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Art Therapy as a Ritualized Space

Among the Quebec Cree

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ABSTRACT

Since 1989, I have worked as an art therapist with approximately 1000 Cree individuals aged from 3 to 90 years old mostly in Northern Quebec Cree communities. In this thesis, I developed a comprehensive analysis of the nature of my Cree patients' experiences in art therapy and showed how art therapy is a means of revealing some contradictory and ambiguous tendancies in the construction of the modern Cree Self. "Cree" is no longer a universally-valid indication of a core set of values that help situate individuals in social space, yet they feel that Cree is necessary in all definitions of the Self.

The focus is on the people of the James Bay region of Northern Quebec. This thesis is not an overview of the Cree people as such but about individual experience with trauma, how it is perceived, defined and narrated within the art therapy context, and how culture becomes an issue for my Cree patients in their healing process. Some traumas are possibly a result of their experience of political domination and cultural repression by Euro-Canadians. In this thesis I represented an important dimension of Cree reality that engages Cree definitions of the Self.

I began this research with the idea of exploring reasons for my Cree patients' response to art therapy. It gradually evolved into an analysis of how art therapy becomes a ritualized space where mytho-poetic thought is evoked and where my patients and I transcend the immediate communication and emotional barriers between Cree and Euro-Canadian individuals. Often times with my Cree patients, art therapy becomes a sacred ritual in that it helps re-establish personal harmony through individuation. Through my analysis I developed a

better understanding of the metonymic links my patients often make between art therapy and their experience in the bush, both constituting a place to re-affirm their notions of Self. This thesis has taught me not only to consider the notions of Self presented to me by my Cree patients and informants as a legitimate object of anthropological study, but also to observe my own relationships and feelings as significant data.

In Chapter 1, the introduction, I developed the hypotheses thoroughly. I situated my thesis vis à vis past and current anthropological research and showed how this thesis makes a significant contribution to anthropology, specifically in the area of anthropology of the Self. Chapter 2 outlined the ethnographic, cultural and historical contexts of the Quebec Cree. I feel it necessary to situate them ethnographically and historically because definitions of Cree culture are an issue for many of my patients in terms of the problems they face in identifying themselves vis à vis a culture at a collective and a personal level. This chapter includes ethnoprofiles, which are personal observations that highlight my role as clinician-ethnographer. In Chapter 3, I explored Cree styles of communication as demonstrated in both our clinical and ethnographic engagement. I addressed the patterns of hierarchy and indirection in Cree conversation and emotional discourse, and the Cree perception of human relationship as recounted in their narratives of Self and their relationship with me. Barriers exist not because the Cree are "different" but because of the colonial ideology present in Euro-Canadian society.

Chapter 4 explored specific elements of Cree mytho-poetic thought as I have been introduced to it, such as narrative discourse, metonymic and metaphoric associations as exemplified in animal-

doctor relationships. I discussed the synaesthetic elements of Cree reality as illustrated in one of my case studies. In Chapter 5, I developed my argument of art therapy as a form of ritual activity. I showed how the physical space of art therapy (i.e. the structure and its limitations) becomes a place of meaning and what appears to be a metaphoric condensation of place and Self. I described the metonymic associations made by many of my Cree patients between their bush experience and art therapy ritual. Chapter 6 is the conclusion of the thesis, presenting a synthesis of the previously outlined arguments, in hopes to elucidate the dynamics of how art therapy becomes an interstice for the expression of Cree Self, and a 'sacred' ritual space in a 'secular' world.

Keywords:
Art therapy
Quebec Cree
Self
Mytho-poetic thought
Ritual space

Résumé

Depuis 1989, j'ai travaillé en tant qu'art thérapeute avec plus ou moins mille individus d'origine Crie âgés de trois à 90 ans. Ces personnes vivent en majorité dans les communautés Cries du nord du Québec. À travers cette thèse, j'ai tenté de développer une analyse compréhensive, qui témoigne de la manière dont l'art est un mécanisme approprié, pour refléter les tendances ambiguës et contradictoires dans la formation de l'être Cri contemporain. Le terme « Cri » ne sert plus à désigner un ensemble de valeurs universelles dites culturelles qui aident l'individu à se situer dans un monde social, mais est devenu, pour ces personnes, un mot politisé pour toute définition du« Soi ». J'ai porté une attention particulière aux communautés de la région de la Baie James dans le nord du Québec.

Cette thèse n'est pas un survol ethnographique des peuples Cris, mais porte surtout sur l'expérience individuelle du traumatisme psychologique, à savoir, comment il est perçu, vécu et comment il s'exprime dans un contexte de thérapie par l'art. De plus, j'ai eu l'opportunité d'explorer la façon la culture a joué un rôle primordial dans le processus de guérison des Cris. Certains traumatismes sont possiblement le résultat d'une domination et d'une répression culturelles de la part de la population Euro-Canadienne. Dans cette thèse, j'ai présenté une dimension importante de la réalité des Cris, qui clarifie certaines définitions du Cri de « Soi ».

J'ai entrepris cette recherche dans le but d'explorer les causes des réponses positives que j'obtenais de mes patients Cris face à la thérapie par l'art. Cette idée a évolué et est devenue une analyse du : Comment la thérapie par l'art devenait un espace rituel, où la pensée mytho-poétique se déroulait, où moi ainsi que mes patients Cris,

parvenions à une communication qui contournait les barrières
émotives et culturelles, lesquelles sont fréquemment pertinentes dans
la psychothérapie dite classique. Souvent, la thérapie par l'art
conduisait à un rituel sacré aidant à rétablir une harmonie personnelle
à travers l'individualisation.

J'ai tenté d'identifier des liens métonymiques que mes patients
établissaient entre la thérapie par l'art et l'expérience en forêt; les
deux étant des lieux où le « Soi » se redéfinit. De cette recherche, j'ai
appris à considérer les idées du « Soi » exprimées par mes patients et
mes informateurs Cris, comme un témoignage légitime et un sujet
d'une analyse anthropologique. Cela m'a aussi permis de comprendre
et de réaliser mes propres émotions ainsi que mes propres liens. Il est
important de noter que j'ai été protagoniste active dans la construction
de cet espace rituel, et que mon identité d'étrangère sympathique a
été placée dans un environnement mythologique Cri, ce qui leur a
permis d'élaborer et de concrétiser leurs idées du « Soi ».

Dans le premier chapitre, j'ai développé mes hypothèses
d'études, situant ma thèse dans la recherche anthropologique du
passé et du présent, en remarquant comment elle contribuera à
l'anthropologie en général, mais plus particulièrement à l'anthropologie
du "Soi."

Le deuxième chapitre aborde les contextes ethnographiques,
culturels ainsi qu'historiques des Cris du Québec. Ce chapitre
comprend des « ethnoprofiles » qui sont des observations personnelles
reflétant mon rôle de clinicienne ethnographe.

Dans le troisième chapitre, j'ai examiné les différents types de
communication chez les Cris tels que démontrés par la pratique
clinique et ethnographique. J'ai abordé la hiérarchie ainsi que les sous
textes exprimés dans le dialogue Cri, de plus j'ai noté les perceptions

des relations humaines telles que racontées dans leurs récits sur le
« Soi » et leurs rapports avec moi, leur thérapeute.

Dans le quatrième chapitre, je me suis concentrée sur certaines
dimensions de la pensée mytho-poétique chez les Cris, tels que le
dialogue narratif, les métaphores et les associations métonymiques
exprimés dans les descriptions du rapport entre l'individu et son esprit
animal protecteur.

Le cinquième chapitre est consacré au développement de ma
propre théorie de la thérapie par l'art comme activité rituelle avec mes
patients Cris. J'ai examiné les liens métonymiques que mes patients
établissaient entre le milieu thérapeutique et l'expérience en forêt.

En conclusion, le sixième chapitre représente la synthèse des
arguments soulignés dans la thèse, dans le but de réaffirmer la façon
dont la thérapie par l'art pour les Cris devient un endroit rituel sacré
dans un monde que les Cris définissent comme profane.

Mots Clés :

Art-thérapie

Cris du Québec

Le Soi

La pensée mytho-poétique

L'activité rituelle

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Art Therapy as a Ritualized Space

Among the Quebec Cree

Chapter 1 – Introduction

My entrance into the Cree world began in 1989 with my first

Cree patient, a nine-year-old boy whom I began seeing in individual

art therapy while working as an intern in a residential treatment center

in Montreal. Art therapy is a human service profession that uses art

media, the creative art process, and patient responses to his/her

created products as reflections of the patient's development, abilities,

concerns, and conflicts. Art therapy is founded on the belief that the

creative process involved in the making of art is healing and life-

enhancing (AATA, 2001, p.10). It is practiced in mental health,

rehabilitation, medical, educational, and forensic institutions. Art

therapists are professionals trained in both art and psychotherapy.

Psychotherapy is the foundation of art therapy but unlike

psychotherapy, the primary language of art therapy is nonverbal,

which leads to verbal in the form of narratives related to the images

created.

Luke (a pseudonym, like all names used here), who was hearing impaired, was brought to Montreal from his Northern Quebec Cree community because there was no treatment center or a group home facility in the region. Cree community workers, teachers and foster families had difficulty dealing with Luke's impulsive and aggressive behaviours. The agency's clinical assessment workers had initially evaluated Luke and noted his hyperactive tendencies and "inappropriate" social skills, such as his inability to respect the privacy of others. Luke was labeled a "block of ice," and "not at the feeling level." In other words, Luke was judged to be unable to express his emotions verbally. As a result, he was considered as having an inability to relate to his emotions. In the clinical assessment report, this child was portrayed as a typical "emotionally stoic Indian." These conclusions were made by non-Native counsellors and psychiatrists with no apparent knowledge of Cree styles of communication and interaction patterns or of Cree definitions of the Self. The report was written in light of Euro-Canadian psychological norms and ignored Cree views of the behaviors being assessed. Moreover, Luke's identity as a Cree, that is, in terms of how he identified himself in relation to his cultural group of reference, was dismissed.

When I began my internship at the residential treatment unit in 1989, the workers immediately decided to place Luke first on my list of art therapy "candidates." The workers told me they did not have much hope for this "problematic case" because of his hyperactivity, his hearing impairment and the fact that he was "the only Indian child on the unit." The worker who brought Luke to the art therapy room for the first time sarcastically wished me good luck. After our first session, the counsellors and educators on the unit were in disbelief when I told them that Luke had responded well to art therapy, showing his willingness and readiness to express himself through art. In my report, I had concluded that he was definitely a good art therapy candidate. Soon after, the workers on the unit began referring to the art therapy room as "the place where magic happens once the door closes."

Luke's initial art therapy assessment revealed that he was able to express his thoughts and feelings, especially at the non-verbal level. In his first drawing, he immediately drew a star, and then he added a heart, a portrait of me, a small boat, and a Batman symbol (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Luke's First Picture

Luke then described most of these symbols, which were repeated

themes throughout his therapeutic process. He interacted readily with

me and expressed his fear of the unknown, especially in terms of

relating to his new surroundings (Figure 2). Luke also mentioned how

much he missed home, which was 750 miles away. When he painted

Figure 2, Luke was anxious about leaving to go back home to visit his

family. He expressed his fear in leaving and he asked if I would still be there when he returned to the unit. He wrote my name in the center of the heart, underlined it five times and then added the sun behind the heart with short yellow lines. The dark heart covering the bright sun, as Luke had interpreted it, symbolized the tension and anxiety he felt within as well as the good things or sense of wholeness that were not yet known to Luke.

Figure 2 – Luke's Heart Painting
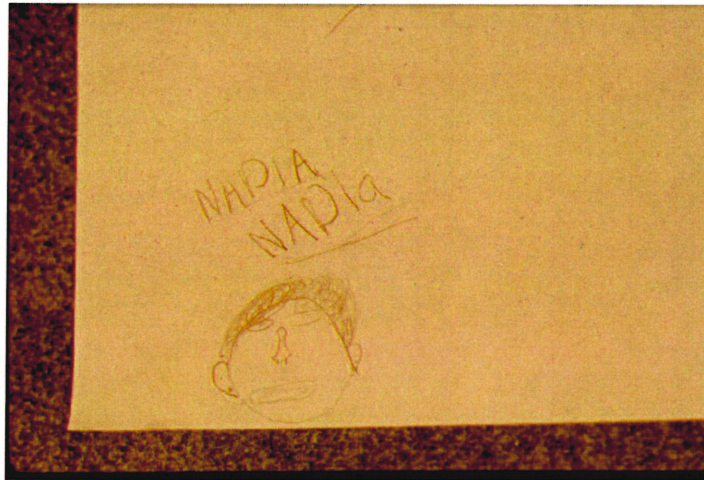
Figure 3 – Luke's Portrait of Me (In First Picture)

In our first sessions, Luke's reaction towards me was partly due to the fact that he thought I was Cree because, physically, he took me for a Cree person (i.e. my dark complexion and almond-shaped eyes). In our first session, he derived much pride from his portrait of me, which he had included in his first drawing (Figure 3).

This boy engaged in two years of individual art therapy and, as a result, he developed a very significant relationship with me (cf. Ferrara, 1991, 1998b). His successful treatment had a considerable ripple effect, leading to more referrals from various Cree communities in Northern Quebec, as well as from Inuit, Ojibwa, Abenaki, and Mohawk peoples.

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Luke's case illustrates two significant problems that I have faced during the past eleven years of clinical work. These issues relate to the Western approach to communication, which values verbal expression. The other problem, closely related to the first, is the preconceived notion that emotions must be expressed verbally in order to "properly" define an autonomous Self. These Western-constructed biases create barriers when working with non-Western peoples such as First Nation peoples. What I realized early on in my work was that I was attempting to bridge ideologically-constructed communication and emotional barriers within the context of art therapy.[1] Art therapy is not free from the biases of the Western culture, which gave birth to the approach. However, what makes it distinct from classical psychotherapy is that art therapy is initially silent because patients are encouraged to create a drawing, painting or sculpture and, thus, to express himself/herself on a nonverbal level. Patients are then encouraged to talk about their iconic production; very often, they develop narratives about the imagery. It is possible that silence has a different meaning to the Cree, which I will further explore in this thesis.

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[1] It is important to note that psychotherapy or verbal therapy may be effective with some Cree people and not others, as is also the case with Euro-Canadians. I found that verbal therapy as a primary form of treatment was ineffective for most of my Cree patients.

My experience in clinical art psychotherapy (Ferrara, 1990,

1991, 1994, 1996, 1998a, 1998b) has shown that visual and sculptural

media help my Cree patients[2] transcend these emotional and political

barriers in speech because it recontextualizes emotivity and it is

initially silent. In the art therapy context, the art acts as a catalyst for

non-verbal emotional expression, which later facilitates verbal

exchanges.[3] Although the language used, whether English, Cree or

French, also influences the actual verbal expression of emotion, I

believe that for these Cree patients, the primary means for the

expression of emotions is art, to which a narrative function is later

attributed. In addition, in comparing my Euro-Canadian patients to my

Cree patients, a distinct difference is that the Cree patients rarely

hesitate when asked to draw in a clinical setting.[4] Most of my Cree

patients approach the art materials offered (eg. pastels, paint, and

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[2] Throughout this thesis I will be using the term "patient" rather than "client" in reference to the individuals who come to see me in the clinical context. It is a matter of preference and it is the term that the Cree people I work with use. Thus far, I have seen approximately 1000 Cree patients, mostly for short-term therapy and several for long-term therapy (i.e. for a period of 1 to 2 years). In terms of statistics, 60% of my patients in Northern Quebec region (i.e. from all nine Cree communities) are male and 40% are female.

[3] Cf. Ferrara (1998a, 1996, 1992).

[4] In relation to art among Cree people, a relevant study with a different focus is Fulford's (1994) structural analysis of drawings of a group of Cree children from Northeastern Ontario. Fulford illustrates how art is used as a natural and silent form of communication. The author claims that the children's drawings have a narrative function, containing elements such as characters, a setting, plot and theme, and they serve as a form of self-expression (p. 40).

clay) with confidence and demonstrate their readiness and willingness

to engage in creating art even though they receive no formal training

in childhood. They do not have difficulty seeing how the art making

process can be used as a tool in the resolution of conflicting feelings or

issues, leading to the restoration of health. Many of my Euro-

Canadian patients initially do have difficulty understanding the link

between art and therapy because art-making is seen as a special

activity for talented individuals only (or perhaps seen as childish), and

I often hear defensive reactions such as, "I can only draw stick

figures," or "I am not an artist." For many of my Euro-Canadian

patients, art is marginalized in terms of self-expression, whereas it is

not for my Cree patients. According to one of my Cree informants[5],

art-making is not perceived as an autonomous activity but as part of

their way of life. One Cree woman, Lyne, explains: "It is important for

us to see things visually. Even when we tell stories we say them with

words that are like pictures. We are not writers, we are more visual.

Art helps us see things and that's how we retain them."

It may be impossible for me to convey a definition of art for my

Cree patients, simply because in the Cree language there is no word

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[5] Throughout this thesis, I will be making a distinction between my patients and the individuals who I have met and worked with outside the clinical setting, whom I will refer to as my informants. Both my patients and informants have provided me with valuable insight on Cree values and beliefs.

for "art". What I can judge, however, is the result: these individuals believe they feel better after engaging in art therapy. It may be that other factors are at work, such as the personality of the therapist or the environmental stimuli in which art therapy operates. It may be that the Cree who engage in art therapy volunteer because they want to be healed and so are healed, regardless of the therapy.[6] My Cree patients seem quite responsive to art therapy, as in the case of Luke outlined above. In this thesis, I hope to explore why this is so, as well as analyze the elements of the art therapy space in which my Cree patients and myself continue to negotiate and engage. When I travel to Northern Quebec Cree communities, I am usually provided with office space by local social services or the community hospital. I try to use the same office space whenever I return to the communities in order to maintain a sense of continuity. Sometimes interpreters are present during my sessions, usually with very young children (3-4 years old) and elders who only speak their native tongue.

Many Cree people in the various communities in the Quebec north view art therapy as valuable and consistent with Cree forms of intervention. Art therapy is seen as a form of treatment that sets out

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[6] There is a large body of research that has identified "healable" personality types in terms of Western-style therapy (cf. Ferrara, 1998a).

to heal the spirit, mind and body in order to restore balance in one's self-identity. According to my Cree informants, the healing process does not necessarily refer to mental health alone. It entails an approach in which one is healed when one experiences a sense of harmony and balance within the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual realms. In addition, the individual is usually not isolated in his/her healing experience; close family members become directly involved in restoring the individual's health. Thus, my therapeutic stance in art therapy appears amenable to Cree discourses on healing, especially in terms of restoring balance in one's self-identity. This thesis is not about Cree people as such but about individual experience with trauma, how it is perceived, defined and narrated within the art therapy context, and how culture becomes an issue for my Cree patients in their healing process. Some traumas are possibly a result of their experience of political domination and cultural repression by Euro-Canadians.

