waabanong*

*Nakaygum.*

### **Reclaiming memory: older, non-linear patterns of development**

Marty Kennedy, one of the two Bloodvein community members who worked on the community's land use plan as part of the Government of Manitoba's broad area plan for the east side, reflected upon this clash of systems from his conflicted position of having to translate the stories and knowledge of the elders and land users into the language of the Province, telling me that “[w]hite people have a different system than ours...[the people] they can think about it where we've gone and that's our traditional territory...we don't write lines on the Earth.”



6. The linear winter road and hydro line intersects older, meandering watery roads

Kennedy, somewhere in his late 30s /early 40s, can see the change in the understanding of space and the erosion of a self-determining sense of place that is occurring from one generation to the next as older, orally-given and less linear, less

formal cultural memory gets displaced in favour of the dominant culture being transmitted from the centre. He feels that more land-based education in the schools could help recentre the geographic space, the land, that comprises a large part of historic collective Anishinaabek identity: “we've been trying to get that going; I'd like to add it into the school curriculum so that the students know their territory and know their history rather than just knowing what Canada has become since 1867...” This articulation expresses an idea of contrasting and trying to reclaim a specific sense of *place* that the Anishinaabek culture of Miskoosipi inhabits from an inside-out perspective, vital in the construction of a specifically Anishinaabek rather than universal Canadian identity, ultimately filling a more positive space of belonging than does the Canadian identity. The latter is vague, dominating, and, based on its self-projection through television sets, loud narrative that prevents the fuller expression of Anishinaabek identity, especially given the historical representations of Aboriginal peoples in the dominant Canadian society. It also serves to decentre an Anishinaabek identity that is often reserve-based, again a creation of and dominance by the Canadian state via the Indian Act. For Marty the very act of experiencing the places their ancestors and a diminishing number of hunters and trappers travel(led) and lived would be a good start to triggering a collective cultural understanding of who they are and where they are from, of broadening the identity beyond the limiting confines of the reserve: “They haven't been very far within our traditional territory in terms of how far they've gone and which areas they've seen...” Politically, having a larger territory to call home can also enable a broader sense of identity, one more fluid, open, unbound, less regulated and restrictive, open to more creativity and economic possibility, while subverting the intentions behind the

concentration of Indians into sedentary settlements that Borrows warned about, and the formalization of lands taking place by the provincial government today through the legal structures being put into place to ‘protect’ certain lands. More on these structures will be said in the next chapter.

I asked Rose Klippenstein, who received me in Poplar River and helped find me a place to stay for a week in March 2011 of her sense of belonging to Poplar River and if she would ever consider moving away, to which she answered simply: “what keeps me here is my family...and this is my home.” Similarly, considering if all weather access will affect his desire to move about, Marty Kennedy has begun to also root himself in the place of his upbringing: “actually I heard this already in the late 70s, early 80s, that there's a road coming through, and I've been waiting since then for that road to come through...being able to travel...now today? Nowhere. I don't want to go anywhere. I'd rather go up into the bush...” One can only assume that many people, especially young people, feel now the way Marty felt in his teenaged years and twenties, and that his sense of not wanting to go anywhere could be a strong countervailing force if supported and well-resourced to take youth onto the land more often.

### **Place and mobility within and beyond the traditional territory**

As I understand the logic of Algonquian languages from my summary study of Cree, nouns almost always have a trans-active nature to them, carrying thingdom only in relation to a process or action. Similarly, one cannot think of the Anishinaabek boreal homeland as a fixed place without considering the activities taking place within them and the movement of people across the lands and the waters, both flowing or frozen, an animation coming out of every page in Boulanger’s *Remembering*.

There seemed to be a stronger connection to the land the more north I travelled, as access to Winnipeg and the south is more difficult in Poplar than in Berens, and Bloodvein, which will have all-weather road access within the coming year of 2014, already has an easier connection across Lake Winnipeg both in winter and via ferry in the summer. When I last travelled to Berens, it was during freeze up, a time when boats have stopped travelling on the lake but cars cannot yet get out on winter roads. Berens River at this time is actually more accessible coming from Winnipeg than Bloodvein, as there are several flights a week to and from Berens from the Pine Dock airport near the Narrows of Lake Winnipeg on the west side.

But to Rose, travel is a vital part of living in Poplar River, as its location on Lake Winnipeg means a degree of mobility greater than that of the inland Island Lakes communities: “Because of the lake. We have our access, we could go to Riverton from here...by boat. Last summer I went to Norway House by boat. We go places, you know.” While Poplar River, Berens, and Bloodvein are all connected to the Interlake and the all-weather roads on the west of the lake, perhaps having less access means a great connection to the bush, as Rose reflects upon the Island Lakes communities: “I think they have more way of life over there than we do here in Poplar...old ways, like they still go to their fishing camp, their traplines...They just want their families to keep their traditions going.”

### **Historical means of travel throughout the east side**

Making sense of cultural changes that are now still continuing means getting a better sense of the longer arc of change in: land use, modes of travel, and transport of freight throughout the region. The changes have affected and continue to affect both the

individuals in their personal ranges of mobility and accompanying economic and social choices of where they would live, work, and visit, but also the communities as a whole through the various methods of shipping goods. These variables both affect the cost of living and have made available different jobs in the operation of a range of machines, along with general maintenance of machine-centric systems.

As a young man, Louis Young grew up in Bloodvein but knew that making a life in the bush was always an option, as he had spent all of his free time in the bush after school “hunting rabbits, chickens, just being out there.” The level of comfort he had practising trapping and hunting helped later, as he tells me:

I was 18, when I dropped out of school and my dad came up and said: “Now what are you going to do?” and he turned and walked away. And my brother Albert... he needed a partner to go trapping, so I went. We did fly out, landed on ice. Trapped and came back by homemade canoe. We paddled and went down river and came home by canoe.

This level of comfort in knowing the land and understanding what is required both to stay on it and to procure a living from it – along with the sense of space that this knowledge engenders – is one which has been steadily fading since Louis was 18. Many of the elders and traditional land users I spoke with bemoaned the loss of time spent on the land by the youths, a loss for some so deep that they are barely even aware of what they are missing.

## **Walking**

The most basic and oldest form of mobility shared among all humans is walking. Walking, and the use of snowshoes in the winter, is the slowest but also most direct mode of movement over land. As it predated most other forms of mobility in the boreal region, as everywhere, walking helped create a sense of distance and territory. Trapper Conrad Bushie of Hollow Water told me that he was told their traditional territory encompasses

the distance one person could walk in each direction from the reserve, bound by Lake Winnipeg to the west – an area encompassing around 90 miles in each direction as per common feats of old. Bloodvein elder Mike Green, born in 1925, said “that long ago the families would just carry their children, they would just wrap up their babies and they would just walk to their trap lines,” similar to Boulanger's narrative of how his baby was born on the land<sup>27</sup> and countless other tales of being born 'in the bush' where families would spend 6 or 8 continuous months of the year from around October to May.

Walking was not only done in the service of trapping. One of Berens River's oldest members, Ronald (Lonnie) Ross, “made track by foot - that winter road that first went through, he's the one that made the trail for it, going east first and then south. There was a different road first, it went this way (east) and then south...to Hollow Water...He started off on #6 trap line and then all the way down to Bloodvein...walking with snowshoes..marking it...that's what they used, that route.” (told in translation by Keith Berens). Walking here was done in the service of a much quicker mode of transportation, and laid the early tracks for the dominant form of personal and freight access to communities over the last 40+ years.



7. Ronald (Lonnie) Ross recalls by-gone days, some rather humorous, in his home on Berens River's south shore

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27 Boulanger, pp11-13



## **Dog teams**

Minnie Mason, an elder at Poplar River, described earlier modes of transportation and regional patterns of travel and work:

People used to get some freight from Berens River by dog team at this time, even the mail they used to get. No we used to stay all winter up the river. And then we came back by boat in the spring, in May. My grandfather used to have a little store over there, with Hudson Bay, they used to keep a little store for him over there. I was a little girl that time.

Earlier fur trade patterns and their trading posts throughout the bush country played a key role in setting the traveling paths through the forests and across the muskeg. I am told a young man from Bloodvein is now living at Hollow Water and relearning the nearly-lost but not forgotten art of keeping a dog team, a vital step in remembering and traveling across the paths of those who came before.

Abel Bruce was born in 1947, and lives on the south shore across Poplar River's mouth from where I stayed. He did not have a phone, so he showed up at the church the day we had discussed we would meet, and we talked for a couple of hours. He did not want to be recorded, so I took notes instead. Abel told me that he started trapping with his brother Albert when he was 17, which would have been around 1964, and continued trapping for about 25 years, until 1989. During the winter of early 2011, he went to the family trap line, following the winter road for an hour and a half, but that in old times – he surmises around 100 years ago – people used dog teams. In winter, when he was trapping, they would travel 4 days with snowshoes and a toboggan, staying in a canvas tent with a stove along the way. He remembers 1972 being the most successful winter of trapping, due to higher fur prices and many animals trapped, noting they were snowbound at the trap line, unable to travel much due to waist-high snow.

As for travel during open season – the time when the water is flowing across the land – 'my strength was this,' he says, shaking his right arm. 'we never used to use a motor to go trapping; we used paddles.' He tells me they would take their time 'because we have to go with everything in it – food...everything.' They would travel up to the family trapping cabin in the spring to prepare it, chopping wood and getting ready for the long winter trapping months. The use of a motor would come later.

## **Paddling**

Mike Green also shared some trapping stories of being on the main roads of the land, the rivers.

when (we) were coming back, when (we) were coming down the river, coming home, and one of the families didn't have anything to eat - and when (we) got to this certain place and (we) had to portage, (we) came upon these people...and my uncle told (me) to look in the pot, and they told (me) to look in the pot, and they were cooking turtles...

I asked if his grandchildren today have tried less common meats like turtle or beaver, he told me that 'his grandchildren eat only what we eat now:...moose, fish, ducks, geese,' suggesting that they are still accustomed to wild game and at least are learning hunting and fishing – trapping has taken a back seat, mostly since the decline in the fur market. They travelled during the trapping and hunting days with smoked meat, pemmican, and fish, and that way it kept good for a while. (translated by Martina Fisher) In those days, people paddling long distances would travel with others or sometimes they would have their own route or they would leave at different times, but that time - when they encountered the family cooking turtles - he said that this time they travelled together back to the community. This reciprocal safety measure is not too unlike how people caravan today in bad weather on the winter road. They each leave at their own time, but they

know if others have gone out ahead or are coming behind them. The canoe also connected relatives downstream at the mouth communities of Bloodvein and Berens River with relatives, many distant and, as Louis Young told me, surmising a product of the fur trading days, upstream in Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi.

### **Here come the machines: winter motor, summer motor, & a nowhere-going motor**

Abel recalled that after the good trapping year, 1972, he and his brother each bought an Elan Skidoo. Two weeks later (after setting the traps) they went to check them, using the skidoos for the first time in the bush. 'It didn't feel good to me...just like you're into something – laziness or something like that...'

Lonnie (Ronald) Ross remembered the first time he had outboard motors, 2 horsepower. He used to go all the way to Leaf River (towards Poplar River) for trapping and hunting. I asked him when did fuel come in? Lonnie told me it was 'when they first starting having outboard motors, that's when the gas came, I guess from the HB stores.' He doesn't remember how many years, cuz he was one of the first to have a car up here. I asked where he would travel with that car and was told, through translation, that 'they just made their own roads, trails...There was no place to go that time...no roads, nothing...'

### **Tractor trains: cutting lines into the bush**

When I first heard of tractor trains I had no idea what they were, but they came up over and over again in some of the old timers' memories, along with in those narrative of people who retained stories of their parents or had worked on them in their later years. Louis told me of their later years, when he was a kid: "All I know of them is that when we were kids we used to jump on a tractor train and go for a ride." Lonnie Ross talked a little bit about them, as did Keith Berens up at Berens, and Frank Young and Louis Young

of Bloodvein, but nobody was as rich a resource about their history as was Charlie Bushie, with whom I had a visit of good length each of my trips to Berens River in 2013. Most of the following history, however, comes from Charlie, born 1937.



8. Charlie Bushie of Berens River with distant relative Shavon Sinclair of Hollow Water

There were two companies that operated tractor trains in *Waabanong Nakaygum*, Patrice's and Sigfurdson's. They were the forerunners to winter roads, paths about 10 to 12 feet wide made through the bush throughout the 'pristine' boreal forests of the east shore. Charlie not only was a treasury of historical information and insightful anecdotes about the tractor trains, he is one of those people – like Ernest McPherson of Little Black River – who can share a wealth of labour history about the whole region's waged jobs during several decades throughout the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, having worked many of them himself.

The tractor trains basically consisted of a tractor with a v-blade on the front to push the snow aside, latched to 5 or 6 sleighs each about 8-9 feet wide and 35 feet long. At the back was a caboose where the workers could cook and eat and sleep, and a crew usually consisted of 7 people: 4 drivers, 2 breakies, and a cook. The shifts would be twice a day, 6 hours on and 6 hours off, and while Charlie, born in 1937, was too young to work for Patrice's, his father was a cook and he later worked for Sigfurdson's, as a lead driver.



9. Example of a tractor with a v-blade hauling cargo across a frozen lake<sup>28</sup>

There was a second tractor that would haul another 5 or 6 sleighs and not unlike a rail train, would be attached on the front to create a second engine for pulling the sleighs up big hills in the bush, or could be attached on the back to slow down the train and prevent the front tractor from jackknifing when heading downhill.

Patrice's hauled to a place in Ontario they used to call Berens River Mines, but Charlie told me he didn't know why they used to call it Berens River Mines when it was

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<sup>28</sup> Photo courtesy of “The Journal of Marvin F. and Janice Barton Huffaker.”  
<http://www.islandfalls.ca/historical.articles/huffakerjournal.htm>

Fairview Lake Mines – a gold mine. They also would haul goods to Sandy Lake, which was en route, and the trip would take about a week return. He relayed to me:

Well...I heard they were [running] 12 years or something ... that's when they closed up the mines... They quit hauling in 1952 The mine was over then...yeah, That's when they closed the mine...but it's re-opened again I hear. But they're hauling from Pickle Lake, Ontario now. Now they call it Pickle Lake mines.

The tractor trains brought supplies to the mines and would even haul out mineral rock back through the bush where it could be transported south on Lake Winnipeg on a barge in open season. He tells me of the pace of travel, saying they would make about 25 or 'if you go good' 30 miles per shift, if they wouldn't get stuck anywhere. The tractor engines were either D6s, which hauled about 8-10 tonnes per sleigh, or D-14s which hauled 18-20 tonnes each; one could hold 40 drums of fuel. I tried to imagine how this machine got through deep snow in the bush, so he explained what to him was a common-sense experience:

just plough through...once you make that route through, it's good. When there's lots of snow you can't put all the sleighs because you'll be breaking the chains. You got to relay all the time when you got snow – Relay so far about 5 miles ahead, and then come back empty and get that sleigh back over there again...Oh lots, it slows you down lots...

Sigfurdson's was Sigfurdson's Fish, another Interlake connection to the east side as the family came from Lundar, and hauled from Riverton across the lake to Berens River, and they became quite significant in the history of travel throughout the east side as they built most of the roads throughout the area. Charlie thinks that in the late 1970s Sigfurdson's roads were sold to the province for about \$6 million, forming the backbone of the winter roads network through the bush. They had a big warehouse in Berens River where they stored the goods they supplied many communities throughout the area, but they stopped

hauling in 1969. One time Charlie hauled beer from Ma Kemp's store at Berens River to some northern communities.



10. The tractor trains were used to clear the paths that would become winter roads<sup>29</sup>

The tractor trains made a long circuitous route I could not quite follow without aid of map, but recall Charlie mentioning going down a big treacherous hill that really slowed them down around Shamattawa, along with stops in Island Lake, God's Lake, God's Lake Narrows, God's River, up to Ilford, back halfway to God's River, then branching up to Oxford House, then back to Ilford, load up again. Other times they hauled goods up to Poplar River, Cross Lake and Norway House. After quite a while telling me about the tractor trains, I asked Charlie - a very modern man who has adapted to all the transportation modes and labour opportunities that presented themselves over

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<sup>29</sup> See "We shared each other's gladness," by Toni Schuetz, picture 9-4  
[http://blackpearlcomputing.com/bio/Chapter\\_9.html](http://blackpearlcomputing.com/bio/Chapter_9.html)



the years – if he thought the coming all weather roads would benefit the community. He thought it could help to alleviate the cost of living, but with a caveat, telling me that:

The price is very high...we're trying to keep up with it...especially when there's no work around. Like me, I'm pensioner and I'm having a hard time there to keep up with the price of the stores there – everything's going high...But the price of food is rising all over though, that's another thing. If you get the road right through. There will be no use having the road if the price of food is rising all over...



