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"BEING ALIVE WELL": INDIGENOUS BELIEF AS OPPOSITION AMONG THE WHAPMAGOOSTUI CREE

Naomi Adelson, M.A.
McGill University, Montréal
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ABSTRACT

Through an analysis of Cree concepts of well-being, I challenge conventional social scientific definitions of health. In this dissertation I argue that there exists a fundamental biomedical dualism in health studies and, using cross-cultural examples, explore an expanded notion of "health". I then introduce the Cree concept of *miyupimaatisiiu* ("being alive well") and explain that for the Whapmagoostui Cree there is no term that translates back into English as health. I present the core symbols of "being alive well" and in their analysis find a persistence of traditional meanings. For the Cree "being alive well" is consonant with "being Cree", simultaneously transcending the individual and reflecting current political realities. *Miyupimaatisiiu* for the adult Cree of Whapmagoostui is a strategy of cultural assertion and resistance and hence situated within the realm of political discourses.

Au travers d'une analyse des concepts cris de bien-être, je remets en question la définition conventionelle de la santé en science humaines. Dans cette thèse, je soutiens qu'il existe un dualisme bio-médical fondamental dans les études de la santé et par l'examen d'exemples inter-culturels, je propose l'élargissement de la notion de "santé". Je présente le concept cri de *miyupimaatisiiu* (bien-vivre) et je constate que dans la langue crie de Whapmagoostui, il n'existe pas de traduction du mot "santé". Je présente les symboles clés de "bien-vivre", dont l'analyse révèle la persistence des significations traditionelles. Pour les Cris, "bien-vivre" équivant à "être Cri". Ce concept transcende le niveau individuel et reflète les réalités politiques actuelles. Pour les Cris adultes de Whapmagoostui, *miyupimaatisiiu* exprime une stratégie d'affirmation culturelle et de résistance et se situe donc au niveau du discours politique.

FOR MY FAMILY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I recall the first time that I arrived in Great Whale in October of 1987. In order to ascertain if the community would agree to the research project that I was planning for the following year, I spent two days in the village as a guest of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services. During those very blustery and very cold days I toured the perimeter of the village, met with a total of just three people, and browsed through the Co-op store at least a dozen times. I spent two long nights alone - wondering how I would ever return to such a small, isolated community to spend an entire year. How different my perspective is now that I have had the pleasure of participating in the rich and active community life in Whapmagoostui. It is hard to imagine how I ever spent those initial days in such isolation.

So many people in the village of Whapmagoostui expressed only their kindness and generosity to me. I extend my most sincere thanks to all the people of Whapmagoostui for welcom-

ing me so warmly into the community and I especially thank those who participated in this project. Most importantly, I thank the Whapmagoostui Band Council for granting me permission to conduct this research.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank specific people for their support, assistance and kindness and apologize at the outset to any whom I may have inadvertently omitted. To begin, I thank Steven Bearskin, manager of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services and Helen Bobbish-Atkinson, then communications director of the Board for their initial and continued support of this project's goals, as well as Dr. Elizabeth Robinson, director of the Module du Nord, for her support of and enduring interest in socio-cultural studies in medicine.

I thank the administrators of Badabin Eeyou School for the use of the computer and office facilities, and especially, Kitty Masty for keeping me in line!

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So much of what was discussed with people is not included in this dissertation. We spent countless hours reviewing all sorts of traditional remedies and therapies and discussing topics ranging from relations between the Cree and the nursing station to the meaning of Christianity in the modern Cree world. All of this is part of the sub-text of this disserta-

tion and while no less worthy of inclusion, is not part of the final version of the document. I anticipate that these data will be drawn upon over the next few years as I continue to learn about the past, present, and future of the Cree people.

Thank you Dr. Margaret Lock, my doctoral supervisor, for your patience, support, guidance and instruction over the years. I also thank Dr. Jérôme Rousseau for direction and for providing me with the knowledge that these projects really are do-able. As well I thank Dr. Colin Scott and Dr. Allan Young for their key insights and thoughtful discussions of critical issues and concepts. And, a special thank you to Rose Marie Stano for doing what she does so well.

I thank Lisa M. Mitchell for having the good sense to move to Montréal. Our discussions, coffee sessions, phone conferences, always having "the better question" to ask me, and her enduring friendship have produced nothing less than this dissertation. I only hope that I have been able to return the favour in kind. I also thank Pam Wakewich, Tom Dunk and Ken Bassett for their fruitful commentary, discussions and support. I thank Joel Minion for always putting this project into its proper perspective, as well as my other friends, who managed to stick by me and finally learn to stop asking if I was ever going to get a real job.

To my parents, sisters and family who have shared with me the trials and tribulations of the many years of graduate school: I am forever grateful for your unquestioning support

of my chosen circuitous path in life. Thank you.

I thank the National Health Research and Development Program, Health and Welfare Canada (Grant #6606-3176-55) and the McGill Centre for Northern Studies for the generous financial support of this project. I also graciously thank the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada as well as the Max Bell Fellowship in Canadian Studies for their support of this academic undertaking. Without the assistance of these fellowships I could not have pursued my studies to this level.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

In this dissertation I examine how concepts of health are constructed in a Cree community. I then consider how those representations and interpretations of health are shaped within a particular cultural and historical context. By addressing the circumstances and conditions through which this concept of health is constituted, I illustrate how it is simultaneously a powerful symbol of individual, social and political well-being. For the Cree, health is not simply physical well-being, but one form of articulating Cree nationalism in response to a perceived challenge to that identity.

As I will show in this dissertation, the very word health is perhaps a misnomer, since for the Cree the most apt phrase is *miyupimaatisiiu*,[1] or "being alive well". "Being alive

[1]The transliteration of most of the Cree terms into English orthography is from the Cree Lexicon: Eastern James Bay Dialects (1987), using the Northern, coastal dialect.

well" constitutes what one may describe as being healthy, yet it is less determined by bodily functions than it is by the practices of daily living and by the balance of human relationships intrinsic to Cree lifestyles.[2] Lacasse (1982) reached similar conclusions for the Montagnais, that is, that health is above all a matter of quality of life. I agree with and have reached similar conclusions to those of both Lacasse (1982) and Kistabish (1982) in that I see "health" as being a political and social phenomenon which is intimately tied to a particular way of life. Where I will differ with their works is that I understand in the articulation of "being alive well" an explicit expression of Cree identity and a process of cultural assertion specifically as a form of resistance. Thus, despite the awkwardness of the term *miyupimaatisiiu* in

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Terms not found in the lexicon are marked with an asterisk (*).

[2]While much of the information can be generalized to the Eastern James Bay Cree, I discuss specifically the Whapmagoostui Cree of Great Whale River since it is there that I conducted my research. As well, there is a confusion in the literature about the linguistic and cultural affiliation of the Great Whale Cree. They are alternatively referred to as Montagnais, Naskapi, Montagnais-Naskapi, or distinguished from either of these more eastern Algonquin groups. Affiliation with the western Hudson Bay Cree was an accident of missionization when the assumption was that the populations on either side of the James and Hudson Bays were related. Despite the closer affiliation to Naskapi or Montagnais (Innu), religious and administrative links were determined through Moose Factory and the term Cree used to classify these peoples. I will follow the present day usage of the terms Cree and Whapmagoostui Cree along with the northern Indigenous nomenclature of *iyiyuu* (sing.) and *iyiyuu'ch* (plu.).

translation I intend to make use of it throughout this dissertation.

This project is particularly timely. First, as I will detail in the chapters that follow, this is a period of particular uncertainty for the Cree of Whapmagoostui.[3] Historically, the Cree have had a considerable amount of interaction with other Native and non-Native groups (see Chapter Four), but the proposed massive hydro-electric project planned for the region is perceived as being a direct threat to their way of life and the viability of their land.

As well, at the time of the writing of this dissertation a large scale "health survey" has been launched in northern Québec. This project is an adjunct to the Santé Québec study that was conducted in the late 1980's throughout non-Native southern Québec. Partially at the request of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services and to be conducted in Cree, the study will examine blood pressure, blood samples, anthropometric measurements, and dietary practices, as well as areas of mental and physical health, health risk factors, health service utilization and disabilities (Lavallée 1991). In light of both this project and the current political

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[3]I use the terms Great Whale and Great Whale River interchangeably and when referring to the combined Inuit and Cree site. Whapmagoostui is the English transliteration of the name of the band that now resides at Great Whale River. The literal meaning of *whapmagoostui* is "white whale (river)," but the conventional term Great Whale River is used in translation. Whapmagoostui refers specifically to the Cree village.

climate, I believe that a project which examines the association of health beliefs and political realities is not only timely, but a worthwhile contribution to the study of "health" among the James Bay Cree.

Following this introduction I will discuss the health/illness dyad which is commonly used as a basic framework for understanding a biomedically-informed notion of health. While not within the scope of this project to debate the tenets of a western or biomedically-informed perspective, I do challenge the conventionally held notion of health arising from that perspective. Similarly, I have not conducted a study of the comparative definitions of health and illness, although this is discussed briefly in relation to "being alive well." As well, this is not a study of the comparative uses of indigenous and biomedical health services. All are topics for further investigation and worthy of separate inquiries.

"Being alive well", as I describe in the chapters that follow, is not a component of a health/illness dyad. Thus, I agree with Kass that

> ...disease, as the generic name for the cluster of symptoms and identifiable pathological conditions of the body, is not a notion symmetrical with, or opposite to, health. Health and *unhealth*...are true contraries, not health and disease (Kass 1981: 11).[4]

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[4]Kass points out the etymological root of the word health, from the Old English (*hal*) and Old High German (*heil*) words for whole; "to be whole is to be healthy, and to be healthy is to be whole" (1981: 15); the word health has no

The core of this dissertation is based upon the idealized and lived experiences of "being alive well" in that "being alive well" is simultaneously a statement of "experiential" (Kelman 1975)[5] and social well-being.

I present and explain the symbols of well-being for the Whapmagoostui Cree adults as they were described to me by the people of that community whom I interviewed. As Ortner has stated, a symbol is "a vehicle for cultural meaning" (1973: 1339). By symbols I refer to the usual anthropological definition which denotes how events, objects or beliefs are made meaningful to people through culturally constructed concepts.

The concepts described to me to a large extent exemplify distinctive Cree practices. In my assessment of those symbols and their meanings I delineate a socially, historically, and politically informed conceptualization of "being alive well". I further suggest that the tenacity with which the perceived traditional definition of "being alive well" is held may be the result of the increasing encroachment of non-Native influences on the community and the Cree nation.

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root relationship to the words for disease, illness or sickness (1981: 15).

[5]Kelman (1975) contrasts experiential and functional health; the former being the personal capacity of development free of illness while the latter encompasses the ability to perform work roles.

1.2 Medical Anthropology and Health

The roots of medical anthropology lie in the classic works of the anthropological study of religion and ritual.[6] Those investigations incorporated indigenous healing beliefs and practices into the study of societies and socio-cultural belief systems. Sickness events and healing procedures were chronicled in relation to other social phenomena (A. Young 1982; for example see: Evans-Pritchard 1937; Rivers 1924; V. Turner 1967, 1968; see also Landy 1983; Lieban 1977 for surveys of early works in medical anthropology).

The ethnomedical research done throughout the 1970's brought the heterogeneity of medical beliefs and practices to the fore in anthropology and signalled a prodigious growth in the field of medical anthropology (for example: Janzen 1978; Kleinman 1979; Lewis 1975; Lock 1984; Lindenbaum 1979; Ngubane 1977). More recently, biomedicine has been included in the analysis of culturally constituted healing practices (Comaroff 1982; Eisenberg and Kleinman 1981; Hahn and Gaines 1985; Lock and Gordon 1988; Wright and Treacher 1982).

Disease, illness, and sickness each carry their own specific meanings within medical anthropology, and the development of those classifications distinguishes an import-

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[6]I focus primarily on the symbolic and phenomenological aspects of the illness process here, and thus have excluded from this brief review the fields of applied medical anthropology and biomedical anthropology, which incorporates physical anthropology and the study of biological and disease phenomena cross-culturally.

ant stage in the evolution of the discipline (Eisenberg 1977; Hahn and Kleinman 1983; Kleinman, Eisenberg and Good 1978). Following Eisenberg, "disease" relates specifically to body organ or system abnormalities whereas "illness" refers to the individual, experiential changes in states of being and social function (Eisenberg 1977).

In an investigation limited to disease and illness, however, the focus of analysis is upon the individual illness experience and primarily during aspects of the clinical encounter, (Kleinman 1979; Katon and Kleinman 1981) so that, critics argue, there is a perpetuation of the mind-body dualism that is central to the biomedical model of disease and cure (A. Young 1982). More importantly, the disease-illness distinction does not address or acknowledge the social relations inherent to illness processes, that is, how those experiences are shaped and distributed in society (A. Young 1982: 269). In much the same way that biomedicine focuses exclusively on individual disease phenomena, so did medical anthropologists restrict their studies to the disease experience and clinical process.

In order to rectify the shortcomings of the disease-illness distinction, social conditions and influences are incorporated into the anthropological configuration through the concept of "sickness". According to A. Young (see also Frankenberg 1980, 1988) "sickness is a process for socializing

disease and illness" (1982: 270).[7] Specifically, "sickness" is a process of translation through which disparate behaviours and biological signs are ascribed socially recognizable meanings. Through the sickness process these disparate signs become symptoms and yield a range of possible socially acceptable outcomes, that is, this is a process whereby illness is socially validated (A. Young 1982).

More recently, there has been a shift away from the illness experience as the principal locus of investigation and toward an understanding of the body in society. In these analyses illness is viewed as a medium for the expression and communication of the cultural, emotional and political relations of the social order (Comaroff 1985a,b; Lock and Scheper-Hughes 1990; Scheper-Hughes 1988; Lock and Dunk 1990). Rather than focusing on disease, illness, or sickness per se the shift is toward an anthropology of the body whereby, as Lock and Scheper-Hughes suggest,

> [t]he individual body should be seen as the most immediate, the proximate terrain where social truths and social contradictions are played out, as well as the locus of personal and social resistance, creativity and struggle (1990: 71).

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[7]There is an allusion here to the political economy of health (see, for example, Navarro 1976; Doyal 1979; Baer 1982, 1986; Singer 1990) but in these Marxist analyses of health care systems and processes of illness the focus is on the effects of capitalism and the commodification of the health care process, with explicit attention to class relations. While the perspective adds to the overall understanding of sickness, it limits the attention addressed to other elements intrinsic to the cultural realities of either illness or well-being (see Chapter Three).

I will resume this discussion in Chapter Three and now turn to the anthropological study of health.

There have been a number of anthropological studies that attempt to address, understand, or define health both universally and cross-culturally (Alers 1971; Audy 1971; Bauwens 1978; Clark 1970; Dubos 1965, 1979; Fabrega and Manning 1972; Harjula 1982; Herzlich 1973; Kasl and Cobb 1966; Koos 1954; Mechanic 1974; Ngubane 1977; Wall 1988). Few however examine health independently of illness or question the underlying ideological beliefs associated with "health." The term health, as it is usually used, as I will argue in the third chapter, is intrinsically bound to the biomedical model and constituted from within this paradigm.

Studies as comprehensive as those of Wall (1988), Ngubane (1977) or Manning and Fabrega (1972; 1973) that richly detail the cultural construction of health do so nevertheless in relation to illness or the healing process.

I present René Dubos' (1965) definition of health as an example of how health is conceived as being subsumed within a definition of the absence of disease. Dubos' notion of health has at its core the essence of what many of the aforementioned studies assume. That is, that one may never reach the ideally healthy state, but it is nonetheless a practical formulation of adaptation in the absence of disease. One can never be completely "healthy" in the process of adaptation to an imperfect world. Health, says Dubos, is best viewed as a

mirage, an ideal that can never be met in the real world of physical, biological and social forces (1965: 349). Countering health is the constant possibility of disease. Health is thus viewed as a process of individual responsibility for coping with external forces, and is situated in opposition to ill-health: if one is not healthy then one must *ipso facto* be unhealthy or sick.

The functional, ecological model of health espoused by Dubos assumes an individual basis for the maintenance of health and well-being and, by remaining within the framework of a biomedical model of health and disease preserves the boundaries of health through individual action and in relation to the individual body.

What I contend, and will demonstrate through this dissertation, is that while illness may be the antithesis of health, for the Cree "being alive well" transcends this individualistic notion of health. "Being alive well" is constituted within a framework of the social and political realities affecting both the individual and the group and is not simply confined to an individual body or based on the absence of disease.

1.3 "Being Alive Well"

For the Cree, one may be sick and in hospital but as long as that individual is surrounded by family members and feels comforted, then he or she is *miyupimaatisiiu*, or "alive well"

(Bobbish-Atkinson and Magonet 1990). "Being alive well" is a statement of how one lives and interacts, and although related to, is not bound within the nexus of health and illness. Of course, the ideals that comprise "being alive well" cannot always be met, and one may then not "be alive well". This does not always necessarily imply a pathological condition of the individual, however, so much as it might of society.

Cree well-being, say the adults whom I interviewed, is the Cree way of life: "being alive well" is being able to hunt, pursue traditional activities, live well in the bush, eat the right foods, keep warm, and it is the ability to provide for oneself and others. "Being alive well" is an idealized image of Cree life.

There are similarities between the conceptualization of Cree "being alive well" and, for example, the northern Australian Anbarra conceptualization of well-being (Meehan 1982). In both cases well-being is attained by living and eating according to the proper indigenous traditions which can only be achieved through an explicit opposition to the presence or influences of non-Natives. I will address this issue more fully in the final sections of the dissertation.

In this introduction to "being alive well," I would like to introduce some of the complexities involved in coming to understand "being alive well." Western medical interventions have long been integrated into Cree conceptualizations of healing, as have, to some degree, Western notions of "health."

Just as Nichter found in rural south India that "popular health culture is a bricolage, an assemblage of eclectic conceptual and material resources" (1989: 190), so too, do Cree adults simultaneously hold different concepts and ideals of health, each consonant with a particular conceptualization of individual and social factors through which notions of "health" are constructed. Indeed, people everywhere can talk of sharing a concept of health (or illness), and yet of course, there is variety, just as there is variety between groups and cultures. Thus just as there is no one thing called biomedicine, despite the label, there is similarly, no one thing called health. This does not preclude however that there is a distinctive Cree concept of "being alive well" which simultaneously consolidates fundamental concepts of Cree well-being, irrespective of whether it is in conflict or conformity with organic "health." In reality, people move back and forth in what they say and do and particular conditions and perceptions of their lived experience will guide people's actions and thoughts at any given moment in how they perceive and manage their daily lives (A. Young 1991 pers. comm.).

This perspective will thus not only be as faithful as is reasonably possible to what my informants have told me, but will also challenge the conventional, biomedically informed comprehension of health. As well, by relating the historical, cultural, and political factors intrinsic to "being alive

well," I distinguish and articulate a particular notion of Cree nationalism.

Prior to the more comprehensive discussion of the data, I will introduce the work that I did at Whapmagoostui. In the sections that follow I will explain how I came to choose Whapmagoostui as my fieldsite and then describe the village itself. I present in this initial chapter an introduction to the people of Whapmagoostui and their contemporary situation. The history of the region of Great Whale and the details and chronology of the contemporary political situation will be described in Chapter Four.

1.4 First Contact

Earlier anthropological inquiries at Great Whale River were conducted more often among the Inuit than among the Cree. The majority of these studies took place through the 1950's and 1960's and were conducted primarily by John J. Honigmann and then a series of his graduate students (Honigmann 1950, 1951, 1952, 1957, 1962; Honigmann and Honigmann 1953a,b; Rogers 1965; Wills 1965; Barger and Earl 1971; Barger 1974, 1977; Walker[8] 1953). These research projects were conducted during summer months and without exception at the established village. This time period coincides with the large influx of

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[8]Walker's M.A. thesis is from the University of Arizona but he relies upon Honigmann's fieldnotes and published works (1953:iv).

non-Native government and armed forces workers[9] and many of the studies examine the relationships between the Inuit, Cree and non-Native populations.

Since that time, anthropologists have concentrated on James Bay Cree communities south and southeast of Great Whale River (for example: Preston 1971, 1976, 1977, 1981a,b; Feit 1978, 1982, 1985, 1986; Tanner 1979; Scott 1979, 1983, 1989a,b; Salisbury 1986). The fieldwork that I conducted among the Whapmagoostui Cree was the first after an absence of anthropologists in this community for approximately twenty years.

My choosing to work with the Whapmagoostui Cree arises from conversations with one of my dissertation committee members and with the communications director of the Cree Regional Board of Health and Social Services (CRBHSS). Since the early 1970's the contact between Cree communities and McGill University anthropologists has been symbiotic. The Cree acknowledge that they have benefitted from anthropologists' contributions in the public, academic and legal arenas in that those efforts have led to a greater understanding of Cree cultural, political and economic activities. The anthropologists, in turn, have advanced academically and professionally through their association with the Cree nation. The link between the Cree and the McGill anthropologists was

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[9]Great Whale was selected as one of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) lines monitoring stations.

forged in the early 1970's during the conflict that arose as a result of the planned implementation of the first James Bay hydro-electric project (see Salisbury 1983). Anthropologists worked with and for the Cree throughout the court battles and the ensuing agreements and changes to the infrastructure of the Cree communities and the Cree nation itself.

On the basis of this long-standing connection between McGill University and the Cree people, it was suggested to me that I choose one or two of the Cree communities as my fieldsite.[10] Dr. Colin Scott further recommended that I think about Whapmagoostui since this community was often overlooked in favour of those south of it. It was finally Ms. Helen Bobbish-Atkinson, then director of communications for the CRBHSS, who convinced me that not only was a study of "health" worthwhile but she also agreed that I should go to Whapmagoostui, since she too felt it was being overlooked.

My first contact with the Cree of Whapmagoostui was in the fall of 1987 when I went to meet with the council and health committee representatives in order to get a preliminary sense of whether they would see the merit of my project. The immediate concerns that were voiced to me were: whether I would be independently funded, if I would provide some local employment and if the project would have some basic, practical

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[10]In my initial proposal I intended to compare an inland with a coastal village. Ultimately I decided to go to only one community for practical and financial reasons and also because I felt that the study that I planned was best suited to a long term association with one community.

value. Funding had not been secured at that early stage but I did know that I would be hiring local translators and that I also envisioned this project to have both theoretical as well as practical merit. With the initial go-ahead from these representatives, I then completed the project proposal and submitted that to the Great Whale Band Council and the Cree Regional Board of Health and Social Services for their respective approvals.

With approvals secured, I left to Great Whale River and the village of Whapmagoostui. That was June, 1988 - and one of the enduring memories of that first week in Great Whale was seeing the northern slopes of the hills nearby still covered in snow and the immense ice floes that would, despite their size and abundance, arrive on the shore of the Hudson Bay one day and disappear the next. I would quickly become acclimatized to the northern climate and learn about the long winters, beautiful spring months and the few short weeks that constitute summer.

The health board representative found temporary housing for me on the day of my arrival. I was to live with a young family for the first week - or until other arrangements could be made. That week stretched into eight as my host, Maggie, welcomed me into her home and her confidence. She became my language instructor, teaching me how to understand not only the spoken language but also the more subtle forms of passive and non-verbal communication among the Cree. She introduced

me to the village on our walks or all-terrain vehicle (ATV) rides to and from the store, and eased me through the maze of her family relations each time we met one of her siblings, cousins, aunts or uncles.

Since Maggie would be going south to continue her education that fall, I arranged to move in with her mother-in-law and family. I lived with Eliza, her husband and their adult son for the next 4 months. Each member of the family had a full-time job outside of the house and often arrived home at different hours, so there was less time to spend together. Eliza was very kind to me and we would try to chat in a mixture of Cree and English while she sewed, cooked or babysat children - Eliza was never without something to do. The age and language barriers between us meant however that, despite the shared sense of friendship, our communication was limited. In order to supplement the rent I paid, I helped Eliza with the household chores - she especially appreciated this in the early winter when her back was sore from a week of cleaning out the newly constructed houses that had been built that summer and fall.

After January, 1988 and until my departure, I lived with Emily. My move to Emily's was predicated on a number of things. Emily was increasingly becoming an important translator for me and we tended to do a lot of work together. We had also, over the months, become good friends and often spent hours discussing Cree myths, politics, religion or language

issues. We both felt that it would serve our respective interests to have me move in with her and her children. On my two returns to Great Whale since the end of the longer fieldwork period, I have stayed with Emily and on both occasions it was nothing less than a trip back home.

1.5 Great Whale and the Whapmagoostui Cree

1.5-i The Location

Approximately 1200 kilometres north of Montréal and just above the 55° parallel the mouth of the Great Whale River opens into Hudson Bay. The villages of Great Whale are located where the Great Whale River and Hudson Bay converge. This is the subarctic taïga, a transitional zone between southern boreal forest and the treeless tundra. There is the characteristic inland panorama of coniferous (primarily spruce) trees along with some birch, low shrubs and carpets of lichen. The vegetation along the shoreline to the west and north of the villages resembles that of the barren lands because of the harsh conditions and fierce winds that blow along the coast. There are quarries and channels of bedrock in the hills to the north and south of the villages. These rocks along with the sand that characterizes the villages' immediate terrain are evidence of the tiers of glaciation and erosions that have shaped this region since the last Ice Age (Marsh 1988). The combination of frequent northerly winds and the geography of the region contributes to Great Whale River

community habitually being covered in a thick, soupy fog during most of the summer season.

Whapmagoostui is the furthest north of the modern Eastern James Bay Cree communities and the only one on the shores of the Hudson Bay. The other seven communities are located to the south and southeast of Great Whale River.[11]

Roads into northeastern Québec go only as far as Chisasibi so the only means of entry into Great Whale remains either by plane or boat.[12] The "big" plane, a Canadian Airlines Boeing 737, arrives daily during the week. The smaller planes of Air Creebec and Air Inuit have less frequent schedules. With only visual landing capacity there is often the likelihood that any of the planes will not be able to land.[13]

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[11]Chisasibi, the second largest of the Cree communities is south of Whapmagoostui. The other coastal communities are: Wemindji, Eastmain and Waskaganish. The inland communities are, from north to south, Nemaska, Waswanipi, Mistissini (the largest of the Cree villages), and Oujé-Bougamou.

[12]Annual supplies of fuel, construction equipment and materials, trucks, and much of the Northern Store's inventory are sent up by ship some time in late July or August (the Cree term used that corresponds to the calendar month of August is *chiimaan piisim* which translates to "boat month").

[13]The airport is provincial property, expropriated by the government from Inuit category 1A land. Despite the acknowledged need for radar facilities to assist landings, more land is needed for this. Negotiations between the government and the Inuit remain unresolved and are now stalled by the debates surrounding the hydro-electric projects.

1.5-ii Kuujjuarapik, Great Whale, Whapmagoostui, Poste de la Baleine

Great Whale consists of two official municipalities: Kuujjuarapik (Inuit) and Whapmagoostui (Cree), and three unofficial communities: Inuit, Cree and non-Native. The village of Kuujjuarapik is run by the mayor and his council, while Whapmagoostui elects a chief and council to those government seats. The population of Great Whale currently consists of just over 500 Cree, approximately 300 Inuit and 200 predominantly francophone non-Natives. It is only in the last few years, since many Inuit moved to the newly created village of Umiujaq, that the Cree outnumber the Inuit.[14] Each of these three groups speaks a different language, the most common denominator being a fourth, English.

Although the Inuit were in the majority until a few years ago, there are now more Cree than either Inuit or non-Native inhabitants. This shift in population sizes is the direct result of a recent exodus of almost half the Inuit population from Great Whale to Umiujaq.

The non-Native population - with the exception of the Anglican priest and his family and those who have married into either Cree or Inuit families - live "up the hill" from the Cree and Inuit.

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[14]Umiujaq, located about 100 km. north of Great Whale, is a village that was petitioned for by Kuujjuarapik Inuit as part of the compensation package in the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. The construction and eventual move to this coastal village took place in the early 1980s.

The generator station, police station, employment office and all other provincial services, judicial offices, adult education facility, post office, airport and, Cree clinic are located on Inuit land.[15] The non-Native teachers, clinic workers, government employees, Hydro workers, police, employment officer, court officers, postal employees, construction workers and engineers all live near these offices. This entire section is considered "up the hill" from the two Native communities. The lodging provided for the non-Native residents of Great Whale is either in comfortable trailer-style or permanent houses, or in renovated army barracks - modern-day remnants of the Cold War era.

The non-Native population does not partake to any real extent in local politics, partly for the simple reason that they cannot vote for the local municipal leaders. Instead, they vote in the federal and provincial elections as members of the greater Abitibi region. Many of the non-Native people have their food flown in from Val D'Or or Montreal on a weekly basis, so shop only for a few items at the local stores.[16]

As much as there are divisions between the Native and non-Native residents of Great Whale, there are invisible jural and linguistic lines that separate the indigenous communities.

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[15]By accident of history the Inuit medical clinic is on Cree land and the Cree clinic is "up the hill" and thus, on Inuit land.

[16]Substantial cargo allowances are often included in employment packages for non-Natives working in the north.

Since the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA; see Chapter Four), Whapmagoostui's village borders are circumscribed by the limits of Cree and Inuit category 1A land. Divisions between the Cree and Inuit were evident in the past at Great Whale but never was the division of land so precisely and explicitly acknowledged. A case in point is the situation of the convenience store owned by a Cree man. The front entrance of the store is on Inuit category 1A land although the rest of the store sits on Cree land. The question arose at one time if the store would then have to contribute to the Inuit municipal tax on purchased goods. It does not - but the incident conveys a sense of the division felt between the communities arising from the stipulations of the JBNQA.

The Cree and Inuit speak different mother tongues and since people tend to socialize within their own kin groups, there is rarely overlap of the linguistic or cultural boundaries.[17] The Cree and Inuit hunt in different regions, eat different bush foods, and live in different types of community housing. Both the Cree and Inuit shop at the Northern Store and while both may shop at either the Co-Op or Sandy's Store, by and large, the Inuit frequent the former and the Cree, the latter. The children are educated in different schools, and

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[17]There is now an increased emphasis among the Inuit to educate their children in French, so there is less of a common language of communication between the younger generations.

the Cree and Inuit have separate church services, medical clinics, and municipal services.

While not unfriendly there is only limited communication or interaction between the Cree and the Inuit. The only time that Cree and Inuit participate jointly in activities is during the occasional attendance at the other community's feasts or games, or when socializing at the one local bar.

Despite this limited daily interaction, there is a shared respect at the time of a death of either an Inuit or a Cree individual. When a death occurs in Whapmagoostui or Kuujjuarapik, flags are lowered and all social events postponed in both communities and only resumed after the burial and final prayer service. There is a respectful reciprocity between the Cree and the Inuit such that social activities - from bingo to community feasts - will be put on hold until after the funeral. Most of the regular day's activities are suspended for the community so that anyone who wishes can attend these services.

There is also an established reciprocity between the Cree and the Inuit in the preparation of the dead. Although the origin of this practice is unclear, Inuit women come to wash and prepare a deceased Cree individual and Cree women will do the same for the Inuit.[18]

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[18]One informant suggested that perhaps the origin of this practice is from the days when it was primarily the older and incapacitated Cree and Inuit who were living at the post. With fewer people in either group, most would be in mourning for the deceased. This courtesy, possibly at the urging of

The recent resolve on the part of both the communities of Whapmagoostui and Kuujjuarapik to contest the planned Hydro-electric project in the region has brought the communities to a new, and rather delicate, political alliance.

1.5-iii The Village of Whapmagoostui

With few exceptions, all members of the Cree community residing at Great Whale live in houses within the boundaries of the village of Whapmagoostui. Also situated in the Cree village are the band office, school, sports field (and hockey arena, which is still under construction), grocery store, radio station, construction warehouse, and machine shop. The other two stores, the Cree clinic, church, post office, small hotel, bar, and a snack bar are situated on Inuit land, as are all Inuit housing and Inuit community facilities.

The modern single unit or semi-detached houses erected in Whapmagoostui over the last eight years have significantly changed the face of the village.[19] The older federal government-built houses were aligned primarily along a main east-west artery that divides the Cree and Inuit communities. Some of the old houses are still being used but the units are slowly being demolished and the families moved into the newer homes. The new Cree homes are constructed so that house

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the missionary, may have developed as a result.

[19]See Salisbury 1986: 69-71 for a review of the Cree Housing Corporation's agenda for setting up and constructing housing.

fronts face inward and toward one another. The homes along the two east-west roads end in large cul-de-sacs at either extreme. The two north to south roads curve toward the west in such a way that the line of the houses forms a stylized "J" shape.

A common site either behind or beside many homes in the late fall are the canvas and pole "tipi" structures (*iyiyu-kamikw*; literal translation: Cree/Indian dwelling) that are erected soon after the return from goose camp. *Iyiyukamikw* are generally constructed at the home of the matriarch of a family and her daughters and daughters-in-law will share the dwelling with her.

There are several purposes for the *iyiyukamikw*. They are used primarily to pluck and then roast or dry the geese during the late fall season. The fire pit in the centre of the *iyiyukamikw* is used for cooking, smoking caribou hides, or simply for baking bannock. With the aromatic spruce boughs on the floor and a small controlled fire burning, the environment of the *iyiyukamikw* is a tranquil respite from village activities for the women. Oftentimes women will gather together in one *iyiyukamikw* in order to work and chat together.

The newly constructed homes are all built on cement foundations and so have underground water and sewage facilities. The homes are designed with either three or four bedrooms depending on the model and some families will turn the basement area into additional bedroom space, if needed.

Houses are provided - delays in construction notwithstanding - for families who need and want them. As well, moving from one home to another is done relatively casually and can be negotiated between families before being brought to the band housing officer.

With each year of construction activity the roads of packed sand and crushed stone are either extended or new ones made. The streets are, of course, used for vehicle transit - primarily by municipal services such as the school bus, garbage pick up, snow removal, construction, and maintenance. Few individuals have their own automobiles.[20]

The principal modes of personal transportation are snowmobiles in the wintertime and all-terrain vehicles (ATV) the rest of the year. For the snowmobiles and ATVs, the roads comprise just a small portion of the network of trails that weave through the village and which trace packed sand or snow routes between and behind the houses and community facilities.

Borders and boundaries such as gardens or gates around houses do not exist in Whapmagoostui. The sandy terrain upon which the homes are built limits any type of horticulture even if one were to consider engaging in that activity. More importantly, I would suggest, is what may be a new interpretation of an established ethic of land tenure. The houses

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[20]People drive vans or four-wheel drive vehicles; there are no cars in Great Whale, since the terrain makes them virtually impractical.

in the community are not owned outright.[21] Thus, just as the land and animals cannot be owned by humans, so it is also with the houses and with the property surrounding the actual premises. As one elder explained to me, the houses are to be used while spending time in the village, much as the *iyiyu-kamikw* is used when in the bush. They are both dwellings that serve the same basic purpose of warmth and protection from the elements, and neither is considered to be more permanent than the other. In much the same way, the property around the houses is freely accessible and one is allowed full range of the area with no restrictions or boundaries determined by the inhabitants of the residences.

With sliding scale rents everyone in the community has equal access to housing.[22] There is increasing evidence though of financial divisions between those who have administrative, teaching or office positions and those who are either unemployed or are full-time trappers. There is an emerging financial gap between those with jobs and resources available to purchase material goods and those without either.

The acquisition of material goods does not immediately translate into prosperity however. To be poor in the Cree

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[21]Category 1A lands are set aside for the exclusive use of Cree, according to the JBNQA, but Québec retains ownership of the land. Hence, property cannot be owned outright by individuals. Homes are allocated and administered through the Cree Housing Corporation.

[22]There are also two homes built to accommodate wheelchairs and a newly built multi-unit residence that will house chronically ill residents of the community.

language implies that one is without food and not necessarily that a person or family is lacking material goods, although one often results in the other. The worth of material items is based primarily on their usefulness and one's relative degree of need. Those who have more than others will often give food or money to family members who have less. For example, new snowmobiles may be bought annually by those who can afford them so that the older snowmobiles can be given or sold at a very low cost to a relative who is in need of one. Those who are out hunting may in turn provide additional bush food to those who are in town and unable to hunt or trap for themselves. Hence, despite an increasing disparity between town workers, trappers and those who are unemployed, there remains an ethic of reciprocity that permeates this new division which is reinforced by a pragmatic attitude toward material goods (see also C. Scott 1983; 1984).