I am aware that in the following thesis I am examining, representing and in a sense defending Cree cultural conceptions that were given to me through images, words and gestures by my individual patients and informants, which may not necessarily portray Cree society as a whole. I am thus representing a dimension of Cree

reality, which, however, seems very important because it engages Cree definitions of the Self, especially politically-constructed definitions that reflect tensions and ambiguities in the Cree world that are very likely the result of colonial domination and repression. The focus will be on how the individual conceives himself/herself and how he/she articulates his/her world in terms of his/her social and cultural creations (cf. Briggs, 1998; Crapanzano, 1980). Like Briggs (1998) and her experience of Inuit psychology and culture, I too have learned (and continue to learn) how Cree culture and psychology "actively reconstitute themselves and each other in the tangle of experience" (p. 2). This thesis is inscribed within the growing movement in anthropology that involves moving away from perceiving people as passive vehicles of their culture and social structures towards approaching them as self-conscious and active individuals (cf. Rosaldo, 1984; Geertz, 1984; Marcus & Fischer, 1986; Sökefeld, 1999; Cohen, 1994). I am also operating within a post-modern sensibility by including myself in the thesis yet the thesis is not essentially about me.

This thesis will help deconstruct the ideological dichotomy between Western notions of 'Self' and non-Western senses of 'Self' (cf. Spiro, 1993) in this case the Cree Self, and perhaps show that there may be more similarity than difference between the two, and that the

notion of self may not be that peculiar in the Cree context (cf. Spiro, 1993; Geertz, 1984; Whittaker, 1992). Although there is not much published material on the Cree Self (cf. Ingold, 1999; Brightman, 1993; Scollon & Scollon, 1981), I will review studies on the Inuit Self (cf. Briggs, 1998; Stairs, 1992; Nuttall, 1992), where I have found similarities to the Cree Self, especially in terms of how nature and the collectivity play significant roles in the construction of the "Native" Self. Moreover, these studies also show how emphasis is placed on the individual's sense of autonomy, which concords with the Cree Self.

Early on in my work, I came to notice a distinct difference in Cree notions of Self from the definitions found in ethno-psychology (cf. Sökefeld, 1999; Sampson, 1988; Rosaldo, 1984; Shweder & Bourne, 1982; Heelas & Lock, 1981) and transcultural psychiatry (cf. Kirmayer, 1989), which tend to focus on non-Western notions of Self as more collective-oriented and thus, less individualistic. What I hope to explore through this thesis is how the Cree Self appears to be more of a composite-type Self consisting of the individual and autonomous Self, the Self in nature, and the Self in the collectivity (these will be defined in more detail below). Rather than viewing Cree notions of Self as constituting an indigenous form of individualism (cf. Sampson, 1988), I

will illustrate how the Cree are highly individuated even though individualism is not a socially approved value.

I am also aware that my ethnographic description may distort Cree definitions and understandings by forcing them into my own ways of conceptualizing the world (cf. McGee & Warms, 2000, p. 517). The reality is that meaning can never be accurately translated and that there are no simple elements of meaning (Rabinow & Sullivan, 1979, p.6), nor is "accuracy" the watchword it once was in the discipline. I plan to give voice to a variety of viewpoints of my Cree patients and informants in hopes to avoid essentializing a notion of "Creeness" and painting a monolithic image of the Cree people I work with. My goal in this thesis is to provide the reader with the subjective meanings of these individuals' experiences. Through their narratives and artwork, I will show how the Cree individuals I work with articulate, formulate and represent expressions of their notions of self (cf. Bruner, 1986, p. 9), and in turn, develop an analysis of the images created by my patients and the verbal and nonverbal dialogue that emerges between them and me. My ethnography will also highlight my own experiences and feelings in order to elucidate the relationship between what I know as a clinician-ethnographer and how I came to know it. I am aware that the construction of the Cree notion of Self is in part

constituted by my self-knowledge (cf. Burridge, 1979; Fabian, 1983;

Strathern, 1987), and, it is therefore important to provide the reader

with my own experiences and feelings as well.[7] I hope to provide an

interplay of voices and actions, mine and those of the Cree individuals

I have met and worked with, that results when distinct life experiences

intersect, and self-reflection and healing occur, which are usually

sustained after the therapy ends.

1.1– Hypotheses

In the following thesis, I will develop a comprehensive analysis

of the nature of my Cree patients' experiences in art therapy and show

how art therapy is a means of revealing some contradictory and

ambiguous tendencies in the construction of the modern Cree Self. I

will explore the Cree notion of the composite Self, which consists of

the individual autonomous Self, the Self in nature, and the Self in the

collectivity. The Cree Self is reciprocally embedded in the individual, in

nature (i.e. the bush) and in the collective (i.e. the community), and I

will show that the source of tension and instability usually lies in

integrating this latter dimension to the others. Art therapy facilitates

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[7] Rabinow and Sullivan (1979) also direct their attention to this important point that "our capacity to understand is rooted in our own self-definitions, hence in what we are. What we are is a self-interpreting and self-defining animal" (p. 6). As anthropologists, we offer interpretations of interpretations.

the process of creating a new Self by deconstructing the old,

redefining the components, and building a new multi-vocal Self.

Initially I will explore the Quebec Cree people ethnographically

and historically in order to contextualize the setting in which I work.

Moreover, I feel it necessary to situate them ethnographically and

historically because definitions of Cree culture – Euro-Canadian,

anthropological, and, now, Cree - are an issue for many of my patients

in terms of the problems they face in identifying themselves vis à vis a

culture at a collective and personal level; this obviously suggests that

a) individuals may have fragile and fragmented Selves; and b) it may

not be clear to them what "Cree culture" is, since this is clearly a

political construct engaged in situations of culture contact (i.e. Natives

vs. Euro-Canadians) that may have become internalized in all local and

apparently non-political processes of defining the Self. I will present

my hypothesis in relation to what brings these individuals to art

therapy. Essentially, my patients appear to experience inner conflicts

related to wanting to be something they are not anymore, nor may

have ever been. Because the Cree collectivity - their identity as a

group with shared traits, very much in the same sense of Anderson's

(1991) "imagined communities"[8] - is constantly changing due to

Canadian colonialism[9], pressures and stresses are felt at an individual

level as the elements with which individuals construct "Cree-ness"

change in unforeseen ways. In other words, individuals struggle to

come to grips with a definition of a collective – "Cree" – which was not

part of tradition and which is politicized in such a way that it has little

resonance on the local and individual level. Cree indigenous or

traditional definitions of what it means to be human are no longer fully

functional nor relevant in the contemporary definition of "Cree."

Although pre-contact conditions are the subject of endless

speculation, I am certain that 350 years of contact with Europeans has

substantially changed ideas of the Self and of the collective. In the

past, Cree people hunted and gathered with their kin, friends and

partners, and they engaged in their rituals, such as hunting rituals and

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[8] As coined by Anderson (1991), "imagined community" refers to the implicit notion of a set of people all working toward a common goal. In the Cree case, it would refer to the Cree people's attempts to create a Cree collective cultural identity, relying on essentialised and reconstructed notions of history (Anderson, 1991; Boyarin, 1994).

[9] Colonialism refers to the Amerindian experience of being forced to accept a centralized authority to which they would all be subordinated. Amerindians have been forced to remold themselves in the Euro-Canadian cultural pattern, leading to the destruction of their indigenous systems of thought and ways of life (Dickason, 1997, p. 13). Amerindian people were faced with cultural and existential crises with effects still being felt after 300 years. Canadian colonial power structure continues to this day with the nation's unremitting desire to exploit indigenous lands (cf. Alfred, 1999, p.98).

the use of sweat lodges, for healing purposes. [10] They were a semi-nomadic or nomadic, small-scale society with no obvious social classes and no highly specialized division of labor; for instance, hunting tended to be done by men although it could be done by women, just as men sometimes worked (tanned) animal skins and helped raise children. There was no apparent need for institutionalization of values. Division of labor is not related to the Cree notion of hierarchy. Thus, there are no gender-specific roles in Cree society, however they become so through the agency of power that is usually gained in animal-doctor relationships, which tend to occur among men.

Cree people have been continuously bombarded with images of Self and of the group controlled by Euro-Canadians through formal schooling, which is now obligatory. This opens up new options, yet many of these are hard to operationalise because many Cree lack the cultural capital (cf. Bourdieu, 1977) to be fully functional in both Euro-Canadian and "Cree" contexts, and this may be due to the fact that "Cree" is no longer a universally-valid indication of a core set of values that help situate individuals in social space with permeable and

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[10] Sweat lodges, *mitutisaan* involve the use of hot coal placed at the center of a wigwam (or teepee) and people sit around and express their concerns, problems and/or emotions in hopes to gain insight. The sweat lodge was used in the past to cleanse the individual both physically and symbolically in preparation for hunting (Tanner, 1979). I have noticed that in the past ten years or so sweat lodges are being used more and more by aboriginal people for healing purposes.

moveable frontiers. It is also clearly due to the fact that obligatory

schooling, required by the Canadian government, is usually inadequate

to the task of furnishing Cree people with the sufficient cultural tools

to facilitate their integration in Euro-Canadian society.[11] The

mechanisms of integration to formally organize themselves as a

collectivity have been challenged and eroded by Euro-Canadian

policies. In addition, many Cree feel they cannot use indigenous

definitions of Self against Euro-Canadian definitions because Euro-

Canadians cannot understand them, which suggests their dilemma:

"Cree" cannot be and is not a marker of an autonomous people (and

of autonomous individuals), yet they feel it necessary in all definitions

of the Self.[12]

Cree people react differently to pressures and stresses, such as

the growing presence of Euro-Canadians and their commercial

exploitation of northern resources (e.g. the James Bay Hydro-Electric

Project that flooded much of Cree land and created hunting

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[11] There are many reasons for this that are beyond the scope of this thesis, but two may be mentioned: firstly, educational policies are implicitly racist and secondly, they are ideologically insensitive to Cree concerns.

[12] While indigenous definitions have pre-contact origins, "indigenous" is a term that better accommodates over three centuries of influence from relations with Euorpeans. It is not "pre-contact" definitions of the Self that are salient in Cree imaginations, and that the Cree feel unable to use, but rather indigenous definitions nearer to hand historically, as embodied in and communicated by parents and grandparents.

provisions).[13] According to one of my Cree informants, his people used to be more in charge of their lives than they are now; for instance, hunting, which is a fundamental activity for the Cree, is negotiated in a Euro-Canadian legal framework that registers traplines and hunting territories and imposes laws and restrictions on hunting. Those that are deeply affected by these pressures are usually seeking an imagined collectivity or an imaginary whole (cf. Fernandez, 1986, p. 162) and they get caught in the paradox of two political identities, neither of which appears to be sufficient or complex enough to enable autonomous Selves. In other words, the category of "Cree" becomes a semiotically-charged category of Self with ambiguous political overtones. "Cree" is not only referent to "a" culture but is also a political category that refers to several "cultures." A colonial mentality and all this entails has become part of their construction of Self (cf. Alfred, 1999). Many of my Cree patients' personal issues reflect this concrete problem.

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[13] The James Bay Hydro-Electric Project I, established in 1971 by the Quebec government flooded large parts of Cree hunting territories, and the resulting James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement led to political, social, and economic changes in all nine Cree communities. It created land categories defining the hunting, fishing and trapping rights of the Cree people and the government's right to replace these lands with others if necessary (Adelson, 2000). For a comprehensive analysis of the James Bay Hydro Project see Feit (1985), Salisbury (1986) and Richardson (1991).

While contextualizing my patients, I will attempt to analyze their interaction patterns and communication styles. I will show how we, my patients and I, transcend the communication and emotional barriers often present between Cree and Euro-Canadian individuals, especially in the context of mental health processes, and especially between individuals who invoke highly-politicised definitions of "Cree" and "Canadian." I will show how I explicitly use my presence and reactions to my presence (as described above with Luke) in a controlled environment to trace the contours of Cree-ness, and help the individual create a new sense of Self, the Cree way.

A fundamental premise in psychiatry and psychotherapy is that perceptions that are verbalized can lead to an enhancement of mental health (Ferrara, 1998a; Pennebaker, 1995). Among the Cree people I work with, verbal disclosure is not perceived as a primary process that leads to health. There is currently a preoccupation with healing in many Native communities in Canada, and art therapy also fulfills a discursive niche in this "Aboriginal healing movement" in that it addresses the needs of Aboriginal children, adolescents and adults who are experiencing "mental health" problems. This phenomenon is part of a regime of Euro-Canadian social control. For instance, many of my patients described how difficult it was for them to seek immediate

help or treatment because they had to follow certain procedures within the network of social services, such as engage in clinical evaluations, judicial procedures, and often times be placed on a waiting list for any form of help due to lack of qualified staff to complete such procedures. Euro-Canadian social services and mental health agencies in Native communities exert a high degree of control over people's lives. Moreover, the Euro-Canadian concept of mental health is viewed by many of my informants as a narrowly focused term that is not always relevant to Cree individuals, who may feel that the nature of their problem is not only mental but, in their terms, also spiritual and emotional. These are viewed as interdependent dimensions of one's health.

I am usually hired as a consultant for these agencies and therefore, I am regarded as a figure with authority and expertise. The power relations in the therapeutic relationship between my "Aboriginal" patient and myself, the "White" therapist, is also imbued with socio-historical dimensions related to colonialism. Often with both my patients and myself, this remains an unquestioned reality. Nonetheless, once a sense of trust is established, our relationship is able to transcend this ideological barrier. In this thesis, I will address

how this reality affects the emergent discursive practice in art therapy with my Cree patients.[14]

I have remained faithful to my Western training by providing and structuring a space defined by the rules of formation of art therapy. I then negotiate the space with my patients, deciding upon when to meet and how long, what art materials to use, what to create and what to talk about. This space is then given meaning by the patients. My Cree patients undertake to change the initially semantically void art therapy space into an articulated space. This space becomes a place of healing characterized by constancy, such as the same therapist, same materials, same room, and the on-going engagement to confront one another. Continuity metonymically evokes the past and facilitates the use of "traditional" elements in the negotiated identities that appear in the ritual (clinical) space. Because of the formulaic aspect of this therapy, our engagement becomes a space where these repetitive elements, limited in number, contribute to the ritualization of the art therapy experience and of its signs.

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[14] Discursive practice refers to the communication that emerges in the situational context of therapy that is often stimulated by the artwork created by the patient.

By ritualization, I mean that art therapy becomes a way of acting that is distinct from other activities in the individual's life. Bell's (1992) theory on ritualization is relevant here in that she defines ritualization as a strategic way of acting that creates and privileges a qualitative distinction between the 'sacred' and the 'profane' (p.74). The art therapy space is a space with structure and consistency, which becomes highly significant and therefore a sacred ritual (cf. Rappaport, 1999, p.210). According to Bell (1992, p. 92), rituals are intensive forms of communication by virtue of their repetition and sacredness. The art therapy ritual is not simply a matter of routine; it is granted a privileged distinction because it occurs in a delineated and structured space to which access is restricted, and its function is to secure more effective communication (cf. Bell, 1992; Rappaport, 1999).

Strategies for differentiating itself from other ways of acting are intrinsic to ritualization (Bell, 1992). Art therapy can be seen as a 'way of acting' that makes the following distinctions: a) a special time for the occurrence of the art therapy session with the art therapy 'specialist,' b) the internal orchestration of the art-making process (i.e. the patient may either choose the type of art activity, or suggestions are made by the therapist, or specific art materials are provided for particular art therapy assessments), c) the specific codes of

communication or what Rappaport (1999, p. 151) defines as ritualized gestures and words are used (i.e. verbal and gestural combinations such as the therapist placing the artwork at some distance for the patient to describe his/her experience and piece). The ritual acts and objects in the art therapy space have special communicational qualities (cf. Rappaport, 1999).

There is a double ritualization that occurs within art therapy, which, on the one hand, involves my role in recreating the art therapy space that I was trained to create. I am structuring the situation by offering the patient a limited number of art materials and a limited amount of time in the art therapy milieu. The space becomes defined by such limitations and the structure defines what people can do or think. It becomes a space with a purpose, a symbolic space grounded in experience (cf. Tuan, 1993, p. 175).

The other dimension of the ritualization process is the patient's role and how they attach meaning to the structured space and the on-going engagement. My patients often attach meaning to the constancy of the elements of the therapeutic milieu, such as the creative art process, the artwork produced because they are self-reflections, and to our therapeutic relationship. The interactive dialogue or "dialogic exchange" (Schafer, 1981) between the patient and myself, which

becomes both a medium and product of this interaction, is instrumental in attributing meaning to the ritual space.[15] This dialogic exchange inspires the patient to engage in a self-reflexive dialogic through the narratives expressed by the patient, which promote a dialogue with one's Self. The interaction between the therapist and the patient as narrator serves to construct the meaning of the personal narratives and the meaning attached to the therapeutic milieu. The rest of this chapter will explore this second ritual dimension.

I am also employing a ritualistic form of therapeutic rhetoric to empower the patient, which is an element in most psychotherapeutic approaches (Frank & Frank, 1991). This ritualized therapeutic rhetoric involves listening to my patients with interest, acknowledging what they say, and validating what they create; by validating I mean showing interest in what is created, making comments and asking questions about the product and their art-making experience. By validating their creations within the limited ritual space, I help enrich the semiotic power of the interpretative signs they attribute to their work. My therapeutic interventions rely on the patient's narratives of self. Both my faith and the patient's faith in the intervention I provide

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[15]Cf. Pred (1990, p.10) on how people reproduce and transform social and spatial structures.

along with patient's trust in me play a significant role in the

ritualization of art therapy, which I believe leads to my Cree patients'

positive response.

In my interpretation of art therapy as a ritual space, I find some

parallels with Victor Turner's (1969) work on "The Ritual Process," and

Arnold van Gennep's (1909) theory of ritual as a separate social space.

In the following thesis, I will apply pertinent elements of V. Turner and

van Gennep's theoretical frameworks to my Cree patients' art therapy

experiences as an initial means of approaching the meaningful

experiences that seem to take place in the ritual space. The rules of

art therapy frame the ritual process but the ritual process transcends

its frame, especially when the patient uses the art therapy ritual to

transform, that is, to engage in some form of transition or resolution.