11. The high cost of produce, even in winter, at Berens River, when access is greater

This statement illustrates an important point: transportation of freight and mobility is only one aspect of the overall economic challenges of the north, and while it affects pretty much all community members, there are other broader economic issues that challenge northern communities to do with global macro-economics, food prices being chief among them. Aware that self-reliance was and must again be part of the mix, Charlie told me that “Like before...everyone had a garden here. Raising Potatoes and corn, we had a garden over there – I used to help my mom - when my dad used to go trapping in the



spring, me and mom used to do with the garden.” Certainly northern projects like starting to get gardening going again are a vital part of the economics of self-reliance and a reduced cost of living, not to mention healthier, local plant foods to complement bush foods. Tractor trains gave way to winter roads and to increased shipping of freight by air, though with the cost of fuel on the rise globally, shipping freight has become prohibitive, up to \$3-\$4 per pound and a 60 lb. limit.

### **Barges and boats**

The Poplar River – owned by the Freshwater & Fisheries Marketing Board, but also hauls freight after the season. I asked Louis how much of the transportation and shipping was by water, open in summer or frozen over in winter: “For Bloodvein it was a fair amount, because barge could be brought into the reserve, so a lot of our housing material, construction material and equipment could be brought in by barge in the summertime. So we ourselves have not been 100% dependent on winter roads because of the lake, we live along the shore.” I asked him if the early melt affected communities like Bloodvein along the lake a lot:

Not as much, because as I say the heavier freight like fuels and construction materials and equipment – they can be brought in by barge, and they still do, yeah - but the more remote communities, our neighbours Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi and further up north there they’re at a disadvantage because they have no access other than the winter roads for the heavier goods.

Lake Winnipeg has a strong influence on the patterns of social and economic life on the east side, as it connects the Interlake with the communities of Poplar River, Berens River and Bloodvein in ways not available to the more 'isolated' communities of Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi, Island Lake and the “Gods” communities (-River, -Lake, -Lake Narrows), Oxford House, and Shamattawa.

## **Shift to winter roads**

After Sigfurdson's sold the roads they had built to the province, the creation of winter roads in the early 1970s created a new level of personal access to the communities from the south, and for community members to the south, generally to Winnipeg. Martina Fisher, who introduced me to Bloodvein's elders and served as my interpreter for interviews in Anishinaabemowin, spoke about the change:

I remember when I was a child there were only trails in the community, there was a lot of bush in the community, I remember even where the houses were now, where the roads are, and where the ditches are, and where there's lots of water where there was good land where the houses were – changed quite a bit – and then the roads made a big change in the community, the school. We only had a small nursing station as big...as a house. And we only had the doctor and the nurse visit once in a while.

Joe Klein – Andrew Everette - from Berens River told me he remembered “travelling on the winter road in '81. I was only 6 or 7. Travelled by Greyhound to Riverton, and from there we jumped in a vehicle (and came across the crossing) Earliest I remember going on that road was '81.”

## **History of the Interlake road opening access to Bloodvein**

Florence Fisher of Bloodvein told me, through Martina Fisher's interpretation that she doesn't remember the year but she said that they hired men from here to go and brush cut when they were building that road on the other side.

Then after the road was built they would go to Riverton...stores: that was mainly why people would travel out. Medical? no, it was always to Pine Falls, that's where the hospital was, and they would use float planes. --- It was not until much later that she started going to Winnipeg – not too many people went to Winnipeg.

Some Anishinaabek I was told found work clearing brush to build that road on the west side up to Pine Dock, where the airport is located from which scheduled flights to Berens

and more expensive charter flights to Bloodvein and other communities take off. The road continues on to Dogview, at the Narrows of Lake Winnipeg, from where one crosses Lake Winnipeg on the clearing once the lake is frozen. Further it ends at Matheson's Landing, with ferry service to the primarily Metis community of Matheson Island. Matheson's landing is beyond where I travelled, having gone once across the lake when it was frozen (2011) and once only to the airport to fly to Berens (Nov 2013). The trip in between involved driving up the east side from Hollow Water to Loon Straits, Bloodvein, and Berens River (Feb 2013). Some people I spoke with in Bloodvein, like Martina Fisher, told me informally that they would have hoped that other communities would get roads connecting them to Bloodvein, but without need of the road going south from there. As Bloodvein has access either by the winter road south to Hollow Water, or a bit later in winter the 7 mile crossing to Dogview, or by ferry to Matheson's Landing in open (water) season, the period of no surface access (flying across to Pine Dock is a mighty expensive proposition as there are no scheduled flights, whereas the flights are only \$90 each way to Berens River) is thus far shorter.

Martina Fisher described the various modes of access she would have to her community in the early days before the winter road and the change in access it brought:

well when the winter road came in, I was already in the community, but it was easier for me to come back and forth because the first years when I first left the community I was 14 years old, to attend high school in Winnipeg, I was only able to come home at Christmas time and summer and if I did make it home on the weekend, we'd have to find a ride and then my dad would have to pick me up by skidoo across the lake...or by boat in the summer...



12. Dogview, w. side of the Lake, from where the winter road crosses the lake to Bloodvein. The clearing indicates the spot where Sigfurdson's had a garage and a warehouse

I asked Louis when did he start to see a real change in terms of the amount of food he was receiving from the land versus that which was coming in from the outside? Was it gradually over time or was there a real period? “It might have been 1967,” he tells me. “It might have been around that time when that road was built on the west side of Lake Winnipeg and we had easier access to the south. And that’s when I remember access to alcohol was increased because of that road access.” There are too many tales I heard about people crossing the lake to go into them here, but some are tragic and others downright comical.

### **Access as social connection**

Against this horizon of understanding the various shifts in access and modes of transportation over the last century, I began asking people for their perspectives on the next “speed up,” to borrow from McLuhan,<sup>30</sup> the all-weather road, and what changes they

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30 Marshall McLuhan. “Roads and Paper Routes,” 1964.

saw it bringing to the community, what opportunities it might provide, and how their personal sense of place might change. These questions were mostly hypothetical, and for some this made it hard to answer, while others either had given or did give the subject some thought and imagined some of the changes.



13. This map showing some of the coast of *Waabanong Nakaygum* and the Interlake puts into perspective the importance of the Interlake region in the history of change on the east side, due to increased access across The Narrows – by ferry in summer and by ice road from Dogview to Bloodvein FN. Most people I spoke with hope the ferry and clearing continue to operate once the all-weather roads are built, as crossing the lake here cuts down travel time to Winnipeg, plus people have social and business ties in Riverton and other Interlake towns that would be cut off.

## To and from Winnipeg

It might be assumed that given the allure of Winnipeg, both in terms of entertainment and visiting and cheaper groceries and the general trends of urbanization, the road can be conceived of as offering Anishinaabek people greater access to the capital. Martina discussed with me, however, how the road might be advantageous in leading people back to the communities.

The positive part of it would be that it would be much easier for us to visit families when there's a death in the community or other events: People won't come; our relatives don't come because it's too costly for them....Even when there's a winter road, it's costly for people to travel, cuz they have to hire, but if they had their own vehicles it would be much cheaper.

Her statement that people still need their own vehicles does bring back the question Charlie Bushie raised (two years later), which is that the road might not be of great use if costs keep going up. This applies to food but also to gas prices affecting personal use. Localizing the food source – fish and game, but also increasing gardening as Charlie suggested – might help offset the overall rising costs that threaten to make access less of a boon than some might imagine. As one community member, a trapper, who preferred to remain anonymous told me, the road was for the community's two main family members to play with their toys, meaning trucks. For him, the road would not likely offer one iota more of access, except as a passenger.

Katherine Klippenstein of Poplar River, living now in Winnipeg, also conceived of the road as a conduit for her to spend more quality time with family, though she saw it at different moments in our talk from both sides, in one case the road leading to Winnipeg:

I would see my family a lot more that's for sure. Yeah, I would,

actually, for sure. I'd take advantage of that for sure and go up north and see my family. I think they would come down here more often I think that's what would happen, because they would want to leave, so I don't know if I would get a chance really to go up there because they would be coming here (laughing) all the time.

Katherine reconsidered her own autonomy and saw the roads leading back home, due to the bonus of

just having access to that road and just having access... on my own schedule, if I had access like somewhere like Grand Rapids. I can go visit my friend in Grand Rapids. It takes me 5 hours. I can go visit and come back. That's on the same parallel, Grand Rapids and Poplar River. I go to Grand Rapids more than I go to my own community, and I'm not related to anybody in Grand Rapids, I just have couple friends there. So if that road were on the other side I would be going home...

I first had met Katherine in Winnipeg at an event to remember the missing and murdered Aboriginal women, and she connected me with her mother Rose, who lives and works at the nursing station in Poplar River and was my first person of contact. Poplar River did not, when I was there in 2011, yet have a clear timeline as to how long it would take before an all-weather road would connect them, but some believed it would be a good ten years if ever. As mentioned in the opening paragraph of this paper, the land between Poplar River and Berens River is far more muskegy and open than the winter road between Berens and Bloodvein. Charlie Bushie had worked on the Hydro line which runs from Bloodvein to Poplar, often paired with the winter road, and told me it took 3 years to install and was very difficult near Poplar River.

Rose, for her part, approves of the changes in mobility the all-weather road will bring: "I think it will be a big change, and it's better for my grandchildren, my great grandchildren, to get out of Poplar instead of getting stuck here...there will be more



opportunities for them...so they get to go out of the communities whenever they feel like it..." Rose also discussed single parents where the other parent lives elsewhere, usually in the south, and how the all-weather road will allow for greater unity and travel among families that are split up and living in different places.

Though I did not get to the inland communities, Frank Young, former Bloodvein chief worker on the winter roads, was thinking about the more northerly communities without lake access, and how changing climate is making it very challenging for northerners to get out. While the March I was up there was at times still deeply cold and had about 3 snow storms, it was the year previous when the quick melt had occurred, causing many semi-trucks to be stuck in the muddy melting muskeg up north throughout the east side.

I've worked on the winter road for years. I'm still the foreman there this year, and for years I've been a foreman on that winter road and it's changed, so much drastically last year, that this year and last year - we've never flooded the rivers and lakes like we did this year, where they kept flooding and flooding because it wasn't building any ice, because it was warmer, the watershed was too high and the water was too swift, the rivers were flowing too fast and then we couldn't build because it was wearing out from the bottom. No matter how much ice you put from on top, it was still not [solid enough]...to see the people trying to get through, when we're constructing that winter road, when we see them coming, you know some of the guys that I work with are always complaining 'why do they have to come when we're [working]-?' They don't seem to understand: these people, the prices they have to pay up north. We're having it so easy here that we can just drive off and go and get our stuff whenever we want it into Winnipeg or to Riverton, these guys they're stuck up there for 8 to 9 months.

Frank also told me that when the winter road south from Island Lake communities is not open, they can often travel to God's Lake, God's Lake Narrows, Oxford House and then to Norway House, and then from Norway House to Winnipeg, taking them 38 hours to drive the other way, as compared with about ten via Bloodvein and the crossing of the

Narrows to Dogview. “So that's when we were talking...and I said well we'll do the best that we can – we're probably going to try to bring out some heavy equipment and try to do what we can to open it, and then we did, so we opened it. And they're coming – they're going crazy...” The solidarity and empathy for the people more north and east, living deeper within the boreal region, seems to be one reason why certain individuals I spoke with who opposed all-weather roads being built actually ended up acquiescing to the plans without too much of a stir, out of concern for much harsher economic conditions and a deeper sense of isolation up north. I would be curious to explore this issue in more depth with some of the more remote community members, like those in Oxford House, Island Lake, Little Grand Rapids, etc.

### **On students travelling to and from Winnipeg**

Today Bloodvein has an elementary and middle school, as do Berens and Poplar Rivers have schools running through (at least) grade 8, but as Martina already mentioned, students still have to travel out to get a high school education, mainly to Winnipeg.

Ellen, a band councillor and Frank's wife, reflected on the schooling challenges:

[I]t's hard for our kids. We only have up to grade 9 here after that they have to go out to school...to either Winnipeg, Riverton, SE College, wherever...but you know that's the hard part of leaving. Some of them are still quite young, it's hard for them to leave...and the road...at least maybe they could come home weekends. Maybe they might even go to Pine Falls...or even to Hollow Water...

The idea of building a high school on the east side that would be accessible by all-weather road is something that no doubt would be supported by community members all along the lake, whether it be housed in Hollow Water, Pine Falls, or Berens River.

Katherine, who wants to be a teacher, echoes that sentiment:

I think we could use it (the road) as a tool more for education. To

get kids back and forth, to feel more close to home, like the kids that we send to the south - to get them visiting back and forth more often than twice a year – you know they only get to go home twice a year within their school year, and a lot of them end up getting home sick and then probably quitting.

### **On connecting the various communities of the boreal**

Katherine contemplated the connections among various communities should the roads network eventually extend throughout the east side, and the social and cultural novelty it would create:

I think it would connect people, for sure, and like fishing derbies would be bigger, and you know treaty days – we'd all go to different treaty days, and it would be really interesting actually to see that because it's never really been like that... that connection would be a first. And before it was canoeing, we would be connected through trapping and canoeing, and like a lot of people knew my grandfather from Poplar River and they would know him through trapping...I hope it's a good connection and communities can get together and learn from each other.

I attended the fishing derby at Round Lake in early March of 2011, and saw that people had come from several east side communities, the type of gathering and catching-up, that can bind together members of several different communities, but only in winter as it stands. I recall another former chief of Bloodvein telling me off the record before I had begun my research about the cost of a baseball tournament for his children, and how the all-weather road would alleviate such conditions, allowing for more cultural exchange among communities throughout the region through sporting and other events.

### **A sense of isolation...**

Isolation, a theme that arose occasionally in my interviews but which is often projected onto northern people, can emerge from simple old-fashioned loneliness, but even then, is it not a phenomenon stemming from an elsewhere consciousness and displacement from

or aversion to the here and now. To rephrase the question, consider the levels of mobility and the access to mass media, primarily television, in a First Nation community today as compared with outside-generated cultural influences around 60-70 years ago when all-weather roads were built connecting communities like Grassy Narrows or Hollow Water. Though my work did not focus on the oral histories of those roads, I suppose that the external cultural influences being boomed in today, with their representations of consumer-driven desire and urban and American normalcy, are far louder than any outside influences before roads were built in the 1940s and 50s. I would argue that the presence of mass media in the communities today would increase the sense of loneliness, and create a displacement and sense of isolation in those who indulge in these images as compared with spending time walking, paddling, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, mushing in the paths of their grandparents and great grandparents.

Katherine spent lots of time travelling in and out of Poplar River, and has lived in Winnipeg for some time now. She discusses the anticipation of the all-weather road as being centred on leaving and personal mobility.

They knew it wasn't going to be right away...people always said 'oh, I can't wait til that road comes but it's not going to be for a long long time' and I think it was just the fact that being isolated, when you feel it then you know what that feels like...when you feel that isolation and you have no money and there's no way out, you feel a little bit stir crazy sometimes...we're the only people in Canada that are that isolated, and it's kind of ridiculous sometimes, [we wonder] 'ok, why are we still living like this?' in this isolation - which is awesome sometimes. When I want to go on a trip, I feel good, but if I were stuck in Poplar for 5 years in isolation, I would feel a little bit different. I would feel a little bit sick of it. Like the rest of Canada is all connected and there's roads, and these little Northern communities are isolated...it's a different feeling.

I have not heard as much of this sense of isolation as problematic from people who spend

lots of time in the traditional territory practising traditional land use or simply taking in the life force of the great biomass that surrounds these reserves, the 'awesomeness' Katherine refers to. People like Katherine in Poplar River, Marty in Bloodvein, and Morden Everette, who has built a two-storey cabin as part of his bush school for youth along the Pigeon River near Berens River, are leaders in their sense of vision and understanding the need to restore the cycles of memory and relationship with the land. Marty spoke to me of a vision to assemble some youths and land teachers from the community and paddle the whole E-W width of the traditional territory over a week or so one summer. Restoration of this land consciousness is possibly the strongest form of resistance to the linear, industrial model of development ever encroaching on these lands from the outside.