1.5-iv Population and Employment

Of the 500 Cree living in Whapmagoostui in 1988-1989, only 158 (32%) are over the age of 30. Of the 94 who are between the ages of 30 and 50, fifty are women and forty-four are men. Of those over the age of 50, there are thirty women and thirty-four men.

All of the elder adult women fall within 4 occupational categories (see Table 1). They either pursue traditional activities (70%), are housewives (23%), or work in cleaning

TABLE I
OCCUPATIONS OF ADULT CREE WOMEN OF WHAPMAGOOSTUI
BORN PRIOR TO 1940 AND BETWEEN 1940-1960*

	<1940	1940-60	TOTAL
Traditional Pursuits	21/70%**	10/20%	31/39%
Housewife	7/23% **	10/20%	17/21%
Domestic	2/6%	7/14%	9/11%
Administrative, Band	---	2/4%	2/3%
Band Office Employee	---	1/2%	1/1%
Provincial Government Employee	---	2/4%	2/3%
Administrative, School	---	2/4%	2/3%
Teacher	---	5/10%	5/6%
Community/Social Worker	---	3/6%	3/4%
Store Employee	---	4/8%	4/5%
Local Radio Employee	---	2/4%	2/3%
Unemployed	---	2/4%	2/3%
TOTAL	30	50	80

TABLE II
OCCUPATIONS OF ADULT CREE MEN OF WHAPMAGOOSTUI
BORN PRIOR TO 1940 AND BETWEEN 1940-1960*

	<1940	1940-60	TOTAL
Traditional Pursuits	22/65%**	6/14%	28/36%
Construction	3/9%**	16/36%	19/24%
Catechist	2/6%	---	2/2%
Administrative, Band	---	8/18%	8/10%
Band Office Employee	---	1/2%	1/1%
Administrative, Cree Construction Corporation	---	1/2%	1/1%
Police	---	1/2%	1/1%
Maintenance	---	5/11%	5/6%
Teacher	---	1/2%	1/1%
Community/Social Worker	---	2/5%	2/2%
Store Employee	2/6%	---	2/2%
Driver	---	2/5%	2/2%
Artist	1/3%	---	1/1%
Unemployed	4/12%	1/2%	5/6%
TOTAL	34	44	78

n.b. A higher percentage of women are listed as pursuing traditional activities. This is because some are retired or widows of ISP hunters.

* As defined by a Band official as of Summer/Fall, 1988. Not included are those who were either out of town or incapacitated due to chronic illness.

** Some retired but defined according to these categories.

services (6%). The fourth category (not listed in Table 1A) is catechist. One elder adult woman is a catechist but also pursues traditional activities. The distinction between housewives and those pursuing traditional activities[23] is dependent upon their husbands' work, that is if the man and woman are collecting Income Security for time spent hunting and trapping in the bush, or if retired from those activities. Those categorized as housewives - a term suggested to me by a member of the community - are among the women whose husbands are not trappers and do not participate in the Income Security Program. The term housewife is not entirely indicative of the range of activities that these women can be involved in, some of which would overlap with those pursuing traditional activities. The daily activities of older adult women may include home maintenance as well as child care for grandchildren, nieces or nephews, cooking, baking, preparing bush foods and their by-products (including for example, plucking, skinning, scraping and tanning hides), as well as sewing boots, mitts, and other items used by family members or sold to the local craft shop.

As shown in Table 1, among those born between 1940 and 1960, the greatest percentage of women are either housewives

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[23]The term traditional pursuits is how the Cree distinguish in English between those who are trappers and those who are wage earners. This does not preclude the fact that everyone in the village pursues, to a greater or lesser degree, some so-called traditional activities - either hunting, sewing, wood carving, or manufacturing implements such as snowshoes, snow shovels, boots, mitts or gun sacks.

or pursue traditional activities. Other forms of employment for these women include band administrator or employee, teacher, provincial government employee, school administration, social worker, store employee and local radio station worker. Only 4% of this age group are unemployed in 1988.

Among the elder adult men, 65% pursue traditional activities, while the others are either catechists, employed in construction, art, or at one of the local stores. Only 6% are unemployed.

The greatest percentage of men between the ages of 30 and 50 are employed by the Cree Construction Corporation in 1988 (36%). Only 14% participate in the Income Security Program. Other occupations include band administrator or employee, administrator of other Cree organizations, police, maintenance, teacher, social worker, or band driver. At the time of this survey in the fall of 1988 only 2% of the adult men over the age of thirty are unemployed.[24]

Families who participate in the Income Security Program, developed through the JBNQA, are remunerated for the time spent trapping and in the bush. The overall percentage of Whapmagoostui adult men who trap on full time basis is 36 percent.

This figure, however, does not take into account the number of families that regularly hunt or fish. There is the

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[24]Seasonal employment in construction skews the figures. During the winter and when no construction work is available many men are unemployed.

twice annual goose hunting season at which time the community virtually shuts down while everyone who is able is off at their respective hunting sites.

Bush food is procured throughout the year either directly or indirectly. There is an informal kin network of distribution of bush food sent in from those trapping full time and if, for example, a moose has been shot, the hundreds of kilograms of meat are distributed throughout the entire village. As well, young and older men will shoot ptarmigan or trap rabbits during the winter and fish during the summer. Caribou herds, which have returned to the region of Great Whale for the last three winters, are prudently hunted - people are reminded to kill only what is needed for food.

Of increased concern in 1990 and the future is the job opportunities for the burgeoning youth population of this community. Whereas just a few years ago anyone returning to the community with a college or university degree was guaranteed a job, there are fewer and fewer openings in either the band office or the few local enterprises. The current impetus is to determine where the job priorities are and to continue replacing non-Native with Cree employees in school and administrative positions.

1.5-v Religion in Whapmagoostui: Cree Anglicanism

Religion plays an important role in Whapmagoostui. Preston (1981b) refers to a Cree-Anglicanism that is practised

by the Cree in the Hudson Bay coastal region, and this term aptly describes the religious practices of the Whapmagoostui Cree. That is, the religion that is practised is by no means a "folk" religion, but rather the syncretic integration of two forms of religious worship. Since the inception of Christianity in this region, Cree values have been incorporated into the biblical teachings. There is a fusion of Cree and Christian beliefs in the interpretation of supernatural forces within Cree orthodoxy. The Christian God, for example, is the omnipotent being in the hierarchy of spirits within Cree cosmology (Feit 1983: 16; Tanner 1979: 108; see also Chapter Five).

Another example that illustrates this melding of Cree beliefs with Christian doctrine is in the prayers that are said after the death of an individual. It is felt that the spirit can only make a successful transition into the next world, and at the same time leave those behind in peace, if the proper prayers are said. These prayers, taken from Biblical text, are repeated on a regular basis at the home of immediate family members of the deceased from the time of death until after the burial. Here, the concept of spirit movement and successful passage without harming any of those still living is the adaptation of Cree beliefs to the doctrine of an eternal afterlife. The notion of heaven, after all, came only with the teachings of Christianity.

Christian baptism, confirmation, communion, marriage as well as funeral and burial practices are an integral part of Cree-Anglican religious traditions although each ceremony carries with it particular local variations, as one would find in any isolated community.

Another aspect of Cree-Anglicanism is the type of Christian doctrine that is upheld in Whapmagoostui. In this case, it is not just that Cree beliefs have been integrated into Christianity, but the type of Christianity that has been accepted by the Cree people. The Christian morality of the earlier stricter Anglicanism determines the ethical standards that one must strive to achieve in this village. Part of the reason for the continuity of a stricter moral code is the limited access to biblical texts in the Cree language. Currently, the only Cree syllabic Bible available is a literal translation of a 17th century King James version of the scriptures.[25] Thus, despite radical changes in the interpretations and thinking of the modern Anglican church, local Cree interpretations are suspended in this much older English version. Divorce and remarriage, for example, while accepted

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[25]The readings from the Old and New Testaments, prayer book, hymnal, the Gospel According to St. John, and a few devotional readings are the only texts of any kind available in Cree syllabics. The syllabary used however is that of Moose Cree. A number of years ago the monumental task of translating the religious texts into eastern Cree was begun and is still not yet completed.

within the Anglican church, remain intolerable acts in Whapmagoostui (Rev. T. Martin per. comm. 1991).[26]

Church services are held in Cree on Wednesday evening and twice on Sunday, in the morning and again in the evening. These services follow directly after those held for the Inuit. Attendance at the church varies but is especially high after people have been away from the village for any length of time. The first communion services that are held just after goose break, for example, will often fill the church to capacity.

The catechists, lay readers and priest perform the thrice weekly services. The catechists and lay readers are trained to read and conduct services. Catechists, but not lay readers, can also preside over communion services, marriages and baptisms. All members of the Cree clergy are highly respected elders within the community. In Whapmagoostui today there are two catechists and six lay readers, who work together with the priest in church and community activities. Members of the community will go to one of the Cree clergy for counselling and guidance, since people may prefer to discuss personal problems with them rather than either the social workers or the non-Cree speaking priest. Along with counselling activities and regular visits to the sick, the catechists

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[26]Another result of the increasingly more tolerant spirituality of the Anglican church today is that Cree practices that were once strictly forbidden - such as drumming in church or conducting a sweat lodge - are being sanctioned and encouraged by the church. Despite this however there is little evidence of a resurgence of these activities (Rev. T. Martin per. comm. 1991).

and lay readers are also responsible for teaching the children their confirmation lesson and they remain important and respected religious and community leaders (Rev. T. Martin, per. comm. 1991).

So strong is the Cree-Anglican tradition that the "new missionaries" of the Pentecostal church come up against solid opposition when attempting to convert members of the community. In contrast to the situation in other Cree communities and even in neighbouring Kuujjuarapik, few people are interested in Pentecostalism. Polite indifference has greeted the two missionaries who have spent the last few years living in Kuujjuarapik learning Inuktitut and Cree. The only reason cited for interest in or conversion to this religion by the Cree is because of the strict prohibition of alcohol consumption required of all converts. As well, despite the presence of a small Catholic chapel in Great Whale there have been no conversions to Catholicism.[27]

1.5-vi The Whapmagoostui *Iyiyuu'ch*

In this last section of the first chapter, I introduce the Cree people as they describe themselves (see Chapter Six

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[27]There have never been attempts of conversion to Catholicism because of a decision taken over a century ago as to the division of missionary activity in the north. In Great Whale specifically, there is no interest by the Cree in Catholicism partly because it is perceived as being "non-Native" since the chapel is "up the hill" from the Native communities and attended only by non-Native Catholics. Also, there is little interaction between the leaders or the congregants of either church.

for the political significance of the description of *Iyiyuu*). In Cree the word for person is the same word that distinguishes a Cree person from another. Thus, *iyiyuu* (plural: *iyiyuu'ch*) indicates that one is referring to any person or, in particular, a Cree individual. The term *iyiyuu* can further be used to make the distinction between Cree and other Indigenous groups, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, or between a living person and other living creatures, such as animals.

The Whapmagoostui *iyiyuu'ch* are the people who today define themselves as having their primary place of residence in Whapmagoostui. Since Whapmagoostui is situated on the coast of Hudson Bay and is hence a coastal community, the people are generally referred to as "coastal." Each of the eight Cree villages is classified as either coastal or inland, indicating primarily the location of the village, or more specifically, the original post locale, since that is the derivation of the terminology as well as the settlement sites. Thus the terms "coastal" person (*wiinipaakuu; wiinipaakw* translates to Hudson or James Bay, or to mean salt water) and "inland" person (*nuuhchimiiuiyiyiu; nuuhchimiihch* translates to the bush side, or inland) refer more to the site of the villages than they do the people themselves and are not indicative of where people travel or hunt.

Although the words *wiinipaakuu* and *nuuhchimiiuiyiyiu* describe and translate into English as coastal and inland

people, respectively, the categorization of either coastal or inland has another meaning as well. The Cree terms for coastal and inland peoples refers not just to geographic locales but denotes past lifestyles. Those who congregated at coastal trading posts were more likely to have more contact with non-Natives and thus work for the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). Thus, the *wiinipaakuu* indicates those people who, through their hunting cycle traded at the coastal posts and who may have altered their hunting practices to include working at the post. The *nuuhchimiiuiyiyiu*, or inland dwellers, had relatively less contact and maintained a more traditional lifestyle for a longer period of time (H. Bobbish-Atkinson 1988: per. comm.; Morantz 1983: 70: Preston 1981b: 196-7).

Within Whapmagoostui there are further classifications of people that distinguish their principal hunting locales and, more recently, their hunting status. People differentiate between those who hunt regularly and those who work in the village and only hunt on weekends or during the goose hunting season (R. Dick 1991: per. comm; see also Salisbury 1986: 115, for discussion of polarization between bureaucrats and hunters).

There is also a clear distinction made in Whapmagoostui between what are described as "northern" and "southern" peoples. This distinction is based primarily on where people were born and where their families hunted and, in most cases,

continue to hunt. Northerners are those who hunt, or whose parents and grandparents hunted, at or near Richmond Gulf, Clearwater Lake, Little Whale River, or Freshwater Seal Lake.

> The people who originally came from Richmond Gulf [before the post was shut down] called the people from Great Whale River, "southerners". And in turn, the people who haunted the Great Whale River post, called the people who hunted Richmond Gulf post, "northerners." They give each other these names. (AN, Interview #2.)

There is an immediate sense of affiliation with either one group or the other by the adults of Whapmagoostui which is exemplified in the following excerpt:

> - Are you a northerner or a southerner?
>
> Of course, I am a Northern person, that is where I was raised. That is where I was raised to become what I am, I spent most of my time at Fresh Water Seal Lake and further north. That is where my grandfather spent most of his time. Way far, where "the border" is [literal translation: the line of the land; which indicates the point at which rivers flow in the opposite direction], that is where he used to spend his time when he was still hunting. But I remember very clearly because I was already an adult. Way far north, at the barren land near Nastapoka River, that was where we spent our time for one year, all through the year because we didn't go to the trading post until the summer came. And that was how we always spent our time, like that, ever since I grew up. I spent my time at Fresh Water Seal Lake, also at Clearwater Lake, where the stream goes to the other side. That was also where my grandfathers spent their time. (MG, Interview #2.)

Northerners are also those who may be from, or whose family travelled to, the Schefferville area and as far north as Kuujjuak on the Ungava Bay coast. In the historical literature, northerners are described as the barren land caribou hunters and are distinct from other Eastern Cree in this

respect (Morantz 1983; Francis and Morantz 1983). Southerners, similar to other Eastern Cree, travelled as far south as Chisasibi and hunted inland and in denser boreal forest areas.

People in Whapmagoostui say that one is characteristically a northerner or southerner although examples of these attributes are few and reflect biases of one group over the other rather than any particular traits per se. By and large the most important distinction made between the two groups is the large game hunted. For the Southerner, the bear is the most symbolically significant animal (Tanner 1979) whereas for the Northerner, it is the caribou.

As one individual pointed out to me the ability to distinguish between northerners and southerners is becoming increasingly more ambiguous. Even though he could immediately distinguish himself as a Southerner, he felt that there was no longer any great distinction between the two. He explained this as the result of shifting migration patterns of the wildlife, bringing both the beaver and the caribou so close to Great Whale. The Northerners have taught the Southerners about killing caribou and handling caribou skins, and the Southerners in turn have taught the Northerners about beavers, so that "it seems right now that they are all the same, what they do in the bush, they seem to make their living on the same things, like beaver and porcupine and caribou and fish

and black bear - whenever they are lucky to get those things..." (JK, Interview #1).

In Whapmagoostui today, while the distinction between northerners and southerners is a reflection of where one's family has hunted, the immediate dividing line between north and south is the Great Whale River. Those who head north along the Hudson Bay coast are northerners, whereas those who cross to the south side of the Great Whale River and continue south to pursue their hunting are referred to as southerners.

1.6 Overview of Chapters

In this initial chapter I have presented an introduction to the village and the people of Whapmagoostui. I will suspend this discussion temporarily in order to provide the theoretical framework that circumscribes my ethnographic research. In the next chapter I describe the realities and practical considerations of the research process that I faced as well as what that process means to me as an anthropologist.

In the organization of this dissertation, I have deliberately separated the discussion of "health" from that of "being alive well". Thus, in Chapter Three I outline the concept and meanings of "health" through a review of the health literature in anthropology.

After that theoretical discussion I return to people of Whapmagoostui in Chapter Four and present the historical background to the place and setting of my ethnographic research as

well as the contemporary political situation. Cree conceptualizations of "being alive well" are presented in Chapter Five and it is in this chapter that I describe the meanings and relationship of ideas surrounding "being alive well."

In Chapter Six I pursue the discussion of the political relevance of "being alive well" and introduce theories of nationalism, tradition and resistance which together provide the course and direction of my final argument. Thus, Chapter Six is a discussion of the concept and practice of "being alive well" in the context of Cree identity and in relation to the contemporary political realities. Finally, I propose that, given the conditions of the past and present, "being alive well" is part of the process through which people today are articulating their reaction to the various forms of encroachment upon Cree lives and, hence, well-being. In the final chapter, I review the core arguments of the dissertation and present my conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO: THE RESEARCH PROCESS

2.1 Field Work and Participant Observation

Just as other social sciences are discovering the value of the ethnographic process in their own research, anthropological field work has over the last decade come under increased scrutiny by the practitioners of the discipline itself. In this era of heightened self-awareness, anthropologists have taken to questioning the very foundation of anthropological research methodology (Clifford 1988; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Cushman 1982; Marcus and Fischer 1986; Peacock 1986; Wax 1985). This period of introspection has been beneficial in a number of ways. The novice as well as the experienced field worker can now more openly reflect upon his or her experiences as part of the process of the work itself. Field work is viewed less and less as a project of the lone researcher, but as an interaction negotiated between the "observer" and the "observed". The anthropologist is no

longer perceived as being simply a mirror reflecting what others do, but more akin to a prism, refracting what has been learned and witnessed through his or her own education and experience. As Ruth Landes says, field work

> serves an idiosyncrasy of perception that cannot separate the sensuousness of life from its abstractions, nor the researcher's personality from his experiences. The culture a field worker reports is the one he experiences, filtered through trained observations (1986: 121).

Similarly, Peacock comments that

> [t]he observer-describer brings to his object of observation his own theories and questions as well as implicit biases and attitudes [which] set a framework for his perceptions (Peacock 1986: 67).

This increased reflection on the role played by the anthropologist in the field has in turn empowered all of the field actors with a function in the development of the ethnographic experience. More than a recounting of "real" events and facts, an ethnography should be viewed as a negotiated reality. According to Peacock, "the ethnographer distills his ethnography from his own experience in the flow of native life....[such that] the ethnographer and the natives work together to construct the data and interpretation that we call ethnography" (Peacock 1986: 67). Thus an ethnography is the assemblage of contributions from all of the participants condensed through the discipline of anthropology and the theoretical perspective of the anthropologist. The interpretive influence has led me to understand that anthropological field methods are by definition subjective and what I experi-

enced and then recorded are at the same time personal yet valid accounts of village life and activity.

I was being observed in Whapmagoostui as much as I was observing. As one member of the community told me upon his return after a lengthy absence: he had heard news of a young white woman who had become a fixture in the community, but had heard nothing good or bad about her. That was good, he informed me, because with things being fairly quiet thus far "you must be okay or I would have heard something about you by now."

I could not always choose to include or exclude myself from events around me. I witnessed what I was exposed to, yet because I was present I may have seen more or fewer things depending upon whether it was deemed right for me to see them. For example, purposely or not, I was sheltered to a great extent from the alcohol abuse and violence that might ensue. As a guest of the community, I believe that I was kept away from households in which there may have been excessive drinking. I also chose early on to forego trips to the one local bar in Great Whale. I did this for a number of reasons that I believe outweighed any possible loss of field material. As a new arrival to the community I had to establish - not forfeit - my status where there are few professional women. People who go to this bar are, by and large, considered habitual drinkers and I did not feel it was worth jeopardizing the study by having this classification trailing me. This is

after all, a small community and everyone knows and knows about everyone else.[1]

As a single woman my activities were also simultaneously freer yet more restricted; I could not, for example, join the men on a weekend out hunting, yet as a white female professional/researcher I could sit and talk with men without threatening either the men or the women.

I could not easily be classified or categorized within the community. My status was certainly that of white, non-Native woman yet I circulated almost exclusively within the Cree village. I was not one of the "whites"[2] who lived "up the hill" from the Native villages but neither was I Cree. I was old enough to have both husband and children but had neither, thus my status as adult was put into question. I was certainly chronologically an adult, yet a child in my knowledge and abilities when, for example, camping in the bush. I was alternatively a guest, family member, expert, novice, or professional. I was laughed at during my feeble attempts to speak Cree, chided when I hurried and tried to pluck more than

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[1]Drinking is done primarily at the bar during the week and at home or the bar on the weekends. I was warned early on to not go out during the early morning hours on the weekends because that was the time when people who are drunk wander about. People are afraid of those who are drunk because, I was told, their behaviour may be erratic, unpredictable and might tend towards violence.

[2]Once established within the Cree community, I was perceived as one of "them" by the predominantly French-speaking "white" community. In this case, language was not the distinguishing factor but that I associated exclusively with the Cree population.

one goose feather at a time, yet called upon for basic first aid assistance, for cooking skills when needed, for making sense of some unusual english idiomatic expression, or other translation needs.

Engagement is that interval of time during which one is no longer merely an observer in the community or field site but a participant as well. The period of engagement is a pivotal process yet perhaps only recognized in hindsight. I know now that this moment came for me when I was called upon to roast one of the dozen or so turkeys purchased for the 1988 community Christmas feast. I was fairly well known - if not by name at least by sight[3] - to most of the Cree community after having lived there for just over six months. It was that one telephone call though that established me as a member of the team of women who contributes to community and family feasts. Despite the fact that I dreadfully undercooked that particular turkey, I was called upon the duration of my stay on a regular basis to bake cakes or cook other items for the succession of feasts that came after.

Another example of placement or engagement within the community occurred quite early on. I became aware of the factional divisions within the community soon after my arrival. Partisanship abounds just below the surface of

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[3]My fairly "generic" Cree name among those whom I did not know in the community translates into English as "white woman". "Nahim" is the nickname that was given to me (and is the name that is still used) by those with whom I spent quite a bit of time.

quotidian life and only really intensifies at the time of local elections. By happenstance or accident rather than any planned action, I found myself associated with one "faction" within the first few months of living in Whapmagoostui. This did not constrain my activities or associations, it merely positioned me within the community. That is, one is either a guest, a non-Native resident living "up the hill", Inuit, or a member of the community and therefore leaning in one direction or another on local issues.

Although I never publicly commented one way or the other, my living and casual association with certain members of the community created an impression, rightly or wrongly, of affiliation.[4]

2.2 Beginning the Research

My work in Great Whale was a combination of participant observation and open-ended interview sessions. Until I could hire a full-time translator and assistant, I could not proceed with a regular schedule of interviews. Indeed, the first summer and early fall in Whapmagoostui were spent learning

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[4]This factionalism was heightened during the one election period that I witnessed - although more in theory than in practice. During one particularly tense time I observed members of opposing factions greet one another, shake hands and exchange friendly words. There was no malice or bitterness between them. How could this be, I asked of my informant, how could they talk to one another without any animosity? It was explained to me that these two people simply disagree on an issue yet this ultimately had very little to do with their interpersonal relationship.

Cree and becoming more familiar with the community, the village and camp life. I walked regularly through the village in order to acquaint myself with the general layout, did some substitute teaching at Badabin Eeyou (Cree) school, ran errands and did basic chores. I also had fairly regularly scheduled sessions of language instruction with Maggie during our initial summer together (see Chapter One), although in the end, it was her young son who taught me many of the more practical terms and insisted that I at least understand if not actually speak them to his satisfaction. My lessons continued on an informal basis with my translators and in the winter of 1989, I attended a Cree language course offered by one of the Cree school teachers.

Many hours in the first few months were spent in the priest's basement transcribing genealogies from the church records, first making the connection between the individuals on the cards and their family relations and then trying to link the names to the faces of the people whom I was meeting.

The twice yearly goose hunt is an important event in the lives of the people of Whapmagoostui as well as all the other Cree villages (see C. Scott 1983, 1986). One of the major flyways of the Canada goose migration south in the fall and north in the spring follows the shorelines of the James and Hudson's Bays. The "goose break" from work and school is eagerly awaited by all members of the families in the village and the goose hunt is as much an opportunity to eat goose meat

as it is a chance to get out into the bush. Each extended family has an established goose camp. These sites and general hunting regions are maintained over the years with only some variation in the location of the camp depending, for example, on the flight patterns of the geese (C. Scott 1986).

In the fall of 1988 I was invited to a family's goose camp situated about 10 miles up the coast from Whapmagoostui and spent just over a week in the bush on this first trip out. I went out again in May 1989 for the spring goose hunt and returned to Great Whale to join this same family at spring goose camp again the following year (May 1990).

2.3 Interviews and the Research Assistants

It was difficult at first to find assistants for the study. The primary reason for this, as mentioned, was the timing of the funding. Good translating services are costly and I had to wait until I was assured of adequate funding before I could offer someone a job. Once funding was secured I was faced with a few other obstacles, although none were insurmountable. I could only offer part-time employment and only during the time period that I was living in Whapmagoostui. I needed someone with good translation and communication skills, and someone who was old enough to be respected by people both older and younger than the translator. An added factor was that irrespective of their actual availability or

skills, few Cree men would have worked for a single, non-Native woman.

By January 1989 funding was secured and - aware of these constraints - I let it be known around the community that I wanted to hire a translator. Within just a few weeks, I was able to hire two part-time assistants, both of whom are members of the community. I was fortunate in that both had previously worked as translators. One has been doing considerable work on her own as well as with others over the last decade translating and transcribing partial life histories and recountings of experiences in the bush, myths, and legends. The skills of this translator were augmented by her ability to reflect upon her own experiences of being Cree.

I worked intensively from then on with both of the translators as we conducted interviews and then translated and transcribed the material together. A regular schedule of work was quickly devised so that initial interviews were translated prior to the next with the same individual. Mornings and afternoons were spent translating, leaving the late afternoon or early evening for the interview sessions. On weekends I took the translated material and transcribed it onto the computer. We kept to this schedule until my departure in July, 1989 - interrupted only by spring goose break and one trip to Montréal. In addition to the interviews conducted by myself and one translator, I conducted some interviews in English. The second translator, who had considerable previous

experience in this type of work, conducted interviews and translated the material by herself once we had worked enough together for her to gain an understanding of the job. In the end, she continued with this work for several months after my departure from Great Whale.

2.4 The Research Agenda

The majority of the information was collected over a fifteen month period. The primary method of data collection was through open-ended semi-structured interviews and participant observation.

Selected for the interviews were young and older adult male and female members of the village of Whapmagoostui. I chose to speak with only the adults of this community for a number of reasons. The first was one of practicality - being one person doing a study of this type, my time was limited and I had to decide prior to entering the field who the study population would be. I also believe that the younger adults, teens and children of the community deserve an entirely separate study since the influences upon them and the choices that they will have are so radically different from those of their parents' and grandparents' generations. As well, adolescents in general tend to be more reluctant to share their feelings about quotidian affairs, either because they are shy, indifferent or just less able to articulate their perspectives.

For the Cree of Whapmagoostui, it is generally felt that talking and explaining is the privilege of the older and hence wiser members of the community. Consequently, as much as I wanted this to be a study of adult members of the community, it could not have gone any other way. Even those who were in their mid-forties would suggest to me that I visit with the elders of the community since they were the ones who could share information and their knowledge with me. Interviews with some younger adults were awkward or strained - some felt ill-equipped to answer my questions based on their perceived limited experience. This was based on the general perception, despite assurances otherwise, that they were not capable or best able to provide the information that I sought. It was assumed, based on previous experiences with interviewers, anthropological or otherwise, that the information sought was of traditional activities and that the younger adults would be less able to answer my questions.[5]

For the purpose of this study older adults, or elders, are those born prior to 1940, while the younger adults are those born during or after 1940. I interviewed just under twenty percent of the total adult population born during or

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[5]Indeed, this is also a consideration in terms of the information that I actually collected - how much can be attributed to the fact that people perceive the interview process to be a time to recount, to bring out knowledge about an era that is only captured at moments such as these? I cannot gauge the effect of this single factor independent of all the others, but it is certainly an element that must be considered.

prior to 1960. More men and women in the category of older adults participated. Reasons why individuals in either category would choose to not participate were because of time conflicts, no interest in the project, or because they were out of town during the interview periods.

Potential participants' names were selected from the band list and these people were contacted initially by telephone. The general purpose of the interview was described to them at that time. Prior to the start of the first interview, each participant read and signed the consent form, which was written in Cree syllabics (see Appendix A).

The interviews were then conducted, for the most part, at the home of the participant or occasionally, at the home of the translator. In keeping with a recently established practice, people who agreed to participate were financially compensated for the interview time. Interviews with unilingual Cree speakers were conducted entirely in Cree. Those who spoke English conversed in the language of their preference. Interviews were then translated prior to subsequent visits so that I could follow up on particular items or events that were recounted in the previous interview.

A total of twenty-nine individuals were interviewed, each between one and six times. These interviews were supplemented by less formal interviews and conversations which were held over the duration of the field work period. In a related aspect of the research, questions were asked of the local

representative to the Cree Board of Health and Social Services who chairs the local health committee as well as the Public Health Officer.

Questions requiring a brief "Yes" or "No" answer are not inherent within the Cree language. Direct questioning is foreign to the Cree and communication of this type is considered aggressive and liable to upset the balance of an interaction (Bobbish-Atkinson and Magonet 1990: 145). As well, it is considered inordinately rude to interrupt an elder - or any person - while they are talking, except perhaps to ask for a clarification. Simple answers were thus neither expected nor forthcoming. Rather, participants were allowed to answer the questions as they felt appropriate. This type of open-ended interviewing provided the participants with his or her anticipated conditions for responding. This method suited my needs while at the same time very closely resembled a normal Cree conversation.

Cree language is spoken in the context of what is described as an oral - as opposed to literate - culture. Hence, another result of this interview process and the type of response style that was elicited, is that people spoke - as they are accustomed to doing - at length on particular issues. Participants often repeated themselves in order to stress a particular point. This type of speech pattern is expected in oral cultures, and as such was expected of the Cree. As Ong describes, in an oral culture

> ...redundancy characterizes oral thought and speech, it is in a profound sense more natural to thought and speech than is sparse linearity... [which is] structured by the technology of writing (Ong 1982: 40).

Part of the task of translation is to impart a sense of the original structure of the language in this modified format. Thus although the excerpts may appear to be awkward or unpolished it is because I have tried to retain something of the original voice in writing these passages.

The semi-structured nature of the interviews, to the credit of my assistants, was conducive to a relaxed environment despite the presence of the tape recorder or myself. This led some informants to comment that they were happy to be remunerated for "telling stories" which they enjoyed telling anyway. The elders would often joke and tease the translators during the interview or make reference to their respective kin networks while describing the actions of particular individuals.

Another important role that the translators played was one of informal mediation in that their presence accorded the sessions with a sense of value to the community itself. If there were any limitations in what people might discuss with me alone, this was overcome by having local and familiar people engaged in the interview process.

2.5 Studying Cree Health from an Anthropological Perspective

People impose meaning onto events, actions and things and those meanings are part of what constitutes culture. Culture however "is not a fixed thing but a negotiated formulation, a working definition that serves the moment and the circumstance, for both the actor and the ethnographer. Substance is no longer separate from method, for the construction of culture is part of the field work itself" (Peacock 1986: 74-5). Cultures, says Rousseau, "are not objects to be discovered, but a concept which is methodologically useful in some circumstances" (1990: 48). In the case of the Cree, the notion of culture is useful in that it circumscribes ideas and practices which informants describe as being inherently and distinctively Cree. Terms that exist within the Cree language express this self-conscious knowledge and reflect an explicit notion of things Cree and a way of living that is particular to the Cree people. For example, *iyiyuuiihtuun* is the Cree way of doing things, Cree customs and *iyiyuupimaatisiiu*, the Cree way of living. As one informant describes:

> That is what we heard all the time, we were told to keep our *iyiyuuiihtuun*, that is the most important thing to keep. That is how it will always be. As the grandchildren grow that is the first thing they will learn is to keep the *iyiyuuiihtuun*. As they grow, they will continue doing what they learn from their parents: hunting and camping (JM, Interview #1).

Thus, I do not speak of culture, per se, but of what informants say and do associated with my interpretations of

the system of meanings that distinguish those statements. As stated previously, I went into the field with the basic assumption that there is an association between culture and health. This is not to suggest that there is either one Cree culture or one interpretation of health, but that there is something distinctive about Cree concepts of health which is meaningful in the context of Cree lives, and which people can articulate.

I was not sure at first as to how I would approach the subject of health. I first learned about the word *miyupimaatisiiu* (see Chapter Five) through a series of conversations and interviews in the first few months in Whapmagoostui. I came to an initial understanding of what questions might be appropriate to ask in order to grasp the meanings associated with that term. I found that people generally answered similarly to each other in that they chose overwhelmingly to respond with references to the past. *Miyupimaatisiiu* is a complex concept, but derives from an entirely logical system of meanings that is inherent to the Cree belief system. Indeed, it was only after months of hearing people talk about hunting and related activities that I finally came to understand just that, when all the while, I had (naïvely) wanted them to talk about "health".

The initial question that was asked of each participant was "*chaakwaan miyupimaatisiiu*", or "what is/how does one describe 'being alive well'?" Peoples' answer to this one

question provided me with a formidable basis for understanding the complexity of notions of "being alive well" within Cree thought and how Cree well-being is linked to being Cree. I found the answer to this question almost without exception uniform and I will describe that response in Chapter Five. I will then work toward making sense of how this conceptualization of well-being provides me with a paradigm of political relevance. Within the statements of well-being are pronouncements of "being Cree." In Chapter Six, I describe those statements as being constituted from within a distinct sense of national identity and constituted partly as a reaction to potential infringements upon that sense of "being Cree." I begin with the next chapter however, and an examination of "health" in the social scientific literature.

CHAPTER THREE: FROM A MEDICAL TO A POLITICAL UNDERSTANDING OF HEALTH

There are a hundred forms of health.
Paracelsus (1493-1541)

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce and examine various social scientific interpretations of health. By then submitting the concept of health to anthropological scrutiny, I reach two conclusions. The first is that it is primarily through social and cultural knowledge that "health" is made meaningful to people. An important corollary to this is that "health," in its many western interpretations, is first and foremost understood by investigators as simultaneously an individual and biological phenomenon. This is primarily a biomedically-informed interpretation of health which takes as its premise both the supremacy of the individual and the absence of disease.

The second conclusion I reach is that the concept of "health" is ultimately not just a biological, but a political phenomenon as well. Here, I examine Foucault's (1975, 1980b) treatise on health as a process of normalization within populations, and how a particular ideology of health is incorporated into bodily practices. This is what I refer to as the "medicalization of health" (see also Cornwell 1984; Crawford 1980).[1]

From there I move to *miyupimaatisiiu*, or "being alive well," which differs substantially from either the concept of "health" or the alternatives to that concept, described in this chapter. I introduce "being alive well" as a phenomenon of cultural knowledge and practices. This is an integrative concept for the Cree of Whapmagoostui and, I suggest, a means by which cultural identity is asserted (cf. Hallowell 1963).

This chapter provides the groundwork for a broadened understanding of health; one that incorporates cultural,

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[1]In this dissertation I concur with Raymond Williams' and Jean and John Comaroff's respective definition and usage of the term ideology. Ideology, according to Williams is "an articulated system of meanings, values, and beliefs of a kind that can be abstracted as [the] worldview'" (Williams 1977 in Comaroff and Comaroff 1991: 24). The Comaroffs advance this definition to include the intangibles of belief and power:

> Borne in explicit manifestos and everyday practices, self-conscious texts and spontaneous images, popular styles and political platforms, this worldview may be more or less internally systematic, more or less coherent in its outward scheme. But, as long as it exists, it provides an organizing scheme for collective organization (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991: 24).

historical and political elements into a definition of health. In other words, based on my findings, I argue that health is not solely a biological process. As such, definitions of health cannot be contained exclusively within the boundaries of human physiology. Nor can there be any simple or absolute definition. Rather, definitions of health should integrate cultural and political realities since health is always a product and reflection of those processes.

3.2 Biomedicine and Health

Health is understood within a biomedically-informed orientation as an individualized phenomenon of physical or biological wellness in the absence of disease. Health is the focus and anticipated end result of medical intervention and, in this sense, is a scientific and descriptive term that communicates biostatistical normalcy (Nordenfelt and Lindahl 1984; Caplan, Engelhardt, McCartney 1981).