Within the art therapy space, there are what V. Turner (1969, 1974)

refers to as symbolic operators or vehicles (i.e. the artwork, narratives

that stem from the artwork, the relationship between patient and

therapist) that can effect change on the individual occupying the

space. During the therapeutic process, the patient engages in a self-

discovery process that usually leads to self-transformation and the

resolution of conflicting feelings and issues. This period resembles a

threshold, which can be defined as a liminal transition, a domain of

action or thought (V. Turner, 1974, p.52).[16] This ritual space creates a

condition of atemporality and a loss of their problematic social Self,

which according to my Cree patients is akin to what they experience in

the bush.

In the bush, the affirmation of an existential bond between Self

and place is striking (Brody, 2000, p. 320). Many of my Cree

informants and patients often express: "I am just there and I forget

everything else," in relation to both their art therapy and bush

experiences. This statement may be considered as simple in its

outward form yet it describes a cultural domain (i.e. bush life) that is

extremely rich in mythological meaning for the Cree Self and therefore

an extremely fertile source of metonyms with which new Selves can be

constructed – "healed." This is exactly how V. Turner (1974, p.196)

describes the liminal stage. There is a withdrawal from normal modes

of social action during the designated art therapy time and place,

which allows a reconfiguration of signs that possibly concords with

mythological meanings of a "healed" autonomous Self. I believe that

art therapy creates a condition that is outside or on the peripheries of

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[16] In his book, "The Rites of Passage," van Gennep, an ethnographer, demonstrates that many types of rituals have three distinguishable stages of varying duration among various cultures: 1) separation (preliminal), 2) margin or limen (liminal), 3) reaggregation (postliminal). Van Gennep argued that rituals are often performed when individuals experience a change of state or status as defined by their cultural group (cf. Turner, 1974, p. 196).

everyday life and this condition promotes transition, which relates to V.

Turner's (1974, p.47) adaptation of the liminality concept. The

transition that occurs in art therapy involves a fragmented Self

becoming a healed Self, within which coherence and meaning are

found. Moreover, when the art therapy experience is ritualized, it could

transform into a sacred condition and become a liminal ritual

phenomenon. The art therapy space becomes sacred and symbolic

when it leads to the ordering of one's life, infused with values of

balance, thought and affect (cf. Tuan, 1993).

However, unlike V. Turner and van Gennep, I do not believe

that in relation to my Cree patients, this "spatial separation" directly

influences their social status because the problem is not one of social

status. Unlike V. Turner's affirmations regarding the structural-

functional role of ritual, the art therapy ritual is not a social mechanism

that affirms group unity. However, it does appear to evoke mytho-

poetic thinking and communication patterns. According to V. Turner

(1969, p. 167), in the liminal phase, social relationships are simplified

and myth and ritual are elaborated, which also seems to relate to my

Cree patients. In art therapy, there is an amplification of culturally

relevant categories such as myth, from which my Cree patients often

derive narratives in relation to the imagery they create in their

artwork. Many of my Cree patients have often related the imagery in their artwork to myths. Myth as discourse is contextualized in the artwork and given tangible form. Certain myths describe the nature of human relationships with each other as well as their place in the world, and how animals were once super beings, half human and half animal. Some myths show how the characteristics of animals have evolved into their present-day form. As Brightman (1993) explains, "myths as narratives are experienced by their tellers as icons of the characters and events that are represented in the narration" (p. 57). Narratives expressed in a mythic form become experiential knowledge, which is retained because they are meaningful to the patient. In other words, the images become a source of knowledge for the patients.

The narrative component attempts to express Cree values in a forum and in a style in which there are no meaningful referents to lived reality, which in turn makes cultural sense. V. Turner (1981, p.168) refers to this as the narrative's task of "poesis," that is, of remaking and re-articulating cultural sense, and this appears relevant to my Cree patients, who feel the need to make sense of how they failed at particular life experiences. For my Cree patients, art therapy permits what are modern problems to be contextualized in a mytho-poetic manner. By mytho-poesis, I am referring to how myth

expresses images and the art-making process allows one to give form

to these images. The art therapy process appears to evoke the use of

a mytho-poetic reality set. "Mythopoesis … is a perception that arises

when the content of thought is no longer the subjective means but the

source of knowledge. The image recognized as 'objective' is seen as

belonging to the domain of meaning" (Meletinsky, 1998, p. 93). Artistic

expression seems to carry what Meletinsky (1998) would refer to as,

"a mythological inheritance" (p. xix). From a mytho-poetic perspective,

the artwork can be seen as inheriting both the syncretic and concrete

qualities of myth (Meletinsky, 1998).[17] In both myth and art, the

product cannot be separated from the process that produced it. In

addition, mytho-poesis or mytho-logic addresses a metaphysical

dimension rather than the physical dimension, founded on belief

(Leach, 1976, p. 70). Mytho-logic thought or what Lévi-Strauss (1966)

preferred to call mythical thought works with images and events that

are meaningful at the cultural level and provide aesthetic satisfaction

while helping people understand reality (Lévi-Strauss, 1966).

I found a parallel in Lévi-Strauss' (1963) explanation of the use

of myth narratives in a ritual context, specifically a curing rite among

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[17] The syncretic quality of myth relates to how myth involves the coalescence of contradictory elements of the metaphysical dimension in its attempt to explain it. The concrete form of myth relates to the artistic images that myth expresses (Meletinsky, 1998).

the Cuna of Panama, and my Cree patients' use of myths in art therapy. Lévi-Strauss (1963, p.188) claims that the myth narrative permits the patient, who is undergoing a shamanistic curing ritual, to cope with a psycho-physiological trauma by providing a type of "objective correlative" for the patient's repressed and inarticulate experience of trauma, made possible by a metonymically induced parallel between the myth world and the patient's own experience (cf. Shore, 1996, p. 254), which is otherwise unexpressible. According to Lévi-Strauss (1963), during the ritual the inexpressible is sensed. Similarly, my Cree patients often refer to myths to help make sense of the conflicts or traumatic experiences that have affected them and this process somehow helps them to reframe and re-articulate their life experiences, which leads to feeling more grounded and secure. The narratives that surface in art therapy whether evoked by the artwork created by the patient or not, become vehicles for the individual's search for and definition of Self.

As Leach (1976) argues, mytho-logic may conflict with the logical rules of ordinary physical experience. However, it can make perfect sense as long as "the speaker and his listener, or the actor and his audience, share the same conventional ideas about the attributes of metaphysical time and space and of metaphysical objects" (Leach,

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1976, p. 70). Cree use of mythical symbolism is sometimes directed toward some framework of practical, social or environmental knowledge (Scott, 1996, p.70-71), and so, contrary to Leach's perspective (1976), Cree mytho-logic thought does not necessarily conflict with logical rules of the physical environment but enhances it by transforming experiential realities into metonyms. For the Cree, there is no apparent distinction made between the physical and metaphysical dimensions precisely because they must invoke the metaphysical to make sense of the physical. For instance, during one of my bush experiences with a Cree informant, he mentioned that he hunts the animal only when the animal is ready. Moreover, the hunter will wait until the animal tells him he/she is ready to be given to him. He further explained that "animals are gifts given to the hunter and the animal *chooses* to give itself to the hunter"; it is not based on the hunter's readiness. Successful kill is partly attributed to the willingness of the particular moose or beaver or fish, who lays down its life for humans to live (cf. Tanner, 1979; Feit, 1991). In the interpersonal dialogue that occurs between hunters and animals, qualities of personhood are assigned to humans, animals, spirits and certain geophysical agents (Ingold, 1996, p. 131). The Cree disposition appears to include the assumption that common connections among

people, animals and other entities exist, both on the physical and metaphysical dimensions (Scott, 1996; Ingold, 1996).

The symbolic structure of the artwork articulates how individual experience and social reality are constituted and organized. Images in some patients' artwork often convey themes related to life in the forest and the animal world. Several Cree patients describe their unique animal encounters while in the bush, and these animals are often referred to as 'animal-doctors' or 'animal spiritual helpers.' This particular symbolism relates to their mytho-poetic thinking. In art therapy, the Cree individuals I work with may be in the process of constructing a discourse that involves recreating myths in the context of their therapy with me. They appear comfortable with explicitly attributing emotions to their iconic production, which they say constitutes both spiritual elements and storytelling[18] features in terms of the emotionally-filled narratives they express. Storytelling is a way of ordering and giving form and significance to the world, exemplifying mytho-poetic thought by metaphorising it. I will analyze the case

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[18] According to one of my informants, storytelling is used as an instrument of knowledge to promote intellectual and emotional well-being, *miyupimaatisiiun* (cf. Adelson, 2000; Cruikshank, 1990) both at the personal and collective levels. The telling of and listening to a story is both a spiritual and emotional experience because you are involved in doing something meaningful, *chistaamaawin.*

material I have thus far using this framework of mytho-poetic or mytho-logic thought.

The narratives conveyed in a therapeutic context may be attempts to make sense of their present life experience, and they provide complex and rich understandings of the subjects' experiences, describing the "structures of their everyday life" where meanings lie (Keesing, 1987, p. 164). In art therapy with my Cree patients, what surfaces is a particular discourse that can be defined using Foucault's (1972, p. 49) framework, as a practice that systematically attempts to form the objects of which it speaks. The objects of the art therapy discourse consist of the narratives that emerge from the imagery in the artwork produced. The artwork allows a narrative of the Self and of others to be constructed. These narratives unfold in a ritualized healing place and they become sufficiently ambiguous because they refer metaphorically to the metaphysical yet semantically they are inserted "out of context" into a highly ordered space. They therefore become highly semiotically charged as the signifier-signified bond becomes weakened in one direction and reoriented in another. The narratives keep their original charge and then gain a new one. They can thus generate meanings directed towards healing and renewal. The narratives are shaped by the discourse in which they are located,

and essentially they inform the Self and bring the Self to the ritual space, thus allowing later attempts to re-insert this "ritual" Self in the non-ritual context of community. The patient, therapist, the artwork and the space influence the direction, intention and substance of the narratives. The artwork and the narratives are seen as means to therapeutic ends.[19]

The art therapy that I am offering has been given a special status by Cree patients, Cree community workers, and other Cree who have been either directly or indirectly involved with art therapy. Near the beginning of my career, I met a male Cree elder who encouraged me to continue working with his people. His exact words were: "your art therapy was probably created for us to help us heal. *Aspaayimotam*. We have faith in you." According to this Cree elder, healing involves the restoration of "balance" that leads to a composed sense of Self; this Self relates to an individual's unique existence and it is usually defined in relation to other people in the individual's environment. My own conception of Self is similar to this definition because I view the Self as having fluid boundaries that allow for other "selves" (i.e. significant others, including those personae that a person

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[19]Cf. White & Epstein (1990) who argue for a therapy that incorporates narrative means "as an instrument of liberty" and self-awareness (p.217).

incorporates into his or her own social Self) to play a role in continually re-defining one's Self. My own notions of the Self as subject to being decomposed and healed, and my patient-centered approach influence the formation of the art therapy context. I consider the "Self" to relate to the distinct individual that we usually take ourselves to be.[20] Within the art therapy space I provide, to which my Cree patients attach meaning, it seems possible that their conceptions of Self can emerge through the narratives. In this area, I find relevance in Kerby's (1991) presentation of how narratives give meaning to the Self, and how "the development of selves (and thereby the persons) in our narratives is one of the most characteristically human acts, acts that justifiably remain of central importance to both our personal and our communal existence" (p.1). Narratives also proved the patients an opportunity to impose order on otherwise disconnected events, and to create continuity between past, present, and imagined worlds (Ochs & Capps, 1996, p. 19). Thus, in the following thesis, I will attempt to show how my Cree patients contextualize their notions of Self and illustrate how art therapy for the Cree has become a form of healing that is amenable to their conception of Self as well as mine.

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[20] Cf. Kerby (1991, p. 4).

Chapter 2 - The Quebec Cree

In this chapter, I want to situate my thesis subjects within various ethnographic, cultural and historical contexts because images of Cree culture become an issue for many of my patients, in terms of the problems they face in identifying with their culture both at a collective and personal level. The source of tension and instability usually lies in the representation of the collectivity used (or forced onto) in the composite Cree Self. I will present the materials that the Quebec Cree use to construct the ethnographic, cultural and historical contexts. I will report what elements are available to the Cree who want to construct new identities, using elements they and others attribute to the past. Because I acknowledge that I can never know what they know, nor do I have the same social positioning strategies, comments in the form of personal anecdotes of our interactions will be presented as *ethnoprofiles*. These comments or statements made by my Cree patients and informants are indicative of Cree people's self-definitions. Furthermore, "Quebec Cree" is a new political category that I use as a shorthand to refer to people living in communities situated in Quebec. These people identify themselves as "Cree," not "Quebec

Cree," and so here I use the term only to refer to a geographic

referent, which however, also alludes to a particular political situation

of inequality and repression. In this chapter, I will initially explore the

contemporary ethnographic context and then present the historical

context to outline how the Cree experience of colonialism continues to

affect many Cree individuals today.

2.1 - The ethnographic and cultural context of the Quebec Cree

In Northern Quebec, there are nine communities with 12,000

Cree inhabitants.[21] The Cree villages located inland count for nearly

half of the entire Cree population in the province. The other villages

are located along the coast of James and Hudson Bay. It is only within

the past twenty years that the Cree began settling permanently in

communities. The reasons for this previous resistance to

sedenterization include the lack of employment in the settlements as

well as the fact that they preferred their traditional lifestyle and were

experts at securing their livelihood from the land (Salisbury, 1986;

Niezen, 1998; Atkinson & Magonet, 1990). Although their economic

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[21] The nine Cree communities in Northern Quebec include Chisasibi, Nemaska, Mistassini, Wemindji, Waswanapi, Waskaganish, Ouje-Bougamou, East Main, and Whapmagoostui.

self-sufficiency diminished once they began living in more highly-structured communities, the persistence of culturally specific beliefs and ritual practices situated in a discursive space that incorporated many signifiers pointing to environmental referents has been quite strong. This is exemplified in the continuing importance of bush life for the East Main Cree of the James Bay region (Tanner, 1979; Salisbury, 1986; Preston, 1981), in which traditional ceremonies are still held to mark the spring and fall hunts.

Ethnoprofile -

I find this image (Figure 4) is suggestive of the pressures of acculturation that many Quebec Cree people are experiencing, in terms of settling within a house yet maintaining a wigwam in the "backyard." This home is about a decade old and this family like many Cree, continue to cook in the wigwam in their backyard. When I once had supper at this family's house, they baked bannock bread in the conventional oven and cooked the caribou stew in the wigwam over a fire. It suggests the persistence of many Cree individuals I know who refuse to let go of ways of life they are familiar with and attached to. According to a Cree woman, who rarely cooks in the conventional oven "because it makes the food taste awful", the wigwam also symbolizes

the sense of security the Cree experienced in the past, which she (like many) feels the need to hold onto, especially when so much has been destroyed or taken away. The experience of being in the wigwam (including the smell, the sounds and the texture) while she cooks reminds her of her own childhood, and of a time when she felt safe and secure watching her mother and grandmother cook stew or smoke fish over the fire. "I knew one day I would be doing the same thing, so I had to watch them carefully."

Figure 4 – Cree Home

In terms of Cree religious beliefs, Christianization of the James

Bay Cree did not begin until the mid-nineteenth century, about 200

years after the establishment of the Hudson Bay Company (Preston,

1981; Salisbury, 1986; Atkinson and Magonet, 1990). According to

many Cree elders I have spoken with, the importance of Cree religious

beliefs was not acknowledged by missionaries.

Cree people did not become Christian because they were forced

to. Many Cree people I have met believe that the teachings of

Christianity are consistent with some Cree traditions. Cree beliefs

already stressed the values of respect, sharing, love and kinship

(Niezen, 1997), which the missionaries also preached. Thus, the Cree

were not passive subjects of missionary persuasion. They showed their

readiness and willingness to adopt the new ritual forms of values that

they were already familiar with. Christianity was not considered as

incompatible with forest life and Cree religion (Niezen, 1998). The

missionary teachings may have been "reinterpreted to accommodate

them to a Cree idiom of experience" (Preston, 1988, p. 147). Preston

(1988) claims that many Cree of the East Coast of James Bay

manifested a form of syncretism where they accommodated the

spiritual elements of both religions. For instance, in the 1960s there

were some Native Anglican catchecists who were also well-known

traditional Cree shamans (Preston, 1988, p. 151). Another example of syncretism was found in Cree narratives showing how traditional songs and symbols were combined with Christian hymns and icons. By the late 1960s, Pentecostalism began to spread, and, today, at least half of the Cree population are Pentecostal (Prince, 1993). Prince (1993) notes that some Cree regard Pentecostalism as a necessary and positive force, since its severe rules of behavior regarding drinking and sex have saved many from alcohol abuse and disruption in families. However, many Cree feel that its intolerance of traditional religious sentiments and expressions has had only negative effects on Cree culture and society.

According to the Cree elders I know, this syncretism or form of acceptance was not, however, reciprocated by the missionaries, who preached against Cree social practices. Nevertheless, the Cree people were able to maintain their autonomy especially in relation to their hunting technology, strategies and rituals (Morantz, 1978; Niezen, 1997). Despite some pressures towards control and assimilation, many did not abandon their cultural heritage.

Another example of syncretism is the Cree form of medical pluralism, where Cree people continue to use local plant and animal products as their pharmacopoeia, as well as modern medicine to treat

health problems (Adelson, 2000; Atkinson and Magonet, 1990).

Adelson (2000) stresses how the Cree constantly express their respect

for animals and nature. The Cree term, *miyupimaatisiiun*, or 'being

alive well,' "connotes a set of meanings that are contingent on Cree

beliefs and practices" (Adelson, 2000, p.61), such that values are

inseparable from practices.

Essentially, *miyupimaatisiiun* relates to being able to hunt,

engage in traditional activities, live well in the bush, eat the right

foods, keep warm, and especially the ability to provide for oneself and

others (Adelson 2000, p.60-62). The Cree concept of well-being is

definitely linked to their traditional foods and activities. Traditional

medicine continues to be used informally with the Quebec Cree by the

elders, who broadcast their knowledge and experience on the local

radio, and by Cree administrators who try to include traditional

practices in formal procedures (Niezen, 1997, p.486).[22]

Ethnoprofile -

A Cree elder once gave me a tour of a bushcamp, showing me

the different natural substances, such as berries and tree barks that

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[22] For more on the use of traditional healers and the continued access to traditional medicine, I suggest Waldram (1990) and Gregory's (1989) work. Even though they are describing Cree communities in Western Canada, some similarities can be drawn to the Northern Quebec Cree.

could be burned and used for preventive medicine, protection from evil

forces, and simply for luck and health. Some substances were used

individually, while others were part of recipes to help soothe, treat or

prevent certain ailments. These recipes, according to this elder, were

also used by their ancestors, and most people who live in the bush,

whether permanently or intermittently, have knowledge of these

natural forms of medicine and resort to them when necessary. He

actually gave me a medicine bag with roots, sweetgrass and I was told

to keep it with me to protect my spiritual health. Herbal teas are quite

popular and they are used as medicinal teas. I was once given a tea to

settle an upset stomach, and I was told it included hibiscus flowers,

birch leaves, cranberries and cinnamon bark. Another one used for

colds contains juniper berries, spearmint leaves, red clover flowers and

other roots. Both were quite effective – in fact so effective, I continue

to use these medicinal teas.