### **Traditional territories as a basis for self-determination**

Louis told me that he trapped about 60 miles from the community but that people generally fished around 7 miles up the river from the community, maybe 21-27 miles away for those who knew their way well, with hunting trips being about 30-35 miles away. A distance of paddling that might take casual canoeists about a week to paddle, Louis tells me was done in two and half days by trappers.

Being somewhat ignorant of bush life and the changes to the demarcation and conceptualization of land over time, I asked Louis about his family's traditional trap lines, not realizing I was triggering a political response about competing conceptualizations of space: "I wouldn't even say traditional trap line. Trap lines were not instituted until maybe...it might have been in the 40s." The changes to conceptualization of land by government and bureaucrats ironically hamper changing

land use patterns that Louis and others are considering, in acknowledgement that the community cannot or may not wish to maintain or reclaim an entirely hunting-gathering mode of production on the land. As Louis explained, with great emphasis into the microphone on my digital voice recorder:

The provincial government seems to think that in order for us to maintain rights to those trap lines, that we have to be trapping. That's not my view. Those traditional territories – even though they've been divided into family trap lines – Delgamuukw and Donald Marshall Supreme Court cases say that first nations have first rights to those resources. So if we want to change how we use those trap lines – let's say that we want to do cultural tourism – then *we* do that. And they can't come and say 'you're no longer trapping, we're going to take those trap lines away.' We're just using that traditional territory in a different way.

From people using the bush to sustain themselves directly and later for furs to trade for European goods like guns, tea, sugar, lard, alcohol, and flour, the history of trapping has become enshrined in maps found in every band office or Hunters and Trappers Association centres, through solid lines demarcating the various trap lines. Part of a contiguous, verbally and empirically-mapped territory once, these lands came to be seen instrumentally for their fur, a good example of how a living dynamic and non-linear tradition becomes formalized, straightened-out, bureaucratized and co-opted by the state. Does the entire region not face a similar fate now that it is the object of 'broad area planning' and efforts to formally govern it by a provincial government that has invested over ten years in meetings, writing reports, and budgeting to build roads throughout?

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<sup>i</sup> The spatial comparison between the concepts of borders and boundaries, while in and of itself a useful tool for considering the conflict between particular culture and hegemonic states and empires, it is also a useful analogy for how the treaties in Canada have been misunderstood and abused in the interests of power. Recently, conservative commentator Ezra Levant wrote a piece suggesting that the treaties were paper surrenders of land, the equivalent of contractual agreements ceding authority and control over the use of those lands from First Nations to the Crown. Like borders, contracts are rigid, fixed, written, existing on paper, tied to a location in time and space. J.R. Miller's *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty Making in Canada* shows a more open-ended process of relationship and negotiation over land use, an ongoing renegotiating of terms rather than a one-time surrender. Boundaries similarly were always being negotiated and were changing, as seen by pre-contact skirmishes and battles between various first nations and by the diffusion of languages in, say, the broadly spread out Algonquian language family, a sign of much travel, trade, and movement. There is little room for movement within contracts, and almost always a check point at borders, or a legal shift from one jurisdiction to another, like at the Manitoba, Ontario border, which many a river passes without so much as a single noticeable difference being seen between the two geographically 'unreal' entities.

### **3 - Matrix of control, matrix of engagement: the linear march of progress - On the processes of development east of Lake Winnipeg**

...a lot of local people. They figured the white man is doing the same thing all over again to us. They're dictating to us what we should do with our traditional lands. That never happened. We told them Because I worked closely with Poplar River and Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi and a lot of the stuff that we discussed...we pushed it. White people didn't tell us this is what's supposed to happen. No, it never happened. -Frank Young

No, they're not getting it right, well-they are trying to, no, but I disagree completely. if they want to do it right, they'd give us our land back.

-the whole traditional territory? -yeah.

-to be self-governing? -yeah -Marty Kennedy in dialogue

A lot of times we've seen too much in the past where promises were made but they're always being made to break. So that's the scary part of it because sometimes you people come and they say oh this is good, this is what's going to happen. But you don't have time to read all the underlying stuff, you don't have time to read every line on the English that they use, you know, it's for lawyers, and what they say and what is written is not always the same.

-Martina Young

#### **Contrasting older patterns with the central politico-bureaucratic matrix of control**

If boreal Anishinaabek relationship to land is marked by cyclical patterns of memory, stories, footsteps and paddle strokes, and later the strokes of various engines moving more linearly across the lake - up and down rivers and through the snowy bush – then one must recall also that Anishinaabek agency in relationship to the land might not be the dominant political one operative on the east side. It certainly is not the only one, and even within it there are multiple agencies based on various levels of engagement with local



governance and contact with external governments and their ways of viewing and circumscribing the land. Since the late 1990s, the east shore boreal in Manitoba has become the site of various kinds of consultation, contestation, and construction, and the object of many reports, a new provincial government act, new agencies and authorities, and the key election issue debate regarding the placement of a future bi-Pole hydro transmission line.

The cyclical and memory-constructed sense of place that arose out of intimate land use and travel throughout a challenging terrain discussed in the previous chapter traces the long arc of Anishinaabek boreal culture in *Waabanong Nakaygum*. The cultural production of documents and legal structures by the provincial NDP government since 1999, however, has been on another scale of pace: a bureaucratic speed-up, to transpose McLuhan's concept describing changes in methods of technological communication relative to a culture. It is not entirely fair to hand the provincial government full agency in this process, however, as we will discuss in this section.

Describing Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Israeli anthropologist and activist Jeff Halper described an infrastructure-driven 'matrix of control'<sup>31</sup> that the Israeli government has established as facts on the ground. While the occupation of Palestinian lands by the Israeli state is more stark – perhaps more fresh compared to the century and a half occupation of native lands by the Canadian state and its forebears – Halper points out not only the facts on the ground but the legal, bureaucratic, and political structure that supports and actively creates and maintains these facts. It is mainly the structural component of territorial control that I wish to borrow from Halper's analysis, discussing

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31 [http://www.icahd.org/?page\\_id=79](http://www.icahd.org/?page_id=79) “The Key to Peace: Dismantling the Matrix of Control” by Jeff Halper., Israeli Committee Against House Demolition

the East Side planning process against this external-driven power paradigm. The process itself maybe reflected more of a matrix-of-engagement insofar as Anishinaabek representatives on the east side were rather engaged in round table discussions over years, but undoubtedly the production of documents and legalities fits more into the linear and tidy legalistic framework in which the dominant Canadian and Manitoban society operates. I hope to show that while certain results from this decade plus of engagement in the east side may produce some benefits to at least some of the Anishinaabek of east side communities, the pile of papers produced from these years does serve to reify a centre-margin relationship between Winnipeg and the North (or the East) and especially between the city culture and bush culture.

### **A Matrix of Documents, A Long Road of Papers: From the COSDI report to the The East Side Traditional Lands Planning and Special Protected Areas Act**

Let us consider some of the various contexts, processes and perspectives on the process of consultation that has taken place on the east side of Lake Winnipeg over the past 10 or so years.

### **The COSDI, ESPI, and Sustainable Development**

It is important to try to understand the process that has been enacted by the Manitoban Government in conjunction with the First Nation communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg in order to consider how development for the area is being framed, and what other vested interests besides those - diverse as they may be - of First Nations people, are driving the area's development agenda. The entire framework needs to be addressed and evaluated in terms of the prospects of truly social, Indigenous-led development on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

The COSDI – Consultation on Sustainable Development Implementation – process occurred in Manitoba between autumn 1997 and spring of 1999, producing a report that was adopted by the Manitoban government in October of 2000<sup>32</sup>. Through this process it was recommended that the Government of Manitoba undertake broad area planning (BAP), defined as being “integrated and coordinated planning that is based on the sustainability of the ecosystem. Such a planning process ensures that future land, resource and development decisions address the environmental, social, health, cultural and economic needs of the public, local communities, First Nations and various stakeholders and interest groups.<sup>33</sup>” The subsequent East Side Planning Initiative was series of multi-year meetings throughout the east side of the province geared towards hearing and documenting all voices around the table that offered input into the (axiomatically assumed and imposed) broad area plan generated by COSDI.

It is valuable to analyze and understand the framework of sustainable development and compare it with Anishinaabek perspectives of those working on the ground to develop their communities and protect the boreal in relationship with the land. Sustainable development has become the buzz-word of environmentally-conscious economic development, emerging out of the international document “Our Common Future,” also known as The Bruntland Report<sup>34</sup>, and being forwarded as an international paradigm for economic development through the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in

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32 “Promises to Keep,” p.11

33 Ibid., p.11

34 “What is Sustainable Development?” International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), <http://www.iisd.org/sd/>

1992<sup>35</sup>. The International Institute for Sustainable Development was founded in Winnipeg in those years of environmental optimism by both provincial and federal Progressive Conservative governments, and when the new millennium rolled around, the provincial Manitoban NDP government folded the ministries of Environment and Natural Resources into a new ministry called Conservation. This change is key for understanding the context of the COSDI report and the initiation of the first broad area planning process, the East Side Planning Initiative (ESPI), designed to bring the plurality of stakeholders to the table to discuss and make plans for the development of the east side of Lake Winnipeg. Understanding the multi-stakeholder process embedded in the logic of sustainable development is vital to analyzing the Government's agenda(s) on the east side. The final report of the ESPI, 'Promises to Keep,' reflects upon the multiple interests in the east side:

“Although its population is largely situated in 16 First Nations communities, each with its own aspirations, there is a significant interest in the area by other Manitobans because it represents to some an area of pristine beauty and to others, exciting economic development potential.<sup>36</sup>”

Frank Young partook in the East Side Planning Initiative and saw it as respectful and accurately documenting First Nations' voices and concerns, and commenting on the enduring scepticism of 'the white man' and governmental policy-makers:

see a lot of people misunderstood the ESPI that they were saying 'they're telling us what should be done in your area' but that never ever was the plan. We talked about, we were the ones deciding what has to be written. Those people that were there wrote everything that we said. They didn't tell us this is what has to be done, this is what you have to look forward to. We told them, they didn't tell us. This

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35 <http://sdgateway.net/introsd/definitions.htm>

36 “Promises to Keep,” p.11

is the misunderstanding that a lot of people didn't know what was happening exactly at the East Side Planning Initiative....

Despite the process having a measure of honest direct engagement, at least with representatives of the communities, there remain some axiomatic problems with the process. Several major flaws associated both with the dominant growth economics paradigm and with its 'environmental' extension, sustainable development, are embedded in the process's conceptualization. Firstly the idea that some find the east side an area of pristine beauty while others see its economic development potential creates an unhealthy schism reflective of how 'the environment' and 'the economy' are framed as either/or perspectives, pitted against each other in major land use policies and embodied in disputes such as the anti-clearcut-logging camps in the early 1990s in Clayoquot Sound, BC, as in the disputes around oil and gas development today. As environmental scientist and documentary film maker David Suzuki and countless others have pointed out, 'economics' and 'ecology' share a common root of 'eco,' from the Greek *oikos* meaning 'home'<sup>37</sup>. Several First Nations community members expressed a similar perspective in their understanding the economy to be dependent upon the land, perspectives that will be shared later in the description of local solutions to social economic development based on real durability<sup>38</sup>. Louis Young suggested to me that a similar Anishinaabek concept that could tie together the principles of using the land while stewarding it at the same time is that of *Ayangwaam*. He translated this term into English as 'tread carefully.' To Louis, this concept underscores the fact that "the resources are there to be harvested but be sure to harvest in a way that future generations can reap the same resources," being aware of

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37 Talk given in Winnipeg, Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010

38 Anglicization of the French 'durabilité,' the word for the abused (to the point of being rendered nebulous), English term 'sustainability.'

the fragility of the ecosystem. While the paradigm of sustainable development is meant to bridge the schism between ecology and economy, it would seem from some of the language being used that the schism is only being reified, that the ecological and a particular set of interests defined as ‘economic’ remain distinct at the round table but must compromise with each other. The logic of this assumption precludes the development, or redevelopment, of an ecological economics ethos and practise to replace the always destructive cost-benefit logic of growth economics.

The second major problem with the language of this report is that the fact that this land is a homeland to 16 First Nations is placed alongside the interests of ‘other Manitobans,’ situating these broad interests on the same plane. This politically correct flattening of interests onto the same level could reflect a failure of the Government of Manitoba to recognize the full potential of Aboriginal rights to the land and treaty rights to self-determination and self-governance, sidelining or co-opting the foundational character of Aboriginal and treaty rights to the very existence of both Canada and Manitoba, and their subsequent historic trampling-upon through the Indian Act. This pattern of placing Aboriginal interests on an even keel with environmental concerns, industry’s interests and those of the government, is a hallmark of the sustainable development methodology. Insofar as all interests are fused into one process, often called a ‘round table’ – evidenced by the fusion of the Natural Resources ministry with Environment ministry in Manitoba – there is no inherent acknowledgement of a singular priority; sustainable development as an operative policy lever lacks a framework of historic and ecological understanding that no process begins from a neutral point, but rather is based on and has a history, almost always containing a political or power-based

dimension. In this case both the context of injustice towards and dispossession of First Nations peoples and the global context of the ecological crisis and catastrophe, both in terms of climate change and in the loss of forests, pollution of freshwater, and loss of biodiversity, ought to be prioritized over the resource-extractive economics associated with ‘growth.’

The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE), since made defunct by the federal Conservative Government, had been even more direct in its approach of trying to bring Aboriginal communities into non-renewable resource development rather than questioning the very paradigm of pursuing vigorously non-renewable resources in an age often marked by depletion, pollution, and economic boom/bust cycles. The 2001 NRTEE report entitled *Aboriginal Communities and Non-Renewable Resource Development* does not disguise its agenda of more completely switching Aboriginal communities’ modes of production from traditional towards industrial, stating in its executive summary on capacity building that “[l]ife skills in areas such as money management, career planning and cross-cultural communication are also required as Aboriginal peoples make the transition to the wage economy.<sup>39</sup>” The assumption that Aboriginal peoples are inevitably going to transition to being part of the wage “economy” in such a wholesale way – likely to be menial workers in places like mines or doing construction on Hydro dams but so far rarely trained in higher-technology positions – is the triumphal rhetoric of a society that has historically already tried to separate Indigenous peoples from their land-based cultures.

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39 NRTEE, *Aboriginal Communities and Non-Renewable Resource Development*, p.xxi

## World Heritage Site and Pimachowin Aki

What may prove to be one of the most significant projects to come out of the East Side Planning Initiative is the establishment of efforts to create a World Heritage Site covering approximately 40,000 km<sup>2</sup> of traditional Anishinaabe territory, provincial parks in Manitoba and Ontario, and other crown lands<sup>40</sup>. The efforts to gain recognition through the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization of the distinct ecological and cultural traits of the east side is being led by 5 first nations – four in Manitoba and one in Ontario – and is being promoted for sponsorship by the Manitoban government with the support of Ontario. The communities of *Waabanong Nakaygum* involved in pooling together their traditional land use areas are Poplar River FN, Pauingassi FN, Little Grand Rapids FN, and most recently Bloodvein FN, with Pikangikum FN in Ontario comprising the fifth. These five communities together have formed a body through which to channel their efforts to create the World Heritage Site, called Pimachiowin Aki, which means ‘The Land that Gives Life’. Adding to the area’s contiguity, the Governments of Manitoba and Ontario are adding Atikaki and Woodland Caribou Provincial Parks. The process of putting traditional land use areas together to gain globally recognized protected status has led to communities engaging in traditional land use area planning, led by the efforts of Poplar River First Nation. Community member Sophia Rabliaskaus was awarded the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize in 2007 for her efforts.<sup>41 42</sup> Land use planning efforts led by communities have also become the process featured centrally in the Manitoba Government’s recent legislation

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40 <http://www.pimachiowinaki.org/>

41 See <http://www.goldmanprize.org/node/607> to learn more.

42 You may also read fellow Native Studies student Agnieszka Pawlowska’s master’s thesis “Using the global to support the local : community development at Poplar River and the establishment of a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Northern Manitoba” (2009) to learn more about these efforts.



“Bill 6: The East Side Traditional Lands Planning Act and Special Protected Areas Act.”

The establishment of this area as a World Heritage Site will ideally draw international attention to the area – in terms of conservation and culture – affording the First Nations a great opportunity to develop ecological tourism and cultural education centres for themselves and for visitors. The *Waabanong* Anishinaabe Cultural Interpretive centre project being built at Hollow Water will be a good first effort at developing a model based on Anishinaabe culture and an initial draw to an area underrated for its unique and specific blend of culture with ecology.