Although I presume a rather simple model of "health," I am not suggesting that the characteristics that I present constitute all of the elements that are incorporated into a Western understanding of health. There are without doubt, social, economic and cultural factors that determine how health will variably be defined and articulated in diverse settings. There are however some general characteristics that may be viewed as fundamental to our understanding of health as it is defined within an urban, biomedically-informed society.

It is, for example, an individual-centred enterprise that is, in its defining characteristics, both restrictive and normative: people are responsible for maintaining their own health but the form that this takes is defined by medical authority and societal influences. Smoking, eating and alcohol consumption are three examples of how social norms are at the same time variable yet constrained. That is to say, standards may vary with time and between social groups but nevertheless a degree of acquiesence to social norms and standards is expected. How we go about our daily lives, enacting in a variety of ways the myriad of interests and practices that we ascribe to health and well-being, is a manifestation of the constructs and influences of our culture. I will return to the particular social constraints of "health" later on in this chapter.

Epidemiological studies of health exemplify biomedical notions of health in that they are primarily studies of quantity. Their ultimate objective is to provide knowledge for the reduction or prevention of illness (Nordenfelt and Lindahl 1984; Kass 1981; Twaddle and Hessler 1977). How many people smoke, how many weigh more or less than the ascribed normal values, how many have blood pressure values considered pathological; that is, who falls within the designated ranges of normal? These studies assume fixed and stable populations as their baselines, populations which can be quantified in order to draw statistical conclusions in a determination of

what are ultimately societal norms (Armstrong 1983). Questioning the definitions and ranges of health is irrelevant in these so-called health analyses since ultimately, it is the success of the health care system that is the goal. A health care system is then deemed successful if there is an indication of a reduction in morbidity and mortality and, hence an increase in the positive attributes of "health" in that population (T.K. Young 1988a: 48).

A biomedical model limits our understanding of health in a number of ways and in attempting to understand what "health" means, "we... have made little progress by our identification of health as the proper purpose of medicine" (Kass 1981: 10; see also Manning and Fabrega 1973; Crawford 1980). If health is seen only as an object of medical concern (Engelhardt 1981: 31), then the focus is *a priori* reduced to a scrutiny of the workings of the body, physiological wellness, and the absence of disease. In this instance, health is detached and separated from individual experience and from social relations.

Even those who presume a broader definition of health, however, remain trapped within the boundaries of the ubiquitous and ultimately "good to think duality of health and disease (Ahmed et al. 1979; Audy 1971; Boorse 1975; Engelhardt 1981; Kass 1981; Twaddle and Hessler 1977; Whitbeck 1981; see also discussion of normal=health and abnormal=sick in Maslow and Mittelman 1951; Canguilhem 1950). It is generally

believed that health behaviours and health practices circumscribe how one recognizes and responds to disease processes.

Engelhardt (1981), for example, attempts to broaden the concept of health but cannot do so outside of the context of disease or medicine. "The concept of health helps define the concept of disease by providing the telos for the medical enterprise," says Engelhardt (1981: 42). So that,

> while there are many diseases, there is in a sense only one health - a regulative ideal of autonomy directing the physician to the patient as a person, the sufferer of illness, and the reason for all the concern and activity" (Engelhardt 1981: 43).

Worsley succinctly states for medicine the fundamental issue underlying interpretations of health:

> All medicine has a "metamedical" context. Medical conceptions of illness and its cure are always embedded within wider frameworks which supply cognitive [and] normative... ideals, ultimately within some explicit metaphysic or implicit "metaphysical pathos" which may be Hinduism or Western science, astrology or logical positivism (Worsley 1982: 327).

Just as all medicine is constituted within a "metamedical" context, so is health. And Western interpretations of health ultimately mirror, to a lesser or greater degree, interpretations of disease.

3.3 Healthy People and Healthy Systems: The Health Literature

3.3-i The WHO and Health

The World Health Organization's (WHO) broad definition of health has become the underlying standard for national and

international aid organizations and is a useful point of departure in a critique of definitions and theories of health. Health, according to the WHO, "is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease" (World Health Organization 1958). While not repudiating the goals and efforts of the WHO, it is worth noting that this definition does not bring us any closer to an appreciation of what health means to the hundreds of nations that this organization serves. After all, the definition is but one of many culturally constructed utopias of health (Janzen 1981) and the notion of "well-being" is no less problematic than that of "health" (Das 1990: 27; see also Engelhardt 1981; Kass 1981).

By encompassing a realm of personal well-being beyond the absence of disease, the WHO definition of health gives those who work to combat diseases in developing nations a means of increasing their range of activities outside of the biomedical setting. Yet even this seemingly beneficial goal is challenged. Callahan (1981) rejects the "health for all" charter as sententious, not for its intention, but for its implication. He argues that the definition does not remove us from the health/disease dyad, since by inference, if all aspects of one's life can be subsumed under the definition of "health", then these same events or sensations can conversely be described as sick (Callahan 1981: 207). Thus, not only is health placed in direct opposition to disease, but every facet

of one's life can be placed within this realm such that, by extrapolation, social and political problems become "medicalized". The WHO definition is not merely a utopian extreme, says Callahan, but a "tyranny of health" (1981: 207).[2]

The WHO definition of health does not provide a clear understanding of what health means and, since it medicalizes social problems, simultaneously personalizes and individuates the phenomenon of health. That is to say, health is defined through the responsibility of the individual so that the onus is placed upon that individual as the one liable for his or her health, irrespective of the surrounding political and social realities.

The importance of the WHO definition however is that it formally asserts that health is not just the absence of disease. Indeed, people can be "healthy" while having some form of infirmity, and the given notion of "health" is dynamic; equivalent to the dynamic nature of individuals and societies (Callahan 1981; Dunn 1976). The Honourable Mr. Jake Epp (1986), then Minister of National Health and Welfare, uses this notion in his framework statement on goals for Canadians' health. He states that health should be viewed as one's quality of life and part of everyday living (1986:4). Health says Epp, "is envisaged as a resource which gives people the

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[2]Ultimately, Callahan (1981) argues for a wholly biological definition of health which, I argue, is also unacceptable.

ability to manage and even to change their surroundings" (1986: 4).

3.3-ii Extrinsic and Intrinsic Models of Health in the Social Sciences

Social science definitions and studies of health can be separated into two general categories: those that look at the individual, which I will refer to as "intrinsic" definitions of health, and those that look at the social, or "extrinsic," conditions of health.[3] When the individual is the focus of study, health remains within the realm of personal adaptability and responsibility in responding to external events. Extrinsic studies, on the other hand, explore the relationship of health to improved access to health care services or the fitness of the population. In both intrinsic or extrinsic studies however the link between health and illness is neither problematic nor challenged.

In this section I first review models of health that focus primarily upon the individual, and the relationship between the individual and society. These are predominantly philosophical and sociological accounts of health and while this is by no means an exhaustive review of the study of

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[3]Kelman (1975) also uses the terms extrinsic and intrinsic in his earlier study of definitions of health. For Kelman, "functional" health is defined extrinsically and relates to the ability to perform social roles. "Experiential" health is defined intrinsically and refers to biological integrity (1975: 629-630). These definitions differ somewhat from my own.

health in these disciplines, they provide illustrative examples.

I then review anthropological studies that examine the environmental and the socio-political conditions impinging upon "health." In none of these approaches is the concept or meaning of "health" challenged. "Health" remains, one could say, the dependent variable - what is being studied is not the notion of health itself, but those factors that impinge upon or affect the degree to which one can attain health.

3.3-iia Intrinsic Models of Health

My first example of an intrinsic definition of health is that of Kass, who categorically states that the domain of health is individual organisms. "[I]f health exists at all," says Kass, "it exists as a condition at least of bodies" (Kass 1981: 10). While Kass, as a philosopher, does acknowledge the difficulty in defining "health" and that there are objective and subjective accountings and manifestations of health, he nevertheless contends that health

> is a natural standard or norm - not a moral norm, not a "value" as opposed to a "fact," not an obligation, but a state of being that reveals itself in activity as a standard of bodily excellence or fitness, relative to each species and to some extent to individuals, recognizable if not definable, and to some extent attainable.... [H]ealth is 'the well working of the organism as a whole" (1981: 18).

Health is a personal enterprise of attaining excellence and ultimately, the responsibility of the individual (see also Ahmed et al. 1979).

Other intrinsic definitions of health concentrate not just on individual responsibility but on the process of goal attainment. Nordenfelt, for example, defines health simply as the "ability to keep oneself healthy" (1984: 20; see also Wilson 1970). Despite the tautological nature of his definition, Nordenfelt sees health as the individual's abilities to achieve his or her needs and goals (cf. Pörn 1984). Nordenfelt dismisses individual feelings, social constraints, and political realities since they are all considered ancillary to one's capacities or capabilities, and thus health (Nordenfelt 1984: 20; Spicker 1984: 25).

A slight relaxation of Nordenfelt's extreme goal-oriented position is taken by Spicker who suggests a "family of concepts" of health whereby each concept (or definition) legitimates the purpose that it serves (Spicker 1984: 26). That is, we should acknowledge no single vision of health. Rather, Spicker suggests, there should be a plural concept made up of many definitions - such as that of the physician, the patient, the worker, the philosopher, the anthropologist, and so on. A "family of concepts" though, also oversimplifies, and ultimately ignores, historical and cultural factors; elements that influence how "health" is made meaningful to any of those individuals (not to mention the highly

atomistic conceptualization of society embedded within Spicker's definition).

Rather than different individuals having different strategies for understanding health, Herzlich (1973) suggests that individuals simultaneously hold more than one idea about health. Herzlich's 1960's study of health and illness among middle and professional class adults living in Paris, France indicates that there may be a confluence of factors that ultimately constitute "health." Health, according to Herzlich, is comprised of biological as well as psychosocial or behavioural components.[4] Along with physical well-being, to be healthy one must have a proper "reserve of health," that is, a robustness and strength, good temperament, freedom of movement, and good relations with other people (1973: 61). These factors are consolidated within the unifying concept of equilibrium for the Parisians in this study. Equilibrium is based upon the factors listed above and health as equilibrium is the mastery and harmony of one's relation to the social environment (1973: 61-63).

Herzlich found that health is internal to the individual and is a personal means of coping with external stimuli, such as illness, or any experience which is deemed threatening (1973: 30). Thus, Herzlich's study is ultimately an examin-

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[4]It should be noted that Herzlich's findings also reveal the dualistic concept of (healthy) mind and (healthy) body that is inherent within the conceptual framework of both the researcher and study population.

ation of illness behaviour, albeit circumscribed by the relationship between health, illness and society (1973: 139). Indeed, Herzlich concludes that illness behaviour must not only be sanctioned by society but, following Parsons (1958)[5] suggests that through the illness experience - that is, a deviation from health - one's belonging to that society is maintained (see also Ahmed et al. 1979: 13).

Fundamental assumptions about what constitutes health may play a role in how individuals distinguish and articulate their illness experience. As Crawford (1985) states,

> health is a concept grounded in the experience and concerns of daily life [and] is a category of experience that reveals tacit assumptions about individual and social reality. The very fact that people do not tend to question the terms of normal, everyday life means that the notions of health will reflect ongoing...and conventional understandings; understandings... that are replete with the very concepts and ambiguities that structure responses to illness (1985: 62).

But whether or not an individual is experiencing illness is not directly relevant to my thesis. My concern is with how the experience and understanding of health and well-being are culturally mediated. Focusing upon the individual experience of "health" excludes factors which continually influence that state of being. The health/disease dyad, for example, is a

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[5]For Talcott Parsons, health is "the state of optimum *capacity* of an individual for the effective performance of the roles and tasks for which he has been socialized" (1958: 172) and is placed in opposition to the designation of illness. Paralleling Durkheim's thesis on criminal activity, Parsons contends that the designation of illness as illegitimate is enough of a motivational factor for the healthy to attempt to remain so.

phenomenon of the dualistic and profoundly biomedically influenced understanding of ourselves in Western society. The predominance of a health/disease dyad in definitions of health and the concomitant limited ability to place health outside of the individual illness experience tacitly reproduces the medicalized concept of health in studies of well-being.

3.3-iib Extrinsic Models of Health

I will now review two particular approaches to the study of health which are within the discipline of anthropology. Although they each have very different theoretical bases, they both focus upon extrinsic factors in their definitions of health. The two approaches to the study of health that I will describe are products of the sub-disciplines of ecological anthropology and the political economy of health. I describe these two particular approaches because each constitutes an important theoretical perspective within the discipline and both have taken "health" as a particular focus of study.

Health in an ecological model is described as "a measure of environmental adaptation" (McElroy and Townsend 1985: 13; see also Dunn 1968, McElroy 1990; and the health transition literature, e.g. Frenk et al. 1991). Subsistence strategies, energy flow and population control demarcate the areas of primary concern. Culture is relegated to one of the variables within a total ecosystem impinging on the population, including the organism and the tissues and cells that constitute

individual bodies. The environment that "impinges" on a human population, state McElroy and Townsend, "is made up of physical, biological, and cultural components forming a total ecosystem" (1985: 14). Disease, according to this model is a change in one of these variables leading to either ecological or physiological imbalance. A severe imbalance results in disease. By contrast, health is a continuous adaptive response such that there is a homeostatic relationship between the population and the environment. With a population model, the medical ecological perspective focuses on issues of biology, evolution, and the inter-relationship of environment and cultural practices in the distribution of disease and the maintenance of health.

Ecological models of health however focus too narrowly on biological adaptation, survival and efficiency of the group such that the healthier community is one that survives longest (Wadsworth 1984; Colby 1987). Disease is one of many variables that will influence the health of the population or the individual. Within an ecological framework it is believed that there is a universal biological standard of well-being that can be assessed irrespective of cultural variability in the determination of those possible outcomes. A biological criterion for ecological survival assumes a functional, adaptive, rational and creative individual working towards successful procreation. Perhaps this is true, but biological survival as an indicator of successful adaptation does not

preclude that one examine the processes by which choices are made toward that survival and whether or not choices can be made. Ecological theories of health are not necessarily supported by the many values and realities among populations who may consider themselves healthy by standards other than those defined by such models.

In political economic analyses, in contrast to the ecological model, health is viewed as a commodity. Health is measured by the range and degree of its distribution in society and by the relative ease of access to health services. From this perspective, Western biomedical knowledge and practice reproduce the power relations inherent to capitalism. Health and access to health care are unevenly distributed within and between social systems based on the power differential between the controlling and the controlled (Baer 1986; Navarro 1980; Kelman 1980). Differences in distribution are seen in the comparison of politically and economically dominant countries and their poorer counterparts (B. Turner 1987; Frankenberg 1980; see also Navarro 1976; Ehrenreich 1978; McKinlay 1985). In countries such as Canada where indigenous nations have historically been politically weak (in the so-called fourth world) the inequalities in health and health care are seen as paralleling the problems of disease, starvation and death that result from the politics of colo-

nialism in developing nations (O'Neil 1986; T.K. Young 1983).[6] The argument against so-called capitalist medicine is that disease is reduced to a personal problem. This then deflects attention from the wider social and economic factors of causation (see also Callahan's critique of the WHO in this chapter).

An example of the application of health as commodity in a developing nation was described recently by Pedersen (1991; see also Nichter 1989). The "Bamako Initiative," explains Pedersen, is a program organized through the WHO to increase the accessibility to health care services in the low and middle income sub-Saharan countries of Africa. The goals of the Initiative include the promotion of self-reliance at the community and district levels and a decrease in mortality and morbidity (indicating an increase in health) through access to health care services. This is in keeping with the objectives of the WHO as indicated in their definition of health.

The main strategy of the Initiative is to pay for itself through a drug distribution program. That is, the profits from drug sales at the local level are expected to pay for the medical services being provided. The premise upon which the Bamako Initiative is based, argues Pedersen (1991), is that at its very foundation this plan reinforces the notion of health as being equal to an increased availability of drugs and

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[6]This is despite the actual variation in the distribution of disease, which differs from that of developing nations (T.K. Young 1988).

available resources. This agenda is not just deeply rooted within a biomedical model of health but within the decontextualized and depoliticized definition of health inherent within western thought and practices. With the exchange of drugs as the meaningful transaction, there is a concomitant depreciation of social responsibility; health becomes the responsibility of the individual. Increased consumerism will not however ultimately change the circumstances, living conditions, morbidity or mortality of the people who will be purchasing these drugs.

Another perspective within the political economy of health is exemplified by the work of Kelman (1980) who describes health as being contingent upon an ideology of profit. According to Kelman, in the process of the accumulation of wealth there is a continual redefinition of health toward the normalization of stressful habits and practices. Work-induced stress or heart disease, for example, increasingly fall within a newly defined range of normal so that what is defined as morbidity is blurred within continuously shifting classifications of "normal". Interestingly, Kelman (1980) suggests that there is an incipient move toward ill-health in the constant negotiation of the boundaries of health in an environment motivated by profit and where there is a natural and accepted opposition between health and ill-health.

Both political and ecological analyses of health, with few exceptions, are based on the absence of disease rather

than the presence of health. Although the focus of analysis differs, the unit of analysis in each case is a system, be it a population, an individual, an organism, or class relations among sub-sections of a society. Each is a valuable tool in guiding us through a variety of external factors that impinge on levels of morbidity and mortality. Nevertheless, both retain a disease orientation in their respective analyses of "health" and proffer an objective and in the ecological example, quantitative, requisite upon which the definition of health is based. The subjective meanings, cultural constructions and valuations of health are deemed irrelevant in these macroscopic studies.

In contrast to either intrinsic or extrinsic approaches to the study of health, I do not accept the position that health is a category or an entity that can be known universally or against which one can determine the degree of "non-health." Health seeking behaviours, health regulations and the absence of disease do not necessarily equal health. Nor do morbidity and mortality measures provide evidence in any straightforward way for a lack of health. Indicators about populations and patterns of individual behaviours provide little insight into the cultural determinants of either health or illness. These studies can be viewed as having a "negative" pathology-oriented perspective whereby they obscure the practices of hygiene and the conscious maintenance of health ideals - systems which are rooted in cultural norms and

values, and extend beyond the state of the physical body (Janzen 1981:185). As Manning and Fabrega explain,

> ...the framework of Western biology and its concepts of function, structure, and performance are believed to order and constrain abilities located in or derived from the human body. Acceptance of what are assumed to be "invariant and fundamental givens" within the biological paradigm has created a cultural blindness, which can be the source of errors is sociological analyses (1973: 256).

In this study, I attempt to overcome the "invariant and fundamental" givens of health. Health is variably determined, with norms and ideals that are culturally fashioned (see also T.K. Young 1982). Contextualized ideas about health and the ideals of health maintenance can be gained through an anthropological analysis which is not constrained by the framework of Western biology. Studies of health, I suggest, can therefore be initiated through an examination of quotidian practices and cultural knowledge. "Health" should not merely be another variable in the identification of, for example, populations at risk for certain diseases.

3.4 Culture and Health: Examples of Variability in Health Beliefs and Practices

With the research focus of medical anthropology primarily on illness events, illness beliefs and, more recently, the clinical encounter, medical anthropologists have by and large neglected the routines of health maintenance (Kleinman 1979: 53; also, see Chapter One). This is not to say, however, that health has not been the subject of interest or investigation.

Studies of health which incorporate indigenous notions of well-being have usually taken off from or been influenced by symbolic and/or phenomenological theoretical perspectives (for example, Cornwell 1984; Janzen 1981; Manning and Fabrega 1973; Ngubane 1977; Wall 1988). In this section I introduce four cultural images of health that together illustrate the variability in the interpretations and cultural understandings of health. What I want to convey in this section is an appreciation of the emic, or culturally meaningful and relevant accounts of health. I should reiterate here that I do not presume that there is one single definition or interpretation of health encompassed even within each of the examples that I present, or that a single definition of health is held by any member of the society in question. Rather, there are discernable patterns and systems of knowledge which shape how health is variably defined and articulated. The following examples illustrate the social, personal, spiritual, and/or political premises which distinguish how health is perceived. In the sections that follow, I will begin to articulate how concepts of health must be interpreted from within both cultural constraints and political realities.

I start with a look at Classical Chinese medicine and specifically, at how treatment modalities in relation to ideas of balance reflect an implicit concept of health. In this example I am looking at the medical system in particular because of the profound emphasis the doctrine has on notions

of health. In the second case, I present an African interpretation of health. I then move to a British and then an urban North American study of health. These examples each elucidate cultural paradigms in representations of health and while they are not necessarily indicative of what people are doing on a day to day basis do nonetheless illustrate distinctive health knowledge.

The idea of balance is pivotal to health in many cultures and is often based upon some variation of the Hippocratic humoral system of balance and equilibrium within the body and between the body and external stimuli. Health is achieved through, and equivalent to, the intricate balance of one's internal and external environments (Harwood 1971; Leslie 1976). Classical Chinese medicine, with its roots in the ancient humoral - but not Hippocratic - medical system, is an intrinsic part of the modern pluralistic system of medical care in China today (Leslie 1976).

In classical Chinese medicine, health is the primary focus of the entire medical system and, at the same time, it is the responsibility of the individual to keep healthy. He or she must do so by living in accordance with the mandates of society and by taking proper care of his or her body (Lock 1984: 29). Disease is the result of imbalance, when the body is in a state of disharmony. Imbalances can be the result of any number of things, including both inevitable and unpredictable occurrences. Examples of inevitable reasons for a state

of imbalance include the shifts of the seasons and the years, and the life cycle of birth and death. Other more controllable causes of imbalance include lack of sleep, poor eating habits or by being in a state of disharmony with one's family or society (Topley 1976; Lock 1984).

In this conceptualization of health it is believed that there should be a balance of external and internal forces. Human beings are subsumed within the cosmo-biology of the *Han* dynasty, wherein the micro- and macro-cosms are united. The body, like the natural and social worlds, is conceived as being in a state of dynamic equilibrium, oscillating between the poles of *yin* and *yang* (Porkert 1976: 65; Lock 1984: 30).[7] As such, the body becomes the centre of medical attention since one's body is viewed as being an accurate indicator of events within the universe and as a site of possible disjunctures or imbalances. It is through the body that one can assess the complex health status of the individual (Kuriyama 1989:9).

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[7]The principles of Chinese medicine derive from the inductive analysis of the complex relationship between different functions. *Yin* and *yang* are conceived of as the contrasting poles of interrelated phenomena, such as positive and negative, responsive and aggressive, hot and cold, male and female, light and dark. The system is infinitely more complex than I describe in this brief summary. There are not just gradations of *yin* and *yang*, for example, but a complementary cycle of the Five Agents (*wu-hsing*) - water, fire, metal, earth, and wood - that in combination yield a precise diagnosis and guide for treatment (Porkert 1976; Topley 1976).

Only with the proper internal and external balance of essential winds (or *chi*) can one be healthy.[8] One's body is customarily monitored; for example, a person's pulse is checked for the degree of deviation from the seasonal and individual norms and provides an indication of sickness: a winter-like pulse in spring is without doubt pathological, and in summer, possibly fatal (Kuriyama 1989: 15).[9]

The blood and breath that circulate around the body are metaphorically spoken of in terms of rivers and winds, "and as the winds stream[s] in and out of the hollows and openings in the earth, so breath stream[s] in and out of the body's orifices" (Kuriyama 1989: 19). Orifices are tightly maintained in order to preserve an internal balance and so that dangerous winds can not penetrate. The body in classical Chinese medicine, explains Kuriyama, is viewed as the "interface between inner and outer winds, between inner and outer change" (Kuriyama 1989: 25; Topley 1976). Thus health is maintained with proper balance and one's relative ability to withstand external forces. Therapy, explains Lock,

> is designed to stimulate the patient's body in an effort to regain equilibrium. But because of the dynamic nature of the model, perfect health is a

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[8]In Japanese for example, *genki*, the word for health translates literally to "the origin of *ki* (or *chi*)" (Lock 1991 pers. comm.).

[9]It is important to note that Kuriyama is talking about 2nd century B.C. China and references to Lock are from contemporary Japan. There are obviously considerable differences between historical and modern, Japanese and Chinese traditions but much of the underlying philosophy is analogous.

> hypothetical state that can never be fully maintained, and in medicine, therefore, *perfect* health is not the ultimate goal of either patient or doctor. The aim is one of achieving the best possible adaptation to the total milieu that can be expected. Therapy is not designed as an attempt to dominate the forces of nature. Health and ill-health are both seen as natural and as part of a continuum and are not viewed as a dichotomy (Lock 1984: 43; original emphasis).

The classical Chinese medical system must be understood within the context of one of the basic tenets of Confucian philosophy, which has shaped the political order of Chinese society since the 2nd century, B.C. Social ethics and especially the subordination of the individual to the interest and advantage of society is central to this philosophy. Seen in this light, health is not simply an individual phenomenon. Rather, it is the responsibility of the individual to maintain proper equilibrium primarily in order to benefit society (Porkert 1976: 69; Lock 1986).

My second example comes from Africa and the Hausa concept of *lafiya*. Similar in that there is a concept of balance in relation to health, the locus of health and the treatment of illness for the Hausa are not exclusiveiy within the domain of the individual body (see A. Young 1976).

Wall[10] (1988) introduces the concept of *lafiya* among the Hausa of west Africa in his study of illness and well-being in an African village society. *Lafiya* is a fundamental concept in Hausa thought and despite its usual translation to "health" in English, is a much broader concept. *Lafiya*, says Wall, "denotes balance, order, stability, peacefulness, tranquility, prosperity, normality - well-being in a broad sense" (1988: 334). Integral to *lafiya* is a state of domestic tranquility, environmental balance, social order, and moral propriety which encompasses physical, emotional, spiritual and domestic placidity (1988: 334). *Lafiya* is bound to moral order and there is a vigilant guard against the threat of moral disorder - either, for example, through the activities of women who, with their reproductive powers and ability to drain men's heat, are considered the source of evil and mystery, or through the activities associated with sorcery or witchcraft.

> While concepts of anatomy, physiology, or the causation of illness are important in understanding bodily health, *lafiya* has profound social implications as well. The Hausa concept of *lafiya* cannot be fully understood without reference to values of general morality, economy, and interpersonal relationships, not to mention the relationships of [the overwhelmingly Muslim] men and women to the spirit world and to Allah" (Wall 1988: xxi).

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[10]I note in passing that despite the richly illuminating ethnography of health that Wall has written, he is explicitly an ex-anthropologist; someone who became "too wearied by the tribal warfare of Oxford anthropology" and found that there was an "essential irrelevance of academic anthropology to genuine human suffering" (1988: xiv). He is currently a practicing physician.

In order to fully explicate *lafiya* in the context of daily lives and medical choices, Wall details the family and kinship structures, agriculture and village economics, life cycle and rites of passage, religious orientation, and finally the medical concerns of the rural Hausa. Only through the symbolism associated with, and an explanation of, *lafiya* in this context can Hall explain the rationale of Hausa therapeutics. Simply put, *lafiya* is an indicator of social as much as it is of individual well-being, any upset to that balance is perceived as originating from outside of the individual, so this too, is where therapy and prevention occur.

One either has *lafiya* and is in a state of balance and order or lacks *lafiya*, resulting in imbalance and illness. The absence of *lafiya* implies a concomitant lack of strength, so the statement "I have no strength" is a statement of being unwell (*ba lafiya*) (1988: 170). If a man lacks strength, his household will suffer. The inability to work the fields in this principally agricultural society changes a man's status. When he is not able to fulfill his social role, a man's entire compound is in disorder as well, so that "in the absence of *lafiya* and strength, a state of illness exists" (1988: 171). Medicines, including charms and other forms of non-physiological remedies and prophylactics, are used in order to maintain or restore the balance of the individual. Complete restora-

tion is accomplished through social as well as physiological processes.[11]

In the Chinese and the Hausa examples, health is integrally related to the concept of internal and external balance. In the classical Chinese tradition, health is founded upon the relationship of the individual to his or her greater environment and concepts of balance and individual responsibility for it are central to the maintenance of health. For the Hausa, balance also must be diligently maintained but the route to balance and *lafiya* does not reside wholly within the body but also within the social networks of the group.

For my third example, I present a study of East London, England men and women (Cornwell 1984). This example serves not only as a contrast to the previous two, but also highlights the profoundly medical conceptualization of health in both public and private discussions of health in an urban population. Cornwell found that ideas about health were entirely grounded within the lives of the East Londoners with whom she interacted, even despite the variability in descriptions of what health meant to people individually. The social hierarchies and moral attitudes of sexual and class divisions of labour - divisions which so profoundly shape and are shaped

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[11]See also Ngubane (1977) for a comprehensive discussion of the balance of social and ecological factors in the relationship to health and illness among the Nyuswa-Zulu of South Africa.

by their social and work situations - are replicated in attitudes to health. Good health, explains Cornwell,

> ...is also said to be the reward for a good life, meaning a life of moderation and virtue, cleanliness and decency, and above all, a life of hard work. In other words, just as one's place in the hierarchy has to be achieved by "making the most of oneself," so too one's health has to be earned (1984: 128).

Principles such as personal morality, individual responsibility, and the "right attitude," are as vital to good health as they are to all aspects of one's life, irrespective of whether one has any sense of control over the circumstances of one's life - or health (1984: 128).

In addition, Cornwell also found that these East Londoners easily and readily incorporated their commonsense concept of health in relation to morality with their understanding of the medical concepts of health, with the latter continuously influencing and reinforcing the former (1984: 123).

With this profound influence of the dominant medical sense of health permeating definitions of health, health is thus often conceived of almost exclusively in terms of whether one has been sick in the past or is chronically ill. Cornwell found that in discussions of health, "it was of course impossible for people to avoid mentioning illness altogether..." (1984: 129). The absence of disease is perceived as being a discernible indicator of whether one is healthy.

In my fourth and final example, I present an interesting comparison to the working class British concepts of health. This example clearly reveals the fusion of social and medical knowledge about health (and how medical knowledge is, after all, a social product). Among North American middle class women, Crawford (1985, 1980) finds that there is an overwhelming medicalization of health, with a concomitant integration of medical and social values. Despite the fact that Crawford focuses only on urban, middle-class women, and thus addresses only a small fraction of the American population, he nevertheless reveals how a biomedical concept of health is incorporated into individual accounts of health. Indeed, the biomedical definition is quite literally embodied by the individuals in his study: "the biomedical definition of the self is encoded," says Crawford, "as a cultural program with health as its personal, medical, and political objective" (Crawford 1985: 63). Values such as individualism, self-discipline, self-denial and control, or will-power are woven through interpretations of health (Crawford 1985: 63). Social norms and values of individualism and control are inseparable from biomedical ideals of biological fitness and health. In everyday practices the locus of health is at the level of the individual, so that ultimately he or she is responsible for achieving and maintaining his or her health.

The individualistic conceptions of health in the North American and British examples are in distinct contrast to the

previous two examples. The locus of control in the first examples - classical Chinese medical system and the Hausa - lies within the society and the social constraints upon the individual for maintaining a healthy balance in the daily lives. In the second two examples - contemporary east London and urban North America, the locus of control is understood to be the individual, and it is certainly individuals who must work toward their own health. But even this focus upon the individual as well as the definitions and priorities of what constitutes health are forged within the bounds of cultural norms and values. Together, all of these examples illustrate that concepts of "health" are products of cultural and social influences and circumstances. How one constructs ideas about health derives from basic conceptualizations that the person holds about belonging in the world in which she or he lives.

3.5 Anthropological Theory and Health

As I have illustrated in the previous section, an understanding of health or well-being cannot be separated from an understanding of cultural norms and values and their enactment in daily practices and routine activities. As well, I will re-state that an anthropological definition, or perhaps comprehension, of health or well-being should not take the health/disease dyad as its premise. Health must be understood first as a dynamic cultural process.

A. Young (1982) states that all knowledge of society (and sickness) is socially determined. One of the fundamental goals of medical anthropology then is to examine the social forces and relations involved in the process of knowledge production (A. Young 1982: 277-9). It is arguable that in studying "health" I remove myself from the field of "medical" anthropology - but it is precisely through the vehicle of medical anthropology that I can say that the concept of "health" has very little to do with illness. Indeed, Young's definition of sickness (see Chapter One) allows me to go beyond the clinical and social grids of disease or illness and address the cultural foundations of health, and more specifically, of the Cree notion of "being alive well". In "being alive well" I will contend, the concern is not so much with the event or with the outcome, but in how these processes elucidate forms of symbolic power (Young 1982: 271).

Health is not simply a statement of personal well-being. Concepts of health are powerful affirmations of cultural ideals and meaningfully integrate diverse symbols of that culture. In that sense, a concept of health can also be a statement and articulation of political importance, a means of articulating a sense of oneself in the world.

In this last section of this chapter, I present the theoretical foundation for how I have come to this perspective of "health" in medical anthropology. In the process, I offer a premise for understanding the medicalization of health in

Western society. I conclude the chapter by shifting the focus from "health" to the Cree concept of "being alive well." What I suggest is that "being alive well" is an integrative concept, a means of consolidating at the level of practices, or reference to those practices, those elements that constitute well-being. "Being alive well", in turn, is a means of articulating resistance to the perceived threats to the Cree which coalesce in the form of the "whiteman" and the planned massive hydro-electric project.

In this sense, I cannot use the word "health" to describe either what I mean or what the Cree describe. I thus refer specifically to "being alive well" in order to clearly distinguish it from (the medicalized concept of) health.

Symbolic and interpretive approaches in medical anthropology and the study of health provide an important understanding of the relationship between culture and health. Culture is an intricate web of symbolic processes and as such, illness and health are seen as being culturally constructed. There are limitations to these studies of health however, and the weaknesses parallel those of symbolic anthropology generally. That is, while influential and essential to the study of social organization there is virtually no attention paid to the historical, comparative or political influences upon those cultural processes (Alexander 1990: 18).

To disregard political factors in the organization and understanding of health is to dismiss powerful factors that

circumscribe the symbolic and ideological networks in which health (or illness) is embedded (A. Young 1980; 1983). Lock and Scheper-Hughes (1990; see also Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987) overcome the limitations of a wholly symbolic or interpretive approach by incorporating in their thesis the individual, symbolic and political elements that can influence individual actions. Arguing that Cartesian dualism, which so profoundly shapes Western scientific and social knowledge, limits our anthropological understanding of those processes, Lock and Scheper-Hughes advance an alternative understanding of the way in which we examine, for example, the processes of health (or illness).[12]

Lock and Scheper-Hughes assume the body, or the "mindful body", as their focus of study and suggest a triadic inter-relationship in the study of lived (phenomenological), social (symbolic; M. Douglas 1970, 1978) and political bodies in space and time (Foucault 1975, 1979, 1980a, b; cf. B. Turner 1987). This integration of previously distinct theoretical perspectives elucidates the degree to which one must consider not just individual action and interaction, but the contextualization of those processes in the larger social and political order. By focusing on the body, Lock and Scheper-Hughes outline the lived or experiential, the symbolic and the

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[12]Kirmayer (1988) challenges Lock and Scheper-Hughes's thesis specifically, and social theories of the body in general, for their lack of attention to biological bodily processes as integral to the phenomenology of illness and one's sense of self.

political forces that create and are created by individuals in society. Like Foucault (1975, 1979, 1980a,b) and Bourdieu (1977, 1984), these authors examine the links between symbolism and power and through this, the differential distribution of power in society (see, for example, Scheper-Hughes 1988; Comaroff 1985a).

Bourdieu explains the relationship between symbols and hierarchies of power in society as one that is so "natural" that we do not even think to question it. As Bourdieu (1968[1990], 1977) contends, symbolic codes are part of the taken-for-granted practices and perceptions of everyday life, part of how we are raised and educated. Cultural heritage, or knowledge, is transmitted by the process of unconscious training and "becomes second nature, a *habitus*, a possession turned into being" (1968[1990]: 211). In his discussion of how artistic taste is "acquired," for example, Bourdieu explains that

> "...the virtuosity of the judgement of taste seems to reach an experience of aesthetic grace so completely freed from the constraints of culture and so little marked by the long, patient training of which it is the product that any reminder of the conditions and the social conditionings which have rendered it possible seems to be at once obvious and shocking (1968[1990]: 211).

This ability to decipher the codes of culture is, however, unequally distributed in society. Thus there is a creation of a cultural elite, those who have been endowed with the unconscious ability to appropriate and master forms of symbolic power and cultural wealth (1968 [1990], 1984).