The bushcamp continues to play a significant role in the daily lives of the Quebec Cree. The bush, *'nuhchimiihch,'* is regarded by many Cree adults and elders as a natural disciplinarian, with its own rules and rhythms to which individuals adapt, and Cree hunters have long noted that there is a beneficial effect on individuals who follow a

traditional lifestyle (Niezen, 1993). They look forward to their traditional ceremonies to mark the Spring and Fall hunts. They also go to the bush to gather their herbal remedies.

During the last two decades, there has been a gradual revitalization of Cree medicine and a return to sweat-lodges, religious ceremonies and the use of shamans (cf. Young, Ingram, & Swartz, 1989). According to my Cree informants, they believe that the Cree people need to strive to maintain their customs and traditional ways because they are integral elements of their existence as an autonomous people. They also see the hunting economy as a mainstay of Cree society (Niezen, 1993, 1998), on the symbolic level, even though the economics of the traditional lifestyle might mean individuals lose rather than earn money. In other words, people are willing to invest time and money to continue an unprofitable way of life (considered only in terms of a Western model of the economy) because the ties to the land this implies are considered vitally important signals of Cree desires to be autonomous. By symbolic I mean that hunting is a way of life that is considered by many of my Cree informants as a significant sign of their cultural survival, as it links them to their cultural heritage. For many Cree people, it is fundamental that they see themselves as hunters, despite the fact that

it represents approximately 40% of their economic returns (Niezen, 1998). In both the inland and coastal communities I have noticed many signs of the perpetuation of a hunting way of life, such as people celebrating when young, pre-adolescent boys kill geese for their first time and women working hard to build and maintain the wigwams and the bush cabins.

Ethnoprofile -

Many of my initial trips to Northern Quebec had been organized by a non-Cree person, in charge of Cree social services for all nine Quebec Cree communities. Once, when I arrived in Nemaska there was no one around. The trailer homes, store, and Band Council offices were all empty - only dogs were roaming the snowbanks. Finally, a man arrived on his snowmobile and he informed me that everyone was in the bush celebrating goose break. Goose break is a seasonal goose-hunting ritual that usually occurs in the spring and many Cree people go to their bush camps to hunt geese and gather with their families. This ritual sometimes occurs twice a year (i.e. spring and fall) in addition to moose break, which occurs in the fall, and both were totally unknown to me until this experience. The Cree man on the snowmobile thought it was so funny to see a southerner stranded in

the village. He then (luckily!) invited me to the bush to stay with his family. After this experience I made certain that my future trips would be scheduled by Cree community workers. At another time, I was invited to attend a goose break ritual in the bush, where a young boy symbolically enters manhood with the mark of his first killing of a goose (Figure 5). The goose head is hung in the center of the wigwam, along with other animal skulls, for the duration of the festivity, which involves eating the goose, drumming and dancing. The skulls, antlers and bearskin as seen in Figure 5, are placed as tokens of respect to hunted animals.
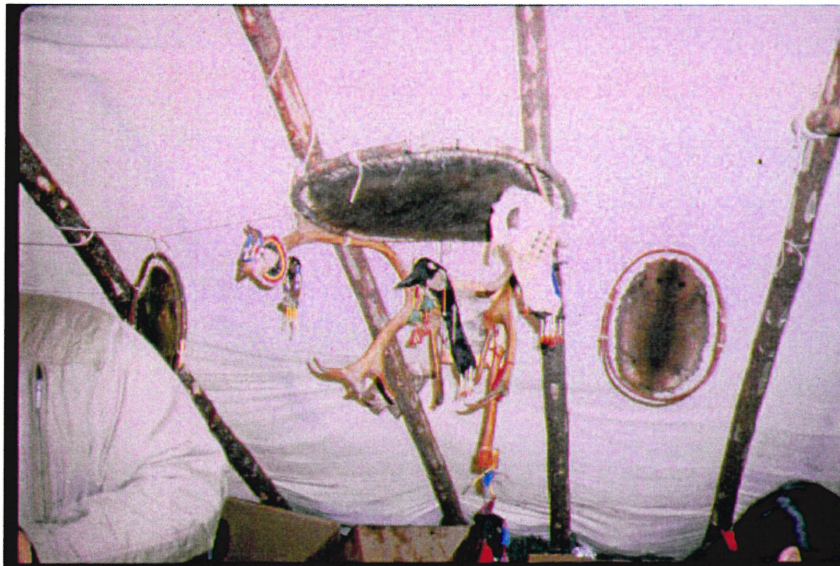
Figure 5 – Goose Break

Many believe that the Cree language is a significant aspect of their identity and is maintained by being in the bush because in the community schools, mostly English and French are being taught. The Cree see this as a result of having been forced to attend boarding schools outside their communities for a period after the Second World War, where the Cree language was never taught or even acknowledged. According to one of my informants, the people were often punished for speaking Cree. Her experience was that she would speak Cree to her friends because she feared losing her language. One day she got caught and the teacher actually cut a piece of her tongue. She said that this experience scarred her both physically and emotionally, but she said she promised herself to not let it destroy her spirit, and so every chance she got she would "secretly" speak to her friends in Cree.

My Cree informants see themselves as faced with a great challenge, involving problems such as alcohol abuse, violence and suicide. These problems are seen as affecting their evolution and even survival as a people. The Cree attribute these problems to the stresses of acculturation, which have historical roots, developed from the "Whiteman invasion" and their subsequent social and cultural domination of the Cree. In order to cope with these problems, the

Cree have tried to return to Cree medicine and treatments, sometimes

used in combination with modern medicine (cf. Adelson, 2000;

Atkinson & Magonet, 1990; Young, et al., 1989). There are also some

Cree people who turn to the Christian church and consider it as a

positive force in helping them deal with their problems. Among the

Quebec Cree there appear to be demands for cultural pluralism,

combining Christian teachings, Western biomedical practices, as well

as Cree traditional approaches. This move towards cultural pluralism is

suggestive of a dynamic and open Cree culture, but paradoxically may

be inhibiting to individuals, who must seek and invent creative ways of

reconciling these different and varied semantic and semiotic fields.

2.2 - A Quebec Cree community

In this section, I will describe a Quebec Cree community where

many of my Cree informants and patients live. I will provide empirical

details of how they live as I have observed while working and living in

this northern community. The pseudonym I will use for this community

is Masgami in order to protect the identity of my patients and their

family and friends.

This community was established in the early 19th century as an

important fur-trading post. This post was also used for whale hunting.

The first Anglican missionaries arrived in the mid 1800's and established a school in the early 1900s. The Catholic missionaries began their activities in the 1920s and they also founded a school and a hospital. Masgami was subject to a process of semi-forced settlement in the 1960s, when more than 50 permanent dwellings were constructed by the government as a means of facilitating government practices of the time, which favoured integration of Native lifestyles into a lower middle class model of Euro-Canadian values.

The present population of Masgami is approximately 2500, with 400 permanent Cree households and 200 non-native people who work for the schools, hospitals, social services and some for Hydro-Quebec. From a Euro-Canadian perspective, this community has all the 'essential' services, such as running water, electricity, a local radio station, a police force, a fire station and a general store. It is connected to other towns by a highway and several paved roads with clusters of houses. There are two churches, Anglican and Catholic. There is a commercial building in the center of the community. This building includes the general store, a bank, and a hair salon. There is a motel, the Band Council office and other offices on the second floor. Thus, there is a considerable amount of traffic in the commercial building. Adjacent to this building is the community centre, which

contains several offices, an auditorium, a restaurant, a reception hall, a gym, an arcade and a bowling alley.

Some of the dwellings in the community are trailer-type homes, with two to three bedrooms, and others are larger homes with a cement foundation. These homes resemble a bungalow-style house with the bedrooms all on one floor. Although this community seems to resemble many other Euro-Canadian Northern towns, there are several hints that the Cree residents have not modified their values just because some aspects of their physical surroundings evoke Euro-Canadian values. For example, I noticed in many homes that children do not necessarily have their separate bedrooms. They often sleep with their parents, which according to several informants is a common practice. One person noted that it stems from being accustomed to sleeping all together in the tent. In many homes, I noted that a freezer filled with meat (goose, caribou, moose and beaver) is usually found in the basement. On the outside, the homes are surrounded by 4x4 trucks, large vans, skidoos and children's toys and bicycles. Although these objects are also owned by Euro-Canadians, the Cree see them as useful imports that allow them to live their lives as they wish. The fact that they own and use Euro-Canadian goods does not mean they feel constrained to behave like Euro-Canadians.

It may be significant that animals in the community are also treated according to Cree beliefs regarding animals. Dogs often roam around freely in town. The dogs that are considered as pets are usually owned by the Euro-Canadians who live in Masgami. Cree say that other dogs are owned by everyone; they are seen as "community dogs," as one informant told me. Like the children in the community, it is everyone's responsibility to feed them. According to many of the Euro-Canadians in Masgami, they have great difficulty with the roaming dogs and how they feel the dogs are mistreated because they do not live indoors, or when outside they are not leashed. However, my informant Sid said that the Cree always treated dogs with respect by being given the freedom to roam. Sid related this to the past and how hard dogs would work in pulling sleds during hunting expeditions in the winter months.

Most revenues come from working for the Band Office, in social services, schools, daycare centres and for construction companies. Another important economic activity involves hunting, fishing and trapping, and approximately 30% of the Cree population benefits from the Income Security Program, which is simply government subsidies for hunting. Nevertheless, in Masgami the unemployment rate continues to be high, and so many people receive welfare. This is

often a source of tension for many Cree people who want to work but the options are few. Many attribute their feelings of depression and inadequacy to this, which often leads to alcohol abuse.

Several of my Cree informants believe that a dependency on welfare and Income Security Program has placed constraints on their bush activities. Many Cree people feel that the Income Security Program is contradictory because on the one hand, the government encourages bush activities, yet on the other, it provides a ceiling on the number of days in harvesting and related activities that are renumerated under the program. Thus, this contradiction between traditional freedom and Euro-Canadian control is often experienced as a source of tension. Many people have difficulty with the high transportation costs they have to pay for goods now seen as essential, such as Euro-Canadian food and clothing. For instance, a pack of diapers costs $30.00 and a 4-pack of toilet paper rolls, $10.00. Oftentimes, Cree people stock up on such essential items when they travel down south to Val d'Or or Montreal. Although I have not been able to get the figures that would allow to calculate if store profits are reasonable, some researchers (Lanoue, 1991) have suggested that these stores in Native communities are continuing the tradition established by the Hudson's Bay Company in the fur trade period of

getting huge profits on individual trades to cover the risk of loss in the future. Although this might have been justifiable when transport was by canoe and boat, and Euro-Canadian merchants really faced losing their investment to accidents, this is hardly the case today. This situation may also contribute to tensions among Cree individuals.

In addition, during the fur trade period, the Quebec Cree became firmly enmeshed in the mercantile capitalist economy that favors an ideology in which individualism is accentuated. The notions of absolute property and contractual exchange were foreign to the Cree people (Dickason, 1997), although individuality was not. However, stressing individuality is not the same as stressing individualism, which is often, for Euro-Canadians, another word for egocentric competition. Euro-Canadian economic practices unfortunately stress egocentrism characterized by competition and individualistic values, and these are reinforced by the welfare and income security programs the government has created. Some of my Cree informants noted that these programs isolate individuals from one another and encourage dependency on Euro-Canadians rather than encourage a self-reliant community in which individuals co-operate with one another. One Cree man said that "the welfare and the Income Security Program are tools to enforce settlement life, imposed

on us (the Cree) by the government." Undoubtedly, this is a source of great tension for many Cree individuals.

In terms of bush life in the past, local groups would go hunting within a given territory while respecting other people's hunting territories. The notion of territoriality was always vaguely defined, in the sense that these hunting territories were not seen as private property and did not have formal boundaries that prevented others from hunting. In general, people were free to move around and hunt where they thought best. "Hunting territory" therefore refers to a Cree attempt at co-operating and co-ordinating movement to avoid tensions and to give a message to neighbours that the land belonged to them was being used by a particular social unit that was part of a larger polity. The fur trade and later hydro-electric projects in Northern Quebec led to the development of designated traplines registered with the government and the Cree were given areas to set up their bushcamps. Many Cree elders claim that before the registered trap-line system, everything used to be in one piece and everyone respected each other's areas while sharing hunting territories. Before the trapline registration system, there existed a Cree tenure system and with customary rules established by the Cree people. Nonetheless, it is by no means clear that the registration of traplines altered fundamentally

the kin composition of multi-family groups on Cree hunting territiories,

or reduced sharing and cooperation as regards access to territories (cf.

Tanner, 1979; Feit, 1986, 1991). There was more of a continuity

rather than a disruption in the territory/hunting group system because

some aspects of the registered trapline system are consistent with

Cree views on the freedom of individuals to act as they see fit.

Kin relationships were more than just links between

genealogically or consanguineally defined individuals. Cree kinship

values involved a different system of social classification than that of

Western society.[23] The accent is placed on links among individuals as

members of larger categories, though these are often not named

explicitly as such, causing some confusion in older anthropological

models that were more attuned to ideas derived from studying

societies in which these units are named and are often represented by

a 'totemic' symbol. Turner and Wertman's (1977) model, based on the

Shamattawa Cree of Northern Manitoba, may be useful to understand

Quebec Cree social dynamics. According to Turner and Wertman

(1977), Shamattawa Cree kinship terminology reflected an

incorporative principle, in which ego-centered networks merged

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[23] It is important to note that information on Cree social organization is fairly recent. I am not an expert in this particular area and this thesis is not about this. I want to highlight the differences that are often noted by my patients and informants in terms of kinship values then and now.

through the exchange of marriageable partners and local groups

became allied. This model concords with Quebec Cree practices, where

local groups are comprised of a conjugal pair (i.e. husband and wife

and dependents), drawn from a larger unit that Turner and Wertman

(1977) call brotherhoods.[24] Some fathers and sons hunted together,

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[24] The term "brotherhood" relates to a network of partnerships as a whole hunting-trapping unit and it is used metaphorically to represent an idealized solidarity of people who base important choices in the present on the history of past working partnerships; for example, members of one's brotherhood are sons and daughters of people who worked with one's parents. Naturally, the parents see their partnerships as just that, partnerships. From their children's viewpoint, however, these partnerships appear as close and even fundamental bonds that produce kinship, hence Turner and Wertman's decision to use the word 'brotherhood' for the resulting networks. Turner and Wertman are explicit that the people in brotherhoods are not genealogical brothers, nor are they considered as such by the Shamattawa Cree. This model was also used in other studies by some of Turner's students (cf. Lanoue, 1992; Trott, 1982) in non-Cree contexts. Despite obvious differences with the Shamattawa Cree, they confirmed that while 'brotherhoods' is a useful word to describe the close relationships that characterize these networks, in no case were these feelings of solidarity interpreted by informants as indicative of an actual genealogical bond. Such kinship ties may be present – some people in brotherhoods are indeed genealogical brothers and sisters – but these are considered unimportant or secondary by informants describing their society and its social categories.

although surnames inherited through patrilines were not part of their social organization. This practice of collaboration between fathers and sons and sometimes between brothers gave early traders and anthropologists (especially if they never did any fieldwork among the Cree) the impression that the Cree were a patrilineal society, which is not the case. Unfortunately, this impression has lasted to this day.

According to Morantz (1983), the fur trade provided the James Bay people with more options in their subsistence patterns than were possible before. Morantz argues that subsistence was still the determining factor in terms of social organization, and so, the fur trade could have generated a trend towards an expanding social organization. However, many of my Cree informants (mostly elders) believe the fur trade also forced people to move into new regions in search of new sources of furs for the trading companies and it pressured them to value the individual benefits of individual accumulation of a greater number of furbearers, at the expense of the needs of the group. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, although Cree values of sharing and sensitivity towards the needs of others (Tanner, 1979) were not necessarily reinforced by the fur trade experience and may even have been subject to pressure, it did not fundamentally reduce the sharing and cooperation among Cree people.

In terms of Cree kinship categories, "family" is not a stable category in the sense most Euro-Canadians and many anthropologists use the word. Household is a more relevant category and it exists as a recognized grouping. There are no historical inclinations to categories such as "family," which was introduced by the missionaries and loosely adopted by the Cree, more in speech than in fact. According to one of my informants, in terms of family, *aa paayikutaausiich* is the term many Cree people use to refer to "a group of us." Also, other people's children, whether Cree or non-Cree, are always welcome in most of the households I have visited. I was once invited for supper at a Cree friend's house and I was surprised when five children walked in and immediately joined us at the table. The Cree woman noted that her house was their house and vice versa. This exemplifies the value Cree place on sharing as an effective means of countering tendancies towards individualism, which I am now accustomed to after thirteen years of exposure to a way of life so natural for them and so initially foreign to me.

"Bands" continue to exist among the Northern Quebec Cree and have evolved into administrative, political units, with officials that act as intermediaries between government officials and band members. There are thus three important social categories: the autonomous

individual, networks (including "brotherhoods"), and the band. Some Cree people make reference to these categories that they believe link them to the past because they are seen as traditional, and thus, when used they become re-interpreted signs of the past in which Cree were not subject to Euro-Canadian bureaucratic and economic control.

Geographically-distant relatives still retain strong ties within the community, and child-rearing is seen as a shared endeavor. For instance, as was described to me by Lyne, who is from Masgami, there is a ritual referred to as a walking-out ceremony, where a toddler walks out of a wigwam and onto the ground for the first time. Both Tanner (1979) and Adelson (2000) also describe this rite of passage as symbolizing a child's entry into the world of the Cree people. According to Lyne, the wigwam is built in the bush specifically for the event and before sunrise of the day of the ceremony. The grandparents are usually within the wigwam and the parents await the child outside the wigwam. Before this ritual, which usually occurs in the spring and at sunrise, the toddler should not be placed to walk or crawl on the ground outside. Following the ritual, relatives and friends gather for a feast where bush food is offered (eg. berries, caribou and goose meat).