14. “*Pimachiowin Aki*” - the land that gives life – map of projected world heritage site, comprising the traditional territories of 5 first nations. The major exclusion to date is that of Berens River FN.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Source: Heart of the Boreal website: <http://www.heartoftheboreal.ca/see-the-east-side/planning-area-map>

## The WNO Accord

The forerunner to The East Side Traditional Lands Planning and Special Protected Areas Act – introduced in the Manitoba Legislature as Bill 6 – was the government-to-government agreement created between the Manitoban Government and the Council of Chiefs representing the east side First Nation communities. The agreement, known as the *Waabanong Nakaygum Okimawin* (WNO) Council of Chiefs Accord, acknowledges the First Nations to be the original inhabitants of the area,<sup>44</sup> setting out a protocol by which “the parties agree to work together in a spirit of mutual recognition, respect and reconciliation to achieve the objectives and goals of the East Side Broad Area Land Use Planning Initiative.”<sup>45</sup> Included in the WNO Accord – whose language makes the accord resemble the basis for a new treaty, while acknowledging the supremacy of the original treaties and of constitutionally-guaranteed Aboriginal rights – is a funding agreement whereby the communities will have a pool of monies necessary to carry out traditional land use area surveys and planning processes. It seems that before moving forward with any potential development in the area – which will be far more likely once the area is opened up by year-round road access – it is inherently being acknowledged through the accord that First Nations need to demarcate their boundaries to avoid later conflicts over resources. This strategy seems prescient in seeking to avoid, sustainable development-style, direct conflicts between First Nations and industry over access to land, waters, and sub-surface minerals. While the WNO and later the government’s Bill 6 seem significant at least insofar as the current Manitoban Government has created a matrix of documentation so thick that it would be hard for another government to undo it easily,

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44 Section 1.2, WNO Accord

45 WNO Accord, statement “therefore...”

these documents have not necessarily as of yet been sold adequately to the First Nations people with whom I spoke, many having not heard of them.

While the statements that follow do not necessarily align with the letter of the accord as written, they are important to consider as what Lewis and Lockhart refer to as “perceptual indicators.<sup>46</sup>” In contradistinction to “footprint indicators” which measure hard data on the delivery of programs, often by governments, perceptual indicators tell a more subjective story of how local community members perceive a project, or in this case a more broad framework agreement. The perceptions are important in terms of capacity building, as grassroots engagement and the stimulation of popular support for development on the ground in Anishinaabek communities - by both provincial and local leaders – will help offer community members’ hope and thus begin the process of rebuilding social capital in the communities. In this regard, the WNO Accord has yet to inspire confidence in the people from what I have heard.

Louis Young, having once been a chief at Bloodvein First Nation, understands the importance of community initiatives and appreciates the sometimes complex process of dealing with other governments. Louis’s statement on the WNO Accord could be taken as reflective of the Manitoban Government’s entire approach to the east side, regardless of the progressive legal frameworks being laid out in Bill 6 or in the Accord. He reacted not so positively to mention of the WNO Accord, describing it as “outside people making rules and regulations about Indian lands.<sup>47</sup>”

In this case, the toggle of jurisdictional intervention and bureaucratic productivity of the Government’s heavy intervention in the east side of Lake Winnipeg, while it may

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46 Lockhart and Lewis 2002, p.3

47 Interview with Louis Young, Winnipeg, August 2010

yield a UNESCO World Heritage Site and open up new possibilities on the east side, including potential cottage developments, (both First Nation and provincial-government-controlled), at the same time may serve to undermine collective Aboriginal efforts at self-governance and self-determination through the building-up of social capital and democratic, local structures. A history of mistrust between First Nations and Euro-Canadian-led governments clearly cannot be forgotten or transcended overnight, something members of the Manitoban Government will have to continue to work on regardless of documents, legislation, and agreements already made.

### **The East Side Traditional Lands Planning and Special Protected Areas Act (nee Bill 6)**

Bill 6 was introduced into the 39th Manitoban Legislature during its third session, in 2008. It is one of several keys to the complex puzzle that has been the Government's possibly contradictory strategy for developing and protecting the east side boreal region of Lake Winnipeg at the same time. The thrust of the legislation is to keep any new developments from being granted approval on the east side of Lake Winnipeg before First Nations and Aboriginal communities on the East Side have developed their own land use and resource management plans.<sup>48</sup> Section 3(1) of the act states that “[o]ne or more First Nations or aboriginal communities may request that an area of Crown land in the east side management area that they have traditionally used be designated as a traditional use planning area<sup>49</sup>,” then setting out the procedures by which an area is so designated and by which the public is to be informed. The East Side Planning Act, while a governmental, bureaucratic and legislative work written in government language that many community

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48 See <http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/e003e.php>

49 Ibid.

members may never bother to decipher, if they even know the law exists, with all of its clauses, stipulations, and conditions, is nonetheless a progressive legislative step towards acknowledging Aboriginal self-determination over their traditional lands in the eastern boreal region. Melba Green, the key land use planner for Bloodvein, elaborates:

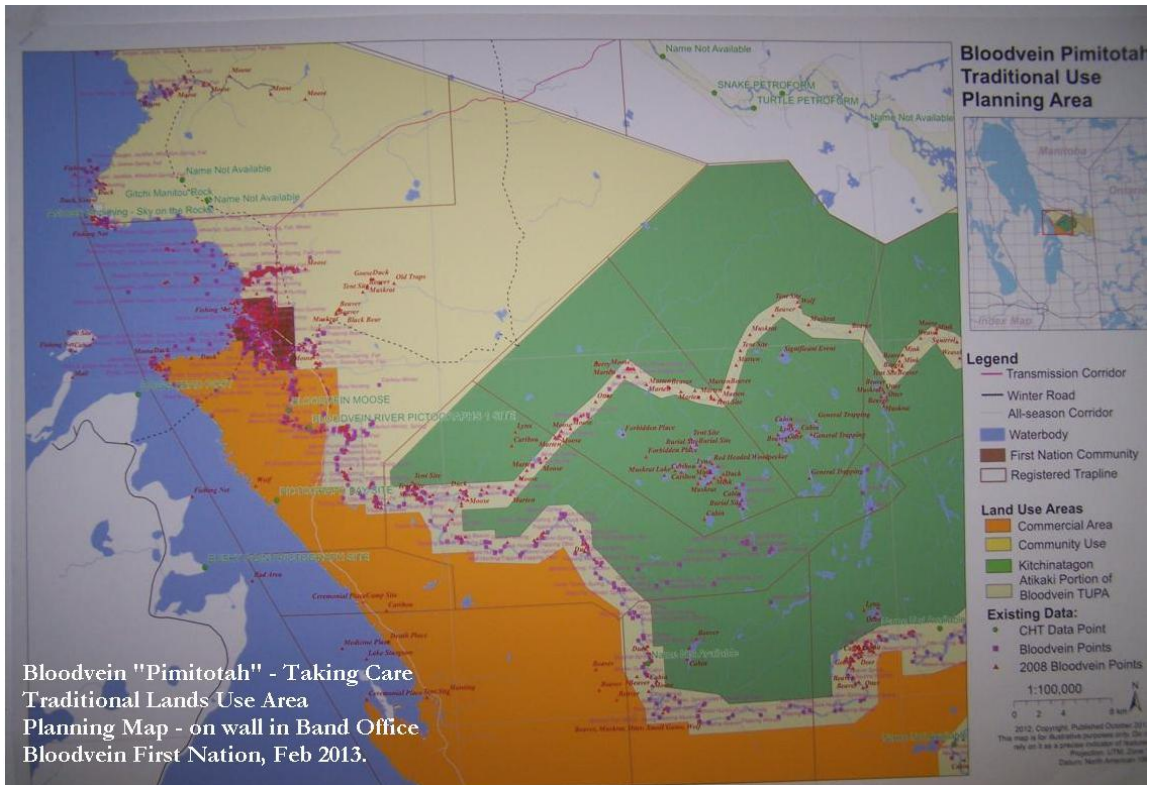
But with this one, with our land use plan, everybody's getting involved in it, because this is a big thing for us on the east side, and in order for us to protect the areas, where there are sacred places, or gathering places, ceremonial places...medicinal plants, they're all over, we're trying to protect those ones...(2013)

The main question that remains to be seen is how the act is implemented, if First Nations will use the window of opportunity it provides to take initiative provided for them through the act, and whether or not the act will adequately protect their interests in the face of competing interests on the east side - or how the legislation would fare under a different Manitoban government. Furthermore, does this Act somehow co-opt, 'formalize,' and professionalize land use planning in a way that pre-empts or precludes more radical, grassroots-led initiatives of self-determination to protect the land? Ellen Young discussed the process of guaranteeing the community's land use plan, *Pimitotah*, "Taking Care"<sup>50</sup>, through the legal structure of the ESPAA as a sign of commitment by the government to giving First Nations the primary say on how their traditional lands will be governed.

I was just going to say that when there was that one meeting I went to and they were talking about Bill 6, and if Bill 6 is there, how can they change something like that?...it'll take time again...I think the province is finally recognizing that there is some value to the land and that they have to respect the Aboriginal peoples' ownership of the land prior to the white man coming.

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50 [http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/lands\\_branch/pdf/bloodvein\\_land\\_use\\_plan\\_revised.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/lands_branch/pdf/bloodvein_land_use_plan_revised.pdf) - Pimitotah



15. map of *Pimitotah*, meaning ‘taking care,’ the land use plan for Bloodvein FN. The map shows the community resource area, the commercial development area and the traditional lands use area.

### The East Side Road Authority (ESRA)<sup>51</sup>

As roads are constructed through the Anishinaabe boreal, the East Side Road Authority has been created by the government to award contracts associated with building the road, including to blast and crush rock that will be used in the construction of the roads, along with clearing brush. So far agreements have been made between the ESRA and several first nations, such as Bloodvein and Berens River First Nations, so that First Nations will gain employment in the building of all-weather roads to their communities. While if roads are to be built the jobs should go to local community people, unfortunately this economic model is all-too-similar to the temporary construction jobs that Cree people are being offered by Manitoba Hydro under dam-ownership agreements made with First

<sup>51</sup> See <http://www.eastsideroadauthority.mb.ca/>

Nations, such as the Wuskwatim Dam partial-ownership agreement with Nisichwayasihk Cree Nation. From a capacity-building point of view, the question must be asked if the skills being learned by building roads can sustain people long-term inside of their ecological regions and if the work can be sustaining beyond the construction of the roads, or if they are temporary make-work efforts typical of central, top-heavy government. While I have heard of some intensely contested politics surrounding the awarding of contracts in a couple of communities, at Bloodvein, when I visited in Feb of 2013, the experience seems to have been a more positive one. The community seemed well organized, and had built themselves a new band office as their previous one was a tiny cabin-like structure. They had their own construction company that was fully COR certified, meaning they could bid on other contracts anywhere in the province, and several community members were given skills training in various aspects of road construction. While this model may be better than a non-engagement with the First Nations of the east side, at the same time one has to ask if such large, industrial project models do not fill a void that otherwise, with the right skills training and coordination, could support the development of local cooperatives, small businesses and land management-cultural reclamation and knowledge- economy capacity building.

### **Reification and subversion of the centre-margin relationship**

In his article “Roads and Paper Routes,” Marshall McLuhan discusses transportation as communication and the impacts new, faster means of transportation have on our social formations:

...all technologies are extensions of our physical and nervous systems to increase power and speed...For an increase of power or speed in any kind of grouping of any components whatever is itself a disruption that causes a change of social organization. The

alternation of social groupings, and the formation of new communities occur with the increased speed of information movement by means of paper messages and road transport. Such speed up means much more control at much greater distances...The point of the matter in the speed up by wheel, road, and paper is the extension of power in an ever more homogenous space.<sup>52</sup>

Keith Berens of Berens River, bridging the gap between the younger generation and that of the elders, described this 'speed-up' dynamic from an Anishinaabek point of view, in terms of the shift away from trapping culture, as he has experienced it: "I wouldn't know that (change in trapping) due to the fact that change occurs so suddenly...even with the technology...then they slap these things down on us... everything is developed by the companies down south for different countries then all of a sudden they ship everything, boom!"

This homogenous, hegemonic space, created by technologies and their role in expanding a singular, growth-based economic model, is what Kulchyski describes as the 'totalizing power' of the state; in the case of the east side and relationships with First Nations, Manitoba stepped in where the federal government has left a power void through its lack of committed engagement with Aboriginal peoples on their issues. That said, following McLuhan's logic, the very process of the State's negotiations through the ESPI, along with the enshrining of land use plans into law, suggests this 'control at much greater distances,' and the building of the road is the key policy tying the matrix of documentation together. As Kulchyski states:

...the State can be defined as a certain kind of writing. The State will not address Aboriginal people until they learn this writing, this form. Negotiation, indeed discussion, cannot proceed without it. But learning this form of writing means engaging in the logic of the dominant order: a paradox. A precondition for playing this game is surrender.<sup>53</sup>

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52 McLuhan, pp.91, 93

53 Peter Kulchyski, *Like the Sound of a Drum*, 17



He points to older forms of writing – on the land and on the body – that are being used by Aboriginal peoples as forms of resistance and subversion of the prefigured power dynamic presented by the State's particular kinds of writings of legitimization, hinting at an older land-based set of gestures and meanings that Aboriginal people bear and maintain as tools of self-determination.

Martina Fisher describes the government-centre's dominance in the process of consultation that occurred about the road.

I didn't get involved until...the last 3 years. Before that...they would come into a community and hold open houses but it was already in the plan before they brought it to the community...they already had their designs, they already had everything on paper, and then they come here and ask us questions about 'what do you feel about this?' – why do you ask us now? – they've already made up their minds, they've already decided.

When I visited Bloodvein in 2011, I spent a lot of my time visiting Melba and Marty as they worked on the land use plan in what is called the 'blue garage.' The blue garage is a large metal structure that mainly houses the community's heavy machinery, such a snow removing and winter-road maintenance equipment. Through a door within it and upstairs was the office that Marty and Melba worked in, two rooms, a computer, many maps on the wall, full ashtrays, and reports piled high. They had been conducting surveys with traditional land users, asking about the numbers and kinds of animals people used to hunt and trap, medicines and berries they would pick, fishing spots, ceremonial places, etc. I looked through the surveys – which had been designed by the now notorious engineering giants SNC Lavalin, in consultation with the provincial government's liaison to the land use planners and with the community planners

themselves<sup>54</sup>. This blue garage had been transformed into a local hive of activity geared towards creating a self-determining land use plan, one that was being directed partly by and requiring the approval of the provincial government, ostensibly to the benefit of the community. Nonetheless, Melba Green seemed to know why she was involved in the project, unconcerned about the implications of external, shared control over the land planning process:

this is a traditional and cultural thing that we're going to be doing for our trap lines. It has nothing to do with politics. It may be so in other words with our leaders here, but they're taking care of it, but as long as they abide what the community wants for our areas...we'll challenge if something ever tries to come up from the government and tries to put a restriction on what we had on our land use plan, we'll have to challenge that because we're giving them so much information what we're doing in there, and he's (the government) reading it and he's looking at the map....

Melba is really committed to not losing local control over the land and the process of development in the community, choosing to play the game that Bill 6 started, but understanding there is always a more activist recourse to action should the seat of power in Winnipeg not hold onto its end of the bargain. The blue garage was a marginal outpost of bureaucratic entanglement with the powerful centre, but Melba managed to subvert its limitations by remaining true to hers and the elders' living land ethos, and the grounding in this perspective made the land planning come from a more positive, community-benefiting place.

I tried asking several people if any opposition to the road had ever been voiced. Even with his positive take on the East Side Planning Initiative, Frank saw the road as being part of a separate process, and had trouble pinpointing when or how the decision to

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<sup>54</sup> SNC Lavalin also wrote the Environmental Impact study on the extension of PR 304 to Berens as an all-season road

build it was taken:

Well to tell you the truth, it's been talked about for...I don't know how many years they've talked about it...well [at] the community meetings that we had there were just questions there to see exactly where that road should go. I think that's the only thing most of the time that they were talking of, that they were discussing: where the road should go...People started coming in and started asking questions, and we had a few people in our meetings there that were very interested in having that road to be built.

To both Frank and his sister Martina, interviewed separately, there was a sense that the process that finally moved the building of the road into action was a kind of political and social inevitability.