The post-structuralist writings of Michel Foucault (1975, 1980b) have also had a direct influence on Lock and Scheper-Hughes' conceptual framework and both his and their works are relevant to my own. Foucault's contribution to our understanding of the interrelationship between medical and social knowledge through a period of French history provides a means of interpreting more recent social phenomena. It is for this reason that I rely on his work in order to further my general thesis.

Foucault (1975, 1980b) has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the development and medicalization of so-called health practices in society and reveals how health has become an attribute of the regulation of populations. Political attention and increasingly intensive study of the conditions of health and sickness, personal habits, and housing developed through the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries in Europe. Foucault refers to this as "medico-administrative" knowledge whereby prescriptive and proscriptive practices are filtered into the realms of everyday lives (Foucault 1980b: 177). The health and physical well-being of the population became one of the essential objectives of political power in the 18th century:

> Here is it not a matter of offering support to a particularly fragile, troubled and troublesome margin of the population but how to raise the level of health of the social body as a whole. Different power apparatuses are called upon to take charge of 'bodies', not simply so as to exact blood service from them or levy dues, but to help and if necessary constrain them to ensure their own good health.

> The imperative of health: at once the duty of each and the objective of all (Foucault 1980b: 170).
>
> ...[T]he health and physical well-being of populations comes to figure as a political objective which the 'police' of the social body must ensure along with those of economic regulation and the needs of order (Foucault 1980b: 171).[13]
>
> [Hence] the doctor becomes the great advisor in the art...of observing, correcting and improving the social 'body' and maintaining it in a permanent state of health (Foucault 1980b: 178).

Thus began the "hygienic policing of an entire population" (Gordon 1980: 243). The strength of Foucault's argument lies not just in his observations of "history" but in where he locates that history: in the so-called policing and regulating of populations. It was only when the individual could be discerned in such a way that the "individual body could become the target and effect of a calculating and ubiquitous gaze...[that]... the study of the individual in the form of the human sciences became a possibility" (Armstrong 1983: 4). This - coupled with the evolution of the field of biological sciences and the development of the germ theory of disease - meant that individualized bodies were increasingly being scrutinized and could become the object, target and effect of power (Foucault 1975).

Health within a regulatory system of control such as that described by Foucault is appropriated by a cultural elite yet

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[13]Foucault describes the 'policing' activities as those mechanisms and institutions of the 18th century which ensured order through economic regulation, measures of public order, and general rules of hygiene (Foucault 1980b: 170-1).

becomes the imperative of every individual. Healthy practices are but one example of the physical embodiment of the power process, permeating not just the relations between people but what we do and how we do it. Health is bound within an ideological process and simultaneously embedded within the routines of everyday life (see Comaroff 1985a).

Armstrong (1983) takes Foucault's study of the normalization and medicalization of health into the twentieth century. He notes that the health of individuals and populations are increasingly monitored as the focus of disease is centred, on the one hand, within the body, and on the other, as the direct result of interaction between bodies in social space (1983: 6). Surveillance techniques have paralleled the development of norms and standards of health. Indeed, as the medical gaze (Foucault 1975) became more reductionistic, it simultaneously regulated the terms of normal within the population.

> Health was no longer to be regarded as a private and immutable state of body...but as something social and relative, 'an objective to which the individual could strive' (Armstrong 1983: 10; Williams 1973: 40, in Armstrong).

Crawford's (1985) study of North American women's concepts of health, for example, can now be understood as the assimilation of the medicalization process - bodies literally controlled by the will of the individual, acceding to the perceived social norms and standards of excellence in health (Crawford 1985:97; see also Lifton 1986; Proctor 1988; Spree 1988 for a lurid

interpretation of health as the social imperative in Nazi Germany).

Foucault offers an understanding of the social history of the regulatory notion of health that Crawford (1985) sees literally incorporated in his study population. It also puts into perspective the political importance of the regulatory notion of health: a healthy population means at one level, at any rate, a healthy system of production. In turn scientific observations and studies derive from and continue to expand our sense of a population based notion of health. And health, when defined as the absence of disease and infirmity, whether of individuals or populations - overlooks social, economic, and cultural factors that play into interpretations of well-being. Foucault's depiction of the regulatory process is thus valuable in explicating what "health" means in the broader web of the political and social relations of populations in the West.

3.6 Summary

There are political and cultural constraints that define forms of "health" and well-being. "Health" is the ideal of a regulatory and normative ideology. In contrast to "health," there are other culturally defined conceptualizations that account for personal and cultural factors influencing one's sense of "health" or well-being which may have little, if anything, to do with levels of morbidity. Using ethnographic

examples, I outlined how concepts of health can be diversely interpreted and how those concepts of the body and society make those interpretations plausible. I then detailed how Foucault derives his interpretation of a powerful, regulatory concept of health and suggested that this is a useful paradigm from which to make sense of a Western concept of health. I will return to and debate this restrictive conceptualization of health in relation to modes of resistance in Chapter Six.

Until then I bring the concept of "being alive well" to the fore and explore how it too derives from a particular cultural and historical perspective. Thus, just as health is defined and mediated within the constraints of one's social and cultural boundaries, so is "being alive well". "Being alive well" is distinguished from "health" in that it draws specifically upon cultural categories that are not intrinsically related to the biomedical or dualistic sense of individual health or illness. That is, the articulation of wellness is made in relation to factors that are distinct from the degree of biological morbidity and are constituted from within and outside of the boundaries of the individual body. "Being alive well" will be the subject of the subsequent chapters, in which I will present the underlying symbolic foundations of the concept, and ultimately how it can be viewed as a statement of resistance among the Cree to the imposed categories and cultural standards inherent even in such concepts as health.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE WHAPMAGOOSTUI CREE

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I establish the historical foundation and present day circumstances of the Whapmagoostui Cree. The overview of historical developments and changes in the region provides the background and setting for the ethnographic and theoretical material that follows. Integral to the development of my thesis is the contextualization of the relationship of the Cree to the politics and economy of the nation-state. For this reason, and because there is no recorded history of the Cree people other than that related to their contact with non-Natives, I am limited to presenting a chronology of events pertaining to the early and contemporary contact periods. In addition, I focus more upon the current situation in Great Whale than I do upon the earlier periods.

To begin, and in order to situate a discussion of the political relevance of "health," I will elucidate the position

of this indigenous population in relation to Canada. Then, prior to describing the current circumstances, I will provide some historical detail in order to establish a context for the development of the association between the Eastern Cree and the nation-state. Thus I will present a synopsis of the initial contact period and then move through the early years of this century. More extensive anthropological studies at Great Whale provide a glimpse of life in the region thirty years ago from which I then advance the profile into the late 1980s. Finally, I provide some background to the current debates surrounding the planned hydro-electric project in the region of Great Whale.

4.2 Fourth World Politics and the Cree Nation

The relationship between the government and the indigenous populations of Canada is complex and varies between different native groups and, over time, with different national policies and agendas. I focus primarily upon the Eastern Algonquian Cree of James Bay and further on in this chapter, upon the relationship between the Cree and the provincial government in recent history.

Indigenous populations in Canada are internal colonies within a larger nation-state. The nation-state, as defined by Dyck (1985), is that complex of government institutions and agencies which historically has enabled the exploitation of indigenously held lands and resources. Despite the espousal

of liberal democratic sentiments by the state, the administration of the minority indigenous populations is often guided by social, ideological and economic decisions that work against the general good of indigenous peoples (Dyck 1985: 7). As such, Dyck reminds us that the state then views indigenous populations as some form of (fictive) single community of people and the legal and political organizations which govern them, rather than how they should be viewed - which is as an aggregate of separate communities (1985: 7; see also Graburn 1981; Dacks 1981).

Referred to as the Fourth World (see Graburn 1981; Manuel & Posluns 1974), indigenous populations are recognized as the original inhabitants of the lands that now comprise nation-states. They are small in number and always a minority population in these countries. Fourth World populations in Canada, as elsewhere (for example, the Norwegian Saami and Australian Aborigines), are "politically weak, economically marginal, and culturally stigmatized members of the national societies that have overtaken them and their lands" (Dyck 1985: 1).

The indigenous populations are so profoundly subjected to governments' policies, that

> [t]he form and substance of their relations with national and state governments are matters of fundamental significance in their everyday life and future prospects as indigenous peoples (Dyck 1985: 1).

As such, the prevailing and most significant endeavours of

Cree and other indigenous leaders today is their work toward establishing land claims. These efforts are directly linked to their aspirations of a territorial base and the concomitant special legal and political status that would ensure the continued survival of native communities (Dyck 1985: 11). The Cree nation, a relatively recent political reality, has arisen directly out of disputes surrounding these types of land claim issues.

4.3 Early Contact Period in the Great Whale River Region

The pre-contact period of the Cree is documented primarily through archaeological records which demonstrate evidence of their existence in the region over the last 5,000 years. The northern Cree were primarily caribou hunters and travelled in small patrilocal family groups across the northwestern sector of modern-day Québec, from Kuujjuak on the Ungava coast to Schefferville, Great Whale River and south to Chisasibi.

Like other oral hunting cultures, Cree history is passed down through the generations primarily in the form of stories and cultural artifacts such as clothing and implements. The tales acquaint the listeners with individuals and their abilities, how they used their skills and methods of survival across vast territories and in a variety of situations. There is also a wealth of stories of encounters with the both evil and good members of the supernatural world, of ancient

ancestors, and of how the Cree world came into being.

The belief in powers is fused with concepts of spirituality and animate spirit beliefs. Those beliefs ran counter to the early teachings of the missionaries. Consequently, many of the tales have been either lost or suppressed because of the silence imposed upon past generations by the disciplinarian authority of the early Christian leaders.[1]

One of the earliest ethnographic accounts of this region is Turner's 1894 description of Indians travelling to Fort Chimo (Kuujjuak). Turner provides a detailed survey of the general pattern of subsistence and hunting techniques of the Cree near the turn of the last century. By that time there had been considerable contact between the hunters and traders. The following anonymous excerpt from Hudson's Bay Company records indicates quite clearly the degree of industry in the region almost two centuries ago:

> Hudson Bay Records 1814 (B.372/a/1)
> July 1 - sailing from E.M. (Eastmain]
> July 2 - anchored for the Night at Paint Hills [Washkaganish]
> July 15 - am at [Great] Whale R[iver].
> July 22 - scaling north looking for better spot for the whale fishery
> July 24 - am at LWR [Little Whale River]...
> Aug. 1 - set up boiling House (at GWR) - on the N. shore...
> Aug 13 - .../ oil taken on board the Schooner. 3 Tons of blubber from LWR, furs and deerskins, the latter retained for use at the house.

Trading posts were established at Great Whale and Little

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[1]The story-telling tradition is very much alive in Whapmagoostui, and there is a recently revived impetus to recall and record these legends and tales of the past.

Whale rivers, Richmond Gulf and other locations partly for the convenience of the traders but also because these were acknowledged congregation sites for the Cree and Inuit of the region. Fur trade posts, explains Preston, "were often built at the site of these gatherings, and in other cases the gatherings were shifted to the post locale to combine the practical, congenial and ideological goals of trade and social exchange" (1975: 329).[2]

Long before European presence in this region, Great Whale was one of the established summer meeting places for the northern-dwelling Cree. Inuit and northern Cree family groups travelled up and down the Hudson Bay coast in search of caribou and other game. Richmond Gulf, Little Whale River and Great Whale River were common stopping points within the margins of their hunting territories.

The annual summer congregation at the mouth of the Great Whale River was a time of marriage celebrations, walking-out

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[2]It should be noted that the period of early contact to the intense trade era is highlighted by a catastrophic incidence of new infectious diseases (such as measles, smallpox, influenza, scarlet fever and tuberculosis) and long periods of famine. It is believed that these diseases were first carried into the trading regions by the Europeans and infected an unimmunized population (T.K. Young 1988b: 661; 1979). These so-called "virgin soil epidemics" had direct and indirect effects on the Native populations. Added to the direct loss of a high number of adults in their prime years, were the losses attributed to the reduction in the number of people responsible for food procurement, defense and procreation (T.K. Young 1988b: 661; see also Jennings 1976; Krech 1978). The epidemics of the early 1900s coincided with a natural decline in the animal population and thus a period of famine for these populations (Robinson 1985).

ceremonies, feasts, games, reunions with family members, and conjuring (Preston 1975: 329).

At the same time, the Cree took this opportunity to harvest the beluga whale. Whale meat was a source of food and more importantly, of fat, which could be stored and used throughout the year. Turner (1894) notes that the Little Whale River people[3] were the only Indians whom he had seen eating whale meat. Although Walker claims that no ritual is recalled as having been attached to the consumption of whale meat (Walker 1953: 64), one of my informants concludes otherwise:

> The way the whale oil was eaten was with other kinds of game meat. It was good when some oil was boiled in with ptarmigan. It was best eaten with fish. The *Iyiyuu'ch* of the past were more apt to kill whales for its oil - and for food. As it was with everything else that the *Iyiyuu* killed for food, they handled the whale with great respect. When a whale would be killed, an old man was given the whale to oversee that the whale was shared and handled according to custom. An old man was made owner of the whale. He instructed that others be given part of the whale, though. He was the boss of the whale (JK, Interview #2).

The Hudson Bay Company (HBC) men were the first European traders to come to the east coast of James Bay. Although they arrived in 1668, trade between the Cree and the HBC was not firmly instituted until the early 1700's. The first post on Hudson Bay was established at Richmond Gulf in the 1740's,

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[3]Turner distinguishes between the Montagnais, the Naskopies (sic) and the Little Whale River Indians who all traded at the Fort Chimo post during the time of his research (1894: 182). Only the Little Whale River participated in the whaling industry at Fort Chimo.

with a smaller outpost at Little Whale River. This post lasted for ten years after which there were trading posts alternately at either Fort George (established in 1803), Little or Great Whale Rivers (Morantz 1983: 58).[4]

The fur trade may have been the initial impetus for European interest in the Hudson Bay region but other motivating factors soon developed. In 1749 a ship was sent up the Hudson Bay coast in order to bring men up to mine iron and copper believed to be in abundant supply in the Richmond Gulf and Little Whale River regions. Mining was initiated at Little Whale River and then prospecting was begun at Richmond Gulf, where a settlement was already located. The anticipated rich yield of ore was never realized and the Europeans turned their attention to whale harvesting.[5] By 1753 this enterprise was firmly established in the region.

It was, in fact, through the whaling industry and not through the fur trade that the northern Cree entered into the European economic structure. The Cree of this region, like the Inuit, were drawn more permanently to the coastal waters of first Little Whale River and then Great Whale River to

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[4]For a review and analysis of trade relations up to 1870 with the Eastern James Bay Cree, see Francis and Morantz (1983).

[5]Prior to the introduction of coal gas and petroleum products in 19th century Europe, whale oil was commonly used as the illuminant in street lamps. The oil was also used in making soap. Prepared whale skins were also used in Europe as a leather substitute (Francis and Morantz 1983; Marsh 1988).

assist in the prosperous whaling industry. As already skilled whalers, the northern Cree were easily incorporated into the harvesting, butchering and preparation of the whales.

Posts were built, moved and rebuilt over the next century.[6] In 1813 a post was established at Great Whale River but closed in favour of a return to the "Big River" (Chisasibi/Fort George/La Grande) post in 1816.

As the excerpt earlier in this section suggests, the whaling operation was continued by sloop up the coast from the Eastmain post to Great Whale River. Annual trips were made from 1791 until the mid 1800's. There were no permanent posts north of Eastmain during this time period since it was felt that the Cree could bring their furs either to Eastmain or to the summer fishery at Great Whale River. The thinking behind this was the conviction that the Cree would move south into fur country as that industry grew (Francis and Morantz 1983: 116-120; Balikci 1961: 64-74; Honigmann 1962: 7-11).

A post was re-established for only a short period in 1836 at Great Whale River, and then again from 1852-1855. The post at Little Whale River was re-built in 1855 but there is no clear documentation as to when it closed. In 1857 the post re-opened in Great Whale River and was from then on continuously in operation. During this period whaling continued to be a profitable enterprise and rendering of whale blubber was

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[6]For further discussion of these incidents and relations between the Cree, Inuit and traders see Francis and Morantz 1983: 118.

done at the post. A large copper kettle used for this purpose is still evident near the village today. The Cree and Inuit provided summer labour at the post, hired to assist with the whaling, chop and haul wood, hunt food for the manager, and perform other maintenance activities. The harvesting of Beluga whales proved to be immensely more successful than the mining operation in the region attempted less than a half century earlier (Balikci 1959; Walker 1953).

Within the next quarter century and with the advent of other forms of fuel, the whale oil needs of the Europeans diminished. This was rather opportune timing since the whaling industry had been so successful up to then that the Beluga came very near to extinction after a century of such intense harvesting.[7] The whaling industry dwindled but the post remained open since the fur trade from there continued to be profitable (Honigmann 1962: 7-11).

The effects of regular contact were clearly changing the seasonal hunting pattern of the Cree and Inuit, and indicate an increased reliance on ammunition and some purchased foods. Speaking about the Inuit who traded at Great Whale, Balikci remarks that

> [i]l est aisé de distinguer déjà, au début de notre siècle, les principales caractéristiques du

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[7]What few whales left were not anxious to be caught, as indicated by one company manager at the Great Whale River post who complained that the whales were shying away from the River during the usual netting season and only entered the river after the nets were stored away for the winter (Francis and Morantz 1983: 147).

> processus du contact culturel: les changements technologiques qui amènent l'épuisement du gibier, les modifications dans le rythme des migrations saisonnières, la dépendence accrue des indigènes envers le poste de la Compagnie (intégration des Esquimaux dans l'économie d'échange moderne), le statut supérieur du gérant et du missionaire dans leurs relations avec les indigènes... (1959: 73-4).

Integration into the modern market economy does not however imply complete reliance or dependence upon post supplies. The Cree maintained a considerable interdependence with the HBC in this early period and relied on only certain goods that were of benefit to them. Morantz reminds us that the caribou was the most reliable and most preferred food source for the northern Cree and as such "...their independence is in the context of disinterest in those European goods other than ones deemed necessary for their survival. Thus metal tools, guns and ammunition in seemingly small quantities were all they desired" (Morantz 1983: 64) along with twine and tobacco (Morantz 1983: 67; see also Morantz 1986; Francis and Morantz 1983; Turner 1894: 280; Speck 1915). Turner's (1894) ethnographic research done at Fort Chimo in 1882-84 supports Morantz's assertion. He found that the Northern Cree hunting families who travelled to this point traded their furs for the gunshot, tea, flour, sugar, cloth and string available at this post. On a practical basis, the want of more trade goods was not feasible since the long cross-country treks limited the amount of either trade goods or furs that could be hauled (Morantz 1983: 66).

Eventually a proportion of the northern hunters increased

their involvement in the fur trade. Morantz suggests that through the incentive of presents for successful trapping, a percentage of the hunters shifted their resource base from the barren lands to the inland regions. A minority also chose to remain at and maintain the post and along with their post duties, these men and their families hunted geese and participated in the whale fishery.[8] Hence the origin of the reference to "coast" Indians.

Thus began the relative accommodation to the fur trade market: some northern Cree remained full-time caribou hunters, others trapped and yet others worked at the post (Morantz 1983: 70). Importantly, Morantz notes, the Great Whale Cree "found a means of incorporating the European trade in a way acceptable to themselves and the HBC" (1983: 71).

4.4 Missionization

While maneuvering through the relatively new market system, the Cree were exposed for the first time to organized religion early in the last century. The firm conviction of early missionaries that Native peoples were practicing acts of the devil sustained their resolve to convert the people to the ways of Christianity. As Edmund Peck said early on in his

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[8]A result of the living conditions for the indigenous populations at posts was outbreaks of highly communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, impetigo, intestinal infections, as well as scabies and pediculosis. These diseases reflected the problems of sanitation, housing and hygiene inherent to early settlement life (T. K. Young 1988b: 661).

mission activities in the "northern wilds" of the Hudson Bay region, "Blessed be God that through my Saviour I am on the winning side" (1876; quoted in Petersen 1974: 31). The missionaries were vigilant in their attempts to obliterate what they perceived as the barbaric ways of primitive peoples. The process of proselytization left no room for the consideration of indigenous practices since it was assumed that they were heathen and hence without significance or utility.

The Anglican missionaries followed the posting routes and went first to Little Whale and eventually to Great Whale River in the mid to late 1800's. The first permanent mission establishment in this region was in August of 1879 when materials were shipped up to Little Whale River for the construction of a church. The church was dismantled a few years later and moved by sled to Great Whale River (Balikci 1959). Along with the post, the church and mission activities brought a considerable number of coastal people to the region between Great Whale and Richmond Gulf (Francis and Morantz 1983).

Christianity and specifically the Anglican church teachings eventually came to have a profound effect upon the northern Cree. In the first years of the missionaries' efforts, people would act in accordance with the church when near the post, but return to the practices that were forbidden - such as shaking tent or other non-Christian rituals - when at their camps (Honigmann 1962). Over the years, and often with relentless effort, the missionaries were successful in

the conversion of an entire people to at least some form of belief in Christianity.

Conversion to Christianity was accomplished largely as the result of the work of two missionaries. Edmund Peck and W.G. Walton exerted a profound moral influence over the people in this region through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Barger 1981: 673). Peck arrived in the eastern Hudson Bay region in 1876 and was soon followed and eventually replaced by Walton. From 1892 to 1924 Reverend W.G. Walton visited the Great Whale post regularly from Fort George (Petersen 1974).[9] In his absence there were Cree catechists trained to conduct the daily services. Leith and Leith note that:

> [k]nowing every individual Indian...dependent on Fort George and Whale River posts, and much of their family history and having gained their confidence and respect, Reverend Walton exercises a benevolent despotism over them which extends beyond spiritual affairs. Anything he says "goes" (Leith and Leith 1912: 47).

As indicated in the following excerpt from an interview that I conducted, Walton's teachings reverberate to this day. MG was discussing how people hunted in the past and then spontaneously shifted the conversation in this way:

> MG: Even though they were only using arrows, that is how it was in the past. But since people don't do what the people did in the past...

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[9]Walton eventually became fluent in the Cree language, and one of his most lasting contributions to the conversion process was his translation of the prayer book into Cree (and Inuktitut) and then teaching the people how to read the syllabics (Petersen 1974; Barger 1981: 673).

There was this priest who came from far from here, his name was Mr. Walton. He was the one who stopped the people from what they were doing - like with the shaking tents.

Q: He was the one who told them?

MG: Yes, he was the one who told them to stop. So, they stopped using the shaking tent. He must have done the same with the people south of here, at all the places he went to.

Q: But did he say why he stopped the people from using the shaking tents?

MG: The reason why he stopped them is because he told them there is only one thing we should think about as a Saviour, who we are living for each day and everything that he made, and that is how it is written in the Bible. We should never think: What shall I live for? What shall I eat? How am I going to stay alive? We should never think that way. If someone thinks that way, it seems as if he has lost faith in Him. That is how the Bible is written, and that is how the people have been taught. That is the main reason why he stopped that. But, while they were still using those shaking tents, it seemed as if they had something else they could depend on.... Until the minister came all the way from England. He was sent because the other minister could not tell the Native people like us because they were scared to stop what the Native people were doing. That was the reason he was sent here because they were sure he would be the one to tell the people, he was the right one to do the job, to tell the Cree people to stop what they were doing in the past. That was what they did. It was the same with the Inuit. That is how the Inuit also changed, since the minister came to the town and all the other places, like Schefferville and all the other places because whenever the people noticed he would come to Great Whale, there were a lot of people who would come to see him, in winter, there were a lot of people who would come a long way just to see him, like the Inuit who would come by dog sled and in the summer he would travel by canoe, he would be taken to other places by canoe, with the large canoes (MG, Interview

#4).

In this excerpt MG recounts the interval during which the Cree incorporated Christianity into their way of life. He comments upon the disruption to the pre-contact ways yet, as a devout Christian himself, sees no conflict in how these changes have affected the Cree or their religiosity.

The devotion to Christianity is now an integral part of Cree beliefs. The highest being in their worldview, for example, is the Christian God. This God is understood as being the Creator who put everything on the earth and who provides for the animals and the people (see also Chapters One & Five).

4.5 Government and Armed Forces Presence in Great Whale

From the 1940s on there were significant changes in the degree of association between the Cree and non-Native populations. Prior to 1955 all of the Cree associated with the Great Whale River post hunted throughout the winter. Those who remained at the post either assisted with its operation or were there because they were incapacitated by age or infirmity (Walker 1953: 6). Faced with a declining fur supply however and with the newly instated federal assistance program, the Cree were entering into a new relationship with the government of Canada. In 1945 the federal government instituted the family allowance plan, which provided some cash to the inhabitants of Great Whale. This was particularly timely since

the decrease in fur stock in the 1930s had left hunters with a paucity of exchange goods. With a limited food supply, and increased incidence of infectious diseases, the people welcomed the new money and services provided to them.[10]

According to the people in Whapmagoostui today, this association was perceived somewhat differently from how it was intended. With fixed resources and with only a limited comprehension of a post-War Canada, the Cree accepted the government cheques, dispensed through the Hudson Bay store, as arising from a logical system of reciprocity. Since they were in need, the store - equated with the government - was now providing them with the means to subsist.[11]

At about the same time representatives of the Department of Indian Affairs encouraged the Cree to organize themselves into a band with chief and council (Boulet and Gagnon 1979: 67). This was done essentially for administrative purposes and without regard for indigenous concerns or concepts of leadership.

In 1949-50, Great Whale River was a seasonally inhabited

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[10]In the 1940's, the James Bay Cree were found to be malnourished and had a high prevalence of tuberculosis and childhood diseases (Vivian et al. 1948: 505; Anonymous 1949; similar findings for Ojibwa: Moore et al. 1946: 223). The findings of these studies awakened the Canadian government to the deplorable conditions of the indigenous populations living around the posts. This led to significant interventions in the post-War period in the areas of health care, social assistance and education (T.K. Young 1988b: 662).

[11]For a comprehensive analysis of reciprocity see C. Scott 1989.

composite of communities (Honigmann 1951, 1962; see also Twomey and Herrick 1941). Approximately 190 Inuit and 170 Cree camped near the post at Christmas time and again between July and August. Permanent residents of the post in 1951-2 included the Hudson Bay Company manager, his wife, a store clerk, the Anglican missionary and, occasionally, a Federal radio operator. Regular non-Native visitors to Great Whale included the Mounted Police (twice annual patrol), the HBC supply boat, the federal Indian agent[12], bush pilots, and the Field Medical Unit, which came by boat from Moose Factory about once a year.[13] Less frequent visitors to Great Whale included naturalists, geologists, sportsmen, prospectors and anthropologists (Honigmann 1951, 1962; Walker 1953). Then as now, both the Anglican mission and the Hudson Bay store were located near the Native dwellings.

Walker describes the subsistence activities in 1952 as being wholly determined by gender; boys worked with men and girls with women performing the daily jobs and tasks. Women collected the firewood, hauled water and gathered berries, and performed all of the household maintenance tasks. The men

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[12]The Agent was supposed to make annual visits to all communities under his jurisdiction. However the Moose Factory based Agent responsible for Great Whale did not visit the village in 1952 despite the fact that they were the most "poverty-stricken and most disease-ridden of all the bands in his territory" (Walker 1953: 7).

[13]Moose Factory, Ontario at this time was the headquarters for all medical and religious services and agencies on either side of the Hudson Bay coast.

left the village in small parties to hunt and fish, partook in wage labour activities (unloading the supply boat, chopping and sawing wood for the post) and made purchases at the store.

Separation of genders was also seen in social activities and church attendance.[14] The church and Bible continued to exert a strong influence at this time on both the Cree and the Inuit populations. Walker notes that a restriction of hunting and other activities on Sunday was by this time a firmly established Cree convention. Church services were held daily in the small church, and were led by a Cree catechist when no missionary was present.

In 1955 the armed forces came to Great Whale River. The result of this was a considerable change to the infrastructure of Great Whale River. No longer just a post or temporary Cree and Inuit village, Great Whale had virtually overnight become a small armed forces base. The Distant Early Warning (DEW) lines radar system put into place during the height of the cold war era necessitated military presence at various sites in the north. The armed forces arrived in the summer of 1955 and set up an enclosed camp along the northwestern reaches of the village near the coast of the Hudson Bay. As one informant commented to me, she returned with her family to Great Whale after wintering inland and found that fences and

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[14]Walker implies that the segregation of the sexes was inherent to Cree practices but it was suggested to me that this seating arrangement was imposed upon the people by the early missionaries.

buildings had been constructed in their absence. Suddenly there were restrictions placed on where the Native populations could go and on what they could do (see also Balikci 1959).

Through 1955 and 1956 there was a large influx of Inuit from further up the coast to Great Whale looking for the construction and related industry jobs suddenly made available. The Cree also took advantage of these employment opportunities but from that time on, and until the late 1980's, the Inuit population superseded that of the Cree (Balikci 1959: 75). Balikci, studying the Inuit of Great Whale, noted that by 1957 relations between the Inuit and non-Natives of Great Whale were such that "[l]es Esquimaux forment une classe de manoeuvres, de domestiques et de prostituées occupant la péripherie des grands établissement Eurocanadiens" (1959: 93). The Cree were treated with even less respect by the new inhabitants of the region. Despite increased employment and increased federal aid to those without jobs there was a - perhaps understandable - concomitant increase in hostility to the newcomers (1959: 93).

With the unique situation of so many Eurocanadian residents arriving at one time to Great Whale, this was a period of intensive study of the inter-ethnic relations and associations between the small villages. Anthropological studies were conducted through the late 1960s primarily to ascertain the degree to which cultural groups influenced one another. These studies, despite being based upon the premise

of acculturation, do nevertheless offer a snapshot of life in Great Whale during the years of early settlement life.

In 1958 the federal government decided to make Great Whale a permanent village site. By 1960 there were 202 Cree, 375 Inuit and 23 non-Natives residing at Great Whale River during the summer months and each in their own separate locale (Johnson 1962; Rogers 1965).

> The village is neatly divided in two: to one side, the western, the tents and houses of the Eskimos; to the other, the eastern, the tents of the Indians. A stranger would not know where the Eskimo dwellings ended and the Indian dwellings began. And yet, there is no overlapping (Johnson 1962: 1).

With some minor variations in population size and type of accommodations, the majority of the Great Whale Cree spent their summers at the village in a community separate from both the Inuit and the non-Native workers. All of the Cree in 1960 lived in tents and 35 of the 39 tents that housed the population were organized according to relation to first degree relatives: father, mother, brother, sister or child. Between 2 and 12 people lived together with an average of 5 individuals in a single dwelling (Johnson 1962).

Not only did the Cree and Inuit remain within their separate camps but the airstrip (conveniently) segregated the Native and non-Native communities.[15] This non-Native village

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[15]There is considerable data on the general racist attitudes of non-Natives toward the Indigenous Cree and Inuit populations and more specifically, discrimination against one group over the other (Walker 1953; Barger and Earl 1971).

unto itself is aptly described by Johnson who in 1960 found that

> [n]orth of the airstrip are...the series of buildings which house the activities of the whites: the Northern Affairs complex, ...the apartments of the teachers in the school run by the Department of Northern Affairs, the school house itself, the nursing station, the large storage building which on Saturday nights and on special occasions is used as a community hall.
>
> To the far east of this complex is the camp of the Department of Hydraulic Resources; to the west, the quarters of the Department of Transport, the Inn and the office of Wheeler Airlines and Nordair; and behind, fenced off from the rest of this little world, the self-contained life of the Mid-Canada [Distance Early Warning] Line base where well over one hundred white individuals lead their separate existence (1962:1).

The radar base halted its operations in 1967. At that time the Federal and Provincial governments inherited full responsibility for maintaining the town and its population but with separate federal agencies to administer the Cree and the Inuit (Barger and Earl 1971: 26). The Department of Northern Affairs was responsible for the Inuit and they had an office in Great Whale. The Indian Affairs Bureau administered the Cree and the closest agency was in Fort George, 240 kilometres south of Great Whale. One of the apparent effects of having both governments responsible for this small locale is that by the late 1960's there was a significant differential in opportunities and services for the Cree and the Inuit. Government programs in housing, job training, and education were more readily available to the Inuit than to the Cree because of the local administration of Inuit affairs (Barger

1977: 7).[16]

Barger and Earl conducted a study on the differential adaptation to town life of the Inuit and Cree populations just after the termination of the base. The Inuit were apparently more "adaptable" to town life since they could occupy the higher paying skilled labour jobs.

With separate government programs for the Cree and the Inuit, the Inuit received more advanced education and better housing facilities. Similar opportunities were not available to the Cree (Barger and Earl 1971: 29; Wills 1965). Indeed, Wills (1965) found that even when the Cree wanted some of the financial benefits of the village and equal job opportunities, the Department of Indian Affairs would only finance handicraft production such as wood carving. Barger and Earl concluded that because of the preferential opportunities for the Inuit and because the Inuit perceived their traditional way of life to be harsh and unprofitable, they then adapted more readily to town living (1971: 30; Barger 1981). In their summary Barger and Earl state that

> [b]oth our quantitative and qualitative data indicate that the Eskimos have tended to move into the town and adjust their life styles, in terms of activities and values, under the new circumstances, whereas the Indians have tended to remain more oriented towards their traditional way of life (1971: 29-30).

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[16]Barger (1977) also notes that even after the consolidation of the DNA and the IAB into the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Inuit and the Cree were administered separately.

Reviewing this study twenty years after its publication I am struck by two things. First is the perceived lower social status of the Cree in the village compared to the Inuit and to the non-Native population (see also Walker 1953; Barger 1977). Second is the more subtle assumption that the Inuit were better off for having chosen village life, whereas circumstances external to the Cree prevented them from making the same choices. Studies of acculturation assume a movement toward settlement economic practices and thus the Inuit are somehow better off (if not better than) the Cree in the same village because of the work that they were able to do. This comparison of male work patterns in and out of the village lacks a subjective assessment of why individuals select particular jobs and more importantly, why the Cree chose to remain with their own work and living practices.

In a reassessment of these circumstances, Barger found that in the process of negotiating town living and with increased activity in local and regional Native political affairs, the Cree of Great Whale "desired many of the benefits of the larger national society [but] were willing to participate in it only to the extent that they could *maintain their unique status and heritage, as Crees*" (emphasis added; Barger 1977: 17; see also Salisbury 1986: 50-51). As Barger (1977) notes, the Cree were apparently aware of the potential loss to their hunting livelihood if they were to be subsumed within the village structure and concomitant restricted employment

opportunities.

The next major period of change for the Cree of Great Whale was the result of events that initially had only an indirect effect upon their lives. These same events however would profoundly affect how the Eastern Cree leadership and communities would come to negotiate with the federal and provincial governments of Canada.

4.6 Whapmagoostui and the Hydro-Electric Project

The Eastern James Bay Cree's process of dealing with the Québec government over the initial hydro-development project in the early 1970's remains a compelling example of modern day relations between the nation-state and indigenous populations. It bears repeating here that Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa's original 1971 plan to flood and dam the La Grande River in the northeastern region of Québec was initiated without any prior consultation with the Cree who inhabit that land. Ironically, just a few years earlier, in the late 1960s, the Cree of Whapmagoostui had stated that their three main concerns as a community surrounded the issues of self-government, land claims and the preservation of their culture (Barger 1980).

In 1971 the Québec government and Hydro-Québec initiated unilateral action to develop Cree lands and waterways for a massive hydroelectric power project. The Cree had not been advised or consulted about this plan and were, at first, unprepared to contest the planned project. That soon changed

and a new young leadership launched direct challenges to this proposed plan. The long and arduous legal battles that ensued resulted in the historic James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA) between Québec Cree, Inuit, and the federal and provincial governments.[17] The Grand Council of the Cree of Québec (GCCQ), organized under the pressure of needing a unified voice for the Cree in dealing with the governments during the negotiation process, ultimately became the first regional government of the Eastern Cree of Québec.[18]

The JBNQA and the Northeastern Québec Agreement which followed were hailed at the time as being dynamic treaties which, importantly, override the mandate of the Indian Act of Canada for the Cree and Inuit of Québec. The Cree-Naskapi (of Québec) Act resulting from the Agreements established the legal basis for the first Indian self-government in Canada. This form of self-government is recognized as a delegated - not an inherent - right (Cree-Naskapi Commission 1986).[19]

Negotiated in the JBNQA are benefits, payments and land

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[17]For more comprehensive details of the dispute and the negotiation process that resulted see Feit 1985, Richardson 1975. Salisbury 1986.

[18] The Cree Regional Authority was established in order to implement the policies of the GCCQ.