As for the Cree from Masgami and other Quebec Cree villages, they have always been experts at securing their livelihood from the land. Cree perception of the land providing for human beings is sensitive to both spiritual and material concerns (Niezen, 1998; Ghostkeeper, 1996). Hunting is considered a "holy occupation" (Speck, 1977, p.72). According to my informants, "economic" actions are not motivated by profit, accumulation, and increase. There has always been a respect of land, animals, and for fellow hunters and their "families." The Cree way of life, religious beliefs and practices all revolve around the complex beliefs regarding the relationship between man, nature and animal. Hunting and religion are conceptually distinct categories of human practice yet the animal plays a prominent role in both realms (Brightman, 1993). Man is surrounded by forms replete with life like his own; thus, all beings and natural things, such as rocks, streams and winds are thought to have a living soul.[25] All plants and animals have functional roles in the universe, which man needs to respect and use appropriately, whether for spiritual quests, medicinal or hunting purposes. In Cree cosmology, the natural world has restorative and curative powers (Niezen, 1998). Although their

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[25] For more on this notion of animism, which is a common element found in various Native American religions cf. Tooker & Sturtevant (1979).

economic self-sufficiency diminished once they began living in more

highly-structured communities, the persistence of

traditional beliefs and ritual ceremonies remains strong. The bush

economy continues to be a significant element in present-day Cree

society and especially in definitions of the Self, as seen in the village of

Masgami.

2.3 - The historical context of the Quebec Cree

The Quebec Cree of the James Bay area have lived in the region

for at least 5000 years (Salisbury, 1986; Niezen, 1998). Although the

natives of James Bay Quebec have been known as "Cree" by the

Europeans, the Quebec Cree do not refer to themselves as Cree.[26]

They call themselves either *iyiyuu* (coastal Cree dialect) or *iinuu*

(inland Cree dialect). *Iyiyuu* or *iinuu* has four levels of meaning,

depending on the context (Atkinson and Magonet, 1990). On one level,

it means "human" as opposed to other life-forms. Secondly, it relates

to Native, as opposed to other ethnic groups. On the third level, it

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[26] During the contact period, the Europeans mangled and mispronounced some difficult names. According to McFarlane and Haimila (1999), the best example of this was with the Cree people of the James Bay region, who were originally named Kenistenaag. "The French first mispronounced their name as Kristinaux and then shortened the misnomer to Cris, which the English then rendered Cree" (p.71). I believe that this misnomer of "Kristinaux" was also related to the movement towards Christianizing the people who were referred to as "Indian savages."

distinguishes the "Cree" from other Native nations. Finally, it means

living or having life (Atkinson and Magonet 1990, p. 14).

The Cree distinguish one another according to the areas they

come from and by their hunting areas, the main distinctions being

between the inland and the coastal people (Salisbury, 1986). There

were no permanent Cree communities before the European fur trade,

and most Cree groups led a semi-nomadic lifestyle, with the entire

"band" meeting and living as a group for only the brief summer

months.[27] During the other three seasons the band divided into

hunting groups that superficially resembled partnerships between

extended families. Thus, the "band" or large grouping only functioned

seasonally during the few weeks of the summer, usually assembling

near a body of water with good fishing resources (Rogers, 1963, p.

26). It did not form for political, religious, or economic reasons,

although the most respected male member was designated the title of

"leader," who was often the shaman of the group (Rogers, 1963;

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[27] Both Rogers (1963) and Morantz (1983) address that the definition of the term "band" is obscured and used loosely in anthropological literature. Also, both authors agree that the band was most probably not a fur trade development and that such a group descended from a pre-contact group that used to assemble seasonally. However, as noted by both Rogers and Morantz, there is insufficient prehistoric information to conclude this. Morantz (1983, p. 99) prefers the use of the term "macro-group" over "band." In this thesis, I am not interested in addressing Cree social organization per se. However, because of the immediate presence of the collectivity in the construction of Self, I believe that it is important to address the nature of band and the Cree notion of collectivity.

Morantz, 1983). With intensive European contact and the subsequent fur trade, the features of the "band" and its functions changed as they assembled at trading posts, increased in size and contained fewer shamans (Rogers, 1963).

The type of "social organization" of the 17th Century large grouping or band was congruent with their hunting practices, since the northern Cree largely depended on animals, such as furbearers and moose, who have different territorial habits – the furbearers tend to live in confined spaces, while the larger ungulates on which they depend for food have larger range, yet are isolated and relatively scarce. Some groups also depended, to a certain extent, on animals like caribou, which necessitated a somewhat more complex but temporary hunt organization (Henriksen, 1974; Riches, 1982; Martin, 1981).

According to a Cree elder I met in the bush, caribou meat and caribou hides used to clothe people as well as birch bark used to build canoes were valued trade items between the northern and southern Cree. As hunters and fishermen, the survival of the Cree through the years was based on their skill and intimate knowledge of the animals they hunted and of their environment. In fact, before the Europeans arrived, in their area the Cree were quite familiar with the fur trade

system, carrying goods and furs from the St-Lawrence northward to James Bay and south using canoe routes they developed (Francis & Morantz, 1983).

In the mid-1600's, the English-European explorers found themselves among the largest group of Canadian Amerindians, who they named "Cree." Civilizing the Cree people was not a priority on their agenda. Rather establishing a positive relationship with the Cree was essential to the development of a functional fur trade system (Dickason, 1997). The English apparently appreciated the hunting capabilities of the Cree hunters.

Both parties were willing to negotiate an alliance because without it trade would be insecure (Dickason, 1997). For the Cree, what they were negotiating was an alliance that entailed a reciprocal relationship. In other words, the Cree expected that the Europeans would help them when necessary just as they would help the English. According to Dickason (1997, p.117), unlike the English settlers, the concept of absolute property was foreign to the Cree.

Even though the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) was established in 1670, many traditional aspects were not directly threatened since a measure of co-dependency developed between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Cree: the Europeans depended on the Cree for food

and furs, and they provided the Cree with guns and ammunition for hunting purposes (Preston, 1981; Salisbury, 1986), as well as for defence and war. In order to maintain this cooperative and codependent relationship, the HBC also kept out other Euro-Canadians until about 1870. To extend its sphere of trade to the north, the HBC often used Cree people as guides and hunters, as the Company's workers were inexperienced (Francis & Morantz, 1983).

During the past twenty years, a new paradigm has surfaced in North American histiography, one that substitutes the old idea that the Cree were dominated since first contact with Europeans. Specifically related to the Eastern James Bay Cree, Francis and Morantz (1983) illustrate that for almost two centuries, beginning in the seventeenth century, the Cree had established a cooperative relationship with the English and French traders. In other words, it could be considered a business or strategic relationship (which of course is a more appropriate term from the Cree point of view), in which both sides obtained goods they each wanted without threatening the survival of the other. The Cree and the European traders, who were few, interacted along commercial, religious and hunting frontiers. The Cree were valuable allies because of their ability to survive in the bush (cf. Miller, 1989). At this point in the 17th century, there was no need to

alter their ways because their hunting methods were successful and thus necessary for the maintenance of the trade system (Miller, 1989). The Cree people were not passive victims, as depicted in many of the older accounts of Canadian history.

According to recent ethnohistoric research, the Cree in fact played a significant role in the trade system (Francis & Morantz, 1983). The Cree were engaged in a cooperative relationship with the Europeans during the fur-trading period and they were crucial to all aspects of the fur trade until the nineteenth century (Francis & Morantz, 1983). The scholars of this "enrichment thesis" view Cree traders as well as other Native traders as "rational and calculating in pursuit of their own self-interest" and not as "gullible savages" (Fisher, 1992, p.xiii). In other words, during the eighteenth century, Native people as a whole were not victims of an unbalanced trade but were intelligent strategists and participants who were responsible for establishing the procedures of the fur trade. As one Cree elder explained: "My ancestors had had experience with trading before the Whiteman came. They would trade with other Indians all the time. The Whiteman needed us because they had no idea how to use the canoe and no idea how to hunt the animals. They showed no respect for the animals like we did, so we hunted." As Francis and Morantz (1983, p.

25) also state, the Natives possessed the knowledge and skills to hunt and trap their fur-bearing prey, as well as for other animals that were part of their diet, thus making them necessary partners in the fur-trade enterprise.

Since the late 17th century and their initial contact with Europeans, the Cree manifested their pride and confidence in their cultural ways by not discarding their own technology and equipment in favor of Europeans technology. They actually provided the European traders with essential tools, such as canoes, snowshoes and sleds (Francis & Morantz, 1983). Despite the close cooperation needed for the trade and the prosperity it brought to both sides, both the Europeans and the Cree continued to live their separate and autonomous ways.

The 19th century brought profound changes to Cree-European relations. The fur trade created a transition phase for the Quebec Cree as it eventually placed the Cree in a position of having to choose between traditional forms of redistribution of game and furs, and a newer individual trading partnership that some have suggested weakened group solidarity (Frenette, 1985; Knight, 1965; Leacock, 1954). There were obviously pressures for the Cree to change and conform to Western market-oriented social and cultural models; for

example, the Cree who lived in the Hudson Bay lowlands area chose to monopolize access to European trade goods, acting as middlemen with other, more distant Native Indian groups (Francis & Morantz, 1983). In brief, the Cree often had to defend their territory from encroachment by outsiders, which sometimes forced them to use less-valued parts of the homeland in order to demonstrate their proprietary interest (Morantz, 1980). Despite these pressures, the Hudson's Bay Company limited contact with the larger European-based society, such that missionaries, governments and corporations only slightly affected the Cree until after the Second World War.

Nevertheless, in terms of the fur trade network, what was once an alliance soon became irrelevance at the end of the nineteenth century, as the Europeans began to view the Cree as well as other Natives as obstacles to economic development and as consumers – wasters - of public funds (Miller, 1989). If they wanted to continue to participate in the fur trade economy, Cree people had to settle close to particular trading posts specifically during the summer months, which restricted their freedom of movement. They lost their roles of strategic allies and economic partners, and cooperation gave way to coercion (Miller, 1989, p.98) represented by the implementation of boarding schools, the destruction of their political institutions, and the

placement of Cree people in reserves in the twentieth century. Thus, although the fur trade brought change that the Cree could initially control, it also brought change in the long run for which the Cree were unprepared, which eventually culminated with their forced "integration" into the Euro-Canadian world in the period following World War II. They were often unable to cope with the new and disruptive elements that came with the forced conformity to Euro-Canadian bureaucratic procedures (Fisher, 1992, p.48). Cree culture and bush life were altered but not destroyed (Miller, 1989; Francis & Morantz, 1983).

Although the fur trade began the movement towards permanent settlement, its impact may not have been as profound as the combined influence of Anglican missionaries, formal medicine and residential schools,[28] which all occurred at different times (Niezen, 1998, p. 39). Missions, biomedicine and schools, each in different ways, had a subtext of assimilation, integration and domination with little regard to Cree values and ways of life (Niezen, 1998). In fact, the fur trade had tried to keep Cree "intact" so they would pursue

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[28] It was believed that residential schools would accelerate the assimilation process removing children from their homes and usually leaving their communities for extended periods of time (Dickason, 1997). They began in late 1930s and they were shut down in the late 1960s (Frideres, 1998). Cf. Miller (1996) for a history of Native residential schools.

"traditional" hunting of fur animals. Missionaries, in contrast, had no such agenda.

The missionaries were responsible for developing the first hospitals and many residential schools. Cree religious values and beliefs were often considered by missionaries as 'devil worship,' and Cree healing practices were seen as primitive, fraudulent and harmful (Waldram, Herring & Young, 1995, p.98). Permanent communities were eventually built around missionary and government institutions and hospitals, which placed more pressure on the Cree to stay in the community, often for the sake of their children (Niezen, 1998, p.39). As a result, an opposition developed between bush life and community life. Residential education enforced European middle-class values and further distanced Cree children from their parents and relatives.

Ethnoprofile –

A Cree woman with whom I spoke described her experience in a residential school as follows: "I was taken away from my mother's arms, put on a plane and I was promised to be taken care of. When I got there I was separated from my brothers and sisters and I was given a number, '37.' I lost my name, my family and when I was abused they took away a big piece of me. I was horse-whipped and

placed in a dark room for a long time, maybe a whole week, with bread and water – just like a prisoner. I was told that I should never speak my Cree language again. After many years, when I returned home, I returned a different person but I never lost my roots. My mother was waiting for me."

Not all the Cree people I met had negative, traumatic experiences at residential school. Lyne, one of my Cree informants, said that she was not separated from her siblings and her experience at the boarding school was positive overall. She was 'allowed' to speak her Cree tongue and she actually spent a lot of time with her siblings and friends from her own community. She did miss her parents and looked forward to returning home. Lyne especially missed her customs, special rituals and gatherings in the bush, which she and her siblings engaged in as soon as they returned.

As with the initial stages of the fur trade economy, the Cree were quite selective in their adoption of key features of European technology and medicine, ideology and religious culture. What the Cree considered useful - tools and medical treatments - was adopted to supplement their own technology. Nursing stations with medical supplies were used for emergencies, and some Western medications

were used to treat diseases such as influenza and scurvy, often in combination with a white cedar drink or a preventative diet of cranberries, gooseberries, and currants they picked from the bush (Waldram et al., 1995). In fact, the Hudson Bay Company had made sure their 'Indian' traders were vaccinated against smallpox in order to ensure the health of their partners, and the Native people often shared their medicinal pharmacopoeia with their counterparts (Waldram et al., 1995; Trigger, 1985).

In terms of equipment adopted in the bush, several key manufactured items, such as snowmobiles and motorboats, as well as roads, have made transportation to the bush much easier in the last two or three decades. Hunting has been more successful with the use of modern rifles and shotguns, although it is doubtful the Cree were eager to substitute "traditional" weapons with the earlier trade guns, often highly inaccurate and even dangerous to the shooter. Thus, when the Cree have been allowed choices, bush life has been more often enhanced rather than compromised (Niezen, 1998, p.7). Cree hunters have long used technology manufactured outside their own society with no feeling that their way of life was threatened, and their forest way of life has a long history of accommodation and innovation resulting from outside influence (Niezen, 1998, p. 5, 7), just as there

were extensive pre-contact trade networks. As Niezen (1998) notes,

the use of rifles or outboard motors did not erode spiritual

relationships with hunted animals because the Cree, like many other

Native groups, did not use the new technology in a "Whiteman's" way;

that is, they did not increase returns from the hunt but preferred to

see the new technology as increasing leisure time and especially

security. The adaptations of specific ideas and tools were selective and

within established cultural patterns (Dickason, 1997). In terms of their

adoption of European medicines and elements of Christianity, it is

important to note that a characteristic of Cree religion and beliefs is

that a single cult or category does not have special access to spiritual

power or healing abilities. Borrowing ideas and beliefs from other

people has always been a common practice (cf. Waldram et al., 1995).

Ethnoprofile -

During my first visit to the bushcamp, I realized how I

romanticized the bush, thinking it is a traditional way of life untouched

by Euro-Canadian influences because the bush is far away from the

community. After many visits to different bushcamps and my

interactions with people there, I observed, as Niezen (1998) notes,

that there is a willingness to accept and initiate change within the

limits of practicality (p.7). For example, while in the bush, I stayed in a

cabin that was built with discarded building supplies left over from

dam construction projects in the early 1990s (cf. Niezen, 1998).

The mega-hydroelectric project that was undertaken in the

1970s by the Quebec government was a pivotal change for the Cree

inhabitants of the region (Salisbury, 1986; Tanner, 1999; Frideres,

1998; Niezen, 1998). The project was launched by the government

without any prior consultation with the people who would be affected

by it (Dickason, 1997, p.380). As Tanner (1999) notes, rapid changes,

such as community relocation, were imposed without sensitivity to the

local ways of life and without the participation of the community,

which in turn induced a sense of powerlessness (p. 124). Not only

were large parts of their hunting territories flooded and the Cree

forced to abandon some of their hunting and fishing activities (Tanner,

1999; Richardson, 1991; Salisbury, 1986; Waldram, 1988), the legal

battle to preserve Cree land that ensued they ultimately lost forced

them to explicitly repoliticize many aspects of "traditional" life, which

up to this point, was simply considered as 'life.' In addition, the

development of vast reservoirs encroached on the migration patterns

of moose, who as a result have shifted farther and farther north (Adelson, 2000, p.125 n.6; Coppinger & Ryan, 1999).

The signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in November 1975 gave the Cree and Inuit limited regional autonomy, monetary compensation, and created forms of local self-government for each of the nine Cree communities.[29] This comprehensive land claim agreement removed the Federal government's responsibility for much of Cree life and transferred it to Quebec and the Cree (Waldram, et al., 1995, p.246), although local Cree control of their social life was limited. Although the Cree and Inuit people were given what appeared to be substantial control of their own political, economic and social affairs, the final say remained with the Provincial government (Dickason, 1997, p.382). This disempowerment under the guise of decentralisation of powers is undoubtedly a source of stress for many Cree, who often feel humiliated and frustrated by being given an opportunity for autonomy on paper that has never been fully realized.

The Cree negotiated a plan with the Quebec government for regional autonomy in education, health care and the Income Security

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[29] This Agreement is considered Canada's first modern aboriginal treaty and was one of the first steps taken by the Federal government and by aboriginal people to establish self-government (Report of the Cree-Naskapi Commission, 1994). The nine Cree communities involved include Chisasibi, Nemaska, Mistassini, Wemindji, Waswanapi, Waskaganish, Ouje-Bougamou, East Main, and Whapmagoostui.

Program, which provides a guaranteed income to hunters and their families who spend most of the year in the bush (Niezen, 1998, p.3; Feit, 1985). The ensuing development and growth of Cree administration based on Euro-Canadian models did not necessarily mean that Cree values, goals, and strategies would be replaced by Euro-Canadian ones (Tanner, 1999; Niezen, 1998), though it was probably disturbing to many older people who had little experience in these matters. For example, many Cree people I have worked with at the Cree Board of Health feel that the board is a non-Cree organization and distant from Cree values in terms of its functions. Nevertheless, they are willing to try to integrate it as smoothly as possible into their society (Bearskin & Dumont, 1991).