I asked if people originally supported the road coming through. Martina answered: “hardly anybody, probably 95% of the community members said ‘no, they didn’t want the road to come in.’ And I think towards the end...the people gave up towards the end and like everything else, they just sort of give up and just let it...let it be.” Alex Young, meanwhile, told me that he had wanted to sign a petition against the road, thinking of the younger generation and how they are different, how the road could bring them trouble. “when they get the elders together through the lands management,” he said, “we made plans to stop this road from coming in, but there was just a handful of them that were there, but they were not strong enough.”

Formal roads, and more particularly road systems, are an established hallmark of empires and denote in the common western mythos ‘civilization.’ “At the regional level, formal roadways continue to function as critical props in state ceremonies of legitimization.”<sup>55</sup> Jane Jacobs discusses how much of Europe had fallen into a dependence on Roman systems of transportation and supply chains, that they began to

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55 Timothy Earle. “Paths and roads in evolutionary perspective.” 1991

forget their traditional village ways, including how to make and build things with local materials. When Rome collapsed, the cultural amnesia the communities were suffering led to 1000 years' Dark Age, as people were left rather helpless<sup>56</sup>. If one considers the deeper integration an all-weather road will have with the rest of the province of Manitoba, Winnipeg specifically, and the global/southern capitalist economy in general, one must consider the main energy sources and fuel driving all the heavy machinery needed to build and maintain these roads, along with the freight-bearing machinery and personal machinery that will be driven up and down these roads, and wonder, with Charlie Bushie, if the costs will keep going up – if the road will in the end be a greater cost to the communities or if it will bring more opportunities. Probably a bit of both, but in any event the entire logic of road-building is contingent upon expanding oil and gas production globally, an ecological threat to the very life systems that support us, not to mention increasingly expensive as peak oil is either coming up or has been passed. Barry Prentice of the University of Manitoba has proposed airships as an environmentally benign way to ship goods more cheaply to northern communities, without having to build roads over muskeg lands.<sup>57</sup> I mentioned this idea to a few people in my travels, and almost nobody had heard of it, and most just laughed: at this point, personal mobility is as large if not larger a concern than cheaper freight. In any event, it is clear that a new grid is being laid over top of *Waabanong Nakaygum*, one of stone and papers. Cultural survival will be increasingly challenging, though the individuals living in communities of the east side – or returning home more often after years living in the city – may become more affluent, but under the terms of the centre, the neoliberal, growth-based economic

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<sup>56</sup> Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead*, chapter 1

<sup>57</sup> See Barry Prentice “Ice roads, airships could work together.” *Winnipeg Free Press*

model we will discuss further in the next chapter. Can the older pattern of relationships established within and pretty specific to Anishinaabek culture find a way to speak amidst such change, to challenge, to remember, and to subvert what comes to their marginal homes from the centre of power and culture? Jacobs grimly warns:

Mass amnesia, striking as it is and seemingly weird, is the least mysterious of Dark Age phenomena. We all understand the harsh principle *Use it or lose it*. A failing or conquered culture can spiral down into a long decline, as happened in most empires after their relatively short heydays of astonishing success. But in extreme cases, failing or conquered cultures can be genuinely lost, never to emerge again as living ways of being. The salient mystery of Dark Ages sets the stage for mass amnesia. People living in vigorous cultures typically treasure those cultures and resist any threat to them. How and why can a people so totally discard a formerly vital culture that it becomes literally lost.<sup>58</sup>

In the mechanism of a remote, central decision-making machine, which understands development in a linear, singular light – resource exploitation and the conversion of biomass into product – this warning is not only for Indigenous people, it is a call to us all. It seems, however, that due to a long-running connection to particular lands, and the cyclical persistence of memory in our dreams and in our sense of who we are, that the Indigenous people of *Waabanong Nakaygum* have the potential and the intact land base sufficient to resist cultural assimilation and the temptations of a civilization that spreads through roads, and one which has offered very few indications it can be sustained over a longer period of time. Beyond the matrix of control that is the ongoing civilizing mission, there remains a 'time immemorial' in memory, story, and on the land. One needs to simply search for the footsteps to know this path.

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58 Jane Jacobs, 4



16. Old bush skills still exist and are being improved upon, as seen in the homemade, humane (instant kill) traps being built by Carl Monkman at Loon Straits. Will they be passed down?

## **4 - Land/Economy – *Ayangwaam* for the Generations**

One day early in the current millennium, canvassing for the Wilderness Committee, I met a man who drives trucks. I told him we were concerned that roads would open up the east shore wilderness to industrial exploitation. 'But what about the folks up there?' he asked. 'Don't they need access to cheaper foods? I work for a company that makes sandwiches,' he continued. 'and don't you think with an all-weather road going up there we could be driving healthy sandwiches and other snacks up there year-round? That would surely help with the health of the people.'

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Yeah, they were healthy before. And everybody has diabetes now, no sickness long time ago, 'cuz they were eating fresh food from bush. Rabbits...fresh fish...they used to eat anything...and now there's lots of people are dying...oh yeah, they used to use medicine...medicine was good for them to use.                   -Minnie Mason, Poplar River

### **Historic economic patterns in Manitoba's northeast boreal region**

The current generation of elders in Bloodvein, Berens and Poplar River comprise the traditional land users with decades of memory, stories, and experience spending time and often making a living and feeding their families from trapping and hunting in the bush. This is the generation that has mainly come out of the bush, grounded in the general frames of the old ways, when the economy was mostly all bush, and still literate in the practises of the land. They often have children or grandchildren, some of whom have stayed in the community and are also hunting and fishing people, some not. Many were born out on the land, but came in to go to school – residential or day – or because their parents came in to find work. Waged labour was often seasonal work like fishing,

lumbering, working on the tractor trains, and other means of earning some cash to purchase the increasingly available trade goods that arrived with each new mode of transportation. The need for an all-weather road is often framed, as above, in a privileging and projection of the consumerism of the south onto the north – be it the cost of milk or of building materials - along with this value’s internalization among people in the north trying to stretch limited dollars and keep costs of living under control.

*Oikos* is the Greek word for ‘home.’ It forms the basis of two words: *Ecology* and *Economy*. The two are interwoven at their roots; *economy is Oikos*, home, and *Nomos*, rule or law. Together the gist of the word ‘*economy*’ is the rules of the home, the ways in which we manage our only “real” – to return to Snyder’s ecological foundationalism – bank account, the ecosphere. *Ecology* is thus the *logia* of *Oikos*, or the study of our home. An economy is supposed to be at the service of people but has become fetishized and deified as a prop for industrial capitalism as that which we must serve, *the economy*. Ecology is thus the whole context for all material transactions, for all originates in the ecosphere. *Ayangwaam* – tread carefully. Let us keep the foundation that is the land/ecology in mind, and consider an economics that both recognizes its root in Earth’s living systems but also understands its purpose as being the benefit of humans, however we define that. We shall straddle that fine line between ecocentric thought, considering living systems and their disruptions through the production of material goods as primary, and anthropocentric thought, understanding the human purpose in our design of systems for our collective household management.

About a generation older than those I spoke with was Tom Boulanger, originally from Oxford House but for much of his life from Berens River. His narrative *An Indian*



*Remembers* describes a life of trapping and how he got some education and began living on a wage, but he also recalls many stories of trappers, hunters, travellers from throughout the east side as a whole. It is this tight network of trappers and hunters, working and living in the bush, that bound together the tradition-based lifestyle in a complex social and ecological, land-based whole. Even the shift to wage labour in the context of seasonal work somewhat fits the pattern of travelling by season, moving around, and finding and creating opportunities when either they or the need for them arises. Boulanger writes about the fur trade when it was thriving:

The year we first started to trap at Berens River was in 1922...we killed a lot of fur. We sold our fur to the Hudson's Bay Company; sometimes to other traders. Sometimes we shipped our fur to George Soudack Fur Auction Sales, Winnipeg, wherever it was good price...<sup>59</sup>We made an average about two thousand dollars worth of fur. It's a very good experience of hunting if a man knows what to do...<sup>60</sup>

Every word of every story Boulanger tells is bound up with the land he is either camped in or moving across. The economy and the land, and its many interrelationships, are in direct relationship – there is not a sense that the two are separate. “Charron Lake to Little Grand Rapids is about sixty miles. We travelled about four days. It was a very hard and slow trip. It was a very rough muskeg when we were travelling.<sup>61</sup>” Boulanger seemed to be an extraordinarily good trapper – made a good living from it and, at least in his narratives, though people rarely saw each other while out trapping, there was a strong sense of solidarity and mutual support when people did. The journey he took to Little Grand across ‘rough muskeg’ was done to help two men who had made an emergency

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<sup>59</sup> Boulanger, p.11

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, p.14

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, p.15

landing of their small airplane in the bush near where he was trapping, in December no less. He was travelling with two sleighs with three dogs each, three of which were borrowed from another fellow he knew.<sup>62</sup> And when his wife unexpectedly gave birth while they were still out in the bush, he travelled three hours to meet his friends the Pascals, who arrived later by dog team at his and his wife's tent to help them out. This old bush spirit of cooperation is a vital part of the traditional Anishinaabek boreal social form, centred as it was around small hunting organized on a smaller, more local scale, likely due to the challenging and not densely inhabited territories into which they had migrated.<sup>63</sup> According to Hallowell, "...while the Ojibwa of the country east of Lake Winnipeg had local facilities for trade from the late eighteenth century onward, the presence of a few isolated trading posts did not change the major culture patterns of their lives.<sup>64</sup>" This account is not meant to be an essentializing view of Ojibway – Anishinaabek – culture, but simply to illustrate what three quarters of a century ago was a pretty stable social-economic-ecological system in *Waabanong Nakaygum*. It was a life that was dynamic insofar as trappers were also seasonal wage labourers, and travelled a lot throughout the area, across quite a geographic wide range.

After we came home I started to work, freighting from Little Grand Rapids for Hudson's Bay Company. We freighted up eight cents a pound, eight dollars a hundred pounds. From Berens River to Little Grand Rapids we had forty-two portages and quite a few strong currents, quite hard work when it was hot days...We used canoes. No planes that time. That's what we did, fishing and freighting. Groceries were at medium price. We had enough living anyway, not much beer like now.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Hallowell, Irving A. *Contributions to Ojibway Studies* Lincoln, 2010, p.23

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, 24

<sup>65</sup> Boulanger, p.19

From the time Boulanger started to trap, 1922, to his writing of his life's stories in 1967, many changes had taken place and were still ongoing. As he indicated, he was - and was typical of his age most likely - mainly a producer, producing and selling primary products, but also consuming food directly from the land through a subsistence labour that he describes casually as though fishing were second nature. Groceries bought with wage earnings supplemented the diet, allowing for a mixture of imported products and local game, the latter being dominant. Two key change to this pattern, both mentioned by Louis Young, came first in 1950 with the registering of trap lines - by a 'half-breed' named Harold Wells - and later with new rules permitting the drinking of alcohol at the treaty site<sup>66</sup>. Boulanger was critical of these changes, commenting on their effects on the young men by the time of his writing:

They were making too much area for each trapper. Long ago before registered trapping-grounds a trapper trapped any places, who's the best trapper. Now in registered trapping-lines quite a few trappers are not trapping much. They hold up the good places where there are a lot of fur.<sup>67</sup>

Boulanger comments on the intergenerational breakdown of trapping, writing that "...the young fellows are not moving around much. They haven't got exercise much. When you go around to some places you will never see a snowshoe track or even a team of dogs trail."<sup>68</sup> Louis recalled that alcohol became more readily available when the west side Interlake road was built in 1967, at least at Bloodvein, same year that Boulanger was writing his narrative and reflecting on the social and economic changes happening on the

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<sup>66</sup> *ibid*, p.23

<sup>67</sup> *ibid*

<sup>68</sup> *ibid*.

east side.

### **Transition and dis/continuity I: A mixed wage - producer economy**

Boulanger's narrative includes the ending of the economic dominance of the fur trade but also a literal geographic re-alignment in the formalization of trap-lines on government maps. Alec Green, born in 1937, himself went from the bush life to the wage life on the lake, as a fisherman.

He mostly spent time at the trap line during the trap line months, all year except for 2 months of summer; kept living on trap line til he was 5 or 6 years old. those were the years of the depression and so there wasn't really anything for them to take up to the trap line, so the family stayed here and the dad would go up in order to hunt to feed the family.<sup>69</sup>

As he grew up, he started off as a fisherman's helper and then he got a license...fished for 54 years as a commercial fisherman. Effectively Alec started his labour receiving a wage on someone else's license, but later was effectively a producer-businessman, with his own license and labourers.

Gathering to sell wild rice also played a key role for a while in the economies of Bloodvein, Berens, and Poplar Rivers, also at Hollow Water further south. An old Harvester boat abandoned by the old bridge on the Rice River is a sign of an economic venture that has come and gone, and with it there has been the nutritional loss of a traditional dietary staple in *manomin*. Martina Fisher tells of a quick shift from being producers to purchasers of wild rice that took place with the suddenness of a switch being flipped, describing her involvement in wild ricing.

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<sup>69</sup> Alec Green; Martina Fisher translated

I participated in picking rice. That was after I got married in 80s and we sold the rice...to this pilot that would come to Bloodvein from Pine Falls, he owned a plane, it was called silver pine and we could come in here and buy the bags of wild rice...we did that for a good 4-5 years and all of a sudden he stopped coming, and then we couldn't sell the rice anymore because they harvested it themselves in the Pine Falls area...the person that came to...and then he started selling it, he sold it to the natives here now...I asked my dad one time about how did they prepare the wild rice long ago and he told me how they cleaned it and how they prepared it. There were only a few families that were picking rice. [it was eaten less] because of the stores: they started selling easier items to cook.



17. An old 'Harvester' boat sits abandoned in Rice River, a sign of a past viable commercial *manomin* harvest.

Minnie Mason of Poplar River also remembers that a man used to come and land his plane on the river and purchase the wild rice. While not within the demarcated 'east side' in Manitoba, at Grassy Narrows, Ontario, the Harvester boat was banned about 30 years ago as the mechanized process was harming the *manomin*, and the memory of traditional methods of collection and processing have been retained. In fact, school children are being taken out to harvest the *manomin* in canoes, and our friend Shoon (Andy Keewatin)

who heads the Hunting and Trapping Association there has started offering ricing trips and workshops as a form of revenue-generation for the centre, a perfect example of an economic development that is based on and not at odds with cultural practice, that maintains the pride of being a producer for those who engage in it; I know I felt proud to spend 4 days picking then processing the rice, and that is without having the long context of inter-generational memory or stories from my family partaking in this activity. The loss of wild rice first as a sellable product and secondly as a dietary staple due to consumer convenience is an unfortunate tale affecting the Anishinaabek communities economically and health-wise, as wild rice is an incomparably healthy, nutritious plant, versatile, and easy to store for many years if kept dry. It furthermore enhances self-reliance, key to moving towards an economy that is subsidiary-based, where decisions are made locally<sup>70</sup>.

Marty Kennedy of Bloodvein, having interviewed many if not all of the community's elders and land users as part of the land use planning project, discussed with me the fact that so few community members are now trapping, that there is an intergenerational disconnect due to the high cost-low returns on being a trapper:

I think the men liked trapping, it's just that it was so expensive to get up to their traplines, and the fur market is down, so they don't want to waste money to make no money, you know? Otherwise they'd do it and I'm sure if they have to survive like that, they'd be able to still, and be able to teach the younger people how to survive and to make clothes.

Marty is attuned to the fact that any land-base activity includes a myriad of other skills, such as those needed for survival, and understands that the skills can be taught on

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<sup>70</sup> See *Subsidiarity* in "Ten Principles for Sustainable Societies," in *Alternative to Economic Globalization: A Better World is Possible*, 2004

their own and should thus resonate among the youths, who are seeking that connection. Mike Green confirmed the diminishment and discontinuity of trapping; “he trapped about 100 miles up in the bush...[his trap-line is] still registered in his family's name...he last trapped with his sons about 6 years ago...his sons don't go since he stopped trapping. The reason why they probably won't go, he said, is because the price of the fur is down and the cost of it (trapping) is high.<sup>71</sup>”

Florence Fisher had a memory of horses being used in the logging of trees, a far more labour-intensive but ecologically benign form of logging than the machinated clearcutting that has ravaged the Anishinaabek boreal homelands from Alberta right through to Quebec<sup>72</sup>.

Fred Smith – he had a team of horses that also pulled the wood for the people. Those must have been in the 50s, they must have started around 40s, 50s. Cuz I remember when I was going to school here, in the early 60s, we used to feed those horses those biscuits that they tried to feed us in school, those hard biscuits.