[19]But, as C. Scott (per. comm.) notes, to the extent that self-government is established as a right under the JBNQA, it has protection under Section 35 of the Constitution as a right established pursuant to a treaty or claims settlement, which is then an aboriginal right and hence is "inherent" in that sense, and not delegated.

rights for the James Bay Cree (and Inuit) of Québec in exchange for the relinquishment of Native title to 404,592 square miles (approx. 647,347 km²) of land. Incorporated into the Agreement is control of wildlife resource management, as well as input into environmental impact assessments, a program of guaranteed income for hunting families, and guaranteed native economic and social development. Other fundamental benefits include administrative control over local and regional governments, education[20] and the administration of justice.

Also created at this time was the Cree Regional Board of Health and Social Services (CRBHSS). The CRBHSS was established with a mandate to implement health and social services in the Cree communities under the Ministry of Health and Social Services of Québec. Services were transferred to the control of the CRBHSS in 1978 and their offices were established in Chisasibi. Although it is modelled after and part of the Regional Council of Health and Social Services in Québec, unlike other Regional Councils, the CRBHSS also manages a Regional Hospital Centre (Chisasibi), a Social Service Centre (Chisasibi), two Reception and Housing Centres, and two Local Community Service Centres (Bobbish-Atkinson and

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[20]The establishment of the Cree School Board removed the Cree from the rivalry between the federal and provincial governments over educational jurisdiction in northern Québec. The Cree School Board is funded provincially but holds full pedagogical control (Boulet and Gagnon 1979: 45).

Magonet 1990).[21]

Although aware of and concerned about the effects of the hydro-electric project and the governments' activities, the people of Whapmagoostui were relatively isolated from the political disputes surrounding the project. As co-signatories to the Agreement, they were involved in the negotiation process and have benefitted from the health, education, housing, and economic programs that arise from the Agreement.

In Great Whale the most immediate and visible early effect of the JBNQA was the formalization of the division between Cree and Inuit lands and people. According to the JBNQA, category 1A lands are those on which the indigenous populations have exclusive surface rights.[22] Category 1A lands are used to build the villages and, uniquely in Great Whale, create invisible dividing lines between the Inuit and Cree communities. These formalized divisions resulted in the entrenchment of separate municipalities with autonomous local Cree and Inuit jurisdiction over their respective 1A lands. Rather than being separated by federal or provincial authority, as was the case in the past, the Cree and Inuit now

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[21]For a concise summary of the complex organizational structure of the CRBHSS, refer to Bobbish-Atkinson and Magonet's The James Bay Experience (1990).

[22]Category 2 lands are those upon which the Cree have exclusive hunting fishing and trapping rights, although the government retains the right to replace these lands with others if needed for serving public needs (e.g. mining). Category 3 lands are those on which the Cree hold no exclusive rights except to trap or hunt certain animals.

function entirely under independent local governments, schools and services.

Suddenly as well, there were unseen partitions between lands and renewable resources that were previously available to anyone who needed them. The ethic of "mine and yours" that is dictated through the treaty, an edict of ownership rather than usufructuary privilege, has ultimately further divided the Inuit and the Cree (E. Masty per. comm.).

The JBNQA offered the Cree and Inuit subsistence and community facilities that most southern Canadians take for granted (Salisbury 1986). Those changes have been slow however. The move from the federally allocated slat wood dwellings into homes with running water and flush toilets, for example, began less than a decade ago. Despite the immediate needs of the population at the time of the signing of the Agreement there was a long delay in housing construction. It was only in the early 1980's that families began to move into new homes. Selections for transfer of housing in Whapmagoostui were organized through the local band council on the basis of age, infirmity, family size and need. Fulfilment of the housing obligations in Whapmagoostui continues to today. Some individuals have chosen to remain in the older dwellings. Some stay because of the higher cost of maintaining the new houses, and others, who are full-time trappers spending only a few months of the year in the village, feel that their transient visits to Whapmagoostui do not necessitate a new

home.

Boulet and Gagnon (1979) conducted a study of the relative changes to the municipal organization in Great Whale some five years after the signing of the JBNQA. Their study highlights the radical internal political changes in Great Whale and the establishment of the two distinct Inuit and Cree municipalities with separate school systems, medical clinics, job opportunities and community priorities.

The late 1980s in Whapmagoostui are marked by the provincial government's renewed interest in northern hydro-electric development. Included in the JBNQA are strategies for the development of northern resources, including the Great Whale River waterway. The original intention of the government of Québec was to build the dams and power stations over a decade ago. These plans were halted in the early 1980's however because of a temporary surplus of hydro-electric power and a shift of government priorities. In 1989, with rising energy concerns, lowered water levels in the James Bay I reservoirs, and greater public opposition to nuclear and coal energy as well as increasing costs of fossil fuel power, the dormant James Bay II project plans were revived. The projects also, according to the government of Québec, could provide a ready source of jobs in a depressed economy. As well, these hydro-electric projects, with the envisioned potential gains from the provision of power to the local aluminum industry and by exporting power directly to the United States market, are

seen by some as having the potential to take the province one step closer to economic independence from the rest of Canada.

The proposed "James Bay II" project[23] plan is to divert three rivers north of the Great Whale River into an immense system of dams, dikes, reservoirs and three power stations at Lac Bienville and at three sites along the Great Whale River in order to generate a maximum of 2,890 megawatts of power.[24]

This massive undertaking will significantly alter the flow of these rivers and change the balance of the ecosystem in the vast region surrounding Whapmagoostui. There will then be concomitant changes to Hudson Bay and specifically Manitoulin Sound, which will affect the beluga whales, fish and seals that migrate to and live in this water system. Nesting and grazing sites of the birds and mammals of the region will be severely affected by the changes in the topography and the water temperatures, which will be altered as a result of the dams and the turbine spill.

How the hydro projects - if allowed to proceed - will transform the Great Whale communities is for the most part

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[23]This is a misnomer. The proposed "second phase" of the projects involves only Hudson Bay, not James Bay.

[24]The Nottaway-Broadback-Rupert (NBR) project, a much larger undertaking remains a real and constant, if apparently latent, concern to the Grand Council of the Crees of Québec. The NBR project is a plan, studied since 1964, to divert the Nottaway and Rupert Rivers into the Broadback River with the catchment basins spreading over approximately 6,500 kilometres^2 and with eight power stations planned to generate a peak power of between 8,400 and 8,700 megawatts (Gorrie 1990; Hydro-Québec 1990).

unknowable. An example of the effect of the project upon basic services and utilities is encapsulated however in the issue of water supply. Although by no means a flawless system, water for the Cree community is currently conveyed through a piping system in place near the mouth of the Great Whale river. A new water supply system must be devised to replace the existing system since the salt water from Hudson Bay will back up into the river as the project is now envisioned. This will mean, for example, installing a pumping station, insulated piping system, heating cable, and maintenance road extending either three kilometres to a nearby lake or, alternatively, upwards of ten kilometres up-river where there will be the supply of fresh water needed to maintain this community (Hydro-Québec 1981).[25]

The larger airport, a road and the new population that they will bring into the region is cause for concern among many in the community. People refer directly to what they have either seen or heard about changes over the past decade in Chisasibi, the community immediately to the south of Whapmagoostui, since the construction of the La Grande hydro-electric project near there. The high incidence of drug and alcohol abuse among the youth in Chisasibi, for example, is attributed directly to the road that was built as part of the

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[25]The Inuit housing does not have underground plumbing and hence have their water supply trucked to each house. This, too, of course, will be affected with a diminished local supply of fresh water.

project. And, since some could not accurately gauge the quality of the ice under the new conditions of warmer water, there is reported to have been at least one accidental death in Chisasibi in the years after the construction of the dams (Salisbury 1986).

The Cree are actively fighting the Great Whale River project on a number of grounds. Of paramount concern is that this is only one of two major development schemes that will devastate Cree hunting lands. The primary consideration for the Cree is the welfare of the land and the effect that this project will have on the wildlife and the vegetation upon which the animals depend. Implicit in this consideration of the land and the animals is a concern for the people (see Chapters Five and Six).

Secondary effects of the planned project, such as increased traffic into the region and the hazards of mercury poisoning of the marine life, are pessimistically viewed as being both inevitable and detrimental to the population (see Weinstein and Penn 1987 for review of effects of mercury contamination).

There is nevertheless a perceptibly different type of battle two decades after the first projects were announced. Compared to the obstacles that the Cree faced in the first round of direct confrontation with the government of Québec over the James Bay I project (see Richardson 1977; Salisbury 1986), this second campaign by the Cree leadership has been

eminently more successful in terms of the speed at which they have been able to act upon or react to the provincial government. Despite any internal strains this young political organization may have, there is a unified focus upon fighting the projects. The political organization of the Cree that grew out of the initial James Bay conflict and the infrastructure that they developed and maintained over the years includes their environmental experts, legal advisors, and their own young and university educated population now playing active leadership roles. These experts and political leaders have increased considerably the Cree nation's ability to oppose what they consider the irresponsible actions of the provincial government and Hydro-Québec.

Compounding the basic concerns about the project is a scepticism shared by the Cree leadership and people toward the provincial government. It is felt that the province of Québec has not lived up to the promises written into the original JBNQA and as such, it is increasingly difficult to enter into any new form of negotiations with them (GCCQ 1990: 10-11). It was for this reason that the decision was taken by the Cree in 1989 to not proceed with talks or negotiations with representatives of Hydro-Québec. At the same time political and legal steps were initiated in order to halt the project. Part of these efforts has been to tie these projects nationally and internationally into the more widespread prevailing concerns of world pollution and the protection of natural environments.

Cree politicians are well aware of the growing international concern for the environment and also know that they will find public support for their cause if they maintain that general line of argument as the greatest hazard of the project. This is not cynical, but rather an astute and prudent assessment of the general political climate in "southern" Québec, Canada and the United States. It is much easier to have the non-Native public work at a level with which it can identify. The Cree concerns for the environment are not consonant with those of all of the activists who would deplore the indigenous peoples' use of traps and the killing of the game and fowl that are so intrinsic to Cree life. But concern for the global environment is the rally call of many otherwise disparate activist groups in the late 1980s and 1990s.

At present the exorbitant financial and environmental costs to the taxpayers of Quebec, along with citizen and environmental lobby groups in the United States and Canada, have provided added support to the Cree's cause. As well, recent investigations into "secret" deals with industries have revealed that Hydro-Québec has provided energy at costs below those of the household consumer which, if nothing else, keeps the general public sceptical about the intentions of such a major and potentially hazardous undertaking.

By February of 1990, opposition to the Great Whale project was organized under a coalition of environmentalists, trade unionists, religious leaders and concerned Native groups

who collectively were asking for an independent study of future hydro-electric development in Québec, a moratorium on all planned projects and on the negotiation of contracts with the United States (Press release, February 15, 1990).

At the time of the writing of this dissertation, federal and provincial jurisdiction in environmental studies remains unresolved as does the process of validating those studies. Because of these unresolvable differences between federal and provincial agencies, the matter went to the Federal Court of Canada which ruled on September 10, 1991 that Québec could not go ahead with the project without a review by and subsequent approval from Ottawa. Later in 1991, the Bourassa government announced a one year delay on the entire project. In addition, there remain concerns on the part of the Cree leadership regarding the way in which the Inuit - with their own very different political agenda - have been willing to negotiate with Hydro-Québec, despite Cree opposition to any form of talks.

Opposition to the project within Whapmagoostui is virtually unanimous. In 1989 there was some talk by a minority of people that the jobs and road into Great Whale would outweigh any drawbacks of the project, and there were a few otherwise unemployed people who worked for Hydro-Québec's archaeologists, as guides and camp hands. More recently, personal advantage has been swayed in favour of the general

consensus of the community against the project.[26]

Statements countering the project range from the pragmatic to the legal and to the biblical. At one community meeting in 1989 an elder spoke of the promise that God made to the people, that this was a good earth and that He would never flood it again. Another spoke of the potential pollution and the changes to the local environment. Yet another reminded the audience of the scores of graves that will be flooded and hence make the fish that swim in the new reservoirs inedible. The Cree political leaders challenged the project on the grounds that the Québec government had not fulfilled its obligation under the JBNQA with respect to a proper environmental review. As will become evident in the Chapters Five and Six, concerns about the welfare of the Whapmagoostui Cree are articulated in their description of "being alive well".

Throughout 1989 Hydro-Québec personnel were becoming increasingly visible in and around the community. The helicopters moving people and equipment daily, building camps upriver and doing preparatory work as part of the preliminary testing were visible testimony to the mounting infringement upon the land and the Cree people.

"Only beavers can build dams on our lands" was one of the placards with which the Cree greeted a visiting environmental

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[26]Decisions, such as the one to oppose the project, are not made unilaterally by the leadership. This decision was taken after a vote at one of the regular public meetings of community and band council.

commission on June 26, 1991 - harkening back to a slogan that was used during the initial campaigns against hydro projects in the 1970's. With those placards the Cree of Whapmagoostui successfully blocked environmental hearings by not allowing either members of the commission or Hydro officials off of the airport grounds and into the community (The Montreal Gazette, June 29, 1991). Efforts by the Cree to halt the project will continue and will, in the process, solidify their sense of nationalism in opposition to forces which are perceived as a direct threat to their continuity (see Chapter Six).

As described above, the Cree "nation" is a new political phenomenon that arose within the last two decades out of necessity in order to represent the Cree position in the transactions and negotiations with the government bodies over the James Bay hydro-projects. There was no single voice to speak for the Eastern James Bay Cree before this process began. The individuals that spearheaded the fight against the government's plans became the first organized leaders of the Cree people as a group distinct from other groups in Canada. Despite the distance between the eight communities, there is an emerging sense of nationalism that was not as apparent (or necessary) prior to the initiation of the hydro-electric projects. Importantly, this so-called Fourth World nation is growing within the boundaries of, but strives towards increased sovereignty from, the larger nation-state.

CHAPTER FIVE: *MIYUPIMAATISIIU*: "BEING ALIVE WELL"

> They were *miyupimaatisiiun* because they lived in the Indian way, which was good for them.... And the people said that's the reason why they were strong and healthy because they didn't use anything from the Whiteman.... That's why they were strong and *miyupimaatisiiun*, and that's what the elders knew. They were a kind of people, even if they didn't have anything much, they still would know what to do to keep well and strong in their lives.... And that's how it was, before Whiteman came. (MG, Interview #1)

5.1 *Miyupimaatisiiu*: Description of the Term

There is no word in Cree that translates simply into English as "healthy". The closest term is *miyupimaatisiiu*. Broken down into its component parts *miyu*, means good or well, and *pimaatisiiu* means living or alive. Thus, in combination *miyupimaatisiiu* becomes "living well". I intentionally use the more awkward translation of *miyupimaatisiiu*, "being alive well", so that the term stands out in English as having a distinct connotation.

In the Cree language all nouns, verbs, and qualifiers are divided according to whether the noun is animate or inanimate. The root word *pimaatisiiu* implies an animate being and, hence one that contains a spirit. Animals, plants, rocks, and even tents, for example, are animate. Thus, humans as well as animals, natural objects, spirit beings, legendary figures and God can all be *pimaatisiiu* or alive (Feit 1983: 2, 18).

The translation of *miyupimaatisiiu* in the Cree Lexicon: Eastern James Bay Dialects (1987) is: "he is in good health, he is recovering from illness." I would suggest that rather than explicating the meaning of the term, this is a means of facilitating the task of translating complex concepts across cultures. As will be explored in this chapter, the concept of *miyupimaatisiiu* goes beyond the simple statement that one is without infirmity. Rather than just "he is healthy," *miyupimaatisiiu* implies that someone is "alive well" or "living well" which connotes a set of meanings contingent upon Cree beliefs and practices.

The opposite of *miyupimaatisiiu* is not the negation of that word. *Nimiyupimaatisiiu*[1] specifically denotes that a woman is out of her normal state of being. She is not unwell, she is pregnant. This is the only meaning suggested to me for *nimiyupimaatisiiu* (E. Masty, per. comm. 1991).

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[1]The *ni* at the beginning of the word indicates a negation of the term in the same way as if "not" is placed in front of a verb or adverb.

In Cree, the term that is more commonly used for being without illness is *niminidahkschoin*˙ which is the negation of the term *nidahkschoin*˙. *Nidahkschoin* means "I am ill," and so *niminidahkschoin* translates to "I am not ill."

The expression that may be used to indicate that one is not *miyupimaatisiiu* is *atdohaakschoh*˙. This translates into English as "s/he is lacking energy" and implies a relationship to that person's relative physical abilities. If a person is not looking the way she or he usually does and is sluggish or listless, or not carrying herself as usual, then that person may be *atdohaakschoh*. The term also implies that one might be weak from a lack of food.

5.2 An Introduction to the Concept of "Being Alive Well"

> My opinion about that and what I think it means is, where the *Iyiyuu'ch* are concerned in relation to the *Iyiyuu* way of life, ...all that the *Iyiyuu* was and had been before he [the Cree in general] used and integrated the Whiteman's way of life into his own life, when he only used and lived his own way of life and used his own knowledge and lived accordingly and used his own knowledge to live the right way and to survive and did not abuse the knowledge that he had to live the right way in order to be well in all that he was, he was *naashtaapwaa* [very] *miyupimaatisiiu*.... He only did all things that he knew that would only be to his well being and did only things that were morally right in his life and only did what would ensure his survival (JK, Interview #1).

The brief descriptions of *miyupimaatisiiu* presented at the outset of this chapter and again here indicate the degree to

which the concept is bound within Cree cultural knowledge and practice.

In this chapter I will describe *miyupimaatisiiu*. I introduce the principal factors that in their amalgamation provide a sense of what it means for the Cree of Whapmagoostui to "be alive well." Warmth, Cree food, and strength together exemplify the essence of "being alive well." To be sure there are other elements, such as devotion to the Christian doctrine and cleanliness, which supplement the fundamental principles of "being alive well." Each is important in that it illustrates that "being alive well" is representative of the ideals of living what is constituted as a Cree way of life.

This description of *miyupimaatisiiu* will provide the foundation for the next chapters, where I discuss how this articulation of "being alive well" is a component of the continuing effort to distinguish between Cree and non-Cree. There is a self-consciousness in explaining what is "really Cree" and how one is "alive well." That self-consciousness, the inextricable link between "being alive well" and being Cree is central to my discussion of the politicization of well-being. "Being alive well" exemplifies what it means to be Cree, and that can only be achieved apart from all that is perceived to be non-Cree. As Feit explains for the case of bush food,

> [T]he value of bush foods may also reflect the fact that bush food production has become a symbol for distinctive Indian identities, Indian skills and knowledge, and Indian rights, in the midst of

> increasing contact with local and national Euro-Canadian society (Feit 1991: 261).

I agree with Feit and suggest that food production is one of the fundamental elements in the articulation of a distinct Cree identity. A sense of well being is linked not only to eating Cree food but also to a sense of identity in an atmosphere of increasing jeopardy to that identity.

The concept of *miyupimaatisiiu* is drawn primarily from those interviews conducted with both men and women over the age of forty. It was among the people in the older age categories that the concepts were articulated not only with clarity but with a consistency that crossed gender, occupational, and age barriers. There is certainly a degree of individual and household diversity in what was and is done and what I present should not be accepted as a static model of either concepts or practices. There was nevertheless a congruity in the way in which *miyupimaatisiiu* was described as being related to how people lived.

The stories that serve to illustrate *miyupimaatisiiu* and Cree life are part of an enduring oral tradition. The stories are often told at bedtime either directly or from tape recordings of elders telling stories and legends. At goose camp, for example, with everyone sleeping in the same area, the tape recorder was turned just as the kerosene lamps were extinguished so that everyone could listen to the tale as they settled in for the night.

Not all of the same myths and stories are shared by all families but the narratives nevertheless remain an important source of both entertainment and information.

A point that I should stress is that in the course of daily life people articulate a clear sense of respect for the bush animals. Those taken-for-granted activities and the disapproval of people who do not adopt similar practices derive from fundamental principles of respect. Younger people are aware of these stories and beliefs and know that this was the way of life prior to Christian missionization. In discussions about hunting and the wildlife, the word "respect" is used regularly in association with those practices. Thus, while not everyone is familiar to the same degree with the animistic origins of the relationship between the Cree and the animals, they nevertheless articulate their relationship to the animals in terms of respect and as Scott (1984) suggests "the emotional and intellectual commitment to the land of Crees who...made their lives in the bush [is] authentic" (1984: 48).

It was mainly the older Cree adults who were able to clearly explicate to me the belief systems from which these principles derive, often in connection with Christian ethics. Among the younger members of the community there is a more ambiguous sense of respect for the land and the animals which is not always articulated so distinctly as a spiritual continuity between the animals and the people, but rather, as

something that the elders teach the younger people. It is the taken-for-granted norm against which youthful rebellious acts are measured. For example, someone who impetuously shoots animals or birds is regarded as being wasteful and as having committed disrespectful acts.

The younger adults focused to a greater extent on aspects of physical fitness and food. While many discussed this in relation to Cree ideals, descriptions of *miyupimaatisiiu* were at the same time couched within and compared to terms of reference drawn from their knowledge of biomedical norms. There was a sense of frustration felt when people tried in conversation to reconcile Cree ideals with those learned through the clinic, public health programs, and the popular media (especially television). While I focus primarily in this dissertation upon older adults' descriptions of *miyupimaatisiiu*, I recognize that a more comprehensive study of health beliefs across the generations will bring other considerations to the fore.

People of all ages discussed concepts relating to physiological health as well as a vast quantity of Cree remedies and therapeutics. This occurred for at least three reasons, I believe. First, the Cree pharmacopoeia is a tangible subject which people could easily discuss and they were always willing to demonstrate the tremendous knowledge they had about a range of remedies. As well, oftentimes the translators, when there was a lull in the conversation, would

resort to asking about traditional therapies. This wealth of information will be left to another report except to note that it is indicative of the concern about biological wellness. There is without doubt a highly developed sense of the body and its functioning both from indigenous knowledge and from what continues to be learned through the school, the clinic, and media such as television and radio. Biological health and *miyupimaatisiiu* are not incompatible and do derive from a similar source. *Miyupimaatisiiu* does connote, at a very basic level, the absence of disease. Yet "being alive well" is understood and described as something that goes beyond simply the absence of disease. One is not merely unhealthy if one has been sick, an individual can lose some of his "well-being."

> ...[T]wenty years ago, I was sick enough to be in the hospital for two years and I have lost a lot of my *miyupimaatisiiun* because of my illness. Even today, I see a doctor once in awhile to see how my health is because of my sicknesses and because I am not very well (JK, Interview #1).

In the interviews and conversations that took place over the fieldwork period individuals merged past experiences and stories with present day events and practices. In those descriptions I found that people expressed an essential self-consciousness in explaining what is "Cree." That is, people felt that those who know what is "really" Cree are those individuals who either lived in the bush for most of their years or know the stories of people who did.

In the sections that follow I present the key concepts associated with *miyupimaatisiiu*. *Miyupimaatisiiu* is both something that derives from the past and is at the same time conceptualized in relation to its present day relevance. I will expand upon the notions of warmth, food and physical activity in describing "being alive well." Indeed, keeping warm and having the physical ability to procure and prepare Cree foods are essential to having and eating Cree food.

In addressing *miyupimaatisiiu* I do not discuss the interaction of the community and the clinic or, to any great extent, the usage of Cree or biomedical pharmacotherapies. Having said that, though, I do not exclude those elements that challenge one's ability to "be alive well". Cree adults' descriptions encompass precautionary actions that serve to safeguard one's well-being. This is illustrated, for example, when people discuss how one must be protected from the cold.

5.3 *Iyimiichim*, Cree Food

5.3-i Preparation and Distribution

Eating well for the Cree of Whapmagoostui incorporates notions of living well that are rooted within Cree life and practices and "being alive well" is intimately tied to all that it means to be Cree and thus to eat Cree food. The following two statements exemplify the connection between eating well and living well:

> What I use in my body that helps me to be *miyupimaatisiiu* that is food that I eat and drink...

> taking my age which is over fifty years old, I use the food we call *Iyimiichim* [from *Iyiyuu* = Cree and *miichim* = food] more than I do the food of the Whiteman or food that is purchased from the store. That is what I like which is what I have seen when I was growing up. All that I ate was food that had been gotten off the land. Still at my age, what I prefer to eat is the food that the *Iyiyuu* kills to eat and every kind of food that is considered *Iyimiichim* (JK, Interview #1).

> ...[T]he things he knew from his own ideas, what he used and how he could feel good, the things he ate, what he ate, which would not make him sick, and it did him good, the way he prepared his food, and he had to kill for his food and he didn't have to eat anything which grows from the garden [implies things cultivated as opposed to wild], because the Whiteman eats things from the garden. And the way Cree life was...wildlife was the most important thing for them, and only what they made their living from (SM, Interview #1).

There is clearly a sense of nostalgia reflected in these statements and a well-defined opposition between what is and is not Cree. In this section, I will elaborate upon the significance of Cree food and indicate how Cree food is a central element in defining "being alive well." I will address the sentiments of conflict between Cree and non-Cree expressed in these statements in later sections of this dissertation.

First and foremost it goes without saying that one must have a good appetite to be *miyupimaatisiiu*. Eating well is an indication that one is well and being able to eat Cree food is essential to *miyupimaatisiiu*.

Iyimiichim are the food and food products procured from the land, water and sky. It is the flesh, fat and marrow of the animals, fish and birds of the sub-arctic. Cree food is

goose, swan, duck, ptarmigan, grouse, porcupine, beaver, muskrat, caribou, moose, bear, and the variety of fish that swim in the fresh water streams, lakes and rivers throughout the inland and the waterways that pour into Hudson or James Bay.

Men, for the most part, are responsible for procuring the meats that constitute Cree foods. Hunting geese, ptarmigan, and on up to the larger game, such as caribou or moose is done exclusively by men. Women may trap small game or fish and are familiar enough with guns. Indeed, some women are quite handy with a .22 rifle, but guns are the domain of men since, ultimately, shooting game is men's work.[2]

When a larger animal, such as a bear or caribou, is killed the animal is symbolically "given" to an elder man, often one's father or grandfather.[3] This is done as a mark of respect to both the elder and the animal (see Tanner 1979).

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[2]The word for the protective cloth sheaths that women make for their husband's and/or sons' rifles, for example, is the same as that for condom. There is continuation of this metaphor in relation to male sexuality and hunting (e.g. "sperm" and "gun powder" share the same word, as do "he ejaculates" and "he shoots" [Scott 1989b: 197]) as well as many allusions to hunting in discussions by men of sexual intercourse (Tanner 1979). And, for example, when a ten year old boy in Whapmagoostui killed his first caribou, he was amiably teased by the elder to whom he presented a token of the kill, who said that the boy was now a man and ready to marry, that is, have sexual relations (see also Tanner 1979). There is no similar relationship between hunting and sexual maturity for women.

[3]Grandfather can mean either one's parents' parents or another elder in the community since all of one's parent's siblings are considered one's grandparents and all elders consider the children of the community their grandchildren.

The elder will then either decide how the meat is to be distributed or, in most cases, will pass that task back to the hunter. The large game is then butchered by the men and distributed either within a single family or, in the case of a moose, amongst members of the community.

Before the Whapmagoostui Cree lived in homes with electricity there was a communal freezer in the village, common to many Canadian Native villages, where much of the surplus of a hunt was stored. Today, many families have or have access to a deep freezer in which they can keep a surplus of meat from successful hunts. Meat is also stored over the winter months in the unheated vestibule of many homes in Whapmagoostui.

Women may also distribute smaller game such as geese, and while some will be kept for future consumption, some of the surplus meat is distributed among their affinal kin. In most circumstances today, food is distributed within a relatively small range of kin. The priority is to first provide hunted food to the elders of the family, which might mean one's parents, parent's parents, and their brothers and sisters. Meat is also provided to members of one's family if, for example, others have been less successful in their hunt or if there is no male household member available to hunt. In the former case, there is a slight stigma attached to being the recipient of raw food since this indicates a lack of success (see Tanner 1979: 177). When there is no male in the house-

hold however, there is a decidedly restrained but appreciative anticipation of the meat.

Redistribution is an important factor in understanding just how much Cree food is made available in the community. Redistribution maintains a strong sense of reciprocity that is fundamental to Cree ideology, as well as providing bush food to those who do not or cannot live off of the land (see Driben 1988; Feit 1991). Feit's discussion of the value of Cree food in Waswanipi is accurate too for Whapmagoostui. As he explains,

> [i]n a society in which animals are sacred, and labour is highly valued and a source of respect, the bush food exchanges are highly valued. The gifting of bush food is both a sign of the value of those foods, and of the value of the social bonds which motivate the distribution. The fact that such exchange is less of material necessity today highlights its social dimensions.... Gift exchange in foods thus flourishes, and reproduces the predominant value of bush over purchased foods, an evaluation of which cannot be explained simply by reference to biological need or by individual consumer preference. Rather food exchanges continue to express the primary commitment to sociality, and to recreating an active practice of mutual aid and responsibility in daily lives in which generosity is expected (1991: 261).

One exception to the closer affinal distribution network that I observed is the distribution of moose meat. With the recent shift in migratory patterns of the moose, these large beasts are now feeding in closer range to Whapmagoostui than they ever have in the past. The meat of the moose is shared throughout the community and one radio announcement is often enough to inform people about where they can go in order to

partake of the meat. As with any large game kill, the animal is first symbolically offered to a community elder who then decides on how to distribute the meat. The elder may, in turn, pass that responsibility back to the hunter. A proportion of surplus food is kept for feasts celebrating special occasions such as weddings or holidays.[4]

Women, as part of their responsibility in maintaining the household, are depended upon for the preparation and cooking of the meat and its accompaniments. The women also process the skins and furs. The responsibility for distribution of the cooked meat then often returns to the elder male of the household, or in his absence, an elder woman.

Iyimiichim is prepared simply and with little seasoning other than salt. The meat is not eaten until properly and fully cooked either by boiling, smoking, frying, or roasting it.

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[4]Along with family feasts and gatherings, there are many events, feasts and festivities that are prepared and celebrated by the entire community (see also Tanner for discussion of Cree feasts 1979, 1984). Community feasts are held on Christmas, Easter and New Year's Eve. There are also community feasts held after the communal walking-out ceremony, after wedding ceremonies and to celebrate specific events such as a visit from the bishop, high school graduation, or to commemorate a successful hunting season. Smaller family gatherings and feasts are held to celebrate the principal Christian holidays as well as young children's birthdays and major anniversaries. There are also a number of gender specific feasts held. Men in the community will celebrate successful hunts and especially, among the southerners and some northerners, the killing of a bear occasions a bear feast. Women and their children participate in baby and bridal showers, which are attended primarily by those in the extended family.

Boiling the fish or meat in water is the most common means of preparation and the rich broth (*muushkimii*) that is produced from this method of cooking is also Cree food. The broth is considered to be an exceptionally nutritious as well as tasty drink. The broth of most foods is recalled as being a proper remedy for a number of ailments as well as being an important first food if someone has not been eating for a long period of time, either because of starvation or sickness.

> Caribou meat was the strongest, as it was said in the past. If someone is almost starving to death, but it was dangerous for them to eat caribou meat because it is too strong. It would kill him if he doesn't watch what he eats, it is better if he starts little by little, not to eat a large amount of food the first time because the meat is too strong - it would shock and kill him if the weak person eats it first, if he is dying from hunger. But they would know exactly what to do with a person, they would only give him a little, they would know how much to give that would be just right, they would start with a little amount, they would start with the broth. The stronger the person gets, the more the meat he can take (AM Interview #1).

Fish broth was given to infants if no breast milk was available. The broth and finely mashed fish or meat was the first food of infants being weaned prior to the use of store bought infant foods.

The blood of animals is also regarded as being very nutritious. The blood and water that a goose has been boiled in, for example, is mixed with oatmeal to make a nourishing and hardy breakfast for young and old alike.

Animal fat was and remains an important food in the Cree diet. Great care was taken in the past in the rendering and

packaging of fat so that so that none would be wasted. Containers used to hold the fat were kept well-protected in order to limit any hazards of spillage during periods of travel. The liquid whale oil, which was abundant during the days of whaling at Great Whale River, was taken from the post back to the bush. A container to hold the oil was fashioned out of the dried whale stomach and then,

> [t]hey [made] a box for the oil, because they thought it would be safer but they would put wet moss first on the bottom and on the sides before they put the oil bag in so it would cushion the bag, so it wouldn't break from the wood [box] (AM, Interview #3).

As another informant describes, animal fat played an important symbolic role as well for the Cree:

> The food that was deemed to be the most important...the caribou fat, was what the *Iyiyuu* regarded as the most important food and did not waste it in any way and [the fat] was handled with much care when prepared. For the [walking out] ceremony, the fat was taken out of storage [if it was available] for the feast and right on top of the fat, the ptarmigan beak was put and there it stood on top of the fat.[5] When the child is taken out of the dwelling and when the child comes in again, it was said that whatever food that had been laid out was what he had killed. Then the feast began and everyone ate (JK, Interview #1).

Another explained that people in the past felt rich when there was an abundance of fat:

> Once he had saved enough smoked fish, he could eat it with the oil. Once they got the oil, they would feel lucky to have it with them and they could eat it with anything because they hardly had enough

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[5]According to JK, the ptarmigan beak symbolized that a walking out feast was being held since the ptarmigan is the first bird of significant size that a child will kill.

> meat to eat but once they got the oil, it made them feel that there was enough for everyone (AM, Interview #3).

Pimihkaan, or pemmican, a mixture of pulverized dried meat or marrow with fat was a vital and easily transportable food source for those travelling over long distances. Today, *pimihkaan* is treated as a special food and may be served in the village as one of the foods for occasions such as wedding feasts.

Fat was a readily available source of nourishment in the past and remains the favoured complement to meats in part because it enhances both the flavour and consistency of the meat. Fat is an important and valued part of the Cree diet although the general usage of fat today is the subject of a growing dilemma confronting the Cree population.

Meat and fish are the principal foods in the established Cree diet and people describe Cree food as explicitly being those products that are procured from the bush. There are however a few foods that regularly supplement meat in the Cree diet, including tea, bannock, and berries.

Blueberries are the preferred regional berries although women may also collect others such as the bakeapple berry (*shikutaau*; rubus chamaemorus), raspberry and wild low-bush cranberry. A very popular summer meal is *shikumin*, which is a mixture of flaked, boiled fish and blueberries. A special treat is made when the berries are cooked with sugar into a sweet jam to be spread on bannock or bread.

Whereas berries are considered within the range of indigenous foods, flour, sugar, and tea constitute additions brought to the Cree by the early traders. These products are now considered staples and are used as a matter of course.

Bannock is made from a mixture of flour, water, baking powder, lard, and salt and is either fried or baked. Bannock is a standard accompaniment to meat or eaten by itself as a snack. Some innovations to the standards are also enjoyed. For example, bannock may be made with fish roe or bits of meat added to it or, in a sweeter form, with raisins or oatmeal.

Infusions made from Labrador Tea leaves or other local herbs are drunk either as a tonic or for medicinal purposes. Store-bought (orange pekoe) tea, although originally used primarily as a tonic, is now considered a staple beverage. It is served tepid, with condensed or fresh milk and/or sugar added. Tea is consumed in large quantities in many households since it is used mainly to quench one's thirst.

5.3-ii *Iyimiichim* and Cree Cosmology

When people discuss *iyimiichim* they are specifically referring to the animals that are trapped, hunted and fished for food. In addition to the substantive significance of these animals, they are also part of a complex spiritual network involving the Cree people, animal spirits and higher beings (Feit 1986; Tanner 1979). The network is simulta-

neously one of power relationships between living beings (Black 1977; 1974).[6]

In Cree cosmology there is a rich and well articulated belief in spirit beings who can effect, but are not wholly responsible for, successful or unsuccessful hunts. These spirit beings are idealized conceptualizations of a particular animal or group of animals such as caribou, fish or the category of marine mammals. The spirit dwells in each of the animals yet does not die with that animal; it is a concept of a fluid force or vitality, and of a spirit to whom the hunter must be recognized in order for the hunt to be successful.

The *mishinaak'*, for example, is not easily translatable but can perhaps be described as the spirit of the animal which dwells simultaneously within the human and in all of that species. In this way the animal becomes a part of the body of hunter. Having the spirit of the animal within the body of the hunter exemplifies the interrelation of person and animal, natural and spirit worlds, with no discernable distinction between them. The *mishinaak'*, either land or water animal spirits, by dwelling within the person affords the individual a certain good fortune in killing that particular animal:

> Sometimes, a person was well-known to have an easy time at catching fish. It was thought that the

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[6]Black (1977) explains that humans and animals differ in the source and type of their relative power. Non-humans have an inherent power to live, whereas humans acquire this power from spiritual sources and can preserve it through the range of respectful behaviours (1977: 145).