Ethnoprofile -

The mega-hydroelectric project continues to affect the younger generation as expressed in a drawing by a Cree adolescent boy, who was very concerned about the negative effects of this project on Cree "traditional" life (Figure 6). He added green to represent the bush and blue for water and then added a large red "X" over it. He noted: "This is what Hydro is trying to destroy, but they can't because the bush is part of who we are." Below the large "X" he drew trees, animals and a

cabin. He used most of the picture plane to show that bush lifeways will persist and survive. He felt empowered after completing this drawing. He was able to frame his anger and frustration and express a narrative. He was emphatic in expressing how disastrous this project has been for his people. He mentioned how his grandparents were not consulted as the government went about destroying their land and their home. "They were asked to sign some papers and then they were relocated from Fort George to a new site, renamed 'Chisasibi.' He added, "they were given money but nothing was going to replace their home. Where they lived was suddenly taken away. The whiteman tried to take the bush away from my people, but they can't – it is our way of life and will always be." (This drawing was completed in a testing milieu, where the boy was seen twice in the context of a research study on styles of emotional expression[30].)

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[30] Cf. Ferrara (1998a).

Figure 6 – Bushlife Ways

At best, the Cree languished in benign neglect by government authorities and thus preserved some aspects of a lifestyle that were consonant with their traditions. At worst, the period after the Second World War led to massive government involvement in previously marginal lands as economic development became a major Canadian political and social agenda. The result was loss of hunting territories and the imposition of White-dominated bureaucratic institutions that aimed at establishing national control over lands, a control that rarely,

if ever, had Cree interests at heart. Nonetheless, the Cree people's ability to negotiate and adjust to subsequent repercussions testifies to their activism as well as their ability to accommodate to rapid social change with a sense of order and continuity (Niezen, 1998, p.11; Tanner, 1999; Bearskin & Dumont, 1991).

2.4 - Cree identity issues

In general, the problems of the Cree patients I have seen in art therapy often involve their struggle with their self-identity within their cultural identity as Natives living in Canada. In other words, the source of tension usually lies in the component of the collective representation in the Self. As a result of European colonialism, Indigenous people were faced with cultural and existential crises with effects still being felt after 300 years.

Ethnoprofile –

During my cross-cultural research comparing different styles of emotional expression between Euro-Canadians and Cree people, I met a 55 year-old Cree man, who was one of my Cree research subjects but not a patient. He provided me with valuable insight into the continued struggle his people experience in regards to colonialism.

From that point on, I realized how colonialism was not a thing of the past but that many individuals remain affected. He drew Figure 7 to describe his current frustration. He made sure I was well aware that the particular test I was using was heavily culturally biased. This test is the SAT9 (Scored Archetypal Test with 9 elements) and it is a pictorial measure used to assess alexithymia (i.e. the inability to express one's feelings) (cf. Ferrara, 1998a). For this test, he was asked to draw a picture using nine archetypes (water, fire, something cyclical, sword, character, refuge, animal, and a monster) and then provide a written narrative of his drawing. He made it quite clear to me that these archetypes stemmed from Western and not Cree mythology.

This man created the monster as symbolizing the European culture when it invaded Amerindian land, and the decimation of Aboriginal culture began, which was seen as something cyclical or progressive. This Cree man scored quite low on this particular scale, yet he used the scale effectively to express his anger and frustration about the colonialism he and his people continue to face and struggle with.
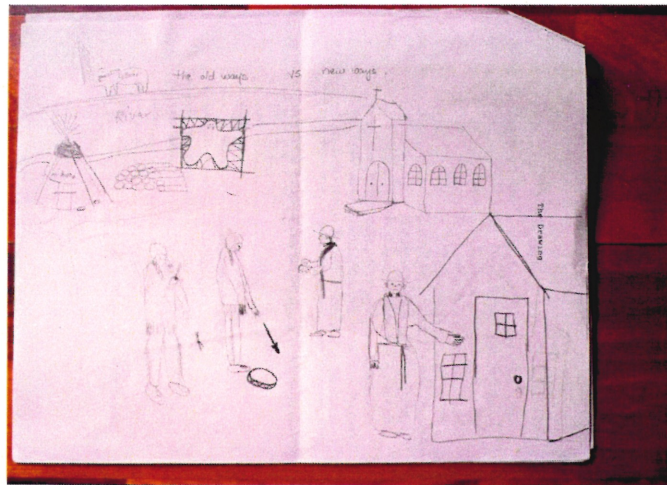
Figure 7 - "The old ways vs. new ways"

Essentially, my patients appear to experience inner conflicts related to wanting to be something they are not anymore. In other words, as noted earlier, their notion of Self is reciprocally embedded in the collectivity or the community, within which they seek a sense of belonging. However, the Cree collectivity, their identity as a group with shared traits, is constantly eroded by the negative effects of Canadian colonialism, such as the obligatory Euro-Canadian school system established in Cree communities that continues to bombard Cree

people with images of Euro-Canadianness rather than underlining Cree values and customs. The Cree collectivity is constantly changing due to Canadian colonialism. Pressures and stresses are therefore felt at an individual level as the referent "collectivity" adopts new and ambiguous meanings. The Cree collectivity is very similar to Anderson's (1991) "imagined communities," not only because traditionally the Cree had a more fluid concept of community compared to ideas in the Western tradition, but because the newly emerging Cree ideas of community are never quite realized in practice. In relation to Cree people, their "imagined community" refers to their attempts to create a Cree collective cultural identity, relying on essentialised and reconstructed notions of history (cf. Anderson, 1991; Boyarin, 1994).

Individuals struggle to come to grips with a definition -"Cree" - which was not part of "tradition" and which is politicized in such a way that it has little resonance on the local and individual level. Cree indigenous or "traditional" definitions of what it means to be human are no longer fully functional. They are now bombarded with images of Self and of group controlled by Euro-Canadians through formal schooling that opens up new options, yet many of these are hard to operationalise because many Cree feel that it forces them to polarise their lives.

The school system does not teach the Cree people how to function effectively in the Euro-Canadian world, and the values and orientations given to them are often rejected because they do not make any apparent sense to the Cree, or are not presented in a way that the Cree recognize as providing useful benefits. The school curriculum consists of the English and French languages. Reading, math and science are taught in these languages. Extra-curricular activities include hockey, baseball and film showings. According to the school officials, mostly non-Native, the curriculum is geared to facilitate the young Cree people's entry into the Euro-Canadian mainstream. Many Cree adults, who enter the work force and often times go south to Montreal or Toronto, have told me how destabilized they feel and how the values they were taught in the school system did not address Cree values, such as the importance of oral tradition, elders' teachings and bush lifeways. In essence, the elements of their composite Self - especially the Self in nature and the Self in the collectivity - are definitely missing in the curriculum. Also, many Cree believe that the high rate of suicide among Cree youth is strongly related to the destabilized sense of Self.

Furthermore, "Cree" is no longer a universally-valid (for Cree speakers) indication of a core set of values that help situate individuals

in social space. The mechanisms of integration to formally organize themselves as a collectivity have been challenged and eroded by Euro-Canadian policies. In addition, many Cree feel they cannot use indigenous definitions of Self against Euro-Canadian definitions because Euro-Canadians cannot or do not care to understand them, and also perhaps they are too distant from new realities. This suggests their dilemma: "Cree" cannot be and is not a marker of an autonomous people (and of autonomous individuals), yet it is necessary (they feel) in all definitions of the Self. As Adelson (2001, p. 299) also observed, the meaning behind "Cree" for the *iiyiyuu'ch* ("Cree people") derives from "the oral historical record and interpretations of the past as it is constituted through the retelling of stories of hunting and survival."

People are reacting differently to new pressures and stresses, such as the growing presence of Euro-Canadians and their recent commercial exploitation of northern resources (e.g. the James Bay Hydro-Electric Project that flooded much of Cree land and created hunting restrictions). According to one person, his people (Cree) used to be more in charge of their lives than they are now. He said: "(in the past) there were no outsiders telling us what to do, how to learn and when to hunt. It's different now. We're not in charge anymore." Many Cree individuals get caught in the paradox of two conflicting identities

– one is related to pre-contact Cree identity and the other is related to

the post-contact, "Whiteman-Cree." In the latter, the category of

"Cree" becomes a semiotically charged category of the Self with

political overtones. "Cree" is not only a culture of lifeways and values

but it has become a political category in opposition to the "White" or

Euro-Canadian (cf. Feit, 1986). Francis and Morantz (1983, p. 12) note

that as a result of modern political and social pressures, a

consciousness of Cree nationality and ethnicity exists today, which did

not seem to have existed in the past, largely because Cree functioned

effectively without these concepts. According to Tanner (1999), it is

only within the past decade that the Cree have fully developed a

consciousness of being "Quebec Cree," especially notable in their

opposition to the proposed Great Whale hydroelectric project in the

1990s (p. 136). This political category is part of a larger category of

aboriginality, which has become a politicized discursive field. As

Adelson (2001, p. 298) also notes, the Cree people ' are not so much

"revisiting the past" as they are negotiating and constructing a new

sense of themselves as Aboriginal Canadians' in a new, strange and

menacing political context.

Brass (1999), a Plains Ojibwa who claims Saulteaux ancestry,

defines aboriginality as a social construction that serves as "a 'dividing

practice' [i.e. dividing aboriginals from non-aboriginals] produced originally by imperial ambition and used by colonial powers when confronting 'the others' whose territory they conquered" (p.18). The Cree people along with other Aboriginal people in North America are designated by special legal status based on historical relationships developed by the colonial encounters between Europeans and the Native populations (Brass, 1999, p.18), but they have now appropriated this oppressive term, "Aboriginal," for their own ends, investing it with new meanings and semiotic referents, such as "The Aboriginal Healing Foundation" and "the Aboriginal Wellness Gathering," whose goals include supporting Aboriginal people in building and reinforcing community-based healing programs.

Alfred (1999) claims that most Native people live in a world of ideas imposed on them by others, which creates a form of internalized oppression (p.70) or what he calls a "colonial mentality". Colonial mentality, which has become part of Native construction of Self, relates to a mental state that blocks the viability of Native values and beliefs and assumes the values, goals and perspectives of Euro-Canadian society (Alfred, 1999, p.70-71). Many of my Cree patients' issues reflect this concrete problem of internalized oppression by means of a negative and conflicted self-image. When the oppression is

internalized, it results in self-hatred and it is manifested through the suicides and deaths triggered by alcoholism (Duran & Duran, 1995) and violence. Those that are deeply affected by these pressures are usually seeking an imagined collectivity or an imaginary whole (cf. Fernandez, 1986, p. 162) and they sometimes are drawn to pan-Indian symbols and rhetoric. This nationalist movement arises from the discourse of an "imagined community," which relies on essentialized and reconstructed notions of history, and it appears as an illusory inclusiveness (Boyarin, 1994; Anderson, 1991; Fernandez, 1986). Nonetheless, as Shkilnyk (1985) claims, it is difficult to assess to what extent the past is idealized, yet the nostalgia that is strongly expressed is an indication of people's ambiguous relationship to the past: that the "past" they recover in constructing politicised social identities may not be congruent with other "pasts" tied to the politics of individual memories.

Pan-Indianism is founded on a romanticized notion of aboriginality, linked to a former way of life that has disappeared, if it ever existed at all; it includes various images, ideas and themes, such as, all Aboriginals possess a special spiritual wisdom connected to nature and the environment, often referred to as Native spirituality. Pan-Indianism is characterized by an idyllic interpretation of a past

where unity reigned in the absence of conflict (Lanoue, 1992).[31] It posits a brotherhood of all Native people, a universalist position as such where particularities are not considered. It is a nationalist rhetoric and a representation of a collectivity within which the individual remains subsumed but this collectivity has very few local manifestations, if any. The pan-Indianism movement is directly related to the discourse on aboriginality, which is largely promoted by the dominant non-Native society which tends to romanticize aboriginal people and clump them together in one group rather than recognize the inherent cultural diversity within this 'group.'

Pan-Indianism informs and shapes the political rhetoric of the Cree that is sometimes manifested in the Cree Band Council and the Quebec Assembly of First Nations in order to promote the Cree people as a nation. This has had some positive results, especially in terms of the Quebec Cree people's struggle against the government plans to create more dams and flood more Cree land (Niezen, 1998, p.8). However, many of my older Cree informants believe that this movement, along with new "Cree" political organizations, represents White and not Cree ideology. A 65-year-old man told me in an

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[31] My intention here is not to offer a thorough analysis of pan-Indianism but to accentuate that it is a political discourse. For a more elaborate description of this movement cf. Lanoue's (1992) work.

emphatic and angry tone that those involved in such groups are

"government puppets talking the Whiteman talk, not Cree." The

proponents of the 'Cree movement,' as among the Sekani in British

Columbia described by Lanoue (1992), are usually from the younger

generations. They believe they need to form a Cree Nation in order to

build a stronger resistance against large-scale development and to

accommodate to rapid social change (Niezen, 1998, p.11), and this

"Nation" must in some ways conform to a Euro-Canadian model if it is

to be effective as a symbolic agent for resistance and revitalization.

From their perspective, regional administrative autonomy is not seen

as a threat to the distinct lifestyle of Cree people. What many of my

informants agree upon, both young and old, is that Cree cultural ways,

hunting, trapping, and ceremonial events, remain persistent elements

that are alive and well today.

Cultural constructions do play into the social and political

dimensions of social control and disempowerment. How the individual

is engaged in all of this is important. As Niezen claims (1998, p.11), it

is misleading to focus on domination and social pathology without

considering individual response to social crisis. The issue is not only

the imposition of social rules by Euro-Canadians on the Cree - a

political phenomenon, in other words - but, also how an individual

reacts psychologically to the mixed and sometimes contradictory rhetorical grab-bag of symbols at his or her disposal, and how tradition defines the terms of access to this cultural mix of symbols. In terms of individual responses to this cultural phenomenon, some seem unable to negotiate this access, while others seem to master the ambiguities in a way that is personally meaningful because their vision is socially accepted. Not all Cree feel oppressed. Sometimes Cree individuals are not "sick," but they know the language of the oppressed and are simply scared of the choices they must make. In this sense, many Cree individuals manifest a state of learned helplessness. Many are not taking responsibility because they never had to in the ways they must do so now – traditionally, people had limited choices in defining themselves vis-à-vis the collectivity, and these choices were essentially coherent one with the other. Several of my informants have told me they feel that they are part of the immediate cause yet the ultimate cause remains the whiteman. Thus, the cultural phenomenon or acculturative stress is different from the psychological phenomenon. Cree people, although they prize individuality and personal autonomy, have coherent rules that define the manner in which culturally-accepted expressions of stress are individualized. In other words, stress is culturally rooted, not physiologically controlled. For example,

when a Cree individual gets stressed, he/she will often direct the violence and tension inwards rather than towards others.

Along with traditional beliefs, the Cree elders have standard socio-psychological guidelines or coherent rules for the young; however, it is common practice to not impose them on the young because they need to discover the "rules" on their own. This appears to create a paradox, which has caused psychological stress particularly with some of my younger Cree patients, who meet with disapproval when their behaviour does not conform to the elders' expectations, but receive little practical guidance on how to integrate the mixed symbols defining Cree self-hood. The extent to which traditional beliefs exist among the young varies, where some are familiar with them while others are not because they have little contact with their elders.

I believe that the way stress is experienced is directly linked to notions of Self. According to Bob, my Cree informant, "the Cree Self is always connected to something else. It doesn't exist alone. Each person is like a grain of sand existing among others." This definition alludes to the composite Cree Self, where in each individual Self there is a social and natural component. What Sampson (1988) describes as an ensembled individualism, a form of sociocentrism, concords with this Cree conception of Self in that it is based on a more inclusive

notion of Self, where others are included in the region defined as Self (p.16). In other words, in this form of sociocentrism, the sense of Self is defined through the relationship and connection with others.[32] Stairs' (1992) definition of ecocentrism, with "eco-" encompassing human, animal and the environment is also relevant to the Cree notion of the composite Self. The "ecocentric metaphor" is described as "an active process rather than an entity image, and one that includes the full environment directly, rather than only via the body of human society" (Stairs, 1992, p. 120). In this form of sociocentrism, the region defined as Self includes others as well as animals and plants on which people depend and features of the landscape in which people live and move (cf. Ingold, 1996, p. 128). This type of psychology allows for multiple definitions of the Self, yet each is autonomous and on an equal footing with other social Selves. In Western society, what is dominant is an egocentric mentality, a self-contained individualism in which the Self is perceived as existing among others yet the self-other

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[32] Sampson (1988) claims that sociocentrism or "ensembled individualism" is less familiar to Westerners as a form of individualism, yet paradoxically it has greater worldwide presence. It is wrongly assumed that freedom, autonomy and independence require self-contained individualism for their realization (Sampson, 1988). However, ensembled individualism may better realize these values because when an individual's "sense of self is defined through relationship and connection, achievements will occur, not by separate actors seeking somehow to mesh their behavior together, but rather from thoroughly interdependent actors whose very design for being includes working on behalf of larger interests" (Sampson, 1988, p. 21).

boundary remains firm. Each Self is an entity separate from every other entity and from the whole group, and the emphasis is placed on self-authorship and personal control (Sampson, 1988).

Stress in Western society is often manifested differently than in Cree society. Social and political problems cause stress at the individual level more so than in the social dimension, since Western individualism is an explicit and ontologically legitimate category into which various and complex meanings can be injected. Essentially, ideological purification of available identity symbols means that the cultural mix of available symbols and rhetoric is less rich and varied than among the Cree, who privilege dreams as the means of establishing the ontological legitimacy of the individual. These dreams often involve contact with a variety of animal-doctors, and so some aspects of the Self are very complex indeed. Similar to the Cree, Hallowell (1966, p. 271) states that among the Ojibwa, dream experience is interpreted as actual experiences of the Self that in essence, function to maintain the sociocultural system. For the Cree, there is a huge gulf between personal autonomy (individuality), which is highly valued, and individualism in the form of egocentrism, which is not. In other words, the Cree are highly individualized as they value

personal autonomy and recognize individuality but individualism is not a socially-approved value.

In the West, people seem to have much greater freedom in the way in which they construct social identities, yet there is a presence of an ideologically legitimate individualism which is entirely absent in Cree society. In part, the strength of ideology explains the apparent paradox between ideologically-legitimate individualism and widespread conformity that is typically of Western modernity and now, post-modernity. Ideology does not "control" thought as such but imposes limits on the thinkable so as to reinforce institutional spaces. In turn, institutions, especially political institutions, directly control an individual's movements, thus urging conformity at the level of thought. In brief, stress in Western societies is conceived as a tension between the individual and society, and coping with it is an individual problem. The onus is placed on the individual to deal with his/her daily stresses and anxieties. The difference I noted with my Cree patients is that the responsibility to address an individual's problems is shared among the individual, his/her family members, and Cree community workers, each playing a significant role in the individual's well-being.