## **Transition and dis/continuity II: The shift to southern-based resource exploitation**

The last half a century has seen an accelerated use of the boreal forest for its raw resources, and often the exploiters of the natural resources are not the First Nations communities themselves, but outsiders, taking from the north to enrich the south. This dynamic started well before the last 50 years, as documented in *Formidable Heritage: Manitoba's North and the Cost of Development, 1870-1930*. Its author, Jim Mochoruk argues that

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<sup>71</sup> Interpreted by Martina Fisher

<sup>72</sup> See Elizabeth May's *At The Cutting Edge At the cutting edge : the crisis in Canada's forests* Rev. ed., 2005

what the 1870s had witnessed was the beginning of the inversion of the historic relationship that had existed between north and south. Whereas, prior to the 1840s, the southern plains and river valleys had been a provisioning area and transportation route for the northern fur trade frontier, it was now the north that was becoming a hinterland and transportation route for southern interests.<sup>73</sup>

Due to a massive flood of European migration into Manitoba, primarily in the agriculture-dependent south, Manitoba shifted conceptually from being a bush land to a prairie province, and the sparsely populated hinterland north was the provider of wood, minerals, energy for the increasing levels of consumption in the south. Though I had been under the illusion that the boreal forest of *Waabanong Nakaygum* was in a ‘pristine’ and ‘untouched’ wilderness condition – concepts earlier debunked as universal generalized truths, but which contain a relative kernel of truth within them – and connected to this projection was the notion that all-weather roads could only serve to facilitate and speed-up exploitation of this area’s resources, it finally hit home to me that the areas around Bloodvein and Berens River had at one point been logged throughout when I flew to and from Berens across the lake from Pine Dock this past November. Flying above the region is a great way to see both the vastness and contiguity of the eastern boreal but also to witness the lines through it, many of them old logging roads. That all-weather roads do, however, accelerate the possibility of resource exploitation is beyond question, as one can only compare the Bloodvein-Berens region with the Winnipeg River-Manigatogan region, the latter long a site of southern- and capital-driven resource extraction. Mochoruk describes the area northeast of a diagonal line drawn from Lake of the Woods to Lake

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<sup>73</sup> Mochoruk, *Formidable heritage : Manitoba's north and the cost of development, 1870 to 1930* p.69. Winnipeg: U of M Press, 2004



Winnipeg as “typical part of the northern resource frontier.<sup>74</sup>” The area typified Manitoba’s hinterland industrialization, and access was key. Mochoruk:

This is not to say, however, that the region did not undergo its own transformation. Hydroelectric generation, pulp and paper milling, and mining, which represented the cutting edge of modern northern development, all had their first burst of planning or development in the Shield country of eastern Manitoba during this period [1896-1912].<sup>75</sup>

The industrialization of the north continues the logic of this period of exploitation in the southeast boreal area of the province, based on capital, mechanization, and a developed globalization of markets for resources. On one hand the community land use plans under the act arising from Bill 6, and the push for a UNESCO World Heritage Site *Pimachiowin Aki*, give the communities of the east side the right to exclude any form of industrial development on their traditional territories under provincial law. On the other hand, returning to the context of Halper’s critique of Israel’s West Bank occupation, an all-weather road on the east side creates a new ‘fact on the ground’ that could lead to new forms of exploitation a generation ahead. As Katherine Klippenstein of Poplar River astutely observes:

I think right now they are (defending the land) but in ten years when there are new leaders, that's what would worry me. I don't know if it's going to get better or if it's going to get worse. And that's the thing with the band system, there are always new leaders every couple years, and people have different value systems. And I think...the protected land we have is a really amazing thing, and you look at the world and there's not very many places that are protected, so I hope that someday that we can just carry that on, and I don't want to see my community going through what Grand Rapids went through, or even Nelson House, you know. The chief will benefit from it, and the councillors will benefit from it, but not the people.

The structures for protecting the land are being put into place, but given the general

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<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*p.166

<sup>75</sup> *ibid*

overwhelming and fetishized power of the economy, a countervailing paradigm is needed.

### **The social economy and the informal economy**

The overall economy can be divided into three sectors: the first is that of private enterprise, whose main purpose is profit and whose capital and decision-making processes are primarily individually-held; the second is the public sector, the realms of governments who are ostensibly primarily interested in distribution of resources (planning), along with regulation and taxation; the third sector is thus the social economy, broadly speaking, and includes the sectors of non-profits, market-based social organizations, cooperatives, etc.<sup>76</sup>

For Lewis “the values of mutuality, self-help, caring for people and the environment, are given higher priority than maximizing profits,<sup>77</sup>” and reciprocity is a key economic principle that animates this system or sector of the overall economy and society.<sup>78</sup> Restakis highlights reciprocity as a core principle of the social economy, in addition to social or collective control over capital.<sup>79</sup> He explains the reciprocity principle as “essentially a social transaction that also has economic ramifications. A reciprocal exchange may have either a social or an economic intent as the primary motivation, and often embodies both.<sup>80</sup>” In Restakis and throughout the literature and the social economy’s history, the reciprocity principle and the entire social aim of its organization has been based on the concept of solidarity,<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Lewis, *Building Community Wealth: A Resource for Social Enterprise Development*, 2006, p. 11

<sup>77</sup> *ibid*

<sup>78</sup> *ibid*

<sup>79</sup> Restakis, 2006, p. 9

<sup>80</sup> *ibid*

<sup>81</sup> Restakis, January 2006, 11 ; Neamtan., 2002

For Neamtan, the social economy is “characterized by enterprises and organizations which are autonomous and private in nature, but where capital and the means of production are collective.<sup>82</sup>” Solidarity is a key concept especially to the process of partnering with and assisting a First Nation community with development of a social economy: it involves a recognition of universally-held material, social and spiritual needs, while maintaining consciousness that the process of decolonization involves communities’ regaining of autonomy and a strengthening of the political voices by and of First Nations people. Lewis and Lockhart point out that the development of social economies is often hampered by the mistaken emphasis solely on business development, even if the business development is a social enterprise structurally. Truly building community capacity and reconstructing fragmented values of solidarity, reciprocity, and collectivity is a key internally-driven process that economically is part of decolonizing fragmented social and material relationships, for it relies upon and re-articulates the traditional bush ethos of the collective. Often I heard people tell me that in the past everyone would always share meat if they got an animal, but that these days, with personal freezers, the practice has diminished.

I asked a number of people, especially those more active in their communities or actively engaged one way or another in the community’s politics, what sort of economic changes they thought the road could create in their communities, besides the contract labour of actually building the road itself. Bloodvein band councillor Ellen Young gave me her perspective on the challenges of and need for capacity-building, a key concept of social enterprises:

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<sup>82</sup> Neamtan, 2002, p. 3

the only economic things that could come out of the road is people may want to start own businesses but then again you have to have good management skills, you have to have all of that educational stuff to be able to run a business...someone could take an opportunity to build a hotel on the road or a service station right on the road...whatever, but there again you need that basis of education to be able to do something with it, and money of course, so that to me is the only economic viability that I see right now, I don't know what else the road...other than maintenance of the road, and upkeep of the road...

Kulchyski, citing Fredric Jameson and drawing on Marx's interpretive level of modes of production, draws out the idea that "[t]o each form of production corresponds a mode of social being...The radicality of the difference between capitalism and gatherers and hunters made for an entirely different dynamic, one that continues today.<sup>83</sup>" When considering the changes to the traditional Anishinaabek society of the fur trade, with its inherent cultural forms of reciprocity and an organic sense of solidarity, one sees the communities of the east side are in a transitional phase, though to what economic and social form remains unclear and contested. The lack of all-weather road access has meant that the social form generated by capitalist modes of production, while creeping in and fragmenting the collective towards greater atomism and individualism, is not as intensely devolved as it is in Canadian cities or elsewhere in the industrialized world. There is actually still a strong collective sense reflected in the economic possibilities that some of the people I interviewed articulated, and in the perceived spirit of the community moving forward together through its capacity building around road construction in Bloodvein (though I admit simple impressionism on the issue of the thornier internal politics, possibly since my connection was primarily through one of the families routinely holding positions on council).

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<sup>83</sup> Kulchyski, *Sound of a Drum* 42

Questioning the individualistic consumption pattern that she sees in Poplar River, which only serves to enrich a private corporation not owned by the community, Katherine asks:

I'm kind of thinking...why don't we have our own store? And why haven't we done this a long time ago? Every community?...Why doesn't the band create their own store...a coop? And...gas and food, all that money that's going into the Northern, it's owned by an American company. Like we don't think about these things:...our money could be cycled into the community if we had a band store...we're not thinking that way and we continue not to think that way and I think it's time we control our own gas, and our cigarettes and our food.

At Berens River, elder Rebecca Swain chimed in about the old social values and how they had changed:

Long ago I guess people used to work together even if they were to build a house they would build one house together, like nobody got paid, so they just built that house....and then there will be another built and stuff like that ... everyone got a house in the end and nobody got paid...<sup>84</sup>

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples notes that Aboriginal economies have been “disrupted over time, marginalized, and largely stripped of their land and natural resource base.”

Picking up on the RCAP's analysis, going forward it is important to reflect back upon the changes and disruptions historical interventions by Euro-Canadians have had upon Aboriginal economies, and to seek to get a hold on how deep these changes have been. One commonly hears it said that Aboriginal peoples “cannot go back” to a completely subsistence or land-based economy, however one can also see that these words spoken from the mouths of non-native people can function as the

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<sup>84</sup> Translated by Lena Whiteway, her daughter

triumphant words representative of a system that sought its very destruction. Regardless of what is practically possible or impossible going forward, ignoring the history of the Aboriginal economies in North America is to ignore and dismiss Aboriginal culture, so intricately and inextricably bound, as any, with its material and ecological situation. A large part of the historical dispossession of Aboriginal peoples in Canada has been a direct result of policies imposed on Aboriginal peoples at the periphery of Canadian life from the power seats at the centres: national and provincial capitals located generally in the Canadian south.<sup>85</sup>

Peter Usher, in a short paper written in 1980, discusses the contrasting modes of production of northern Canada: the native/traditional economy and the industrial/modern economy.<sup>86</sup> He shows the two modes to be vastly different both in terms of the basic unit of participation and the values embodied by each economic form. In the case of the traditional native, subsistence-based but exchange-supplemented, economy, the basic unit is the household and sometimes the whole community.<sup>87</sup> By contrast, the industrial economy favours individualistic mobility, which in turn undermines the traditional Aboriginal values of family solidarity, sense of place and community, stability and tradition.<sup>88</sup> Kulchyski's study of Inuit communities yields a similar observation regarding the breakdown of traditional Inuit social structures through the advance of capital-oriented economics.

The possibility remains that this Inuit mirror of dominant structure, the separation of the political and economic as embodied in the State

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<sup>85</sup> For a detailed discussion of the mechanics of execution of federal policy, see Shewell, 2005

<sup>86</sup> Usher, Peter. "A Northern Perspective on the Informal Economy," 1

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.* p.3

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.* p.4

and private capital that is a foundation of capitalist modernism, will be enlisted to support social relations markedly different from those that predominate. It is a dangerous game, though, and the degree to which it depends upon capital accumulation will determine the degree of possessive individualism that can come to predominate, leading in turn to political and economic forms that may wholly undermine Inuit traditions, values, and culture.<sup>89</sup>

That the social and cultural formation of a community is completely bound-up with the economic mode of production underlies both Kulchyski's and Usher's analyses, and is a particular challenge to think and work through in considering and implementing a social economy approach as the best tool to honour the changing yet historically-rooted cultural forms of a people, and to benefit the community as a whole.

### **Economic opportunity & urbanization: a two-way road**

One cannot discuss potential for economic change simply by centring the community and collective values and hoping that progressive economic development will manifest around these values. Starting a cooperative as Katherine suggested requires a basic amount of solidarity and collective thought and action, but if even a certain minimal presence of these values is operative, such a project has the potential *to rebuild* solidarity and reciprocity within a community. Such feedback mechanisms always require a hopeful break or a leap of faith. Community divisions, be they around family or religious disputes, or simply the passive inertia created over the last century by what Louis Young called "Indian Agent syndrome," though one could also point to welfare as a will-sapping structure, necessary as it is in its immediate scope, as undermining this potential:

they're all individual . I mean it wasn't that way before, you know.  
People operated as a collective at one time, you know, but then that

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<sup>89</sup> Kulchyski, *Like the Sound of A Drum*, 94

started to fall apart. You know I said “the Indian agent syndrome” has contributed to that - the missionary influence has contributed that way.

The individualization of community members and their alienation from a collective purpose has a more immediately political implication: the use by external forces of individual consent and consultation over collective consent to exploit and ‘develop’ native lands, a practice Louis hopes to see overturned:

Because when some of these companies come in there, like Tembec, they will look for individuals who will agree with them , and speak for them, and then they’ll go to the province and say ‘look we talked with this individual , with *these people*, they’ll say, and look they agreed to support us,’ but they’re taking one person at a time and of course there will be people who, and I think it’s always been that way throughout history, that there will be individuals all in support, but if you go to the community and you collect the elders and even the youth and you talk about the resources, you talk about the fur bearing animals, the plant life and all that, and that group will say ‘yeah, we have to make sure that this is protected for future generations.’

Katherine describes the consumerist cycle that goes hand in hand with dis-empowerment and economic alienation from the abundance – of the land or of the city:

Well, you get your monthly cheque, and you get your food, and people don’t need to do that anymore, even though they should – they feel like they don’t need to... but...there’s no jobs, so there’s welfare and then they use their welfare money at the Northern, and so on and so on...

Phil Green, originally from Berens River but teaching up in Poplar River when I was there, talked about the road’s potential to reverse outflow of people from the communities, primarily to Winnipeg. Of the all-weather road’s eventual construction up the east side, he said:

I think that expectation has been there for a long time... but the



political will has not been there...from Government...All these communities pushed for that. Because they know it's only going to enhance opportunities for the people and the communities...maybe that's another way of sustaining the communities because otherwise everyone's abandoning the communities. Communities as you probably know, a lot of the first nations are hovering at about...50-50, 40-60, 60-40, ratio in how many people are on reserve vs off reserve...and those numbers are growing, for lack of opportunity.

In *Planet of Slums*, Mike Davis describes incredible rates of urbanization taking place throughout the world, indicative of a certain kind of economic model that turns primary producers – in this case gatherer-hunters, but one could apply this to farmers here and in China and in Brazil – into general labourers, something of which Phil was astutely aware could apply to the Anishinaabek context: '..the economic opportunity's there, but what I'm saying is we just don't want labouring jobs. We want our people to be instrumentally involved... in participating and vying for contracts in the construction of the road.' So far it seems this trend has been reversed in Bloodvein in how the community has managed the contracts to build the road.

John Loxley also investigates possibilities of social capital and capacity coming back to communities rather than being lost to cities, a possibility that all roads may not lead simply to Winnipeg/Rome, but also that same road could lead out of the city and back home for many. “Movement to the city has the potential for widening opportunities for the community but all too often it simply reproduces the social and economic problems in rural and remote Aboriginal communities.”<sup>90</sup> Discussing Helin’s research, Loxley draws attention to “[a]n interesting feature of the Memberton experience (which) is the conscious effort to attract trained and qualified members of the band back to the

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<sup>90</sup> Loxley. *Aboriginal, Northern, and Community Economic Development*, Winnipeg, 2010, 11

reserve from urban areas.<sup>91</sup>”

What opportunities the community members choose to pursue once connected by all-weather road sometime in 2014 will depend on which values are operative: the self-first individualism of the logic of capital accumulation, or the collective spirit of traditional Anishinaabek life, even if the social form has drastically changed from the height of trapping days. The all-weather road may facilitate an outflow from the community to the south, but Bloodvein's proximity to Winnipeg may also make it easier for new cultural and economic pollination to occur among all of its members – on and off reserve – decentring the reserve as the community's heart and re-purposing the entire traditional territory, according to the land use plan, as part of the community's potential. Collective economic action could alleviate individual material and social challenges to the point where greater self-determined development goals can be achieved. Louis discussed with me the prospects of increased ecological tourism and cultural education within the traditional territory thanks to the road. I asked him to whom he would want to market programmes and if they were dependent upon the UNESCO designation. “A list of things can be done with or without the Heritage Site. Our market is the world.”