> person who was good at catching fish knew the spirit called *mishinaak'* [in this case referring specifically to the spirit of water-dwellers] personally. I guess it is for that reason that the person had an easier time catching fish. I have heard my father say that some *Iyiyuu* were well known to be good at catching one particular kind of game, long ago. It was said that those who stood out as being good at catching that one kind of game, that they had the animal inside them but a very small one. The animal was always in their bodies. When this happens to a person that certain animal that he is good at killing is inside of him, then that is the reason the person is good at killing that kind of an animal (JK, Interview #2).

Women are not excluded from this relationship to the animals and animal spirits, and their role is essential to the maintenance of the proper affiliation between the spirit world and the world of the Cree. While the hunter is responsible for being observant and respectful when hunting, women must demonstrate the same respect at the camp. Women are responsible for maintaining a clean dwelling that is properly stocked with an ample supply of wood and water. Otherwise, it is believed that animals might deem that dwelling unworthy of their presence and would not want to enter it. Women are also responsible for the proper care and handling of the skins and meat of the animals. Cree lore tells, for example, of the scorn shown by the "Lady Spirit of the Caribou"[7] (*pihkut-iskwaauu*) to those women who carelessly tanned caribou hides.

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[7]She is alternately translated as the Lady Spirit of the Caribou or the Lady Spirit of the Wildlife, but either name indicates her status as being the highest power in the spirit world of the animals.

The "Lady Spirit of the Caribou" is the highest order of animal spirits in a hierarchy of animal, human and supernatural beings among the northern Cree. In Cree animal taxonomy there is a ranking of animals that is based upon their spiritual significance, their relative strengths as food and degree of autonomy and self-sufficiency (Black 1977: 146).

The Montagnais animal taxonomy and language elucidated by Bouchard and Mailhot (1972) provides further insight into the classification of animals and humans. The ranking is part of a larger order of the positioning of animals that, according to Bouchard and Mailhot (1972), includes three other elements. The hierarchy of power is associated with type of habitat, type of locomotion (four paws, flight, swim), temporal-spacial distribution (seasonal migration) of the animal, bird or fish. Each factor is dependent upon the others and in combination they provide a comprehensive understanding of the relative position of each animal (1972: 53, 65-66; see also Black in Bouchard and Mailhot: 53). As Black (1977) elucidates for the Ojibwa, and as I found among the Cree of Whapmagoostui, there is a sense of responsibility and self-sufficiency coupled with the knowledge that no one can act alone - even God has helpers; there must be a balanced cooperation among all parties within the hierarchy.[8]

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[8]This is also seen at the level of the organization of hunting groups as well as political leadership among the Cree who recognize that someone must be in control but who acts within the constraints of and for the benefit of the group (Black 1977).

Above all animals and humans is God who is the highest in this order and thus the supreme being. God is the boss and first leader in a descending order of assistants and lesser leaders (Feit 1983: 16).

> In hunting, God is helped by the winds, with the 'north wind' as the oldest, and the winds in turn are helped by the animal 'masters', who are themselves the leaders of each kind of animal. And the old adults of each kind are the 'leaders' of the young in a ranked chain of leadership and power (Feit 1983: 16).

After the winds come the spirit beings of high ranking animals such as bear or caribou. Human beings fall somewhere between the animal spirits and the animals themselves.

> Humans have thoughts, intelligence, intentions, will, and personal idiosyncrasies, thus the winds, animals and humans each act out of their own intentionality, and are each capable of following God's way or abandoning it (Feit 1983: 17).

After humans come the animals. This ranking in the spirit world by and large complements the animals' relative size, strength and value to the Cree. In contrast to southern Cree for whom the bear is the most highly revered (Tanner 1979), the northern Whapmagoostui Cree recognize the caribou as having the highest spiritual significance and nutritional value. The "Lady Spirit of the Caribou," for example, plays a large role in Whapmagoostui Cree legends as she exemplifies the highest level of wildlife. After the caribou (and bear) are the smaller animals, birds and fish.

The lowest rank of animals are those that are considered objectionable. Frogs, lizards, snakes, and all types of

crawling or flying insects are all classified as objectionable beings and at the same time rejected as food by the Cree. Creatures which are considered unacceptable and inedible by the Cree are categorized under the general heading of *minituu-sh*. While this term literally means maleficent spirit it implies something that is inedible for humans.[9]

The distinction of the higher order animals is passed along to the hunter. Animals are not simply killed, they are gifts that are "given" to a hunter who has acted in accordance with the principles of respect that guide his behaviour in the bush (Tanner 1979; Feit 1991). The gift of the animal in turn establishes a cycle of reciprocity.

> To the animal which has given its life that humans may live, the hunter can only offer respect for its soul, proper use of its body, and sharing the gift of food with others. This incommensurability creates enduring obligation, which is expressed by participation in the wider network of gift giving, which eventually leads back to the rebirth of animals and renewed receipts of animal gifts; renewals which people say they experience in the continuing harvest of wildlife... (Feit 1991: 237).

As befits the discussion of Cree beliefs, I turn to an elder to illustrate, through a story, the function of respect and obligation inherent in Cree cosmology:[10]

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[9]*Minituu* means spirit or power. Bouchard and Mailhot translate the Montagnais term *mantusch*, analogous to *minitush*, as meaning maleficent power (1972).

[10]It should come as no surprise that many of the descriptions and explanations that were proffered to me came in the form of stories and parables. Ong (1982) explains that in a primary oral culture, proverbs and stories are patterned for ready recall since thought and memory systems are intertwined; such that "...language is a mode of action and not simply a

> [T]he people would...take care of what they had killed very well and handle it with respect so that they did not anger the spirits of the animals. If they handled the killed animals with respect, they would be successful in their hunts and the spirits of the animals would be happy to give food to them. That is the practice that the people kept always. They knew what the animals wanted, that they should be taken care of with respect and much care. The knowledge that they had about the wants of the animals is what they always tried to keep and practice. When they fail to keep these practices of care and respect of the killed animal, then they knew that the game was angered. Sometimes that was the reason why they did not kill food to eat. It is said that when someone really angered the animal that he depended on for food, the animal would leave that person [and hence, family] for good and starvation resulted.
>
> This is a story of an *Iyiyuu*. There were two families living together. The *Iyiyuu* of this particular story was living with a family. The two hunters made a shaking tent. The *mistaapaau*[11] told this to the one who made the shaking tent that they will be killing some caribou. He was told that they would kill two big caribou and were given instructions about how to take care of these caribou. They had to be extra careful with these two caribou. The man was told that if he did not take care of the caribou well, it would be his last time killing anything. It was still the summer time. As they were paddling along, they saw two big caribou and they killed the two caribou. One of the men remembered what they were told and took extra care and handled the caribou with great respect and care. The other man remembered too, but he did not follow the instructions the *mistaapaau* had told them to follow when handling these caribou. Even though it was the *mistaapaau* who

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countersign of thought" (Ong 1982: 32).

[11]The *mistaapaau* is something akin to an intermediary between the human and spiritual worlds for the Cree. One's *mistaapaau* is called upon during a shaking tent ceremony in order to relay messages between the two worlds (see Preston 1977; Feit 1983). The shaking tent ceremony, central to Cree hunting and religious ideology, was conducted in the past in order to communicate with the animal spirits, often in order to request assistance in locating those animals and hence, food (Feit 1983; Preston 1977; Tanner 1979).

give them the instructions, the *mistaapaau* was just telling the wishes of the animal. In reality it was the animal [spirit] that gave them the instructions on how to handle the animals [that were given to them]. They killed the caribou.... To show the utmost respect for the animal, they did not eat it outside. They only ate any part of the animal inside a dwelling or some kind of a shelter. That is what the *Iyiyuu* did first in the beginning. They did this to show how much they respected the food and the animal. One of the men and the one who was in charge of their affairs and was the boss, was the one who did not follow what they were told to do. He started making the fire and started cooking the caribou out in the open once they had butchered the caribou. He gave some to the people he lived with, the man and his own family. The other man told his wife, "just wrap the food because we can not eat it outside. We will eat it once we are inside our dwelling." Once the two caribou were all eaten up, they were unable to kill anything else to eat. The one who did not do what had been asked of them said, "make another shaking tent." A shaking tent was made for him. The *mistaapaau* went inside the shaking tent. They heard the *mistaapaau* inside talking but the man could not understand what the *mistaapaau* was saying to him. The people understood what was happening from other people's experiences that they could not understand the *mistaapaau* because he did not want to give them anything to eat [because they had angered the animal spirits for one reason or another]. That was what was happening. They could not make sense of what the *mistaapaau* was saying to them. The *mistaapaau* had instructed them also to really take good care of the caribou skin. Again, the man who was the boss did not heed the instructions that had been given to them by the *mistaapaau*. The one who was very careful had been given one caribou from the two that they had killed. He had instructed his wife to take care of the skin well and to make it [tan, etc.] very good and beautifully. When a shaking tent was built for the particular purpose of asking for caribou, the spirit that was spoken to was called "the Lady Spirit of the Caribou." That is the one that was spoken to. That was the one who told whether caribou would be killed or not and whether the caribou would be killed soon and when. I imagine that it was a caribou that they were talking to directly.... The one who was not too careful was asked by the spirit of the caribou, "I want to see

> myself, to see how you took care of me." The spirit said that, meaning it wanted to see how they had softened and tanned the caribou skin. The man could not show the spirit the caribou skin because it had not been tanned yet. The man who had been careful told his wife, "Put the caribou skin inside the shaking tent that you softened and tanned." His wife put the caribou skin inside the shaking tent. The caribou spirit was expressing it's happiness and thankfulness about the caribou skin it was seeing, the spirit called *pihkutiskwaauu*. So, as it happened...he [the one who was careful] told the people he lived with that the end was near for them and that he would try his luck somewhere on a nearby lake. As soon as he had left the family he killed some caribou. As for the other family, I guess they perished because they could not survive themselves. The man and his family lived because he had done what he was told to do and he had pleased *pihkutiskwaauu* when he showed how well he taken care of it. That is how and why he survived (JK, Interview #1).

The affiliation between a hunter and the animals of the sub-arctic is founded upon mutual respect and the culmination of that alliance is the moment at which the animal chooses to give itself to the hunter (Feit 1986; Tanner 1979). The larger the animal that a man kills - or rather, is given - the greater is his acknowledged status. It should be noted, though, that a successful hunter's prestige is rarely overtly manifested. A hunter's ability is acknowledged by others and valued but the hunter himself will always downplay his success. Boasting and other forms of self-aggrandizement are also viewed as forms of disrespect.

People refer to the luck that a hunter will have but as Feit explains, this "luck" is a negotiation of power between God, animal spirits and humans and is grounded in a sense of one's fate in the world as well as one's abilities (Feit 1991:

236; Tanner 1979). People speak of the negotiation of luck or, perhaps destiny, and of a balance of success in hunting activities. The word "luck" is often used to describe the hunter's successes but this is not an accurate term since luck connotes a sense of chance. There is more of a yielding to fate along with a sense of what is expected behaviour, that is, showing the proper respect for the animals, and a knowledge of the cyclical nature of wildlife availability. As Feit explains, "luck" is not random, but an indication of "the ebb and flow of 'power'" (Feit 1983: 18). Just as there are cycles in the animal populations there are also cycles of hunting success.

I will now recount a second legend which tells the story of a man called Gaagaanipidaadh. This tale is particularly informative since it reveals the spiritual relationship of the hunter to the animals and relates many of the elements fundamental to Cree hunting knowledge through a Cree narrative. The legend is referred to as "The Man Who Never Killed Anything":

> I'll tell you that Gaagaanipidaadh never killed anything. It was true that they knew he never killed anything, not even a bird, as he became a man. As his father grew old, they used to make fun of [Gaagaanipidaadh]. While he was walking, he was no different from any other man, but the only thing was that he never killed anything, not even a bird. Then he began to realize, "I wonder why I ever became a man because I am very different from other men, which makes me look like a loser," because he couldn't see or kill any animals like other men could. He took his bow and arrows and shot them just anywhere from where he stood until all his arrows were gone and he threw his bow away. Then he threw himself onto the ground and

cried and he didn't remember what happened.[12] Then he woke up - there was someone - oh, I left something out, there was a Canada Jay who came by where he was lying, he saw that it was a man who was sleeping and he realized he didn't know this man, so he began to spread the news to his neighbours and he would say to them, "I have found a man here, which means I never noticed him before - maybe one of you knows him," it seemed as if all kinds of animals came to where he lay, which means all kinds of wildlife. And all of them told the Canada Jay that they had not noticed him before. The last one asked was the Lady Spirit of the Caribou, she was the last one to be told. And she told them, "Of course, I did not know him, it was all of you who were supposed to notice him first," she said to them. He woke up, and he noticed that someone was cleaning his hair. As he woke up, she [the Lady Spirit of the Caribou] said to him, "No one noticed you before, that's why you had the kind of life you did, but things are going to be different from now on, since you've been discovered." They told him which part of him they were going to be. The caribou, "I will be in your chest because I will be a part of you." And with the fish, "I will be in the palm of your hand," and he was told and everything else, they told him where they were going to stay, the animals which he was now going to hunt.[13] The Lady Spirit of the Caribou said to him, "I will take you for myself later, just because you hadn't been discovered yet because I would have known you before if they had noticed you," she means the wildlife. "The reason I am doing this is because the wildlife hadn't noticed you before - you will live forever once I take you. You will not die until the earth is destroyed," she said to him. And the fish told him, "I will be the first one you will search for, you will put the net in the water. As soon as you put the net in the water, the fish will come to it and the first fish you will catch, you will eat, and the second one you catch will be your father's, the third one will be your mother's. I'm only telling you what to do with just the three, the rest you can do with as you wish. A Canada Jay went wherever the man did, and when he got near his camp, he shot the bird and took it inside and the father was so happy to see his son carrying the Canada Jay. He told his wife to cook it right away and the parents ate it because it was his first kill, because the Canada Jay told him, "you can do

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[12]It was suggested that perhaps he fainted or in some way lost consciousness, that is, of the natural world.

[13]In other versions of this story, each animal tells the man exactly which part of his body they will be.

whatever you wish to do with me, if you want to kill me and take me inside, or not, right now, as you are heading home," the Canada Jay said to him. And he was told which day he should search for each of the wildlife, all kinds of wildlife, one at a time, he should kill each just once in one day, that's what he was told. He also began to kill ptarmigan, that he was never able to before. Since the Canada Jay would go wherever he did, he killed one when he got near his *miichiwaahp* [dwelling] and took the Jay in with him. The old man said, "well, our son killed the Canada Jay," he said to his wife, "clean and cook it, I am going to eat it," the old man said to his wife. And the man said to his mother, "prepare the net, I am going to set it in the water." They knew something was different because he had never said that before, and the mother prepared the net as she was told, it didn't take her long to prepare it. He took the net out as soon as it was finished and the elder ate the Jay. The elder ate the Canada Jay because he didn't want to waste it. He set his net right in front of their camp, he placed three floats on the net and the fish were caught as soon as he placed the net in the water. He continued with that, then he began to take out the fish that were caught in the net. The first one was a big one and the other one was also big, which was his father's so he was told, and the first one would be his and the third one his mother's. As he took the fish out of the net, more fish were caught, so he took the fish inside, and the elder was so happy and he said, "this is the one I'm going to eat and this is my father's and this is your's," he said to his mother. And the elder knew exactly why he was doing this, since he saw the change in his son. And the elder knew exactly what was happening. He had been told, "you should finish everything all at once," and he finished his own fish, and the old man finished his fish, but the wife could not finish, so the old man finished it for her - so the old man ate almost 2 fish. And he told his parents to take the net out because they wouldn't be able to eat all the fish, there were too many. They took the net out that evening before dark. And there were a lot of ptarmigan near their camp, and he shot them and put them inside. He went hunting and he didn't have to go far. He soon saw a caribou, a female caribou with her calves. He carried a small one home and the bear had told him, "I will be the last one you will search for." The beaver and the otter he killed just in front of his camp. So they had a lot of food because he killed all kinds of wildlife, also he killed a polar bear because he had been told that he should search for him. And he didn't have to go far, to search for the wildlife that he wanted to kill. And soon he wasn't able to move to another place because he had so much food which he could

not move anywhere else. He knew that his son-in-law was near to where they were, the elder. They were told which lake they would be at, then he said to him, "go and get your sister, tell her to come and help your mother clean the things that your mother is not able to because I don't think they have killed much food where they are," the old man said. And he left to go to where his sister was, because he knew exactly where they were, and it was still daylight when he reached their camp, and the women who had always made fun of him said, "we have a stranger in our camp and it is Gaagaanipidaadh. I wonder why he is dressed that way," they said. Because they used to say that while the man is hunting, he used to decorate himself with the hide from the neck of the caribou, and that's how his mother had dressed him. And half of his arrows showed that they had been bloodied. And the women said, "why does he dress like that? Because his father probably killed the caribou that was killed." But he just ignored them when he heard what they said about him. Then his sister gave him some fish to eat and he said to his sister, "the reason I came is because our father wants you to come to our camp because we found a lake which is very good for fishing and our mother cannot clean them all, because she is not able to clean them all, while we are able to catch some fish. And our father said that you probably are not having much luck with food." His brother-in-law said, "ok, we will move there." It was true that they weren't having much luck with food where they were. And he told him, "we will travel by canoe and then by foot when we get near the camp. We can get the canoes later, we will come and get them later," he told him. And that night the man [son-in-law] said to his wife, "I think there is a change in my brother-in-law from the way that he was, I guess he has just begun to hunt for some wildlife," he said to his wife. And he told the rest of the group that his father-in-law wanted him to come to his camp. And they started their journey the first thing in the morning, and he was in the same canoe with his brother-in-law. And he told them when they reached the spot, "this is where we will leave the canoe, we will walk from here." And wherever they were on the dry land, there seemed to be a lot of ptarmigan around them. The other men wanted to kill them but the ptarmigan were scared so it was hard to kill them for the other men, but he wouldn't bother to kill the ptarmigan. When he reached where they would leave the canoes and walk from, his sister told him - since there were a lot of ptarmigan wherever they were, the men didn't give up trying to kill the ptarmigan, the men from the group, and the ptarmigan seemed to be so scared of them, and he would only walk with his sister and brother-in-law the whole time - and his sister told

him, "hey, brother, why don't you try to kill some ptarmigan?" his sister told him, and he said, "ok, carry my bag," and as he went on they seemed to be everywhere he went. And it didn't take him long to kill a lot. And they gathered them as he killed them and the sister told the other women to take some for themselves because she had already gathered a lot for herself and it was too heavy to carry them all and they seemed to fight over them. Then he said to his sister that he would stop killing them now, "it seems that you cannot carry them all," and once they could see where the camp was, and he could see the pile of caribou skins hung ready to be tanned and the *teshipitaakin* [cache made of poles on high cut tree trunks to store meat above ground level], they could see the cache and there were more than one. And they could tell that the old man had a lot of food, by looking at his camp. And when they reached the camp, the woman fed the people because she had prepared a meal for them, especially her daughter. And she cooked a lot because she knew how many there would be because she knew that they did not have much food, and that's why she cooked a lot, so that everyone would have enough to eat. So everyone was fed, then the elder said to the daughter, "the reason why your mother is not able to clean everything well is the reason why I told you to come, the reason why I sent your brother to get you and all the things you see that have been killed, I, myself, have not killed anything, only your brother has - not even one fish have I killed, everything was killed by your brother. All the things you see here your brother killed it all. And I thought you could take whatever you can to clean for your own," he said to his daughter. And he told her to extend their *miichiwaahp* so that she could live with her parents, the old man told his daughter. So they worked on their *miichiwaahp* to extend it because they wanted to live with them and while they were working to prepare their camp, the single women were discussing with each other, "I'll be the one who will marry him." And then one time, he said to his father that he doesn't want to be bothered by anyone, which means the women, because they had made fun of him, "if they don't do what I said, I won't be able to stay here with you," he told him, "if they don't do what I just said." And the old man told his daughter to tell the women what he had been told, to warn the women, and tell them to stay away from him, that he doesn't want to be bothered at all. That's what he told his daughter to tell the women. Even though they were told, it didn't stop them, but I don't know how long it was, maybe it was until winter, it was in the winter, that was when he didn't return from hunting. He just didn't return from hunting while he was walking around his hunting ground. That's where he was picked up

by the woman who told him that she was going to take him for herself, "you are going to stay with me," she told him. Then she told him to stay with his parents for a while, and he stayed with them for a while and again he didn't return from hunting, it was in the winter again. And that was the last time that he was seen. That's how it was told.

Q - Is that the reason he left, because the women were with him?

Yes, because the Lady Spirit of the Caribou said to him that he shouldn't be bothered by them because they used to make fun of him. "So I will be the one you will be married to, and the reason why I'm doing this is because you were never described by the wildlife to me and if you were never described by the wildlife to me and if you belong to me, you will never die until the earth is destroyed," that was what she told him. (Recounted by MG, Interview #3.)

Gaagaanipidaadh looked no different from any other man except that he could not kill any of the wildlife. He therefore could not be considered a man. It was not until he was first seen and acknowledged by the animals that he could successfully hunt. Gaagaanipidaadh goes through a transformation when he loses consciousness of this world and awakens to find that he is from then on visible to the supernatural world of the animals. In recounting the tale, MG explicitly indicates how the animals must first become part of Gaagaanipidaadh before he can successfully hunt. He then details the order in which the animals will be given to this man.

Implicit in this tale is that the elder father knows through his own powers that his son has now been recognized by the spirits of the animals. Incorporated into the legend as well are the rules of respect and conservation that are fundamental to Cree hunting practices. It is understood that no food is to be wasted. Wastefulness is a sign of lack of

respect and may be countered in the future by a change in the hunter's success. The ethic of respect inherent to Cree hunting is integrally related to the respect for, and the humility felt in an individual's relationship to, the animals and the land. Examples of this are when the elder eats the "weak" meat of the Canada Jay in order not to waste it and when there is a limit placed on the amount of game that is killed.

The ridicule that Gaagaanipidaadh must withstand from the women divulges to those listening to the tale a sense of the relative status of the hunter. How could someone wear the sign of having killed a caribou, the highest level of wildlife, if they had never been known to kill anything before? When the women discover that he is indeed now successful as a hunter, they find him extremely attractive and a good potential mate and they vie for his attention. As the story ends however, he chooses none of the women, but fulfils the promise to the Lady Spirit of the Caribou. In subsequent instalments, the relationship between humans and the spirit world is developed further as the man enters into the spirit world of the caribou.

This legend of "The Man Who Could Not Kill Anything" is an elaborate recounting of relationships between humans and between human and spirit beings. By highlighting some of the key factors inherent within those relationships, the story at the same time explicates the foundation for the connection

felt between the Cree and the animals that are integral to their world.

Part of how one shows respect to the Lady Spirit of the Caribou and all animal life includes how the men present themselves in the bush. Proper conduct in mediations with the animals is intrinsic to the concept of respect and the hierarchy of power. It goes without saying that guns and vehicles must all be in as good working order as possible. Women play a central role in the men's preparation for the bush. It is women's responsibility, for example, to properly make and decorate the outerwear. Footwear and mittens, as well as the gun cases, shell pouches and hunting sacks must all be well made and attractively adorned. As Tanner notes, "it is the spirit of the moccasins and of the snowshoes that lead the hunter to his prey, and prevents his legs getting tired, and thus those items are decorated to please these spirits" (1979: 92-3). Women must also keep the family's dwelling in good order and well supplied with water and chopped wood. If at all negligent in these duties, that is, if there is any sign of lack of respect, there is a risk that the animals will not see the value of giving themselves to the hunter and hence, his family.

5.3-iii The Nutritional Value of *Iyimiichim*

The nutritional value placed upon meat parallels the significance of the animal powers or spirits, such that larger

or more powerful animals have a greater nutritional value and are viewed as being stronger foods. Small birds are thought to have minimal nutritional value in comparison to the meat of either caribou or bear. The ptarmigan which is the weakest form of food is ranked below fish. After fish are the wild fowl (goose, grouse), and then small game animals such as otter or porcupine, and on up to caribou which "is the strongest meat of all the wildlife" (JP, Interview #3).

Many of the older adults that I interviewed discussed the relative strength of animal meats and their broth in relation to what one should eat or drink if one hadn't had food for any length of time.

> Porcupine, and also its broth is very strong, it is very good to drink, it is good to drink when a person is weak from hunger.... With otter, it is very good to eat, it helps the strength, when a person is weak from hunger, it helps to get their strength back (JP, Sr., Interview #3).

In the past, bear or caribou would have been "too strong" to consume after days of little or no food. Even the broth of these animals would be taken with caution. A preferable alternative to such strong foods was either fish or fish broth.

The fat of the different animals has the same degree of "potency" as the meat of the animal. Bear fat, for example, is considered very strong food and was used extensively in the past as a medicament as well. Animal fat, either alone or mixed together with the inner bark of the tamarack, was used as a poultice on wounds or burns. Bear fat was described to

me as being an exceptionally potent healing agent, thus the animal's strength was reflected also in its curing abilities.

Beaver meat is anomalous in that it was, and still is considered by some, to be of less nutritional value than other animal meats. One informant suggested that the reason why beaver meat would not increase someone's strength is because of the amount of work involved in killing a beaver in the winter. Another individual indicated that because of the beaver's nocturnal habits, the meat and the broth of the beaver is considered weak, irrespective of the amount that a person consumed:

> Because the beaver doesn't do anything in the daylight, he only starts working at night. He works all night and rests during the daylight hours and that is what he is and that is why his broth is weak for regaining one's strength, even if he has a lot of fat on him. Even if they would get full from the beaver meat, it would still not do them much good for their strength. Even if they would get food from the beaver, they would still get weak. The beaver and the ptarmigan are considered the weakest foods or broth for someone who needs to regain his strength (JP, Interview #3).

Nursing women are advised against consuming beaver broth. One explanation for this is the belief that the child, in consuming the broth of a nocturnal animal through her mother, will not sleep well during the night. Another food that lactating women are alerted to is the broth of the cooked porcupine which is said to upset the baby's stomach if the mother consumes it.

Finally, there are foods that are preferentially given to either men or women. The rationale for why certain foods can

or cannot be eaten ranged from explicit explanations of the symbolic value attached to certain parts of the animal to simply stating that men or women just don't eat those foods. Parts of the goose, for example, are considered to be better for the men to eat and other parts for the women. The goose's head should be given to young hunters so that they may have good kills in the future; women eat the feet so that the geese will be drawn down from the sky. The wings and gizzards of geese are also considered to be women's food, although no apparent reason was suggested to me.

The heads of most animals and fish are considered men's food, as are the tails of beaver (the content of which is pure fat), porcupine and otter. The jaw, nose, eyes and tongue of the caribou are considered delicacies and at the same time men's food. One woman suggested that "mostly the nicer parts" are reserved for the men, although women can and will eat these foods if offered to them (cf. Tanner 1979: 161). Tanner explains that the head of the animal connotes honour and so is always given to male hunters (1979: 161). Fish heads contain the preferred parts and thus is an example of the foods that are preferentially given to an elder man or woman. In Whapmagoostui, the fish head is considered a delicacy but may be offered to the eldest daughter or son, knowing that this is the choicest part of the fish.

Women who are pre-menopausal and girls who are not yet of childbearing age are not permitted to consume the meat of any

fetal animal or any part of the reproductive organs of female animals. One reason that was suggested for why women are not allowed to eat the uterus of any winged or land animal is because it is believed that if a woman eats these organ meats, her children will not be able to come out of her own womb. It is for the same reason that women are advised against eating the "balloon" (attached to the outer wall of the stomach) of the sucker fish. Since it resembles the amniotic sac, it is felt that if eaten by the mother, the baby will not be able to "break out of its bag". Post-menopausal women can eat all of the previously proscribed foods but may choose not to (see Tanner 1979 for gender restrictions in eating bear).

A caribou fetus may be left untouched (see Tanner 1979) or eaten, but strict rules apply to the care and handling of the fetal animal. The fetal caribou is handled with great respect and is the first thing that is prepared by women if a pregnant female caribou has been killed.

Indeed, at spring goose camp, I had been watching two young hunters butchering a caribou when they discovered the fetus inside. The family matriarch called out from the *iyiyukamikw*[14] to have me bring the fetus directly into the dwelling. It was handled quickly, efficiently and with proper

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[14]*Iyiyukamikw* literally translates to Indian or Cree house, but is understood in Whapmagoostui as being the tipi-like structure that is conventionally used as the cooking house at the hunting camps. It is the place where the birds are plucked and the meat is prepared, cooked or dried (see also Chapter One).

respect, all the while the elder woman explaining that this had to be the case lest anything happen to her daughters' young or yet to be born children. Leaving other work aside, one of the daughters carefully cleaned, dried and then skinned the animal. The soft hide would be used as a decoration or for a child's clothing but not for foot wear or mittens, or any other ordinary use. The meat was cooked and eaten first by the elder woman - since there was no elder male at this camp - and then the younger adult men.

In the past, the hide was kept as a sort of talisman that was used when appealing to the Lady Spirit of the Caribou for a successful hunt, as other fetal skins were kept in order to have the success of those who show the proper respect to the animal spirits.

Inedible foods are not only those that are symbolically disvalued (*minituush*) because of their hierarchical status but also those that are considered symbolically dirty. Animals that eat garbage are dirty animals. Seagulls, for example, are no longer eaten because people do not want to consume their own waste, which they see the gulls feeding on at the dumps just outside of town. The following two excerpts illustrate the sense of "dirty" food both currently and envisioned for the future.

> Whenever the *Iyiyuu* sees an animal that is usually food for the *Iyiyuu* feeding at a garbage dump, the *Iyiyuu* know right away that the animal is no longer fit for us to eat. Even if the *Iyiyuu* sees the animals tracks or just walking near garbage, he

> right away thinks that the animal cannot be eaten any more (RS, Interview #1).
>
> ...[T]he bear will catch the [fish] sickness [literal translation for term for mercury poisoning], too. Also, the bear will not be healthy to eat because it will eat food from the garbage dumps [when the hydro projects are being built]. The caribou will be sick, too because of the damage to the land because when the explosives are used and the drilling, the dust from these things will go up in the air and deposit on a large area over the land. The caribou eats it's food which is the caribou moss and other plants, therefore the caribou will be sick, too, because it's food will be damaged, too. That is how the caribou will be affected. It is very likely that the humans will be affected too because of eating the caribou and other animals who eat the caribou will be sick, too. That is where the reasons will come from for [the *Iyiyuu'ch*] not being *miyupimaatisiiu* (JK, Interview #1).

Also exemplified in these statements is the connection between what the animals eat and the land and water upon which they are dependent. Thus the two elder men have also connected dirty land to dirty animals. This same theme was repeated in other interviews when people discussed the purity of Cree food because it derives from pure land. The animals who eat clean food are clean, pure, Cree animals.

> The other thing that I have found out is that it helps one to be on the land because it is always clean and pure out on the land. Wherever the person is, it is always clean and pure. That is what helps the person for his well being (JK, Interview #1).
>
> In the past everything was so pure, that is why people were so well. And there was nothing in the water which could make people sick, there was nothing from the air which would affect the lakes because there was nothing disturbing the land.... They were hunting on clean land, that is why they [were] so *miyupimaatisiiu*. Especially the children, they [were] *miyupimaatisiiu* because

> everything was clean/pure at that time, the water, the land (JP, Interview #1).

The mercury that people are told now permeates the fish and cadmium found in the caribou and moose organ meats[15] are also impurities that are perceived as being directly related to whiteman's activities.

Just as Lacasse (1982) found among the Montagnais, there is great attention paid to what the animals ingest since, in a way, the animals "become" what they eat (1982: 27). Thus the importance of the threat that people too "become" what they eat, which is summarized in the assertion "if the land is not healthy then how can we be?" (JM, Interview #2).

The importance of Cree food becomes especially clear when adults talk about "whiteman's food" [*waamistikushiiumiichim*]. Whiteman's food is regarded as food that weakens a person and the consumption of whiteman's food changes the basic constitution of a Cree person. I quote:

> The things that children ate in the past, that was what made them strong and *miyupimaatisiiu* - because they ate only wildlife food, because they only killed what they needed for food (JK, Interview #1).

> With the whiteman's food, sometimes it doesn't do a person well in his system if he eats just whiteman's food for a long time. But if he eats half wildlife food and half whiteman's food, that would do him good (JP #3).

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[15]Despite current advice to the Cree Regional Authority that the organ meats do not represent enough of a risk to alter current consumption practices (Archibald and Kosatsky 1991: 22).

JP goes on to say that, of course, wildlife food is better for the Cree because the native people ate the wildlife food for a long time. With a sense of resignation, many adults remarked that eventually the children will probably be alright since their bodies will get used to the foods that they eat. People today, and especially the young people, are perceived as being weak and unable to perform a range of Cree activities because they are not eating enough of the proper foods and more specifically, because they are eating whiteman's food.

A final note on food consumption. The older Cree adults maintain with conviction that this is God's earth upon which everything has been placed for a purpose. Premising their statements with that belief, many would then describe their dilemma when it comes to understanding the non-Cree foods available at the stores. On the one hand, they perceive the food to be inappropriate food for a Cree person, but feel that if this is what the children want to eat then they should be able to. After all, children should not be denied what they want. How, so many people asked in the course of the interviews, can food be bad for a person? If it was created by God it was meant to be consumed, how is it that another can tell people that they should not consume it. The dilemma arises when they are then told through public health campaigns, for example, that many of the processed foods may be harmful to their health and must be consumed in limited quantities if all (see Chapter Six).

Others expressed concern about the quantity in which whiteman's foods are consumed. People do not know how to "properly" consume these foods, one informant explained. Eating in excess was likened to excessive alcohol consumption since both are relatively new to the Cree and it was felt that the conventions (and risks) that accompany these products not fully known or understood.

5.3-iv Starvation

Starvation and hardship were recounted with considerable regularity in the interviews. The meaning of the term starvation and the degree to which people actually went without food or specifically without meat is contested in the literature (Black-Rogers 1983). For example, in 1894 Turner wrote: "Although their food consists of reindeer, ptarmigan, fish and other game, the deer is their main reliance, and when without it, however great the abundance of other food, [the northern Cree] consider themselves starving" (1894: 276). Seventy years later Wills found that

> [t]he Montagnais-Naskapi speak of the past as a time when the Indians were very poor. Even though game was more plentiful than it is today, they remember the hardships of trapping and many cases of starvation, and recall that white men present at the time did not help Indians who starved (1965: 30).

I presume the suffering and the hunger to have occurred inasmuch as it is part of what is remembered and retold. People discussed with me how they or their ancestors overcame periods

with little or no food, or how entire families had such "poor luck" that they all eventually succumbed to starvation. As one informant recounts:

> The time I remember, I was old enough to hunt ptarmigan [approximately 7 years old, 60 years ago], I was lucky only sometimes in my hunting. There were a lot of people leaving from here [Great Whale] to go to Clearwater Lake, a lot of families were there. Those are the people who died of hunger.... [There were] five families. One family for sure, everyone in the family died of hunger. Of the five families, only one daughter got married and is still alive. She is my next door neighbour. When there was hunger, it was the men who were first affected because they had to hunt, then the children, and especially if there was a mother breastfeeding a baby because of the baby sucking milk from the mother. Seventeen people died of hunger (JP, Interview #1).

Individuals also described what types of food were eaten when no large game was available. Fish were relied upon when nothing else was available. Not being able to harvest any fish was a sign of desperation.

> If someone doesn't have enough food to eat all the time, if they were short of food - fish was always good for everyone, it would help them keep their strength (AM, Interview #3).

Lichen was recounted as being a food source in times of utter despair. The scaly, black crustose lichen that grows on rock surfaces in the sub-Arctic region were explicitly pointed out to me as such on numerous occasions during walks on the rocky terrain near the village. The lichen was cooked with water and eaten as a porridge when there was no other source of food available.

Similar to Tanner's (1979) findings at Mistissini, starvation was recounted to me at Whapmagoostui as being related to the cyclical availability of foods or changes in the hunter's "luck" with the animals. An important factor as well is that the ability to withstand the hardship of little or no food while others perished was, with good reason, an indication of endurance and strength.