In Cree society while there may appear to be fewer stressors as such on the level of daily life (eg. lack of competition) there is more

stress in the ontological dimension of identity legitimacy because of

the multiplicity of signs of the new collectivity (as I described above)

and because of the weight individuals give others when defining the

Self. Integrating the composite Self was already stressful, given

contact with animal-doctors and the necessity to include the group in

some form in the Self. Problems such as substance abuse and suicide

have become serious in Cree society, and Western medicine treats

these as individual problems when in fact they involve not only the

individual Self but also the Self-in-the-collectivity. Thus, the tragedy is

also social in nature and consequently, there is a world of difference in

cause and meaning to substance abuse and suicide. Furthermore,

these problems have developed into a well-defined sub-culture that is

learned by the young as an alternative or even a primary means of

identity construction. As a result, many children and adolescents have

grown into dysfunctional adults who possess a negative self-image.

In terms of their identity issues, the paradox many are

experiencing is that they want to be something they are not anymore.

They believe there is no stable Cree identity because of the

continuation of colonialism. These individuals are engaged in an

ideological positioning of placing one collectivity and way of thinking

against another (cf. Alfred, 1999). They feel they need to adopt one

over the other; they believe they will lose their cultural heritage if they adopt Euro-Canadian values and, on the other hand, they feel that if they re-invest in their cultural heritage, they would not be able to be effective in dealing with the Euro-Canadian mainstream. This struggle directly affects their self-identity by causing insecurities and uncertainties. The goal in therapy is to find a comfortable medium to help develop a more secure Self so they can more easily integrate ambiguous identity symbols.

Many Cree people I know are fully functional in both Euro-Canadian and Cree contexts and they are attempting to resolve this tug-of-war crisis by engaging in a "cultural brokerage" (Stairs, 1992) or "dual lifestyle" (Niezen, 1998), deriving aspects of Euro-Canadian ideology and applying them to their Cree cultural base.[33] My Cree informants who are not experiencing this identity struggle are able to use their traditional knowledge, engage in rituals, and relate to Cree cosmology, and they continue to accommodate to the Euro-Canadian culture without disconnecting from their Cree cultural base. They are

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[33] Dunning (1959) addresses this problem of Native people acting as "cultural brokers" or what he calls "the marginal man" in their experience of acculturation. Dunning explains that this person is in the position of a middleman representing the Western world and playing the role of effecting change in his ethnic community (p. 122).

able to maintain and cultivate their cultural identity while acculturating to Euro-Canadian society. Many of my informants believe that their identity emanates from the past and accommodates to the present. The Cree way of life has "a long history of accommodation and innovation resulting from outside influence" (Niezen, 1998, p.7). My informants often relate to how their ancestors found essential congruences between old beliefs and missionary ideals. Problems like conflicting identities arise "when you let go of spiritual relationships and replace it with Christianity alone because you lack the foundation that is Cree," according to a Cree elder.

Nevertheless, for many individuals the transition from tradition to modernity did not lead to a form of dual lifestyle or cultural brokerage. Instead, two incompatible forms of life met head-on in all Native communities and led to conflict (Ryan, 1992). One of my Cree informants, Mary, eloquently describes this struggle in her own terms: "Culturally, I feel more like a Euro-Canadian person than a Cree person when I am around Crees. Most of my cousins are half White and half Cree but they feel Cree because they grew up in the north. Being Cree to me, you must have experienced the life of living in the community and know the language and the people. Also, being Cree is knowing the traditional life and not thinking of it as mystical, it is just the way it

is." Mary is describing how things are grounded in experiential reality for many Cree people, and she is also expressing how her sense of Self is destabilized because her "newer" Euro-Canadian identity is not grounded in a set of well-defined practices.

In Euro-Canadian society, emotion, symbols and thought processes are heavily affected by ideology. Ideology is a centralising and totalising modern value field because it shapes our perceptions of ourselves as autonomous selves vis-à-vis other autonomous selves. Euro-Canadian ideology resembles Victor Turner's (1969) concept of ideological communitas, which consists of formulated views on how people should live that underline optimal social conditions. Euro-Canadians live up to a purified, ideal social identity of the Self that is embedded in individualism in the form of egocentrism, in which the Self is the center of all things.

Foucault's concept of "technologies" in relation to power and Self is relevant to my argument here, especially his description of technologies of domination and Self (Martin, Gutman, & Hutton, 1988, p.18). According to Foucault, what he calls 'technologies of power' are essentially instruments of social control, which are recognized means by which groups control each other. Technologies of power determine the conduct of individuals, and technologies of Self relate to how

individuals are influenced to transform their bodies, souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity or wisdom. According to Foucault, these specific technologies imply certain modes of training and modification of individuals, and they are associated with domination. One's own behaviour is evaluated by the codes of the ideal Self and role behaviour is articulated to meet the demands of interpersonal situations. Lotman (1990, p. 35) describes Western culture as less dynamic than most non-Western cultures because it enforces an ideology that promotes social passivity by encouraging the tendency to acquire truth in the form of pre-packaged information. Thus, ideology is a centralising form of discourse that focuses on a single modality of experience, which in turn leads to an individualistic definition of Self.

The Cree, on the other hand, do not have ideologies as such. What they have are values and belief systems that allow for multiple starting points for processes that define the Self (because they are based on mytho-poesis) and far from constrictive (because on another level, they underline autonomy).[34] Belief systems are not necessarily ideologies. However, a society's widely held beliefs are not necessarily made coherent by ideology, and in societies without ideologies as

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[34] Cf. Lanoue (2000, 2001).

such, beliefs can be easily linked to mytho-poetic thought (Lanoue, 1998). Lotman (1990, p. 35) would describe Cree culture as more mobile, dynamic and more oriented to messages derived from a large number of cultural "texts" (such as myths), that promote knowledge. Ideology entails a centralising and totalising discourse of the Self, whereas a mytho-logical system allows multiple interpretations within a single discursive style (Lanoue, 1995). The emphasis is placed on individualized perceptions and individual experiential meanings rather than on authoritarian, controlling definitions (Tanner, 2000). The Cree individual is conceptualized as actively involved in the environment and the Self is located in a set of actions that are not necessarily meant to be congruent with one another. Individuals engage intimately with one another and moreover, with non-human beings. There is no dualism between nature and humanity, and personhood is not restricted to human beings. Rather, the human is one of many forms of personhood (Ingold, 1996). As we will see in Chapter 4, animals play a significant role in helping individuals construct their identity.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

This chapter situated my thesis subjects within the ethnographic, cultural and historical contexts because images of Cree culture become an issue for many of my patients, and the source of

tension and instability usually lies in the ambiguous representation of the collectivity in the composite Cree Self. The composite Self, which includes the individual Self, the Self in nature and the Self in the collectivity, was described. I examined elements available to Cree people who want to construct new identities using elements they and others attribute to the past. An illustration of a Quebec Cree community where many of my Cree patients and informants live was also presented.

I will now turn to how my Cree patients and informants communicate in the clinical context as well as in the bush and in the community.

Chapter 3 - Cree Styles of Communication

The following chapter will illustrate elements of Quebec Cree

styles of communication and interaction patterns, manifested both in

the ethnographic and the clinical settings. This chapter will focus on

how thoughts, feelings, and symbols are transmitted verbally by my

Cree patients and informants. In addition to speech structures, Cree

views on emotional discourse and their perception of human

relationships as well as their views of me as a therapist-healer will be

analyzed. It is vital to focus on their interaction patterns in order to

better comprehend their notions of Self and how they are instrumental

in the creation of art therapy as a ritualized space.

3.1 - Cree Interaction Patterns

Studies in the area of ethnography of speaking have primarily

focused on the analysis of verbal repertoires, defining discourse as

including all forms of verbal communication (Finnegan, 1992).

Discourse is more than mere talk to create sentences and it can

include oral forms, written texts and kinesics.[35] This focus of discourse

analysis, largely concerned with verbal communicative acts, has

consequently distorted the realities of communication in societies

where nonverbal repertoires are common, such as Amerindian

societies.[36] "Discourse is an elusive area, an imprecise and constantly

emerging and emergent interface between language and culture,

created by actual instances of language in use and best defined

specifically in terms of such instances" (Sherzer, 1987, p.296). A

specific area that will be analyzed in this thesis is the narrative

discourse of the Cree people, which is used as a communicative style

within the therapeutic context. I am concerned with how people do

things when they are speaking, writing, and creating artwork. In this

definition of discourse, we see the interplay between speech acts and

image acts, which will be elaborated in this chapter. As Darnell (1988)

argues, "the Cree case suggests that consideration of the speech-

centered model of interaction is due for some modification" (p.77).

When I first began working with the Quebec Cree people, I was

not used to their typical sarcasm, resigned laughter and indirect

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[35] Kinesics relates to the study of bodily movements, gestures and facial expressions
as ways of communication.
[36] Cf. Basso (1970), Darnell (1981), Phillips (1976), Spielmann (1998).

responses to direct questioning. I was also totally unfamiliar with their use of silence, which is often used to convey specific messages.

Once, two Cree women picked me up at the local airport in Northern Quebec. In the van, sitting beside me, was a dead beaver, his eyes staring into mine for the whole two-hour trip to the village. The women made sarcastic remarks in Cree and then translated them into English and they giggled at this "southerner's" difficulty with being so close to a dead animal. Once I accepted the beaver, their sarcasm and laughter, simply because I did not have much choice, a silence set in for the next hour. Interestingly, the message conveyed in my silence was one of acceptance of their culture-specific ways of doing things, and I soon understood their need to test me, being a "whiteman." I came to understand that silence is not considered a void in communication among the Cree, in contrast to how we Westerners see it (cf. Basso, 1970; Darnell, 1981). Similar to what Brody (1981, p. 44) describes in his work on Athapaskan hunters, I too discovered that "an awkward pause is a very rare thing among people who accept that there is no need to escape from silence, no need to use words as a way to avoid one another, no need to obscure the real." My understanding of the Cree people's interaction patterns began to develop due to encounters such as this one, and as I became more

sensitive to their thoughts, my initial, superficial perception of the 'stoic Indian' faded quickly as I came to become sensitive to other registers of communication that they use.

In Basso's (1970) study of the Western Apache's interactive patterns, he found that the Apache's decision to speak or be silent depends on the nature of their relationship to other people, and the Cree people I know are quite similar in this regard. In contrast, silence among Euro-Canadians is often cued by the social setting (for example, in funeral homes, etc.) and not by the relationships within a setting. For example, when someone is sad it is courteous and considerate not to attempt to engage him/her in conversation. In addition, direct questions designed to elicit specific responses are usually interpreted as an attempt to control another person's behavior (cf. Farkas, 1986). In fact, I have noticed that it is important to wait until people are ready to engage in a conversation before asking questions. This type of interactional strategy is the expression of how Cree people value non-interference and respect individual autonomy, which in turn, helps promote functional interpersonal relations by discouraging coercion, whether it be physical, verbal or psychological (Brant 1990, p.535). As I was also told (or warned) by one of my informants, coercion or an attempt to persuade another person is

often considered as undesirable behavior, and almost any direct

question that requires an answer is considered coercion. For example,

"how old are you?" is to us an innocuous question, but not to the Cree.

Cree people have sometimes been described as taciturn and

reserved, and there is a tendency by Euro-Canadians to relate the

absence of verbal expression with the absence of feeling. However, as

with many other Native Americans whom I have worked with, the

major function of speech is instrumental rather than expressive

(Darnell, 1988),[37] because there are other modes of expression that

are as important as speech. The amount of talk is a relatively minor

feature of Cree communication. Reticence among the Cree may be a

form of control over excessive self-expression (Preston, 1976), thus

showing how the regulation of talk is aimed at limiting personal

exposure and conserving intact a person's autonomy. Preston (1976)

claims that by Eastern Cree standards, "we [Euro-Canadians] mask our

true feelings with a conspicuous flim-flam of over-expression; that we

sometimes even confuse ourselves, as to what the real feelings are"

(p.452). Most of my Cree informants believe that talking excessively

leads to superficial expressions of one's personality. According to

them, a more limited self-expression fosters sensitivity and an in-depth

understanding of interpersonal relationships. As one Cree elder

informed me, there is no value in verbal communication if there is no

asymmetry of knowledge between the speaker and the listener.

3.2 - Hierarchy and Indirection in Cree Conversation

As in all societies, there are implicit hierarchies involved in the

regulation of talk in Cree society. However, hierarchy figures in

conversation among Cree people in a different way than with non-

Natives. In Cree discourse, hierarchy is implicit and the dimension of

responsibility plays a significant role. Hierarchies and their semiotic

'charge' are individualized and silent rather than socially-acknowledged

and they are not sanctioned by ideology, as they are in Euro-Canadian

rhetoric.

In the therapeutic context with my Cree patients, speech acts[38],

such as maintaining eye contact and expectations of immediate

response are avoided because they are seen as authoritative and thus

invoke the threat of concretizing implicit hierarchies. In brief, Native

American societies tend to avoid evoking and establishing the authority

of discourse, particularly if the discourse serves as a basis for a

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[37] During the past 12 years I have also worked with Mohawk, Ojibwa, Abenaki and Inuit people.
[38] Speech acts relate to how speech is regulated and structured. For a more developed description of the speech act theory, cf. Austin (1962) and Searle (1969).

judgement or a course of action having serious social or personal

consequences (Hill & Irvine, 1992, p.6) that would explicitly confirm a

person's power over another.

Cree discourse appears to downplay intention, yet the speakers

remain responsible for their messages. The dimension of responsibility

is concerned with the act of speaking itself; there is an allocation of

responsibility for taking on the participant role of speaker or listener

(Irvine, 1992; Shuman, 1992; Rosaldo, 1982). Attributing explicit

responsibility to the social situation would tend to grant discursive

legitimacy to implicit hierarchies and is thus avoided. Irvine's (1992)

analysis of the implicit hierarchy found in Wolof conversation is also

relevant to the Cree people I have worked with. She states that

"notions of personal responsibility, whether in talk or in any other

activity (...) are not absent, but they are qualified by the hierarchical

framework" (Irvine, 1992, p. 112). Formal speech, indirection and

delayed responses to direct questions are three important mechanisms

in Cree society, as in many Native American societies, for establishing

communicative responsibility while avoiding the formal legitimation of

authority.

Irvine (1979) illustrates formal political speech events among

the Wolof, Mursi and Ilongot natives. She describes the structure of

speech events and shows how there is more of a centralized focus of attention where only one person speaks at a time, for example, with the Ilongot. Also, different positional identities (social and personal identities) are invoked by the structuring of discourse (Irvine, 1979). Formal, highly-structured speech creates an imaginary space in which speaker and listener can disengage from the consequences of the messages (Lanoue, 1991). This space is very much akin to mythopoesis, where myth is contextualized in the form of discourse, which will be discussed in the subsequent chapter. These properties of formal speech are especially relevant to the Cree within the art therapy setting.

For example, I had once given an art therapy workshop to Cree community workers and after presenting a case study, I attempted to open a discussion with a question regarding the case. Fifteen minutes passed until someone stood up and said, "You look frustrated because we didn't answer right away. We like to take time to think before we speak, especially about something this important." After this eye-opening experience, I began to gain a better understanding as well as patience with an interaction pattern that was outside of my own comfort zone, but one I needed to adapt to in order to continue working with Cree people.

A related feature of Cree discourse is indirection, wherein speech rarely conveys explicitly what the speaker means at the level of semantic content. Cree indirect discourse reconciles both personal intentions and societal coherency (cf. Brenneis, 1987). According to Farkas (1986), the proper etiquette for many Cree people is to present deflective responses to questions, that is, responses that are indirect so that an answer is not directly given in response to a question. This indirect communicative pattern reflects a desire to not expose the Self and offend the other and it is directly related to the ethic of non-interference (Brant, 1990).

Unlike the Fiji and Afro-Americans described by Brenneis (1987), Cree "talk" does not appear to have been transformed by colonialism because indirect discourse has always been an ongoing individual and cultural practice. Indirection can also be engaged literally, as when Cree speakers answer a question directly but address their speech to a third party and not to the asker.[39] Western therapy, with its emphasis on dyadic patient-therapist relationships, may be ineffective in this context.

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[39] The significance of the role of the third person is a unique feature of Cree discourse as well as other Algonquian languages (eg. Ojibwa), and it is referred to as obviation (Dahlstrom, 1996, p.121). The more peripheral third persons are the marked obviative forms, which relate to the point of view of who is doing the seeing rather than who is doing the speaking (Spielmann, 1998).

All cultural aspects of Cree social life are geared to making sure that the structurally-produced tension between group and individual interests never erupts explicitly. This implicit individuality, which does not at all resemble the explicit emphasis on individuals in Euro-Canadian rhetoric, has as its result a discourse in which common interests are rarely explicitly engaged. The result is very often silence, a silence that may not favor the development of new strategies of political survival in the modern world because it is geared to managing conflict among autonomous Selves, not managing potential conflict between Self and the group (cf. Lanoue, 2000). In contrast, Western codes of healing, however, implicitly legitimize explicit hierarchies and a rhetoric of alienated individualism, where the doctor-therapist as the authority figure is ranked above the patient, who is seen as helpless; these codes are thus inadequate in dealing with most Cree problems. In Cree healing practices, such as those administered by Cree shamans or healers, there is a strong individualistic flavor (cf. Young et al, 1989). However, in the process, the individual is not isolated, as family members and the community play a crucial role in the treatment of the individual, just as they do in the definition of the Self among functional individuals.

3.3 - Emotional Discourse

"Emotions" in this context does not mean the full range of the biological traits of emotion (Ekman, 1984; Izard, 1977). Nor is the old Cartesian debate of the relative weight of nature or culture on emotions the issue (cf. Leavitt, 1996). Briefly, the nature-nurture debate is a false dichotomy because it does not take into account how biology and culture work together in the process of identity formation (Erchak, 1992; Hinton, 1993). My Cree informants seem to believe that emotions are both cultural constructs and products of biology. In other words, emotions are seen as languages of the Self (Lutz & White, 1986) that are influenced and shaped by culture and society, and they are also bodily expressions (Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987; Douglas, 1970; Blacking, 1977).[40] According to my Cree informants, feelings are experienced and expressed in the body, that is, they relate to the feeling by saying it is in the heart, head, or stomach, for instance. What may be elusive as a Western notion becomes a tangible one for my Cree informants because it is thought of as embodied.