If one is looking for a practical model for Anishinaabek communities to transition towards a more sustainable, self-determining economy, activist, writer and visionary Winona LaDuke has moved theory into the world of action through her work with her home community of White Earth, MN and her organization Honor the Earth. Reclaiming control over traditional foods – she successfully led a fight against efforts at University of

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<sup>91</sup> *ibid*, p.83

Minnesota to patent genetically engineered wild rice<sup>92</sup> – along with energy independence and food sovereignty are key goals and tools towards self-sufficiency and subsidiarity.

The structure of a dependent economy puts Indigenous communities at risk of constant destabilization and often at the mercy of outside forces, whether those forces are large mining companies or renewable energy developers seeking to profit from the resources of a tribal community, or whether they are unpredictable federal allocations. As the US economy becomes increasingly destabilized as a result of the recession, wartime expenditures, peak oil, and climate change, our tribal economies will face even greater destabilization and more risk...

We can stabilize our tribal economies through localization. By developing our own energy and food sources, we can create vibrant and resilient tribal economies that will ensure our survival in the face of economic and environmental challenges ahead.<sup>93</sup>

Much capacity-building is required for east side communities to reach the level of transformational engagement of a White Earth, along with change agent leadership like LaDuke, but the challenge is not a short term transition but a multi-generational decolonization of and adaptation to not only local but global conditions. The road is but one of many factors in a complex economic, social and political context, and the future in the hands of the communities, with help if needed from allies in the south.

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<sup>92</sup> See Winona LaDuke “Ricekeepers” *Orion Magazine* online, [www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/305](http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/305)

<sup>93</sup> Winona LaDuke. *Sustainable Tribal Economies: A Guide to Restoring Energy and Food Sovereignty in Native America*, Honor the Earth, nd ; see also Winona LaDuke, *Launching a Green Economy for Brown People*, Honor the Earth, 2008

## **5 - Adapting to the Unknown: the Road Ahead**

### **I. People**

When I asked people what they thought would change in the community once it was connected to an all-weather road, I sometimes encountered anxieties, other times easy-going attitudes about the big changes that people acknowledged would likely occur once there was year-round personal mobility – in and out of the reserve. Quite a bit of concern was expressed about the importation of the worst of southern/city social issues, issues that already had made their presence known in the communities but could be exacerbated if all it took to reach the community were to hop in a car, load up on gasoline and drive 4, 6, maybe 8 hours to Bloodvein, Berens, Poplar. People had a keen, often direct, sense of the corrosive effects and dangers associated with alcoholism, drug use and trafficking, gang activity, and even the predatory sex enslavement and trade associated with the above three activities. Despite concern, however, it did not sound like plans were being made to face these issues. There seems to be a deal-with-it-when-it-happens attitude among the Anishinaabe, a wish to remain grounded in experience instead of conjecture, projection and anxiety. Still, the concern was there and especially among some of the elders, who could see the youth as having a very different set of values and cultural references from their less mediated, bush-emergent and often -oriented cultural forms.

Minnie Mason, an elder of Poplar River, voiced her concern about youths driving around all-year, endangering themselves and others on the roads: “I don’t know. There’ll be lots of accidents – too much people!...I don’t know, probably...trouble going on all the

time with young people. Even when they go...accidents!’” Joe Klein (Andrew Everette) and Lena Whiteway of Berens River dialogued about these problems, but they seemed to recognize that there is a need for some leadership and planning to deal with the issues that arise once the all-weather road is built.

-Lena: And another thing too is they'll bring more booze and drugs and stuff like that in...it'll be much easier to bring in whatever they want...

-Joe: (on dealers and drugs) I don't think our community is ready for it...I don't think so-

-Lena: It depends on our leadership if they want to get rid of these things....they have to be vocal and strong and really enforce what they want...People around here are more..sort of laid back I'd say. They're not really vocal in what they believe in

-Joe: ...I pretty much told them that too...we pretty much mind our own business...the RCMP pretty much stays to themselves, the people stay to themselves.'

I experienced this sense of insularity that Joe was describing, though of course as an outsider one cannot expect to be integrated very quickly into a community. I could not help but think environmentally of the problem – if it is a problem, though the above seems to reflect on a lack of cohesion and solidarity involved in the community – as one of community design. Berens is situated on both banks of the Berens River and a little bit north and south along each shore of Lake Winnipeg. The community is very spread out, and while there are little enclaves of a few houses here and there – often of relatives living in close proximity to one another, overall the houses are spread out quite far along the road. The geographic distance seems to mirror if not help create a social distance between people or at least between families. I also reflected upon the strong possibility that planning for hypotheticals was a very Euro-centric, abstract and sometimes

disembodied character trait, and realized that people in this community had already personally and historically as a people lived through so much and thus understood that they will meet any new challenges and respond as best they could when the changes happen.

Martina expressed to me in the inverse, her positive feelings of safety around the times of limited access to Bloodvein, freeze up and melting. “Yeah, it seems far because you’re more isolated but even during isolation I feel a lot more...I feel more...content and safe in here when we can’t get out. It’s more sheltered.”

Frank Young poured cold water on the theory that the road would bring more negative influence, at least not to Bloodvein, the most southerly of the communities to be affected by the road. He told me concerns about bad things and people coming in was the product of

mostly the older generations, the elders: they were always afraid that if a road ever comes that things would come to the community that were not needed, it's bad enough as it is now. But you don't need the road to get this stuff into the communities; it comes anyways...the drugs and the gangs and stuff...

Phil Green, an educator and so clearly concerned about anything that could negatively impact the community's youth, seemed to express a fatigue with a fear- and anxiety-based approach to the future, seeing the need for encountering the future with a positive approach, that old patterns can change and be moved beyond:

It's always been an ongoing concern that with the advent of free access to these communities that there's going to be a negative impact such as alcohol, drugs...or the free access to alcohol or drugs, or other activities...sure that's a legitimate concern. But at the same time we can't be Chicken Littles, we can't say 'the sky's falling, the sky's falling' We got to provide opportunities for our people that live on the reserve and also to promote for them to come and go, to

maintain connections with their communities, whether they live in the urban centre, whether they live outside of the community. So it is important that there is that connection, without saying we can't do that because it might destroy our communities, we have to be open minded about that and we also have to expect our people to be responsible and not be destroyed by mere access of an all-season road.

Phil's approach to the future of the east side communities is based on the unknown, but it is a fertile unknown, like the Zen first concept of unknowing comprising the first step of bearing witness<sup>94</sup>, as outlined by Roshi Bernie Glassman in his pragmatic program of encountering that which is difficult and sometimes even traumatic in our lives and in our worlds. Elsewhere it is called 'resilience'<sup>95</sup> and 'pragmatic adaptation.'

Katherine, being younger, educated and also more comfortable in both the worlds of the bush and of the city, hinted at the internalized racism, echoing past paternalism, inherent in what to her is a very antiquated concern over alcohol entering the community.

well I know a lot of, like, the people around my mom's age, 50s, are talking about it, they're kind of scared that more alcohol and drugs are coming into the community, but like I said you can't control that and if you do it's kind of like stepping back to when native people couldn't drink, you know? you're kind of going into that mentality. Like why can't I have a case of beer and sit on my lawn?

Another concern that Marty Kennedy and Alec Green both mentioned which would require further research is concern that the welfare payments will be decreased to community members because of the community would no longer be classified as remote - which qualifies them for a higher welfare rate of payment.

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<sup>94</sup> Bernie Glassman. *Bearing Witness: A Zen Master's Lessons in Making Peace.*, 1998

<sup>95</sup> For a discussion of resilience, read Wanda Wuttunee, *Living rhythms: lessons in aboriginal economic resilience and vision.* Montréal : 2004

## II The land

Road Kills Anything in its path  
raccoons, bears, skunks, muskrats, /  
coyotes, rabbits, deer  
there is no escape

Road hates life  
road hates time  
rolls out to destroy

Road wants to escape  
road has no memory

Road hates trees  
road hates earth  
road does not understand language

it has its own  
a scowl  
a scar  
*road runs over it*

Road knows no endings or beginnings  
road runs naked

Road knows life  
and raw meat

Road has ideas  
about killing everything in its path<sup>96</sup>



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96 Excerpt from “Road Kills,” David Groulx, in *Imagine Mercy*. 2013



18. Tree-eating machine between Hollow Water and Bloodvein River, clears room for road.

I must acknowledge when I first read this poem, it resonated quite strongly with my original environmental canvasser's bias against roads. I also now am grateful for road, for having brought me to meet new people in new places, but remain suspicious of its ruthless, undiscerning linearity. Roads are the probing fingers of dominating civilizations, ever extending to new corners of the planet, extending centres of production in their power by finding new markets for 'goods,' while enabling the centre to drink more easily from the blood of the land, fuel to feed its machinery. I experienced this linearity of the road's amoral, indiscriminate nature at the end of the railroad tracks at Birkenau when I was bearing witness there for 5 days in November of 2000. If I still had the black and white photo, it would show my shoes half off the very end of the tracks in Birkenau, a question: is this the end of the road? Where else can modernity go after it has followed its roads straight to this place? Is there any way forward, or is the best thing to do, standing on such an edge, to turn back?

That said, I have also come to realize that for people feeling isolation in communities unconnected all year by roads, being born into an environmental alienation yet being fed the images of a world beyond, road can serve as a lifeline, a hope, a way out. And for those born or living in the city, roads can lead back home, out of the centre, back to the safety and shelter of the 'marginal' place, recentring it in their lives. The irony that McLuhan focuses on is that road connects centre and margin such that they are less apart than ever before. But can road bring and affirm life anywhere it goes, or can it only bring what already exists at the centre, the dominant culture to the margins? George Melnyk contemplates this one-way road:

The hinterland is considered by the metropolis to be suited to absorbing mainstream culture, but not suited to generating it. In a metropolis-hinterland relationship the metropolis rather than the region determines what is important...Through its control of cultural consciousness the centre ensures that the region learns to value only that which receives the centre's sanction. So regional culture becomes determined by a psychology lacking in self-determination.<sup>97</sup>

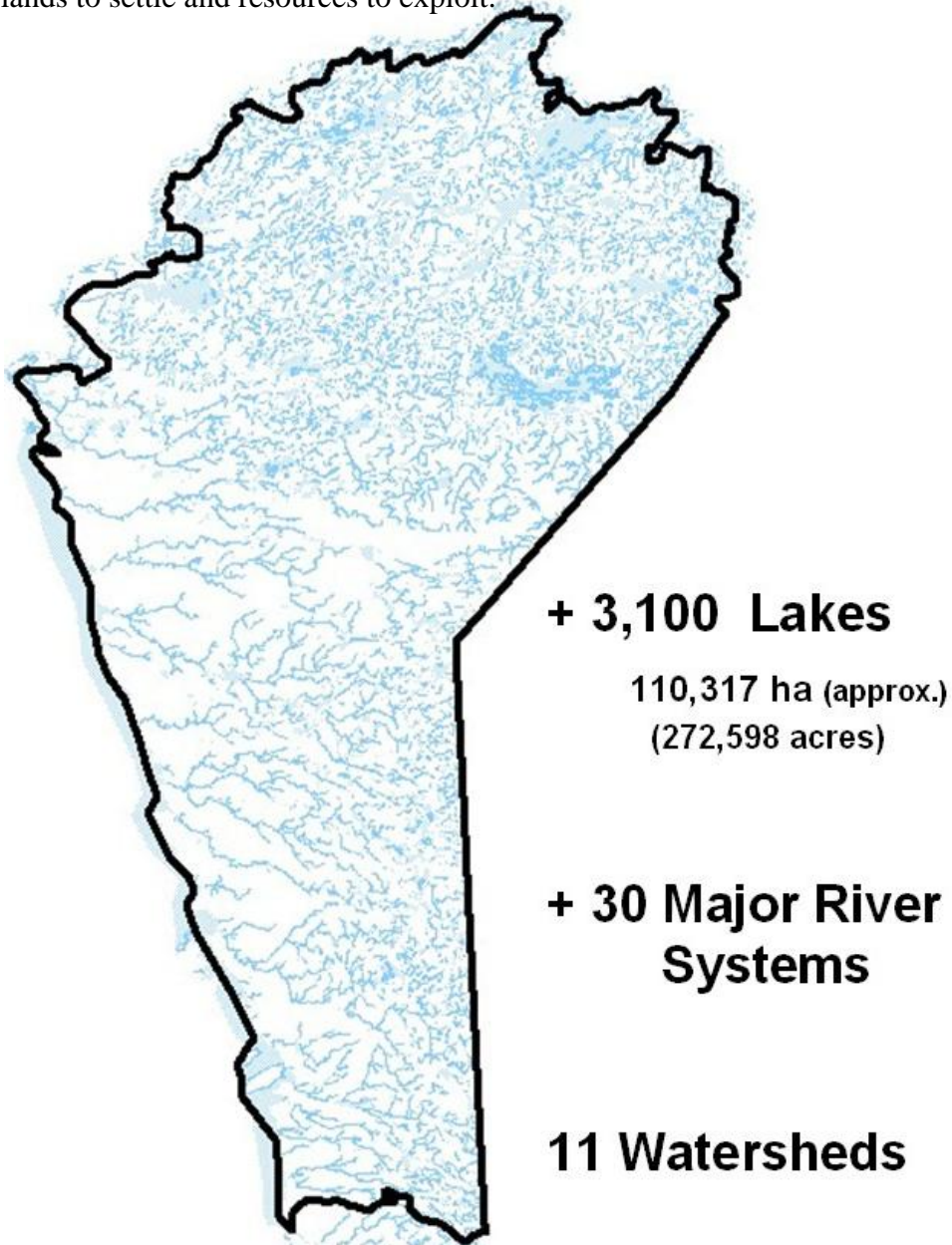
Surely the “speed-up” that has happened since certain communities were connected by road access in the 1940s and 50s, embodied in the fact that satellite dishes have leapfrogged over all-weather driving surfaces into the communities, homes and minds of those who live on the so-called edge of the hegemonic civilization, lessons relatively the impact that all-weather roads can have, culturally-speaking. Their significance to cultural change has been diluted by so many other factors affecting change in First Nations communities. But what of the old roads through the bush, the dogteam trails, the riverways, the trap “lines?”

Fortunately a powerful river cuts a deep bank, and the memory of an Anishinaabek land-oriented culture in Waabanong Nakaygum remains strong, including among some of the proactive youth who are or will soon be leaders in their communities. They will have to be strong – road will bring more people to their territory, and surely the provincial government will be tempted to generate some revenue to help pay for the no doubt expensive choice to build and then maintain hundreds of kilometres of road through so muskegy a region. I not only do not think the bush will not be forgotten, I think educators like Katherine Klippenstein or people like Ronald (Marty) Kennedy will themselves be bridges from their elders to the generation of their children, and will re-

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<sup>97</sup> George Melnyk. *Radical Regionalism*, 17; 1981

address the land as a teacher, asking it to help them remember and reconstitute a culture that has been attacked from the day Europeans started to penetrate the hinterland in their quest for lands to settle and resources to exploit.



[http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/wno/maps/planning/2\\_eastside\\_plan\\_area.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/wno/maps/planning/2_eastside_plan_area.pdf)

**WNO East Side Planning Area Watershed Map**

19. Though still bound by bureaucratic lines, this map imagines the east side in a very different context: as a dense network of interconnected waterways<sup>98</sup>.

<sup>98</sup> See WNO website [http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/wno/maps/planning/2\\_eastside\\_plan\\_area.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/wno/maps/planning/2_eastside_plan_area.pdf)

Important questions must be asked by generations seeking to understand their indigeneity, to connect to a sense of homeland in a way that is on their own terms and feels right to them. Katherine asks:

How did we get there in the first place, and why are we only there? You know, they were nomadic people. We went all over the place, we weren't just in one spot. And they're still adjusting to that. And now we're getting a road and people are freaking out about it, and people are happy about it. Like there's good and bad about it. We can be connected to the rest of the world without, hopefully not, going overboard about it.

The nomadic spirit will drive up and down that road, but with a homeland to balance it and to give it grounding, the spirit will be able to find a dynamic balance, bringing memory not only to its own people, but to all people, as we have all been alienated, as colonizers, as immigrants, as urbanites, farmers, and industrial workers, from an older shared human memory specific to this place.

The process of land use planning in Bloodvein brought Melba Green and Marty Kennedy into close contact with the stories and personal memories of so many land users and community elders; one can hear that the memory and extended sense of place born out of sharing maps and hearing stories of a vast area belonging to a people partly by virtue of these very memories and stories, has an empowering effect. Melba clearly spells out hers and the community's commitment to keeping the land intact:

yeah, I feel positive about now, but before I didn't but now I'm really into it, to help the trappers and my family out here to protect their traplines, no industrial developments if they don't want that, and I'll step in there. And if there's meetings about us on the east side with coordinators are invited out there...just for us to be heard that we want those areas to be protected, not to be misused...and no mineral explorations....no industrial, nothing like that...