5.4 The Effects of Cold on *Miyupimaatisiiu*

5.4-i Protection from Cold

Protection from the cold is as critical to "being alive well" as it is to survival in the bush. The pragmatics of survival are integrated into everyday living today, whether in the bush or in contemporary housing.

Exposure to cold weather or cold water not only can make one sick, it can decrease a person's ability to "be alive well." Although a subtle distinction, this is an important one. "Being alive well" increases one's ability to stave off illness and the effects of cold weather and thus be able to pursue those activities that constitute "being alive well."

> One is always warned about water and the cold. One is taught how to look after himself during the cold weather. The other things people are cautioned is to be careful when they are using axes and guns. These are the most important things that they have to be very careful about. These things were already in the knowledge of the *Iyiyuu* of the past and handed down through the generations (RS, Interview #1).

Precautionary measures against the cold are taken with people of all ages, and especially with infants and young children. Today, for example, babies are wrapped and bundled into *waaspisuuyaan*. Originally a "moss bag",[16] now a *waaspisuuyaan* is a soft fabric bunting bag with wide caribou skin trimming the two front panels into which holes are made for the hide strips which are then looped through the holes. Inside the *waaspisuuyaan* the baby is dressed and wrapped in a flannel blanket. Babies' feet are wrapped in infant style moccasins and, in the winter especially, mothers may wrap a small piece of rabbit fur snugly around their babies' feet.

Infants are always bundled and their heads covered even when indoors. Lace trimmed cotton hats are made by the women and the string of the hat is looped in with the strips that tie the *waaspisuuyaan*.

Whereas in the past, the *waaspisuuyaan* was fixed onto a cradle board, today, when taken outside, babies are secured on their mothers' backs inside a large woollen blanket that is wrapped and knotted around the mother's midriff. In colder weather the infant is then completely enveloped in another large blanket before being taken out of doors. To not take such care of one's children is to risk their lives and incur the wrath of others who equate such inattention with nothing less than cruelty. The following story illustrates not only

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[16]The "moss bag" not only nestled the baby but held the sphagnum moss which was used as diapering material.

the dire consequences of inattention but how that neglect is equated with laziness as well as abuse.

> It was because she did not tend to her right away when she cried while they were travelling [the child was being carried in the toboggan]. It was said that the woman was like the person who was not very kind and loving. She did not seem to show much loving care to her children. Her child was crying while travelling and she was carrying the child in her toboggan. She did not listen when the child told her, "Mother, I am cold." I guess the child had been moving about in the toboggan. I suppose the mother had not put mitts on the child [even though it was wrapped in blankets while in the toboggan]. What is done when people have things to do that is to dress the child warmly even though it is wrapped up and kept warm while being transported on the toboggan. The child is carried on the toboggan and mitts are still put on the child's hands. When the child manages to expose her/his hands out from the wrappers, [then] his/her hands are kept warm. It is presumed that is what happened to child [exposing her hands out of the wrappings]. It was not known if she had put mittens on the child. She did not care to check when the child said, "Mother, I am cold." I can not tell exactly what happened because I was still very young when that happened. But I did see the child as woman. On one hand, all her fingers down to the knuckles were gone and just the thumb was there. On her other hand, the whole hand was gone. I do not know exactly what happened to her hand.... I remember her while she was still alive. She lived despite her ordeal. The old woman was there when this happened...I do not know what they used on her. I suppose they just used tamarack, I presume. I could imagine that they also used seal fat, I really can not say truly, if they were near the post. The seal fat was used at times and helped the *Iyiyuu*, just like I told you about the beaver fat, when these fats are used raw. It could be that they used seal fat, whatever fat it was, to oil the tamarack to put on the wound.... If she had not kept on walking when the child said, "I am cold," if she had not done that, if she had turned around to check and believe the child when she said, "Mother, I am cold," her child would not have gone through this kind of ordeal. The child would not have had frozen hands because she would have fixed the wrappings and tied her more securely on

> the toboggan and warned her not to expose her hands out and to the cold. She should have done these things. It must have been easier for the child to put her hands out because she had not secured her well in the toboggan. She was known to be like that, too, one who does not keep her children's clothing well and secure. She did not seem to be able to work well as she should. She did not seem to care much for her children. She did not work much (AN, Interview #2).

In the past, infants were given spiritual protection in addition to the warm bundling to shield them from the cold. A small necklace made of netting was placed around the baby's neck to "trap" the cold before it could enter the baby's body (see also Flannery 1962: 478).

> They would make a small necklace with thread and put it around the baby's neck and they would say, "this little net is to keep away the cold so that the baby would not catch the cold, to protect her from catching the cold." It helped a baby, but it's just that not everyone had the power [*chiik-stichau*ˀ/magic] to make a net for the baby, so that when a person made the net, it would protect the baby from the cold. I knew MS's mother...had the power, making the net for the infant to protect it from the cold. Also, my grandmother who raised me [had that magical ability].

Q - What kind of thread did they use?

> It's the kind of thread they make a net [*ahapii*] with. ...[T]hey can see sometimes, when the white faded, if you could see a different colour, not white any more, that means it's protecting - the cold is stuck on the *ahapii*. It's the same thing as if you are catching a fish with your net, it's the same thing that you would say, that the net is protecting the baby from the cold. When the net loses its white colour, they would wash it and then put it back again after it is dried (AM, Interview #3).

Although some people still make them for a newborn child, this protective neckwear has been discouraged from use over the

last few years by individuals concerned about the safety of a string around the baby's neck.

Adults are cautious and dress well to protect themselves from the cold, especially when travelling any distance. Since travel to and from goose camp, for example, is done either by skidoo, ATV, or canoe, proper outerwear is worn throughout the trip. Head, hands and feet especially are shielded from cold and inclement weather.

It should be noted however that an important component in the definition of a strong Cree individual is one who can readily withstand the cold, even with minimal outerwear. Stories are recounted of great men in the past who wore very little clothing yet could survive even the harshest of conditions. Today, there is a general distinction made between Cree, who can withstand the sub-zero weather, and weaker non-Cree, who must take extra precautions when outside in the winter.

There was concern, for example, whenever I ventured out of the village. "Be sure that your feet are warm!" "Where is your hat?" "Does she have enough on?" "Will she be cold?" were the questions asked most frequently of or about me prior to any of my travels. Upon our travelling party's arrival at spring goose camp in late April, 1989, the first words to AM, the matriarch of the family, were that I travelled without appropriate footwear. AM called out to me that I was to come

directly to her tent, remove my boots and sit with my feet to the fire until the chill was gone.

Concern for the condition of one's feet and oneself in general is part of the history of endurance and survival when hunting the year round. Warmth and avoidance of cold was crucial to the survival of those who lived and travelled in the sub-arctic climate. Travelling primarily by foot, there was, and remains, care taken in the protection of one's feet. To this day, having cold and especially cold and wet feet is especially distressing and warrants a stop on even a short outing.

The functional importance of walking and of one's feet is underscored by the spiritual importance of the lower limbs. Although not articulated today as being explicitly part of an animistic system of belief, great attention is paid to how one dresses for travelling in the bush. One's feet, in particular, are treated with special importance as witnessed by how footwear such as moccasins and snowshoes are always colourfully decorated (see above and Tanner 1979: 92).

5.4-ii The Condition of Cold in the Body

If someone gets cold or chilled, it is unquestionably cause for concern. Allowing cold to enter one's body, whether by accident or by not taking the proper precautions in dressing, means the possibility of a loss of bodily strength.

It is believed that cold will enter into one's body and continue to reside there unless driven out. For this reason great care is taken that people do not get cold and it is why action is quickly taken if someone becomes cold. If cold is retained within the body or if someone is repeatedly exposed to undue cold they will eventually become sick. Prolonged exposure to cold can have a sort of cumulative effect that will lead to lung, joint, leg and other problems over the years.

> ...like the ones who have leg problems, the ones who have leg problems, it's because they got cold, they got cold because they spent a lot of time outside, especially when they had to spend the night outside during a cold winter and once they got cold, it would stay inside and build up inside him and that's what would make him sick. That's what happened ever since I started to have the pain and it stayed there. Once it's there, it will always be there. Also, it's the same for women, the women have the same problem, when they get sick, it's from the cold. They also have leg problems, as if they can hardly use their legs, that's what the doctor said. If they haven't been treated right away to sweat out the cold, by using the rocks, that would help sweat out the cold. That's the only way, to sweat it out. Once it's sweated out, even when it is deep down, but if it isn't sweated out, if someone got cold, especially if he got wet and cold, and sometimes it would go to his lungs and that's what he knew (MG, Interview #1).

Women are especially cautious of the cold. It is believed that cold can adversely affect blood and particularly, menstrual activity and even interfere with childbirth. Today, girls and women are instructed to keep their feet warm at all times in order to prevent menstrual pains.

> For the girl, it is dangerous for her to get cold because of what the woman has [menstruation]. That is why the female child is taught to watch that she does not get wet or watch that she does not get too cold for long. If a girl gets cold before her first period, that is why she will not be well. I heard long ago that a girl got cold before her first period and the blood came out through her mouth instead of the other way. That is why it is dangerous for a girl to be cold while having her period.... I also heard that it went to her head and her mind was affected because she had been cold [too often] (AN, Interview #1).[17]

5.4-iii Alleviating Cold

The usual treatment strategy for someone who has gotten cold is to warm them, that is, to supplant cold with heat. Routine heat treatments in the past involved either the use of a steam tent (*mitutisaan*) or surrounding the afflicted body part with hot stones and covering it all with a cloth.[18]

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[17]AN also discusses the relationship between blood and heat. Heat not only warms but thickens blood circulating in the body so that if someone is bleeding heavily the heat treatment will reduce the flow of blood. The blood is "sort of cooked and thereby slows down the flow of blood," says AN. This is told in relation to the story of a woman who bled to death after delivering her baby because she got cold.

[18]There are a number of different methods of heat treatments that were used. Depending on the type of ailment, a healer would choose to use either a complete sweat lodge (*mitutisaan*) or partial "sweat lodge" over one area of the body. A dry heat application was made to a part of the body with either a hot stone or a bag of sand. Steam heat in the sweat lodge was produced by pouring water over heated stones. Often moss was added to enhance the steam treatment. The smooth, dark stones found under water are described as the best type since they produce more steam when the moss was used with them. Described as well is the blowing of steam directly into a person's mouth or the affected area of the body. (The steam tent was also used to cleanse the individual symbolically as well as physically in his preparation for hunting

Today, people describe the hot water bottle as being a somewhat adequate replacement for the localized dry heat treatments of the past.

> One thing that the steam tent [*mitutisaan*] is used for is when a person feels chilly all the time and feels shaky inside as if being cold. That is what I have seen a person using the *mitutisaan* for that purpose because they have been cold and that it had been retained in the person. That is why the *mitutisaan* is used to bring out the person's cold water that is inside of him (AN, Interview #1).

> The *Iyiyuu* gives heat treatments to someone who is known to be cold through before the cold goes to the lungs. Once the cold enters the body, if it does not come out to the surface of the body [in the form of sweat] it travels straight to the lungs. When the water that is supposed to come out does not, that is what happens. The whiteman says that it is not good for someone to sweat when someone is very sick. But the *Iyiyuu* has a different idea about this. When a person has been cold, it is advised that the person have heat treatments whenever possible before he gets too sick from his being cold thoroughly recently... When a person sweats, they feel good and relaxed after their sweat session. The water and the cold comes out of the person's body. Sometimes, the person is known to have the condition of having been cold because their sweat is cold to the touch. It is said that the person's state of having been cold is coming out. The *Iyiyuu* administers heat treatments to the person who has the condition of being cold. When fate deems the person to live a long life then the heat treatments work... (AN, Interview #1).

Inherent within this statement is a sense of resignation to a higher order; the fate of the individual who must on the

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[Tanner 1979].)

one hand be self-sufficient, but who also has no control over his or her destiny.[19]

Steam tents are no longer used by the Cree of Whapmagoostui although one was erected during the summer pow-wow of 1989 by MG, an elder of the community, with the help of one of his grandsons.[20] After the construction of the *mitutisaan*, MG explained that he had not constructed it as air-tight as it should be and that the rocks were not left to heat long enough before placing them inside the tent. He also recounted the various therapeutic uses for the steam tent, including how he was often put inside one as a child and young adult whenever he was cold. Members of the community looked on with curiosity at every stage of the construction of the *mitutisaan* since for many it was the first time that they had seen one.

That one can withstand regular exposure to the cold, and especially to cold water is a sign that one is "alive well." In much the same way, if one is not "alive well" and becomes chilled, then the chance of becoming ill is greatly enhanced. This is how the people of today are viewed by the elders. That is, people in the past were stronger and better able to

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[19]This same yielding to fate was discussed in relation to all remedies. A person will only get well if he was meant to, irrespective of the type of treatment. There was always a proviso that if the there was no improvement after three treatments, then the person was not meant to get well.

[20]Following proper rules of respect, MG had stated that if someone asked him to construct a *mitutisaan*, he would do so. I took it upon myself, through his daughter, to request this of him and he willingly obliged.

withstand the elements than the people of today and thus were very *miyupimaatisiiu*.

> Those people [in the past] must have been tough, the ones who could stand the water..., not to get sick from that. But if any of these people right now would do like they did in the past, I'm sure they would get sick right away. I'm sure right away they would feel sick if they got wet from the water - that is how dangerous the water is, if someone gets cold from the water, it would affect the person right away (AM, Interview #3).

Protection from the cold was, and remains, an important preventive practice in the maintenance of *miyupimaatisiiu*. Equally important is the removal of cold from one's body so that the person does not become sick or incapacitated in any way in the future. Being able to withstand cold is a key measure of the strength of an individual and a sign that he or she is "alive well."

5.5 Physical Ability

Physical ability, like food and the avoidance of cold was one of the principal elements discussed when people were asked to talk about *miyupimaatisiiu*. Physical ability, in terms of strength and endurance were described as being of fundamental importance in knowing if someone is "alive well." More explicitly, one must have the physical endurance to withstand the cold and to hunt and prepare one's food to "be alive well." Having the physical ability to procure *iyimiichim* is fundamental to "being alive well."

Qualities associated with physical endurance and physical ability are what people recall as those from the past as having and something which separates people from the past from people today. As far back as I can remember, said one elder woman,

> when the *Iyiyuu* says someone is *miyupimaatisiiu* they mean the person who never seems to be tired out even though they have not stopped working all day long. Someone who can lift heavy things but is not tired or never known to be feeling sick because they are tired from working and doing things all day long (AN, Interview #1).

One must be strong enough to perform the activities that are needed for survival in the bush and the more physically active one is, the stronger he or she will be. At the same time, the only way to have that strength is to eat Cree food, and the only way to eat Cree food is by hunting.

The physical activity that people describe is tied to activities that are recounted from the past. The industry and tenacity of an individual that was "alive well" are features that were not only indicative of one's state of well-being but also of that person's ability to make it possible for others to be "alive well" and are in this way tied to the social obligations in Cree society.

> When a person did not let up in pursuing his work, which some *Iyiyuu* excelled at doing this, it really showed in their lives because then they had good and prosperous lives. He alone made it possible to live the well and prosperous life because of his industriousness and hard work and he also made it possible for others to [be] *miyupimaatisiiu*. The reason why it was possible, that is what I heard tell and not from my own experience do I know this, is that it was his enthusiasm and industriousness

towards his work that gave him the *miyupimaatisiiun* and assurance of his own survival. An *Iyiyuu* with that kind of attitude towards his work did not know what it meant to be lazy at all nor did he like to be lazy in any way. It was this kind of attitude to his work that also gave him the knowledge in knowing how to do well in doing and pursuing his work for survival. He did not like to be lazy or to be doing nothing.

But there were times that the things they liked were not within reach. Whenever the *Iyiyuu'-ch* were at the post just awhile, they were very anxious to be getting back to the kind of life they were living which was being in the inland and living off the land. The kind of life they were living and liked was on the land and the knowledge they had for this kind of living is what they taught their children as soon as they were able to understand. One of the things that was good that the *Iyiyuu'ch* taught their children was to wake and get up very early in mornings and never to sleep into the day too much. The habit of the *Iyiyuu'ch* was to get up before the sun was up was a habit that was practised all their lives. That was what they did all the time. They never slept late into the morning. They hardly ever stopped doing anything for a while. They were constantly keeping themselves busy with the work that needed to be done. At my age, which is over fifty, what I like is what I have seen while I was growing up as a young child (JK, Interview #1).

I knew and I heard that there were many people who wouldn't easily get tired even if they work so hard and carry heavy loads many miles, but still they wouldn't get tired easily, that's how the people were a long time ago. It was just because they would eat the wild animals that they would kill and it was before they would eat any other different kind of things.... That's how strong the people were in the past. That's how the people were when they made their living only by hunting (JK, Interview #1).

That's the main thing, that people got strong and *miyupimaatisiiu* because they moved around all the time. They would work hard everyday because they knew they were *miyupimaatisiiu* enough to do hard work (AM, Interview #3).

Physical strength is needed for survival in the bush. As these excerpts indicate, that one has been out hunting indicates that one has the physical strength needed to work in the bush. This is also evidence of an experienced hunter and of a woman who has the skills and ability required for the preparation of the meat and the hides.

There is also an integral link between physical ability, *miyupimaatisiiu* and doing things explicitly related to bush activities:

> Why the people were *miyupimaatisiiu* was because they were always travelling and were used to the life they had even if they travel for miles and miles, they would probably rest on Sunday but start on Monday, but they were used to the life they had. I knew and I heard that there were many people who would not easily get tired even if they work so hard and carry heavy loads many miles bit still they wouldn't get tired easily, that is how the people were a long time ago. It was just because they would eat the wild animals that they would kill and it was before they would eat any other different kinds of things. That is what my grandfather told me. That is how the people were when they made their living only by hunting (AM, Interview #3).

> The *Iyiyuu* of the past age, never depended on anything to carry them from place to place. They depended only on themselves to get to a place even if the place they wished to go to is very far. They made their own transportation with their body energy and nothing else carried them wherever they wanted to go. They carried their own belongings in winter and in the summer. Since the existence of the posts, the *Iyiyuu* went to those posts, even though they were far from wherever they might be, taking their pelts, if they needed anything from the posts, and they were fast at it, too, it is said. Once they were on this kind of expedition, they were very far from where they started from in one day because they walked with great speed. They only ate when they were camped for the night. That was the only time they drank, too. While they were

> walking during the day, they did not even stop to drink, much less stop to eat but only when they were camped for the night. That is what the *Iyiyuu* of the past did. They did everything with great speed, too. That shows that the *Iyiyuu* of the past were *miyupimaatisiiu* (JK, Interview #1).

Terms that indicate that one is lacking in physical strength are not only related to particular bush activities but can also indicate gender distinctions between those activities. For example, when a man is thin and too weak to walk, one could say that he is "too weak to dig a hole in the ice." When a woman is weak, one might refer to her as being "too weak to chop wood" (JM, Interview #3).

> So that is what happens when a person is slowed down by hunger - mostly it was hunger that slowed people down when they were *miyupimaatisiiu*. But the people never knew when to stop, they would always overwork themselves.... Because mostly if they don't eat as much as they should that slowed them down, so they were supposed to always have enough food to eat to keep them going because they had such a hard life, to make their living (AM, Interview #3).

5.6 Summary

> If the hydro project cannot be stopped, considering the damage and the loss that will be done to the land, this will also speed up the loss of the *Iyiyuu* way of life, therefore, the *Iyiyuu* will not be *miyupimaatisiiu*, in essence, the factors that enabled the *Iyiyuu* to be *miyupimaatisiiu* will be destroyed and lost for them (JK, Interview #1).

In this chapter I have delineated three overarching categories which together serve as key indicators of how one can "be alive well". Protection from the cold, physical activity and eating Cree food are the principal factors

described as necessary for "being alive well." Inherent within this concept is a proper respect and devotion to bush animals and to the Christian doctrine, as well as cleanliness in the house, camp, and the proper handling of the food consumed. Without doubt food, warmth and physical strength are the fitting means of "being alive well." But as described by the Cree, there are particular foods and abilities that constitute well-being. These foods and activities are made meaningful only in the context of Cree knowledge and lives.

Concepts of well-being, I suggest, are inextricable from Cree ideology and are bound to the so-called "traditional" Cree practices. *Miyupimaatisiiu*, say the adults that I interviewed, is the Cree way of life: "being alive well" is being able to hunt, pursue traditional activities, live well in the bush, eat the right foods, keep warm, and is the ability to provide for yourself and others.

What the excerpts from the interviews also indicate is that "being alive well" is also a statement of past ideals in the face of present and future impositions upon that way of life. The stories and descriptions of *miyupimaatisiiu* indicate a series of connections and dualities intrinsic to Cree ideology. The elders emphasize correlations between the Cree people and the animals, spirits and humans, food and hunger, warmth and cold, clean and dirty, internal and external, strength and weakness, village and camp, past and present, present and future, Cree and non-Cree. Feit explains that,

> [t]he image of the competent hunter serves also as a goal of the good life. The aims of both hunting and of life are, in part, to maintain a continuing sensitivity to and a balanced participation with the world, the men and the animals reciprocally contribute to the survival of the other. The aim of life is the perpetuation of an ordered, meaningful and bountiful world. This aim includes those now alive and those yet to be born. The social universe thus extends beyond the human world, beyond the temporal frame of an individual human life (Feit 1986: 180).

The principles that Feit delineates resonate within the notion of *miyupimaatisiiu*. I would further suggest that the ideals of the "balanced participation with the world" of the Cree is being tested and in the face of that, the ability to "be alive well" is diminishing. One response to this threat is to idealize the sense of Cree identity through such concepts of "being alive well." In practice, people indicate that they are "alive well" when they spend time in the bush (cf. Tanner 1979). In the next chapter, I establish the theoretical argument for the association between *miyupimaatisiiu* and themes of nationalism and resistance.

CHAPTER SIX: NATIONALISM, "BEING ALIVE WELL", AND RESISTANCE

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will draw from the literature on nationalism, tradition and resistance in order to provide a foundation for my thesis that *miyupimaatisiiu* is a manifestation of social and political well-being. The core of my argument, and what links this chapter to those that preceded it, is that the traditional images that are evoked in *miyupimaatisiiu* are inherent to contemporary Cree nationalism. Drawing upon my ethnographic data I will locate *miyupimaatisiiu* within a text of historical accountings, land, and the production and interpretation of traditional activities.

A means of assessing well-being in the social sciences, as I discussed earlier, includes the cultural and political influences that shape and are shaped by one's biological level of fitness. I move this argument a step further by suggesting

that we must look beyond biological fitness in order to understand the culturally defined sense of well-being. Furthermore, in this chapter I will explore the concept of cultural identity and its assertion - for the Cree - which is situated within descriptions of well-being. To begin my argument, I shift now from well-being to a discussion of contemporary issues of nationalism and representations of culture.

I ended the last chapter with the statement that *miyupimaatisiiu* is not simply a biological phenomenon, but expressed and elaborated through a constructed notion of Cree identity. I further contend that there is a link between the Cree definition of well-being and a distinct sense of Cree national identity. That the Cree are asserting themselves in the face of threats to their land is consistent with the efforts of the Cree polity over the last two decades. What I will attempt to establish in this chapter is how this notion of resistance is associated within a sense of well-being; that is, that *miyupimaatisiiu* is a form of cultural assertion and as such, represents opposition to perceived threats to cultural continuity.

Miyupimaatisiiu is inextricably linked to Cree beliefs and to distinctively Cree practices. Cree well-being, say the adults that I interviewed, is the Cree way of life, "being alive well" is being able to hunt, pursue traditional activities, live well in the bush, eat the right foods, keep warm, and is the ability to provide for oneself and others. Hence,

in the previous chapter I illustrated how the symbols of hunting, the organization of the spiritual world in relation to hunting activities, and the importance of the balance of those elements are all integral to "being alive well."

The way in which *miyupimaatisiiu* was described to me varied little among individuals. That is, while there was considerable variety in how it was elaborated upon in the interview sessions, there was a notable consistency in how the people whom I interviewed surmised a connection between "being alive well" and their relationship to the land - and concomitantly, the current threat to that connection. Also, when people discussed *miyupimaatisiiu* they often assumed a reference to the past. *Miyupimaatisiiu*, according to the Whapmagoostui Cree, evokes images of a past that is characterized by living in the bush unencumbered by whiteman's interferences, foods, or illnesses.

The idealization of the past contrasts with the harsh and demanding conditions that are also intrinsic to these same narratives of historical events as they were recounted in the interviews. There are many stories of survival through hardship, often involving deaths of entire families or members of families from accidents, disease or starvation. The enduring and abundant Cree ethnomedical knowledge reflects an intimate understanding of, and treatments for, hunger and starvation. As well, there is a high prevalence of infant and maternal childbirth related deaths in both the oral and

documented records (T.K. Young 1988a, b). Continuous hard work, either when travelling or at camp, defines the traditional Cree lifestyle as it was described to me. Life was hard - but felt to be beyond the influences of whiteman.[1]

In the interviews there was a continued reflection upon the invasion of the land, whereby present circumstances are viewed as merely a continuation of past encroachments and intrusions. More specifically, there was an often expressed conviction that one cannot "be alive well" because of the many interferences by whiteman. This separation of Cree and "other" delineates the distinctions that are inherent to the constructed concept of a particular Cree identity. In the following sections I describe first the concept of the "other" according to Cree classifications. I then return to the representation of Cree, or *Iyiyuu*. In Chapter One, I described the term *Iyiyuu* as a way of defining self from other, but in relation to other indigenous groups or, to a greater extent, in relation to other Eastern Cree. Here, I describe *Iyiyuu* as an expression of indigenous identity and specifically, in relation to the non-Native population. The chapter ends with a synthesis of nationalism and resistance and how this is played out through *miyupimaatisiiu*.

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[1]Of course, it must be noted that the hardships endured and overcome by the ingenuity of the people is one of the reason why these stories are recounted. To survive these conditions of adversity is indicative of an individual's - and a people's - resourcefulness and determination (C. Scott 1991, pers. comm.).

6.2 Cree and Other (I): The "Other"

A Cree notion of "other", one might speculate, is as old as the history of encounters between the Cree and various Native and non-Native peoples. With regard to non-Natives - or "whitemen" - in particular, exchanges ranged from those that are viewed by the Cree as having been exploitative to those that are viewed as having been based within a recognized indigenous system of reciprocity. As C. Scott notes,

> ...contrasting [Cree] evaluations of the Whiteman relate to somewhat distinct functions for the reproduction of Cree society. On the one hand, positive evaluations sometimes amount to putting a necessary relationship in an optimistic light -- viewing the Whiteman as irredeemably exploitative would only entail demoralization...and would ignore altruistic features of Whiteman ideology of potential benefit to Crees (1989a: 83).

In either case, the important factor is the development of a particular sense of other, and especially, that "other" as it is currently manifested in "whiteman".

The contemporary non-Native "other" is loosely described as *waamistikushiiu*[2] or "whiteman"; a ubiquitous, undefinable character whose distinguishing characteristic is as being the entity that has, over the years, challenged the very existence of the Cree people. People from outside of Whapmagoostui are *waamistikushiiu*. The term refers generally to any non-Native

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[2]*Waamistikushiiu* literally means "white man/person" and refers specifically to English speaking people. While there is another term for francophones, as well as other terms to indicate people of other nationalities, the word that is used most generally, and which can infer any outsider is *waamistikushiiu*.

and while not necessarily derogatory, neither is it a term of endearment.

The mythical Cree characters known as *pwaatich*• condense and symbolize the distinction between Cree and whiteman. *Pwaatich* were described to me as beings that threaten the safety of the Cree. *Pwaatich* can harm people directly by injuring or killing people, or indirectly, by stealing their food (see also Scott 1984: 33; 1989a). People in Whapmagoostui talk of the original *pwaatich* as the white men who used to travel "eight to a canoe," and are believed to have been the map-makers or prospectors who travelled in and around the Great Whale River region during the nineteenth century. In a more recent incarnation, *pwaatich* have been linked to the military personnel who were stationed in Great Whale in the 1950's (cf. C. Scott 1984). When asked to describe *pwaatich* to me, people described them as white men who lurk in the thicket, awaiting their prey - young children, and especially young girls. To this day, the children in Whapmagoostui are warned from an early age on - only half in jest - to beware of *pwaatich*.[3] Children are told, for example, to be quiet and especially to not speak English when walking in the bush for fear that will lure the *pwaatich* to them. Stories recounted to me also use *pwaatich* interchangeably with the word for whiteman, although *pwaatich*, in particular, always implies

[3]The moniker for *pwaatich* used to tease the children is *pwaachikii*• (or "bogeyman", as it was translated to me).

someone who should at the very least be avoided if not feared altogether.[4] *Pwaatich* is an imagined spectre, a consolidated image of evil lurking at the periphery of the Cree world, thereby demarcating the margins of that world. *Pwaatich* is at the same time the symbolic representation of whiteman's uncharitable and unkind behaviours toward the Cree (C. Scott 1989a: 91).

What is represented in *pwaatich* is realized in the many spheres of daily life in Whapmagoostui. That is, the illusory qualities of *pwaatich* are made real by the tangible effects of whiteman's activities. Whiteman, or *waamistikushiiu*, is thought to be an impediment to the normal course of Cree life and livelihood. While there is some ambivalence about whiteman's influences and products, for the most part they are perceived as negative. On the one hand, items such as rifles, skidoos, and outboard motors are seen as being of great value to the Cree since they are a tremendous advantage in northern hunting practices. Yet these same objects are simultaneously regarded as polluting and unnecessary impediments to Cree activities and hence, to being Cree. To not paddle a canoe or

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[4]C. Scott (1989a) clearly emphasizes however that the *pwaatich* myths tell only one aspect of the association between Cree and whitemen, since they were also each dependent on the other as trade partners:

> ...it may be observed that the ideology of reciprocity has been an important mechanism in securing the consent of Crees to Whiteman's authority -- but especially inasmuch as this ideology has been useful to Crees in securing a measure of material benefit and autonomy (C. Scott 1989a: 82).

walk any great distance invites laziness, say the elders with whom I spoke, and this is not how Cree people were meant to be.

Other obstacles include what is described as whiteman's invasion and subsequent exploitation of the land, whiteman's interference with traditional forms of education, and an onslaught of whiteman's diseases. Whiteman is seen as having brought a myriad of diseases to the Cree people, diseases which are clearly distinguished in Cree medical classifications as being of non-Native origin.[5]

As discussed in Chapter Five, another detrimental effect of whiteman's presence is the foods which line the shelves of the three local stores. These foods, when eaten in quantity, are believed to be harmful to young and old people alike.

This devaluation of "whiteman's food" is by no means specific to the Cree. Studies among Eastern Cree (Berkes and Farkas 1978) and more recently, Western Algonquian and Métis (Wein, Sabry and Evers 1989) indicate a preference by adults, and in the latter case younger people as well, for bush food and against store-bought foods.

Qualitative analyses of other indigenous groups reveal the same partiality for bush food and provide relevant cross-

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[5]*Nituhkuiin* translates to "medicine" in English but refers primarily to medicines available through the clinic as opposed to Cree remedies (*nuuhchimiiunituhkuiin*, translates literally to "bush medicine"). Whiteman's diseases can only, by and large, be cured by taking *nituhkuiin*, or "whiteman's medicine".

cultural comparisons. While I do not presume any sort of universality in indigenous attitudes to non-Native foods, these examples do provide interesting parallels to my findings. Garro reports, for example, that for the Anishnabe of southern Manitoba store bought food is considered inferior to bush foods. Garro cites a medical case history of a woman complaining of "weak blood" which included signs of fatigue and weakness. The woman characterized her episode as being a "whiteman's sickness" directly related to the fact that she had been without wild food in the recent past (Garro 1990: 434). In another example, Borré describes the reliance of North Baffin Island Inuit on seal meat and blood as the "rejuvenator of human blood." Without a regular diet of seal meat a person can become weak (Borré 1991: 54).

As the Cree and other indigenous examples illustrate, the repercussions of eating whiteman's foods are believed to be twofold. To consume whiteman's food invites the potential for imbuing the consumer with whiteman's (negative) characteristics; that is, the foods are symbolically polluting (Douglas 1966). As well, to be without indigenous foods for any length of time is potentially deleterious to the Cree individual.

Another example of what is perceived as part of whiteman's encroachment is the housing facilities. Despite certain conveniences, the new dwellings in Whapmagoostui are considered by some to be a negative thing:

> I feel much better when I live on the land and in a dwelling one lives in, than I feel when I am living

> inside a house. Even though I know that the house gives me comfort and shelter I feel much healthier and I have a sense of well being when I am on the land and living in an Indian dwelling. When I am outside, I feel a sense of well being and I feel that being out there helps me a great deal in feeling well and fine (JK, Interview #1).

Waamistikushiiu - whiteman - is an abstraction imbued primarily with many negative attributes. Although not thought of exclusively in negative terms, there is nevertheless a clear distinction made between *Iyiyuu* and *waamistikushiiu*. Historical patterns lend a certain credibility to the negative innuendo which permeates the term *waamistikushiiu* and I have presented examples where some of those sentiments are expressed. In the next section I discuss the contemporary conceptualization of *Iyiyuu*, the Cree person; and of *Iyiyuu* as a distinct entity in contrast to the *waamistikushiiu*.

6.3 Nationalism, the Past, and Cree Cultural Identity

6.3-i Cree and Other (II): *Iyiyuu*

The Eastern James Bay Cree nation is a new phenomenon and the product of modern history. It is only in the modern context that the eight Eastern Cree villages - connected by ancestral and consanguineal ties - have joined together as a bounded political unit. The Cree nation is a consequence of contemporary political organization. This Cree political entity has emerged over the last two decades as the result of the need for a stable, cohesive unit that can react to issues

and events surrounding the control and development of the natural resources of northern Québec (see Chapter Four).

The eight Eastern James Bay Cree communities, linked through the leadership of the GCCQ, publicly present a unified political voice as well as a particular form of Cree nationalism. Cree nationalism, and nationalism in general, can be understood "by aligning it...with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which - as well as against which - it came into being" (Anderson 1983: 19; Handler 1988). As Thomas suggests,

> self-representation never takes place in isolation,...it is frequently oppositional or reactive: the idea of a community cannot exist in the absence of some externality or difference, and identities and traditions are often not simply different from but constituted in opposition to others (1992: 213).

The distinction between Cree and non-Cree and an explicit Cree nationalism continue to unfold as the Eastern James Bay Cree maintain their opposition to extensive northern development.

This differentiation between Cree and non-Cree is also a product of contemporary bureaucratic and administrative realities. These administrative concerns ultimately sustain distinctions (whatever their origin) at the local level. Every time a purchase is made at the corner store in Great Whale, for example, differences between ethnic groups are underscored as one stands in line at the cash register. Because of tax exemptions, the Cree pay a significantly lower price for cigarettes than do either Inuit or non-Native

smokers. The figures detailing this discrepancy between Cree and non-Cree is written on a sign posted by the manager at the cash of the grocery store. Thus, while the Cree benefit financially from the exemptions, the sign nevertheless - and most likely inadvertently - distinguishes among the different groups living in Great Whale.[6]

Nationalism, according to Handler, "is an ideology concerned with boundedness, continuity, and the homogeneity encompassing diversity. It is an ideology in which social reality, conceived in terms of nationhood, is endowed with the reality of natural things" (1988: 6). Those natural things, the objects through which people create a sense of nationalism derive from meaning attached to one's heritage and are often enacted through "traditional" practices. (See next section for discussion of the paradox of traditions and the past.)

Present day "traditional" activities are enlivened through images of the past. These images are continuously recreated in the form of stories told to children and grandchildren or as information presented in the context of ethnographic interviews. These reflections confer a symbolic potency upon present day traditional activities, linking them to and evoking through them a perpetual connection to the past (C. Scott 1991, pers. comm.; Connerton 1989). Images of the past compellingly animate this sense of Cree nationalism.

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[6]The newly implemented goods and services tax (GST) serves the same purpose: the Cree are exempt from this tax (through a refund process), while all others are not.

Importantly, these same images are evoked in descriptions of *miyupimaatisiiu*.

Essential to the substantiation of the Cree people as a distinct cultural group is their grounding in the past. The essence of what it means to be Cree draws extensively from the oral historical record and (re-)interpretations of the past. As Shils vividly states:

> The relationship [between the past and the environment in which people act] is analogous to that of a person living in a valley; it is the valley that is the setting of his activity, not the peaks, although as a noumenal reality the valley could not be what it is without the mountains around it (Shils 1981: 196-7).