Marty moves beyond the land use plan and the provincial government's recognition and

bureaucratic framework formalizing their land use plan – called *Pimitotah*, or *taking care* – and begins to think of all the additional possibilities of true self-governance of the territory:

I'd say we'd have our own officers, our own ministers, and everything that the Government of Canada or any government...we'd have all these departments within our first nation right here, taking care of the land, we'd have officers out on the land, we'd monitor everything that happens on our land....once that land use plan goes through, there would be some co-management within the park (Atikaki Provincial, in the east of the traditional territory), but I know all our decisions will have to go through the Province, and I feel that's just not right.

I remember Marty telling me that if it were up to him, there would be a little checkpoint gate on the highway at either end of their traditional territory so that they truly could regulate and control what is coming through the traditional territory. This kind of control might help deter poachers on the land, already a concern voiced by Florence and Martina, and confirmed by Alec Green: “hunters, yeah. We still have poachers. We sometimes make a complaint against poachers. Yeah, they travel by plane and they find the carcasses... the people here have been finding the carcasses...they just take the head and leave the rest....”

The community land use plans and the very basis of the world heritage site proposal, which Bloodvein and Poplar River First Nations are both part of, but Berens River is not, would more or less ban mining and limit any logging to small scale, locally-contracted operations. Efforts to use the bush as a more frequent educational site, are key for establishing a pattern of continuity and transmission of the land-user quality of Anishinaabek boreal identity, as well as in restoring pride and keeping youth engaged in meaningful, hands-on ways. Informal education, and its inclusion within the formal

system, is a vital project going forward. Key is also respecting the contributions of those who have had to make a living from or have spent much time in the bush. Martina points to more inland communities and their efforts at teaching their traditions: “when I was in Pauingassi I saw them taking the kids into the bush and the kids all carried something like flour, lard, and cooking utensils, and they would teach them over there, they even set a net that they could learn how to clean fish and cook fish...”

Television has played a key role in manifesting the inevitability, or the sense thereof, of the all-weather road eventually coming to the communities of the *Waabanong Nakaygum* as Donald Bittern, who sadly has recently passed away, expressed it to me. By his words, it is almost as if the TV waves were the distant early warning of the coming road, foreshadowing and also breaking down defences against the civilizational patterns that both road and television together encode, and one only has to consider the number of commercials on the telly these days that are for automobiles to see the connection circle in on itself:

That’s what I’m trying to say is it’s going to be a big challenge for the people in the future. They have to adapt (to) what’s going to come towards them. They can’t block anything now. We’re in the real world. Like sometime I was sitting watching a movie when it says 1932, 1940...and these things were going on over there and we were still isolated those years here...we were struggling, fighting just to get our monthly goods or everything...and we were still struggling, our parents, our ancestors. Like - my dad would take off with a dog team to Berens River to go pick up Hudson’s Bay stuff alone. And that was just a dog team and that was in 1950s or 60s and this was still going...and yet when I look at what happened in those years: 40s, 20s and everything, and yet here we were still struggling...now that we’re out of it, we’re opening – there were trains and cars and airplanes flying around in south and overseas, and here we are up north all the people, the Inuits, the Cree and everything and we were struggling to get a month- and meat, food whatever...’

As the margins and centre, bush and city, indigenous and colonizer cultures converge through technologies and transportation routes, one has to wonder, with Abel Bruce and Donald Bittern of Poplar River, what will keep the traditions of the Anishinaabek alive, and how will they sustain themselves and the lands that sustained their parents and grandparents? Abel decried to me the loss of traditional spiritual cultural practises embodying the principles of an Anishinaabek world-view, such as offering tobacco if a tree is cut down. Undoubtedly this raises one more complicated fragment of northern life about which I am not so qualified to comment, nor would I want to directly given the potentially divisive nature of the subject, namely the influence of Christianity on Anishinaabek society – and that of other First Nations, especially northern, for instance. The breakdown in relationships to the land – if the loss of certain protocols of honour and respect necessitate the loss of the value of sacred stewardship that these cultural forms have long embodied – might yet prove to be one of the greatest and most tragic legacies of Canada's Indian Residential School policy.

“Every time you want to talk to the...chief about things long ago,” Abel begins, “he says 'past is gone; you can't look back in the past'...The old tradition is still here today. This is where I'm going to stand.” Without commenting specifically on the resurgence of Aboriginal spirit and the traditions of the red road, or of the rise of new fundamentalist Christian movements in communities in the north, and how they might affect relationships to community or to the land, it seems like the old ways bound together a tight ontological nexus of economic, spiritual, political, linguistic and ecological practice, but that the fragmentation of this system happens far more quickly

than its establishment or re-establishment. Nevertheless, with the resurgence of Aboriginal spirit in the city and generally in the south, the all-weather road might yet facilitate a strengthening of the practices of the Red Road culture in the north.

Katherine summarizes the choice she and undoubtedly many other young Anishinaabek people face, when considering staying in their communities and including the bush around them in their life plans: “It's such a beautiful life...it's a hard life, but it's a lot more, you know, you feel like you're living, surviving, instead of working at an office, you know, I've done a lot of jobs and I'm never happy there, I'm always happy with...(being) surrounded by nature.”

Road systems embody flows of energy. The all-weather P304 north eventually to Poplar River can and will move people, goods, resources. It can bring people home – for weddings, funerals, reunions, for good – and it can take them out more quickly and affordably – for school, for work, for medical appointments, for adventure and fun, forever. It can move products of industrial society – like pre-made sandwiches in plastic containers – north, or it can take the products of a resurgent Anishinaabek economy, be they wild rice, sculptures and prints, pre-fabricated log homes or anything else one can dream up and reasonably set out to produce from the available raw resources. The road may bring city-dwellers up there on weekends, to their cottages, on lands developed by First Nations or by the provincial government on crown lands. It could bring Japanese and German tourists to stay at a luxury lodge or a rustic shelter, to learn about Anishinaabek culture, to fish and paddle in quiet, away from the Autobahn and the ongoing calamity of Fukushima. Or the road can bring drugs, alcohol, gangsters, germs and so many other negative things up north. The road might bring raw natural resources



from mines up north down to the south for processing and profits. It will be up to the communities and the individuals of the east side to decide how the road is used, and to stand in front of it if the flow on it is not helpful, healthy or bringing happiness to the community.

If roads are well-defined markings on the page that is the Earth, then they are black markers scratched across the page, impossible to miss from the air and in stark contrast to the bush that surrounds them. On the other hand, “[b]ush lands are lands without labels. The written words that mark so much of western land – from highway signs and billboards, to interpretive markers – presuppose an order of domination. Much is written on the bush, but it is written in bush language, as bush text.”<sup>99</sup>

While I remain after several visits to *Waabanong Nakaygum* illiterate in the language of the land, I did get to have a little bit of a walkabout out on the land. Cheepom, the elder who lives right next to the Catholic church where I stayed in Poplar River, agreed to take me one not-too-cold day out to check his traps, on his dilapidated old snow machine. I paid the gas and we got some food and tea together, and he fiddled around for some time with the machine. We communicated mainly with hand gestures, as his English was not so strong, but then neither was my Anishinabemowin. Again, I was going to be a passenger. Finally it was time to go, the carburetor was not quite fixed, but it was holding on well enough. In a puff of exhaust we were off, and I sat in the back wooden box, bumping along like the little kid I was in Anishinaabe country. We got about halfway or so to his trapline, deep in the beautiful forest, snow and exhaust swirling on my quiet, smiling face. Though the land was entirely unfamiliar to me, there

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99 Peter Kulchyski, “Bush/Lands: Some Problems with Defining the Sacred.” in *Sacred Lands*, 1998

is less disorientation when one is with someone who knows the land, and also when what is in general out on the land as compared with being lost in a strange city. Something about the fresh air and the biomass brings one peace. Gary Snyder reports the words of a Crow elder who spoke at a conference of native leaders in the 1970s in Montana:

You know, I think if people stay somewhere long enough – even white people – the spirits will begin to speak to them. It's the power of the spirits coming up from the land. The spirits and the old powers aren't lost, they just need people to be around long enough and the spirits will begin to influence them<sup>100</sup>.

All the more so when the machine one is riding on breaks down, and one is forced to walk three hours along the hydro lines back to the community with an elder one cannot really communicate with verbally, but with whom one can engage in a simple mutual reading, a literacy in the moment of that encounter, the first contact that ought to be relived by every immigrant to this land. Despite my ignorance and illiteracy, I take heart from the Dunne-za epistemic worldview expressed by Robin Riddington:

Every person is expected to 'know something.' What a person knows is a small but complete whole, not a small and incomplete part of the whole. A person knows a 'little bit' about the world in its entirety rather than a little part of all possible knowledge. Dunne-za knowledge is highly contextualized within experience rather than instrumental to purposes removed from experience. Every life is a microcosm of life in the universe at large. Every person 'knows something' from experience<sup>101</sup>.

There is comfort in this egalitarian fractal epistemic view of reality, especially to one who has felt throughout this trip of bearing witness that he cannot move far beyond the place of unknowing, that openness and emptiness that arises from having witnessed and overheard too many times the arrogance and tyranny of totality, of white privilege, the

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100 Snyder Reader, p.193

101 Robin Riddington, *Little Bit Know Something*, p.xv, 1990

attitudes of domestication, domination and control. From knowing the mind is too filled with one kind civilization for it to extend in that direction any farther, and knowing one must turn back or find new paths forward.

I have only reported on some conversations with new friends and community people I have met, in a land not far from the place where I was born, a few hours away on the contour of this Earth from the city of which I am native, an urban Jew, a white man who is faded-brown inside, and a city-boy, whose people have wandered deep into exile. That and a few thoughts I have had along the way. But with every journey I take, every Anishinaabe person I meet, every community I visit, every sweat I am privileged to sit in, the exile lessens one degree. And while none of us really know where the roads are going to – or where they came from (ok, maybe it's Rome – I cannot be equanimous with this bias yet) – each little bit of unknowing, met with a 'little bit know something' brings us one step closer to home, the home right beneath our feet – the home only now starting to enter our dreams.

this narrative journey is a bringing together of indigenous ways of knowing the world  
while honouring tradition as being other than static fossilized epistemology  
what I mean by *try to* is that I actually see it being done or imagine it being done  
but I do not know how to access the accomplishing postvisualizing tools  
which allow me to move from the conceptual to the performed to the spiritual  
and not be caught in a forest of language a treefarm of words  
by *try* I mean I am on the road to giving up *trying*  
replacing hesitating with doing perhaps this is what gilles deleuze (Deleuze, 1994)  
was talking about with respect to stuttering  
or john cage meant when he spoke of silence sound edge and bubbles (Cage, 1961)

the archaeoinformation highway needs upgrading regrading  
it looks like the aftereffects of an asteroid shower or a hail of lead grape  
another caveat this one about bridges and crossing geographies  
the idea in english of 'bridge' is very much about going over or through  
territory without touching it being touched by it  
the idea of bridge is about not touching the river geography land etc  
but being above it away from it *paddle paddle*  
as first peoples we define ourselves relative *to* the river the weather the land  
so what use is there of 'bridge' to us in the english language sense  
yes we had bridges across or through  
for traversing difficult geographies as un/in/ob/trusively as possible  
but we weren't afraid of getting dirty or wet or mussed<sup>102</sup>

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102 Peter Cole, *Coyote Raven Go Canoeing: Coming Home to the Village*. 2005, p.57

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Martina Fisher

Alec Green, translation Martina Fisher

Melba Green, and again Feb 2013

Mike Green, translation Martina Fisher

Ronald (Marty) Kennedy

Ellen and Frank Young

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Charlie Bushie

Lonnie Ross, with Keith Berens and Andrew Everette

Lena Whiteway, with Rebecca Swain and Andrew Everette

**Poplar River, March 11-16, 2011**

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## Appendix A: U of M Research Ethics Board (REB) Approval

### APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

09 October 2009

**TO:** Alon Weinberg (Advisor P. Kulchyski)  
Principal Investigator

**FROM:** Wayne Taylor, Chair  
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)

**Re:** Protocol #J2009:075  
**“Impacts of Roads on the Boreal Anishiinaabek”**

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the **Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement. This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

**Please note:**

- if you have funds pending human ethics approval, the auditor requires that you submit a copy of this Approval Certificate to Eveline Saurette in the Office of Research Services, (e-mail [eveline saurette@umanitoba.ca](mailto:eveline_saurette@umanitoba.ca), or fax 261-0325), including the Sponsor name, before your account can be opened.
- if you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.

**The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study** (available at: [http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors\\_ethics\\_human\\_REB\\_forms\\_guidelines.html](http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors_ethics_human_REB_forms_guidelines.html)) **in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.**

## Appendix B: Research Letter of Introduction

Protocol #J2009:075 “Impacts of Roads on the Boreal Anishinaabek” Alon Weinberg  
Letter of Introduction

Alon Weinberg  
Master of Arts Student,  
Department of Native Studies  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
(204)XXX-XXXX

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing to introduce both myself and my native studies research project to you, and to invite your participation in this project. This project is being initiated to investigate the relationship of all-weather roads to Anishinaabek culture in the boreal forest ecosystem of Manitoba and Northwest Ontario.

In the case of some communities, all-weather roads have been connected to communities in the last 40-60 years. In these communities, through interviews and collective discussions, I am hoping to record an oral history of what changes occurred in the community throughout the transition to all-weather road access. The research will seek to discover changes in terms of ecological relationships, social change, cultural continuity, and economic change. The oral history will be presented in participants' own words, with secondary research being conducted to help frame the time period in question. All reporting of oral history will first be checked for accuracy with the participants, to ensure fair representation and reproduction of their words.

For communities still today without year-round road access, the questions will focus on the perception of community members regarding the need for all-weather roads, seeking to understand how participants believe all-weather road access can benefit their communities, and how all-weather road access might hinder their communities. Perspectives will be sought from a broad cross-section of the community, from youth to elders. Recordings will be made consistent with the interviews in the communities with an oral history of being connected by all-weather roads, and all perspectives shared will again be checked with the participants for accuracy.

Your participation in this research study is entirely voluntary. Unless otherwise requested, you will be acknowledged as the speaker of your words and all words shared by you will be attributed to you. In the event you prefer to remain anonymous, your words will be shared as being from ‘anonymous.’ A copy of each interview will be shared with the person sharing, and when permission is granted, recordings and a copy of the final research project will be left in each community in the band office. This research belongs to the community in addition to being conducted as part of my research in the graduate program of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba, and is thus a voluntary collaboration between yourself and the researcher, between your community and the Department of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba. We hope this research will benefit you and your community and will help inform public policy in Manitoba and Northwest Ontario for many years to come.

I look forward to your involvement in the project and your willingness to share what you know about all-weather roads in the context of your Anishinaabek culture.

Sincerely,

Alon Weinberg, Master of Arts graduate student, U of M Department of Native Studies

Protocol #J2009:075 “Impacts of Roads on the Boreal Anishinaabek” Alon Weinberg  
Informed Consent Form

Re: Participation in Native Studies Research Project on Impacts of Roads on the Boreal Anishinaabek

Letter of Consent

By virtue of my signature on this letter and / or my oral, recorded consent, I,  
\_\_\_\_\_ (name), agree to participate in an oral interview about the role of all-  
weather roads on my community and on Anishinaabek cultural continuity in general.

I agree to be recorded and understand that this research will be shared with members of my and other  
First Nations communities, along with members of the academic community and of the general public.  
I understand that before this research is shared, I will be given an opportunity to corroborate or change  
any words that have been attributed to me. I acknowledge the right to be acknowledged for any words  
I may share and to have any words spoken by me to be attributed to me.

I release the researcher, Alon Weinberg, and the University of Manitoba, from any and all legal liability,  
so long as the conditions listed above are followed as understood. I also understand that I have the  
final say on how the research is used, and that the researcher will withdraw use of the recorded  
interviews and/or my name upon my request at any stage in the process.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ this \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_ in the year of \_\_\_\_\_ at  
\_\_\_\_\_(place).

OPTION B

I prefer to have that which I say in recorded interview be presented as anonymous, and ask that my  
name not be used in any part of this research project

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ this \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_  
In the year or \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_(place).