The past is reconstructed through a chronology of oral histories that describe the representative or ideal *Iyiyuu*. These histories suffuse the modern Cree person with a particular sense of identity such that the past is not just recorded in memory, but is at the same time part of how current identities are perceived. These images infuse the activities of daily living with profound meaning (Shils 1981: 196). Representations and ideas of the past

> have an apparent continuity not of themselves but because they are capable of forming a unity with the person...in mundane practice.... The past as it is represented becomes embodied and thereby achieves its force as part of the living present (Kapferer 1989: 189).

Yet, reifications of traditions should not be seen as cultural phenomena that either exist or persist on their own (Thomas 1992). That identity, a sense of "Cree-ness" and explicitly, Cree as opposed to non-Cree, is a result of two

interrelated phenomena. A long-standing encroachment upon the Cree by non-Natives augments the need to define what it means to be Cree in light of that intrusion whereby one "[uses] the other as a foil for internal reflection and [potentially] revolution..." (Thomas 1992: 228). This is especially true when the "other" is perceived as being a threat to the very continuity of a population. That sense of identity is continually recreated in response to external (as well as internal) constraints.

A study of Cree nationalism is not a unique contribution to anthropology. People the world over look to the past as a way of distinguishing themselves both culturally and politically and often times, this occurs in reaction to forms of ideological domination. What I will show however is that this sense of nationalism is integral to a particular - and explicitly Cree - sense of well-being. This in turn, I argue, is part of a process of resistance.

6.3-ii Traditions and Daily Practices

Hobsbawm's "invented tradition" allows me to introduce the concept of tradition and advance the general direction of my thesis. In the introductory chapter to The Invention of Tradition (1983), Hobsbawm says that "invented tradition"

> is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they

> normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historical past... [however] the peculiarity of invented traditions is that the continuity with [the past] is largely factitious (Hobsbawm 1983: 1).

Hobsbawm is referring specifically to the emergence of a national identity in nineteenth century Europe and the creation of that identity through the deliberate formation of national symbols. A key point made by Hobsbawm is that the past - either real or invented - is used in the transformation of practices into traditions.[7]

Hobsbawm differentiates between "genuine" and "invented" traditions. Genuine traditions are fixed and invariant acts or articles, since "[w]here the old ways are alive, traditions need be neither revived nor invented" (1983: 8). "Invented traditions", on the other hand, are "essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition" (Hobsbawm 1983: 4; see for example, Fienup-Riordan 1988). In "invented traditions" there are practices and objects that through their enactment together or separately conjure up the past, whether that past is remote or near, real or imagined.

Handler and Linnekin (1984) take issue with Hobsbawm's distinction of "genuine" and "invented" traditions. Their refutation of Hobsbawm provides an interesting and important

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[7]In The Invention of Tradition (1983) Hobsbawm and Ranger examine the role of power and political manipulation in the creation of national symbols. This, however, is tangential to the point that I raise in this section.

shift in the exploration of the relationship between traditions and the past. Handler and Linnekin argue that the very notion of something being traditional is implausible, since tradition, they say,

> is a model of the past and is inseparable from the interpretation of tradition in the present. Undeniably traditional action may refer to the past, but to "be about" or to refer to is a symbolic rather than natural relationship, and as such it is [an interpretive process which is] characterized by discontinuity as well as by continuity (1984: 276).

That is, tradition is not an unchanging set of ideas and practices that are handed down from one generation to the next but an "on-going interpretation of the past" (1984: 274; Philibert 1986).[8]

> ...[T]radition is not a bounded entity made up of bounded constituent parts, but a process of interpretation, attributing meaning in the present through making reference to the past (Handler and Linnekin 1984: 287).

Self-conscious efforts at revival by their very nature alter tradition, and their enactment takes place within the context of the routines of daily life, which is itself after all symbolically constructed (Handler and Linnekin 1984: 276). "To do something because it is traditional," say Handler and Linnekin, "is already to reinterpret, and hence to change it" (1984: 281).

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[8]This is also an important shift from earlier anthropological interpretations of tradition, which implied a static concept, an inheritance of customs, and used in contrast to modernity and change (see for example Sapir 1949).

J. Scott offers another means of describing tradition, and in his case, incorporates Bourdieu's concept of *doxa*.[9]

> It is useful...to distinguish two sorts of tradition: one that is taken for granted - what Bourdieu calls *doxa* - and is thus not perceived as tradition but is simply what is done and another that is the imaginative reconstruction of the past in the service of current interests (J. Scott 1985: 346).

In the former sense of the term, Scott views tradition as something that is enacted without forethought, that which is expected; in the latter meaning, tradition is the calling up of a past as it is required in the present. The essence of Scott's second use of the term is perhaps close to Hobsbawm's concept of "invented tradition" yet moves the use of the past and of traditions into a different political realm. That is, Scott acknowledges a notion of tradition that derives from the past, even if it is an "imaginative" reinterpretation of that past. The use of traditions in this case however is in the reorganization of the present and in the potential for creating a new power structure and a new status quo.

Both Handler & Linnekin's and J. Scott's analyses of tradition bring to the fore the political relevance of traditional practices. Traditional practices in the contemporary context are often a reflection of, or more importantly, a reaction to contemporary events. For example, Handler and

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[9]Bourdieu (1977) introduced the word *doxa* to specify what he means by the realm of presupposed knowledge - that which is always inferred and rarely stated - of what one learns at a young age and what then becomes the conventional ways tc act (see also Chapter Three).

Linnekin point to the ancient symbolic meaning that the island of Kahoolawe holds for Hawaiians. That this sacred Hawaiian ground has also been a site of bombing practice since World War II, however, gives that particular land added meaning in its present day context. Hence, the importance and meaning of the land "derives from the modern context" while at the same time making reference to an idealized past (Handler and Linnekin 1984: 283). Similarly, Keesing notes that

> [t]he ancestral ways of life being evoked rhetorically may bear little resemblance to those documented historically, recorded ethnographically, and reconstructed archaeologically - yet their symbolic power and political force are undeniable. Perhaps it does not matter whether the past being recreated and invoked are mythical or "real," in the sense of representing closely what actual people did in actual times and places. Political symbols radically condense and simplify "reality," and are to some extent devoid of content: that is how and why they work. Perhaps it matters only whether such political ideologies are used for just causes, whether they are instruments of liberation or of oppression (Keesing 1989: 19).

Traditions need not be based in a particular historical reality to make them any less powerful. These traditional practices are evoked as part of the self-consciousness of actors and are the result of particular circumstances. Keesing adds another dimension to the discussion of the creation and recreation of traditions. He notes that what is being played out is not only in response to Western bias but that the issue of cultural identity arises out of Western

ideologies.[10] That is, cultural "facts" are appropriated and utilized in order to situate one group in distinction to another such that:

> ...[C]ontemporary Third World (and Fourth World) representations of their own cultures have been shaped by colonial domination and the perception of Western culture through a direct reactive process, a dialectic in which elements of indigenous culture are selected and valorized (at the level of both ideology and practice) as *counters to* or *commentaries on* the intrusive and dominant colonial culture (Keesing 1989: 23; original emphasis).

Keesing goes on to say that it is not one's cultural identity that is being challenged, but that one's cultural identity takes on particular importance in light of colonial domination (Keesing 1989: 26). Thus, traditions authenticate one's sense of being a part of a group, as being distinct from others and especially from those who represent authority and control. One's sense of identity may derive not just from being different from "other" but explicitly because of who that other is (cf. Thomas 1992).

The emergence of a post-colonial nationalism and the elicitation of the past in that context is not unique to either the South Pacific or to North America. This movement transcends the oceans as well as the cultural and historical differences separating indigenous populations around the

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[10]Reporters from around the world have been coming to Great Whale in the last two years in order to investigate the condition of the people through the process of opposition to the hydro-electric project. Worthy of future study is the image that the Cree present to these reporters, what is ultimately reported in the press and then how that is perceived back in Whapmagoostui.

world. Nationalism is often the consequence of the spurning of colonial influence and is hence the proper focus of discussion of the changing political reality of Fourth World peoples internationally.

In nationalism everywhere there is an extreme cultural self-consciousness (Kapferer 1989: 193). Nationalism, says Kapferer, "does not exploit collective senses of identity or build upon shared meanings so much as create and generate them" (1989: 191). These sets of meanings are built on and generated from a link to a (mythical) past and the creation of that past through modern enactments of traditions.

According to Kapferer (1988), one must look to both the nationalist traditions and to the practices of everyday life in order to find and ultimately understand the potency of nationalism (Kapferer 1988: 20). I illustrate his point with the following examples taken from my fieldwork experience.

In many Whapmagoostui households the radio is tuned to the local Cree station and is left on for a good part of the day. The station, which broadcasts entirely in the Cree language, serves as an important communication medium. For one hour in the morning and again in the late afternoon news and information is fed live from CBC Northern Services in Montréal to all the eastern Cree communities. The rest of the day and evening the radio transmits local programs, playing primarily the very popular country and western music interspersed with community news, events, speeches, and public

service announcements (such as changes in the quality of the drinking water), as well as birthday and anniversary greetings. The radio is regularly used as a message centre, lets the one taxi in town know where it is needed and also runs bingo games two nights per week.

The radio broadcast is also, I suggest, a powerful medium for sustaining in the public's consciousness those issues that reflect problems believed to stem from whiteman's interference. That is, an announcement reminding people to limit their consumption of certain species of fish or the organ meats of large game because of possible mercury or cadmium contamination has at least two effects. It serves a direct purpose by advising people about potential hazards. At the same time however this announcement supports the notion of the impediments the people now face due to effects of *waamistikushiiu*. Hence people are reminded through a popular medium about the threats to their land and to themselves. The radio is a vehicle for sustaining in everyday life the essence of the political agenda that has become a daily issue for the Cree people.

Another example of the potency of nationalism in daily practices is found at Whapmagoostui's Cree school. At Badabin Eeyou school, Cree culture is disseminated through regularly scheduled classroom activities. Classes in Cree culture and Cree language are part of the basic curriculum. Cree language classes offer the only opportunity for the children to learn

the syllabarium. Cree "culture" classes - divided according to gender - provide the boys and girls with some of the basic skills in producing Cree material culture. Boys are taught how to construct such things as wooden sleds and snow shovels; girls learn how to sew gun sacks and ammunition bags (to be used by the men) and how to cook bannock and other foods. Classes are held in two separate rooms: boys' culture classes are held in a room that looks like a woodshop; girls' classes are held in the "Girl's Cree Culture" room, a home economics setting. The classes, taught entirely in the Cree language by local men and women, reinforce a sense of Cree culture as one that is based primarily in material goods such as snowshoes, sleds or snow shovels, and in the process sustain the strict gender categories of women's and men's work in traditional Cree society. The result is an (at best, imperfect) attempt to instill a sense of Cree culture in the classroom setting.[11]

Thus within the school, Cree culture and tradition are presented as something tangible - and the articles that are created year after year by the students are used as part of the Cree culture curriculum. Of course, the limitations of a classroom setting, or for that matter the instructors'

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[11]Despite this attempt at introducing Cree "culture" into the school environment there has been a systematic deprecation of fundamental Cree activities such as the twice annual goose hunting season. Whereas at one time classes were suspended for these periods, this is no longer seen as a priority. (The result of this new ruling is that teachers must be in class, but most of the student body is absent. Few parents afterall will allow their children to remain in the village when the rest of the family is off at goose camp.)

choices, lend themselves to a peculiar artificiality. Yet simultaneously, the contemporary enactments of traditions in a structured school setting by these children represent and reinforce a particular sense of being Cree.

6.4 The Issue of Resistance

6.4-i The Limits of *Miyupimaatisiiu* and the Assertion of Political Well-Being

That the Cree people describe the experience of well-being in relation to the past becomes especially significant in light of the discussion of Cree nationalism and forms of resistance. The images evoked through *miyupimaatisiiu* do not just hark back to an idealized past; subsumed within those images is an articulation of contemporary concerns and in particular, concerns about the land.

In their discussions of the ideals of Cree well-being, informants present a vision of a world where interferences by whiteman are minimal. This world constitutes a past when there were fewer outside influences upon the adults and children. Life may have been harder during that time, fewer may have actually survived, but the hardships endured were within the scope of those who had lived off of the land the year round. Any misfortune was primarily the result of cyclic fluctuations in the availability of animals or the consequence of the arduous lifestyle of those living in the bush year-round. For example, recounted to me were the prophecies of a long departed Cree man who predicted a cycle of abundance and

scarcity for the Whapmagoostui people. Individuals today recount how this appears to be true; that the sequence of plenty after paucity is what they are observing. They take as evidence the scarcity of wildlife in the recent past in comparison to the present-day return of the caribou herds to the Great Whale River region as an indication of this forecasting. Whatever the reason, they contend, the deceased elder's predictions have held true. This prediction in turn reinforces the common beliefs held about hardships and survival in the past.

The ideals of *miyupimaatisiiu* are linked to what might otherwise be termed a healthy lifestyle for the Cree - living in the bush and partaking in all that entails (see Chapter Five). Village life - associated with such things as structured schooling for the children, alcohol consumption and its concomitant disruptive behaviours - is viewed as negative and potentially disruptive, and carries with it none of the quiescence associated with bush living.

> There is one thing I am worried about that could put the *Iyiyuu* of today in a bad situation. The thing I am leery of is what has happened to other native communities when the *waamistikushiiu* comes into or comes within the surrounding area of the native community. Always without exception, the *waamistikushiiu* brings certain habits and one example is drinking. I can not say that I reject everything that the *waamistikushiiu* brings but what it does to the *Iyiyuu*. That is what makes me fear that these kinds of things will make trouble or make the *Iyiyuu* go the wrong way. (GM, Interview #2)

> When I am outside, I feel a sense of well being and I feel that being out there helps me a great deal

> in feeling well and fine. It also helps me to feel fine when I am doing the work that one does when one is in camp. The other thing that I have found out is that it helps one to be on the land because it is always clean and pure out on the land. Wherever the person is, it is always clean and pure. That is what helps the person for his well being (JK, Interview #1).

The majority of the community of Whapmagoostui can only live in the bush at certain times of the year. During the bi-annual goose hunts the village is virtually emptied as families head out to their hunting camps. As well, many families have winter and summer weekend camping sites within less than an hour's travel from the village. These times spent away from the village make bush life more memorable and serve to highlight the differences between village and bush living. Members of the community are not opting to return on a full-time basis to bush living. While this was an ideal to which some participants aspired, many feel that a combination of village and camp life is part of their overall contemporary situation. They nevertheless view the problems of well-being as stemming from living in the village and in houses (see also Tanner 1979).

Bush camp, goose hunting, and bush related activities are also more than "what Cree do"; these activities reaffirm a distinction between Cree and "other." It is perhaps for this reason that I witnessed the following expression of hostility one morning at spring goose camp in 1989. All morning Hydro-Québec helicopters had been flying past the camp and hence, directly through and over the expanse of the Canada goose

flyway. There was bitterness and anger in the voices of the women and men as they shook their fists into the sky and decried the scouting activities of the surveyors. The helicopters were not just scaring away the geese, they were directly threatening a social space that is not meant to include whiteman.

Issues facing the community as a whole add to the dilemmas confronting the Whapmagoostui Cree. These issues include changes arising from the industry surrounding any potential hydro-electric projects, inexplicable "ills" associated with town life,[12] and the deviant behaviours of the youth such as vandalism and drug use. The latter problems are viewed as being particularly difficult by the elders, who profess an inability to deal with these newly arising issues. After all, the elders explained to me, teaching is passed along from one generation to the next, and yet they have no advice to offer with respect to the complex problems associated with drinking and drug abuse. The adults see the future generations as not only different from themselves but different because they will not have the opportunities that these elders had; primarily the advantage of learning from and living off the land.

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[12]During the initial weeks of my field research there was a tragic and incomprehensible death of a young man. This 30 year old suffered a fatal heart attack one evening. It was the first time that people could recall a young person dying from something other than an accident and it unnerved the entire community.

While people talk about the ideals of "being alive well" there are some contradictions in how people act compared to what they perceive to be "ideal" conditions of well-being. Canned foods such as sausages or other meats, for example, have become something of a necessary evil; food that is extremely handy to transport and eat when going to the bush or when a quick lunch or dinner is called for in the village. People, of course, purchase and eat many of the foods that can be found at the grocery stores in Great Whale. Nevertheless these foods are always regarded as whiteman's food and there is always a distinction made between those foods and *iyi-miichim*. One notable example of this distinction stands out from my field notes. At a birthday party for one of his children, my host turned to his daughter and asked, "do you want spaghetti or *iyimiichim*?" Condensed in this very casual question is the fundamental dilemma which underlies the challenges of *miyupimaatisiiu* today.

There is also a dilemma in relation to food that stems from an interpretation of the teachings of Christianity. The ardent faith in Christianity which is upheld in Whapmagoostui presents a contradiction of values if one does not consume whitemans' foods. On the surface, this should seem illogical since the religious doctrine was an imposition from whiteman to begin with. Over the generations however and with the melding of Christian doctrine and the Cree belief system, Christianity has taken hold with strong conviction in this

community (see Chapter Four). One of the fundamental teachings of Christianity is that God has put everything on the earth for the good of mankind. How is it possible then, elders ask, that some foods could be bad for you? Surely if it is available, it is also worthy of consumption. This food could not possibly be all bad since it is, according to this reasoning, at the very least, one of God's creations. By contrast, there is the prevailing conviction that store bought food is not Cree food and therefore not good for the old people and likely damaging the very constitution of the young.[13]

Direct threats to *miyupimaatisiiu* in relation to food also include the lessons of "proper" nutrition being taught to the adults at the medical clinic. People, of course, have the right to freely choose between one food and another, but the translation of "proper" nutrition across the cultural boundaries lends itself to contentious issues of power and authority. By intimating that there is a better way to eat implies that what the Cree have been doing has been wrong and what the clinical staff teaches - imbued with the authority of biomedical knowledge - is right. The power of this nutritional message leads to confusion and uncertainty. How, for example, the women want to know, can eating fat be bad for

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[13]An adjunct to this dilemma is that some individuals also express incredulity that the grocery store's nutritional pamphlets and posters would prevail upon them to not purchase certain items. As one person summarized it: "Why have them for sale to begin with if they are bad for you?"

people. Fat is such a highly valued foodstuff that to consider it harmful is implausible. In much the same way, to have excess fat on one's body is a sign of well-being, not a harbinger of future ailment. This conflict is born out in a study that was conducted recently in which one hundred percent of the clinical staff felt that obesity was a significant health problem for the James Bay Cree communities whereas only twenty-nine percent of the community representatives agreed with this position (Lavallée 1987).

The dilemmas surrounding the consumption of food, participating in bush activities versus living in the village, and the host of negative effects perceived to derive from the village constitute the basis for a particular sense of what *miyupimaatisiiu* means to the adults of Whapmagoostui. To not be "alive well", in other words, is not to be sick, but rather, to be in circumstances other than those envisioned as ideal. *Miyupimaatisiiu* is taken as the standard against which present day life is gauged and is thus a statement of social and political well-being, not simply one of physical well-being. Through all of this, the people whom I interviewed assert a particular configuration of "being alive well" - wherein the past is influencing present ideals and held as a model for current conceptualizations of *miyupimaatisiiu*.

In this section I have focused on issues that either directly or indirectly reflect the concerns surrounding the limits to achieving or maintaining *miyupimaatisiiu* given

contemporary conditions. Coupled with these concerns are those arising from the impending hydro-electric project and threats to the Cree land base.

A heightened awareness of threats to the land (and hence to the people) imparts a heightened awareness of the land. Participants made distinct reference to the land when discussing *miyupimaatisiiu* which, as I contend in Chapter Five, is an integral component in the representations of *miyupimaatisiiu*. I defer to Keesing once more since his commentary on the Pacific Islanders is equally pertinent to the Cree with regard to the significance of the land as symbol in the present-day context:

> The symbolic themes Pacific Islanders use to assert their unity and identity have also been shaped by struggles against domination, as is most clearly manifest in the pervasive elevation of "land" as a political symbol.... An ideology of attachment to and spiritual significance of the land could achieve such prominence only in a historical context of invasion and colonization (Keesing 1989: 29).

> When massively confronted with an engulfing or technologically dominating force...one is led to take an objectified, externalized view of one's way of life that would hardly be possible if one were simply *living* it. Land, and spiritual connection to it, *could not* have, other than in a context of invasion and displacement and alienation, the ideological significance it acquires in such a context (Keesing 1989: 33; original emphasis).

A profound sense of the land, while intrinsic to the Cree belief system, takes on added meaning in the context of a very real struggle to affirm control of that land. Exemplified in

the personal and social configurations of *miyupimaatisiiu* is this assertion of political well-being.

6.4-ii Sites of Resistance

Resistance is the non-acquiescent response of groups to conditions of subordination. That response can take the shape of small or local types of opposition, shifts and departures from imposed norms, or large scale forms of dissension. Resistance involves informally organized practices (Abu-Lughod 1990: 41; J. Scott 1985, 1990) and, says Comaroff,

> is typically neither an all or nothing phenomenon nor an act in and of itself; it is frequently part and parcel of practices of subjective and collective reconstruction (Comaroff 1985a: 195).

In contemporary analyses, we are advised to look to those beliefs and practices that are apparently removed from the flow of customary political authority to see how people are articulating any of the various forms of resistance. One objective of the social sciences, Bourdieu reminds us, is to "look...through the so-called normal arenas of political power and control since those which reproduce the political order without any deliberate intervention tacitly exclude any other forms or voices of potential power or access to that control" (Bourdieu 1977: 189; see also Abu-Lughod 1990; Comaroff 1985a).

Forms of dissent are found in many spheres of contemporary life, not just those that are associated with traditional avenues of resistance. We cannot, according to Comaroff,

"confine our assessment of historical practice to the utilitarian operations of tangible domination or explicit opposition" (1985a: 263). That is, we must look beyond conventional forms of power and resistance, to ideas and practices that are apparently removed from the flow of customary political authority to see how people are articulating resistance to the given situation. It is from this standpoint that I develop my argument of *miyupimaatisiiu* as a form of resistance.

The roots of resistance among the Cree of Whapmagoostui originate in an era of post-colonial nationalism and challenges to Cree national identity. Visions of the past, evoked even through descriptions of *miyupimaatisiiu*, are part of the process of this discourse of resistance. This should be expected, since "...the imaginative capacity of subordinate groups to reverse and/or negate dominant ideologies is so widespread - if not universal - that it might be considered part and parcel of their standard cultural and religious equipment..." (J. Scott 1985: 331). As Comaroff and Comaroff assert:

> [e]arly on in the colonizing process, wherever it occurs, the assault on local societies and cultures is the subject of neither "consciousness" nor "unconsciousness" on the part of the victim, but of recognition - recognition that occurs with varying degrees of inchoateness and clarity. Out of that recognition, and the creative tensions to which it may lead, there typically arise forms of *experimental practice* that are at once techniques of empowerment and signs of collective representation (original emphasis; 1991: 31).

Jean Comaroff (1985a,b) elucidates this point in earlier writings in which she analyzes ritual activities of the southern African Tshidi Zionists. Members of this church, by reinterpreting rites of the Protestant orthodoxy, enact forms of ritualized resistance. In the case of the Tshidi Zionists, signs of oppression are powerfully redefined as signs of resistance.

The Cree example differs in that although the signs of resistance are found within an historical consciousness, that resistance is articulated from within the sphere of daily Cree life. In the following sections I elucidate this form of resistance with specific reference to *miyupimaatisiiu*.

6.4-iii Challenging the Medicalization of Health

In order to pursue my discussion of how well-being and resistance are interrelated, I return once again to the discussion of "health" begun in Chapter Three. In that chapter I described Foucault's (1975, 1980a,b) regulatory system of health and how health is part of the process of normalization within populations. Through Foucault I addressed the "medicalization of health" and the relationship of health to power relations.

Health, according to Foucault, is not related to power through a process of commodification but as a population-based regulative phenomenon. The connection of health and power is

effected through hygienic policing, or a "repressive ideology of health" (Das 1990: 42). It is through the processes of social constraints enacted at the (micro) level of individual practices, that power is achieved (Foucault 1980b). Power centres on the individual and specifically, the individual body. Power is not enacted from the top down through the directives of imperious leaders. Rather, individuals who, in going about the routines of daily living, reproduce through their bodies the habits and rules of the historical configurations of power-relations (Foucault 1975, 1979, 1980a,b; Bourdieu 1977; Armstrong 1985). Within those practices, routines and interactions of daily living are the conventions of a "healthy" lifestyle and in that, the normalization of circumscribed standards of health.

Das (1990), like Comaroff (1985a,b) and B. Turner (1985), argues that Foucault's views are far too restrictive in that they narrowly define the individual as something akin to an involuntary player shaped according to the bidding of the state. Is health always related to restrictive forms of power, Das asks, or could it equally be related to the power of resistance? With optimism, she suggests that

> [t]he promotion of an idea of health which is consonant with freedom would require that the practices of the state are formed in accordance with the desires of the population rather than the population being shaped to correspond to the fantasy body of the modern states (Das 1990: 43).

Das' perspective on health counters Foucault's regulative and restrictive conceptualization of health. Specifically,

Das suggests that health should be understood from within the realm of the phenomenological experience of the well-being of the individual. Participation in social processes is learned in how we attribute variable significance to different parts of the body and in interpreting those corporeal states using the symbols of that society (Das 1990: 31). Individual health is effected in personal practices and individual experience. Health, suggests Das, is part of one's constitution of oneself, such that the corporeality of the self is the foundation of an individual's experience of well-being (1990: 27). In this way, Das challenges regulative health with an individual-centred, experiential conception of health.

Although Das (1990) presents a challenging case for health as personal experience in the face of ideological repression, she nevertheless fails to impart to her readers a sense of just what she means by health in everyday practice. Her explanations of health are continually clouded by references to health as overcoming disease or infirmity - health as a process of recovery, rather than simply health as process. Das reflects upon the 1984 tragedy in Bhopal, India when tons of methyl isocyanate escaped into the air, killing or maiming thousands of people. She also uses the experiences of geriatric medicine, pain, and anorexia nervosa to illustrate her point.

Das thus tends to use what she clearly defines as <u>disease</u> categories in order to establish her position on health.

Despite her recurrent use of disease categories, Das' thesis is nonetheless pertinent to the development of my argument. In Das' words, the body is "the point at which individual experience and collective ideologies intersect" (Das 1990: 43; see also Comaroff 1985a; Lock and Scheper-Hughes 1990). Das contends that the individual is both defined by society and the one who resists that definition. As such, health must be defined from within a liberating paradigm and not one that, by an implicit adherence to processes of normalization, perpetuates a model by which power can be exercised. The problem, according to Das, is that these (latter) "...ideologies of health may rob one of one's personhood and one's place in society" (Das 1990: 45).

Das sees the body as the place of conflict between a repressive ideology of health and the experiences of personhood and one's place in society. There is a constant struggle between conflicting ideologies which are played out at the level of the body and in various interpretations of health (Das 1990: 43). Through a phenomenological treatise, Das tries to resolve her conflict with Foucault's bleak and restrictive exploration of the embodiment of state power.[14]

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[14]Contrary to Das, Crawford suggests that the very processes that are restrictive may also be viewed as forms of release. Health as discipline and self-denial is as liberating for Crawford as it is restraining for Das. According to Crawford, individualistic conceptions of health, while replete with hegemonic meanings, can at the same time be appropriated in attempts to counter perceived obstacles to health (1985: 96-7).

Das ultimately sees health as a form of active resistance, or at the very least, the means by which a person, through his or her body, is involved in the dynamic process of balancing the power of the state with that of the individual. Similarly, Lock and Scheper-Hughes point to the body as the site of social truths and the locus of personal and social resistance (1990: 71).[15]

Das provides some ground breaking arguments for the distancing of health from illness. In so doing she also shifts the emphasis away from the regulatory and normalizing models of health and situates health within the realm of the sentient individual and at the same time within the domain of resistance. In Chapter Three I demonstrated that health is never a neutral topic; that it is imbued with political significance and more specifically, that health can be defined within a particular framework. In this section, I have illustrated an alternative to that circumscribed definition and proffer instead the idea of health as resistance.

6.4-iv *Miyupimaatisiiu* and Resistance

Just as a redefined health can be explored as an avenue of resistance so can *miyupimaatisiiu*. I continue to underscore the fundamental difference between ("the repressive ideology of") health and *miyupimaatisiiu* when health is used

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[15]There are also examples of sickness as a form of resistance, for example Lewis (1971).

to describe simply a biological phenomenon and represents a series of population norms. But where health is viewed as an avenue to resistance, as in Das' case, the gulf between health and *miyupimaatisiiu* diminishes. Das' focus on the body returns the discussion of health to restrictive (or liberating) practices.

In a similar way *miyupimaatisiiu*, while ultimately having meaning at a level of the physiological body, is made relevant at the level of the symbolic and political bodies (Lock and Scheper-Hughes 1990). The personal and social representations of *miyupimaatisiiu* alluded to earlier provide the foundation for the political configuration of "being alive well."

The consistent theme of Cree ways being equivalent to Cree well-being and whiteman's ways equalling a threat to that well-being is a means of articulating resistance. The discourse of *miyupimaatisiiu* is one of resistance in that it is part of the process of affirming a particular national identity.

For the Cree, resistance is not just the activities of the political leaders as they continue to oppose the endeavours of the provincial government, nor is it part of a conflict model involving the reformation of an underclass, nor the minutiae of seemingly negligible agitation as a means of expressing discontent (see, for example, J. Scott 1985). Rather, resistance as I describe for the Cree of Whapmagoostui is closer in meaning to the conceptions and practices that

consolidate a particular collective identity. In this way, "being alive well" exemplifies statements of dissension to unacceptable conditions in contemporary Cree life. This pronouncement of opposition is being affirmed within a local context and is distinctive in that people are articulating their dissatisfaction in a form of indigenous cultural assertion.

This does not preclude my original articulation of well-being as a Cree concept derived from distinctively Cree practices. "Being alive well" is a focal point around which the adult Cree can organize and articulate their distinct status in opposition to the perceived encroachment upon themselves and their land. Hence "being alive well" speaks to ideals that can only be enacted through practices that are immediately understood as "being Cree." They are an assertion - and perhaps, reinterpretation - of Cree cultural practices in the face of perceived threats to their continuity.

My analysis of *miyupimaatisiiu* discloses not just cultural priorities but situates these priorities as they are defined in the face of the current political situation. By reformulating health as not simply the converse of illness I have been able to present an alternative, culturally defined concept of well-being. "Being alive well" incorporates references to an idealized past and concentrates issues of identity around a particular set of cultural beliefs and practices. As such, "being alive well", or *miyupimaatisiiu*, encompasses a

variety of ways of defining and delimiting the constraints felt by the Cree today. For example, eating Cree food is not just an internally consistent cultural practice but is something which affects the very nature of the Cree individual. The conceptualization and practical implications of *miyupimaatisiiu* - such as the underlying symbolic value in the consumption of Cree food - in its very act imparts political process upon everyday practice.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS

The land has more wealth than anything
you could compensate us for.
Grand Chief Matthew Coon-Come 1989

...we anthropologists are still explorers
who tell ourselves stories...
Comaroff and Comaroff 1991

I began this dissertation with an examination of the various ways of defining health. From within the context of the medical anthropological literature, I took the concept of health to be problematic in that relatively little work has been done on the implicit meaning(s) contained within the term health. I proceeded to argue that the concept of health is by and large viewed from within the dominant biomedical perspective in that there exists a fundamental dualism between health and illness. Using cross-cultural examples, I challenged this general definition and explored an expanded notion of health.

I then introduced the Cree concept of *miyupimaatisiiu*, or

"being alive well", and explained that for the Cree there is no term that translates back into English as health. For the Cree "being alive well" is part of the realm of "being Cree" and while an absence of infirmity is important, it is only part of the complex meaning of the term and not its defining characteristic.[1] What I then propose is that *miyupimaatisiiu* transcends the individual and is a reflection of a current political reality. I describe *miyupimaatisiiu* for the adult Cree of Whapmagoostui as a strategy of cultural assertion, and hence, as resistance in the face of the potential eradication of Eastern Cree land and history.

It should not be lost in the deconstruction process however that there is an inherent importance in the production of this particular form of knowledge. "[C]reated identities are not somehow contrived and insincere," says Thomas (1992: 213); the process may be imaginative yet is dynamic and very real. At the outset of this dissertation I wrote about the reflexive nature of anthropological research. An inherent component of this reflexivity is not only the subjective nature of the anthropologist's accountings, but the subjectivity of the informants' narratives. What has been reproduced in this text may then be akin to what Levi-Strauss (1970) refers to as "the informant's model", that idealized version of society. I can only assume, for example, that the

[1]In future research I would like to explore how health is variably defined within biomedical discourses, since it follows that interpretations will vary with context.

unfolding of a political consciousness influences how people express themselves. The announcement of the revival of the dormant hydro electric project - officially announced during the period of my field work in 1989 - certainly influenced how people thought about and responded to my questions.

If there were no "new world" discoverers, no fur traders, no missionaries, no government assistance, and no provincial resource management projects would the Cree people describe *miyupimaatisiiu* in the same way today? Did people always hark back to the "good old days" - days when the water was cleaner and the animals better to eat? Will the Cree children of today reminisce about the 1990's as the "good old days" when they are their parents' age? These questions are, for obvious reasons, impossible to answer. But perhaps one can speculate that with each perceived threat and each metre of encroachment, the sense of self-identity coalesces into a more coherent form such that a "traditional" notion of culture, an "invented tradition" however it is understood and recreated increasingly becomes an important means of self-perception and hence, self-presentation. As Comaroff and Comaroff explain,

> ...historical consciousness is not confined to one expressive mode, that it must be created and conveyed, with great subtlety and no less "truth", in a variety of genres (1991: 35).

If my goal has been to disconnect the Cree notion of *miyupimaatisiiu* from the term "health", then does *miyupimaatisiiu* have anything to do with health and if not, what comparative significance does this study have? The comparative

significance lies in my deconstructing the implicit biomedical interpretation of health on the one hand and politicizing it on the other. Health and *miyupimaatisiiu* are equally politically charged. How they differ is in how the concepts are realized in their cultural and political contexts. By exploring these concepts I have attempted to contribute to a medical anthropology that looks outside the explicit domain of medicine or health and into the realm of the social significance of these processes. This is not to say that the discipline of medical anthropology has distanced itself from the political significance of either health or illness (see Chapters One and Three). Indeed, the opposite is true and the medical anthropology literature is replete with a complex range of views on the connection between medicine, health, and politics. Rather than escaping into the phenomenological experiences of illness (DiGiacomo 1992; Das 1990) however, medical anthropologists must move outward to the socially and politically relevant spheres through which concepts such as illness or health attain their diverse yet explicit meanings.

By presenting health from within the latter context, one might then say that I invite debate about the relationship between politics and health. As I have shown in this dissertation however, health <u>is</u> politics - and to conclude otherwise perpetuates a biomedical interpretation of health. And, like health, *miyupimaatisiiu* is not only a fitting topic within the

realm of political discourses but a phenomenon of political resistance.

APPENDIX A(1): CONSENT FORM (ENGLISH)

This anthropology research project is about Cree ways and beliefs about health. I am here in your community for one year to learn about the people and the life in Whapmagoostui and will conduct many interviews like this one with you. These interviews are an important part of the doctoral thesis (book) that I am writing at McGill University, Montreal.

The benefits of this research include the recording of many stories told by the people as well as helping health care workers to better understand the Cree people.

As a participant you will receive $12.00 for each hour of interview and have the right to withdraw at any time. You also have the right to confidentiality - please advise me of any information that you would not want repeated to others. There are no personal risks in participating in this project.

I understand what my participation includes.

Sign here:_____

ProjectDirector:_____
Naomi Adelson

Date:_____

APPENDIX A(2): CONSENT FORM (CREE)

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ᐸᒪ ᐧᐃᐧᐃᑕᒧᐧᐃᒪ ᐃᑕᐢᒪᒪᐣᒪ ᑭᐧ ᒪᐃᐧᒥᐊᐃᒃᐣ ᒪᒥᒥᒪᐣᓂᐅᑕᒪ
ᐊᐣᒥᒥ ᐧᐃᐧᐃᐣᒪ ᐃᐦᐃᐧᒪ ᓂᐣᐧᐃᐣ ᐊᐱᒥᐊᐃᒃᒪᒪ
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