For example, the Cree word that comes closest to the English term 'emotion' is *umituunaaichikanich*, which is defined as "mind and heart, thought and feeling" (Scott, 1996, p. 73). This definition is quite

similar to Rosaldo's (1984) findings on the Ilongot and to Wikan's (1990, 1991) findings on the Balinese, where emotions are better understood as "embodied thoughts." Emotions are best seen as interpretations of experience in which the body and the Self are immediately involved (Rosaldo, 1984, p. 141). Emotions *are* important to the Cree individuals I have met (c.f. Ferrara, 1998a, 1998b). However, the verbal expression of emotion may not have been developed because it may not be valued when interacting with humans. What we call taciturn and emotionally reticent may not be applicable to the Cree since they recognise few occasions in which it is obligatory to express their emotions. Now that they are being educated in the Western sense, many Cree people are learning that one aspect of the Western identity kit is the ability to express verbally a rhetoric of emotions, especially in dealing with certain problems such as alcoholism, sexual abuse and suicide (Ferrara, 1998a).

Another element in Cree Selves is clearly the manner in which Cree socialize emotions. As Briggs (1970) shows in her pioneering work on Inuit emotional expression, and I have found similarities with my Cree patients and informants, emotional and

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[40] Bodily expressions include the physical or biological sensations, body image and how the body is symbolized in a given society.

personal control regulates social life. Briggs (1970, 1998) describes

the Inuit term *isuma*, which involves reason and the regulation of

emotional reactions. Essentially, *isuma* "refers to all functions that we

think of as cerebral – mind, thought, memory, reason, sense, ideas

and will" (Briggs, 1998, p. 233). In this sense, the Inuit term *isuma* is

similar to the Cree word *umituunaaichikanich. Isuma* is regarded

among the Inuit as the sacred realm of an individual's thoughts and

emotions – a place only the individual has access to (Qitsualik, 1998).

If emotions such as anger, pain, frustration are made apparent, then

the individual in Inuit society is considered to lack *isuma* or reason

(Briggs, 1970). A well-developed *isuma* is the ability to act

autonomously and self-sufficiently, and an adult is usually one who has

isuma (Briggs, 1987, p.10). According to Cohen (1994), *isuma* is "a

way of harmonising the emotional needs of the individual with their

pragmatic need for society" (p. 36), and this is what seems to be

relevant to my Cree informants, the importance of maintaining a sense

of harmony between the individual and society, because each is seen

as implicated in the other. In this regard, their apparent 'reticence' is

better understood as an explicit attempt to reconcile the individual and

the social. In other words, it is not that they do not talk and express

themselves but that they are more cautious because words represent

power. Darnell's (1981) argument on Cree taciturnity concords with what I am saying in that speech has little to do with the speaker and more with the listener. The one who speaks must have something to say which is not known to the listener (Darnell, 1981, p. 57). Thus, emphasis is placed on the interaction between the individual and the other.

Among the Cree people I know verbalized emotions are also explicitly politicized communicative events because their rarity engages and demands an extremely high intensity of interaction.[41] As such, Cree people are generally very careful about expressing emotions, especially when the interaction is with non-Native observers. Silence among the Cree is often an appropriate response (Ferrara, 1994; Brant, 1990; Darnell, 1981) to emotionally tense situations. It is not surprising that Western therapeutic practices often see the lack of emotional verbalization among the Cree a therapeutic challenge at best, and as a sign of emotional and social crippling at worst, when in fact it is a way of defusing the therapist-patient hierarchy, especially since the Western-therapist often does not know the rules governing speech and silence.

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[41] This line of argument showing how emotions are used as instruments in the negotiation of relationships has been richly developed by Lutz & Abu-Lughod (1990).

Standard views among many educated Euro-Canadians, including therapists, suggest that the expression of emotion is 'good' because it allows the individual to avoid somatization and neuroses.[42] In fact, a fundamental premise in psychiatry and psychotherapy is that perceptions that are verbalized can lead to an enhancement of mental health (Ferrara, 1998a; Pennebaker, 1995). Many of my Cree patients stated that they often feel forced to talk about their feelings in other more conventional therapies. Verbal disclosure of feelings is not perceived as a primary criterion that leads to health. In fact, "somatization" of emotions is perceived as the norm, not something to be avoided.

The main thrust of all theories and discourse elements among Euro-Canadians suggests that verbalizing emotions is a communicative gesture whose Other is the projected Self (Leavitt, 1996). In other words, when someone verbalizes emotions there is often no real attempt to engage the Other. By implication, verbalization subverts the Other by incorporating the Other into the speaker's projected Self. Talking openly about emotions is really a conversation with one's depersonalised, objectified, and projected Self, or perhaps it is more

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[42] By somatization, I mean the belief that repressed emotions will emerge and harm the body by causing stress. Neuroses are psychic blockages that the individual may overcome by verbalizing his/her fears or conflicts.

accurate to say, with one's selves, as an attempt to reconcile different facets of various identity processes in heterogenous and highly differentiated social contexts.

This is not to say that the Cree do not acknowledge individuality; however, for the Cree, there appears to be different social and political contexts to individuality that prevent it from erupting as individualism, as described in Chapter 2. My Cree informants, as with many indigenous people I have worked with, are socially and politically incorporative societies. Incorporation refers to how the production of a common group identity subsumes and may even replace an individual identity (Turner & Wertman, 1977; Lanoue, 1995, p.7). In addition, relationships usually operate on the level of performance (eg. cooperation in hunting and gathering tasks). What is given central importance in Western society is the development of a highly individuated Self and persons see themselves as individuals rather than as parts of relationships. Among the Cree, self-hood includes interpersonal relationships, and what exists is more of a sociocentric conception of the Self, which relates to the self being dependent on the social context, as illustrated in Chapter 2.[43] The sociocentric and individualistic sides or aspects of the Cree notion of

Self are not contrasting sides but seen as both part of a balanced framework.

What I have noticed with my Cree informants and patients is that the expression of emotion initiates and confirms a social responsibility. Emotional expression is both a personal articulation and a social enactment (Lutz, 1988), and it is through emotion that links between the Self and social world can be clearly erected (Lyon & Barbalet, 1994; Douglas, 1970). Thus, there is an interplay between the individual body and the social body. The individual body refers to one's unique body image and self-identity, and the social body relates to how the body is symbolized in society and in one's social Self (cf. Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987; B.S. Turner, 1984; Csordas, 1990, 1993). With the Cree, both the individual body and social body appear to be reconciled by the politics of identity[44]: in the Cree context of social incorporation, the individual body-self becomes a social body-self, and this complementarity becomes their political practice. In other words, their recent experience of being disempowered and invalidated socially and politically by Euro-Canadian society has affected their

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[43] On the relationship between self and the social context, see Shweder and Bourne (1982); Heelas and Lock (1981); Lock and Scheper-Hughes (1990).
[44] On the concept of politics of identity, see T. Turner (1995) and Parkin (1985).

sense of corporeal embodiment[45], and their feelings of anger and

frustration are either displaced towards others, leading to violence, or

are self-directed, leading to self-destructive behavior. In such

conflictual situations, there may also be a resistance against their

social body-self. Because of the high degree of complimentarity

between the Self and others in Cree society, I believe that the

standard Western theory of frustration leading to displacement is

invalid in the Cree case (cf. Freud, 1946).[46] To hurt others is not so

much venting one's anger (due to impotence) at others, as might be

the case in Western societies, but another form of hurting oneself

when a person feels incapable of reconciling the different and

contradictory signs that define the new, political definition of "Cree-

ness."

3.4 - Human Relationships

It is vital to address how my Cree patients and informants

perceive human relationships in order to better contextualise their

social dynamics, their interactions with me as well as their perception

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[45] Corporeal existence or practice is also referred to as habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) and embodied sociality (Csordas, 1993).
[46] Anna Freud (1946) outlines a number of different defense mechanisms, such as displacement, which relate to impulses and feelings that are unconsciously transferred from the original source or person to a less threatening source.

of me as a healer. In many ways, the Cree perception of being human is related to their model of social organisation. The traditional Cree model of social relations is one based on a community of individuals organised into production groups, who work together on a seasonal basis and reform every year. The Cree social world is negotiated ad-hoc within known limits rather than by individuals adhering to a precise set of values and practices. In terms of kinship beliefs, Cree people often refer to each other by relationship terms that imply communality and co-operation (cf. D.H. Turner, 1978). Within the context of Self-as community, human relationships are formed for pragmatic reasons, to help maintain patterns of co-operation and shared residential histories. The Shamattawa Cree described by D.H. Turner (1978, p.9) show similar features, especially as regards one aspect, their way of structuring the world, in such a way that pragmatic flexibility is given free rein but occurs within a structured framework, such that flexibility in the formation of relationships never threatens the construction and stability of the collective.

The development of relationships with others is integral not only for the evolution of community life but for the individual's personal growth; these are interdependent upon each other. An individual's problems affect both his personal health and that of the community.

The Cree tend to avoid labelling a person as 'deviant' or problematic

individual because this would only foster the person's marginalization

from the community (Preston, 1991). Given what I have said about the

Cree Self reciprocally embedded in the collective, the "failure" of an

individual – in hunting, in social relationships, and in what we call

psychological equilibrium – is also the failure of the community.

Instead, steps are taken that are believed to favor the reintegration of

that person back into his/her social networks (Preston, 1991; Ferrara,

1996). For example, the first session I had with a Cree "bushman"[47] in

art therapy (Ferrara, 1996) involved his three siblings and his

community worker. They were all determined to help this individual

address his 'deviant' behavior, that is, his alcoholism and acts of

vandalism. They were also present to assess my effectiveness in

facilitating this person's healing process. If I represented a negative

influence in any way or was uncooperative with their approach, I

would have been seen as an outside source who does not promote

community strength and therefore, I would weaken their effectiveness

in helping this individual through his troubles. In terms of Cree

relations with Euro-Canadians, Tanner (1999) defines it as an

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[47] A bushman refers to an individual who lives mostly in the bush as a hunter and fisherman.

"exclusionist" approach, in that they remain guarded as they consider the possibility of incorporating outside innovations into their existing ways of doing things. Their subsequent perception of me was as a non-threatening individual because I intervened little and let them do most of the talking. As therapy progressed, they eventually considered me as an effective healer/therapist.

As I have witnessed, the Cree develop acquaintances initially, assess the potentialities of the relationship and then relate to the person according to what he or she does rather than what the person says or claims; status symbols and identity markers familiar to Euro-Canadians, such as clothes, jewellery, possessions in general, "good" manners, etc., are irrelevant to Cree interaction. Cree are relatively insensitive to our rhetorics of the Self, especially self-produced and self-referential rhetoric. For instance, I was initially perceived as a "whiteman-outsider-therapist" and once I "proved" myself by facilitating successful treatments, only then was I accepted and considered a "healer" or *minwachihiwaw*.[48] In the past, Cree models for healing were more male-centered because healing rituals were usually conducted by male elders, but female healers are becoming more common and they

are actually running healing circles and sweat lodges, once the prerogative of male healers. I worked with a Cree female healer in a halfway house for Native male prisoners and she conducted healing circles and sweat lodges with clients and co-workers. Many of my informants and patients believe that a healer's effectiveness rests not on their gender but on their ability to open a closed mind and heart. In fact, most social categories among the Cree are not coded for gender. For example, while in the bush, men usually go hunting while the women stay in the wigwam (tent) to clean, prepare the food and take care of the small children. However, it is believed that women could go hunting and the men could stay in the wigwam, which is sometimes the case. Thus, there is no highly specialized division of labor nor gender-specific roles.

The difference with interaction with my non-Native patients is that the Cree are more sensitive to what I do and relatively insensitive to the status differences that frame doctor-patient relationships in Euro-Canadian society. Another difference is that there are no ideologically-sanctioned categories for the Cree. My work is legitimated not by a particular ideology of power but because the Quebec Cree

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[48] This emphasis on pragmatic flexibility also manifests itself in the form of female healers.

community has gradually developed faith in art therapy intervention, which became an influential factor in the successful treatments that followed. My Cree patients find rhetorical coherency in the space provided by the art therapy context, and because art therapy (and the art therapist) is initially silent it is easier for individuals to incorporate me into their notion of the generalised Other, which concords well with their notion of the autonomous Self as incorporating others.

In brief, the Cree usually have a "wait and see" attitude before deciding to adopt or reject Western elements. Again, this is very suggestive of the weakness of ideological conditioning. This is not to say that the past and in particular, past experience, is ignored. On the contrary, all knowledge is experientially produced, evaluated, and, literally, embodied, to such an extent that knowledge is always keyed to the individual and his or her existential contingencies, and which is why rhetoric divorced from action is largely ignored.

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This chapter explored elements of Quebec Cree styles of communication and interaction patterns, manifested both in the ethnographic and the clinical settings. I have shown how the Cree's decision to speak or be silent depends on the nature of their relationship to other people. Hierarchy figures in conversation among

Cree people in a more implicit way as compared to non-Natives, and there is an allocation of responsibility for taking on the participant role of speaker or listener. In terms of Cree emotional discourse, I showed how emotions are important to the Cree; however, verbal disclosure of emotions is not perceived as a primary criterion that leads to health, and silence is often an appropriate response to emotionally tense situations.

Chapter 4 - Cree Mytho-Poetic Thought

Before developing my analysis on mytho-poetic thought as I witnessed it among my Cree informants and patients and how this relates to the Self and to healing, I would like to elaborate on their process of reality construction, how they seem to integrate knowledge and experience, and show how these elements influence the formation of their notion of Self and vice versa. Cree interaction patterns, their narrative and emotional discourses, and the way they perceive humans and animals illustrate their culturally patterned ways of reality construction.

I have noticed that the Cree often invoke combinations of both the so-called rational-empirical dimensions of life and what we call mythical aspects, in a semi-sacred, semi-secular fashion. Myth is conceived as logical and empirical, though its meanings are fluid and its narratives non-linear. During the past twelve years of clinical work and fieldwork with the Cree of Northern Quebec, I have been in the process of re-thinking my own ways of knowing and understanding

human behaviour, using the Cree thought system.[49] This is not to say

that I am a "wanna-be Cree," but having had such exposure to their

ways, I am in essence acculturating into the Cree culture (as I know it)

by adopting ways that feel relevant to my own experience and values.

I have moved beyond perceiving the Cree understanding of things as

merely a diverse cultural construction of reality and I am now in the

process of using it to better understand my being and the environment

I am a part of. Personally, I always felt that the Euro-Canadian

thought system in which I was socialized was limiting, reducing

experience to a singular modality or a particular classified slot.

In the Euro-Canadian society that I am a part of, mytho-poetic

thought is often seen as illogical, as producing statements that are

untestable or blatantly false, like fairy tales. I believe that this

perception only demonstrates the ideological limits that recognize only

particular kinds of logic. The symbolic aspect of Cree reality makes the

intangible seem tangible, the mythical not mystical and reality

grounded and balanced. I have found coherence in the Cree

perspective on how to draw attention to polysemic relational unities

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[49] Ingold (1996) strongly recommends that Westerners use the hunter-gatherer reality set, such as the Cree's, to re-evaluate their own way of thinking and living. Brody (2000) too believes that "there are lessons to be learned from the hunter-gatherer world that go to the core of who we are as human beings. (...) There may also be lessons and explanations of a kind, for some of the malaise and sense of inadequacy that afflict so many of us" (p. 8).

rather than focusing on simple dualities. Among my Cree informants I

have noticed that metaphor is used to explore the potential

relationship between two things, such as between human and animal,

rather than the figurative, realised relationship. According to my

informants, their reality set is not "mytho-poetic" or "symbolic," it is

simply connected to their environment and their everyday lived

experiences. From their perspective, the knowledge and poetics that

stem from myth provide great insight because they are seen as lived

reality, while conserving the power of myth to metonymically link

aspects of experience and of thought that are not causally linked by

rational and positivistic logic.

In this chapter, I will illustrate the elements of Cree reality set

and their mytho-poetic thought. I will address certain elements of

mytho-poesis, such as narrative discourse, metonymic and metaphoric

associations as exemplified in animal-doctor relationships, which

relates to contact with animals who confer messages and power on

people. In Cree reality, importance is placed on multi-sensorial or

synaesthetic experience, which relates to the process whereby a

sensation produced in one sensory realm induces the application of

another sensory realm. Thus, I will present the synaesthetic elements

of Cree reality as illustrated in one of my case studies. Throughout this

chapter I will attempt to show the salient connection between the Cree

notion of Self, their use of narrative discourse and their interpretation

of metaphysical reality.

4.1 – Mytho-Poetic Thought

Cree reality is characterized by a perception of the world in

which humans, animals, and nature all play significant roles in

transmitting knowledge orally, by rote and/or by re-enactment in

language, art, myth and ritual. A significant amount of education

occurs within the family and it is characterized by an accent on first-

hand experience and direct observation, as well as by active non-

interference on the parents' part (Berry & Bennett, 1992, p.75; Brant,

1990). My informants unanimously said that children are allowed and

encouraged to explore the world on their own terms. Such an

approach is believed to foster the development of qualities of

independence, equality, perseverance and respect, which are valued

by Cree society (Berry & Bennett, 1992, p. 76). This type of knowledge

is highly contextualized because of the intimate contact between

individuals and things. It also fosters a gradual development of levels

of abstraction, which contrasts against the cognitive values of de-

contextualization taught in the present school system (Berry &

Bennett, 1992), where knowledge is more enforced upon the individual and first-hand experience in acquiring knowledge is rarely emphasized. As a Cree informant stated, the Euro-Canadian educational system depersonalises the learning process and detracts from a communal way of learning and living. The values taught in the Euro-Canadian schools contribute to alienation and the isolation of the person within his/her environment, according to the Cree.

Scollon and Scollon's (1979, 1981) model of narrative discourse and bush consciousness of the Athabaskans in Alberta is useful here in understanding the reality set of the Cree people I have met and worked with. In Cree views of reality, the trait of non-interference in others' affairs, including that of children, is extended to include non-negotiation of personal intersubjective reality (cf. Scollon & Scollon, 1979, p.203), which refers to the internal world of the Self. In other words, an individual's inner reality is considered as a private realm to which only the individual has access. An individual exists in an unspoken state of truce with others and his/her thoughts are not scrutinized nor questioned. The individual is a central, organizing trait or aspect of "bush consciousness," which is a general term relating to the reality set or mode of thinking of many aboriginal groups. There is a high degree of respect for the individuality of others and careful

guarding of one's own individuality (Scollon & Scollon, 1981, p.15).

Individual autonomy can only be obtained to the extent that it is

granted to one by others. Thus, among the Cree, individual autonomy

may be viewed as a social product (Scollon & Scollon, 1981). The Cree

sense of Self is constructed with a definite view of the other. Although

it appears as a sociocentric conception of Self, there is also another

dimension, nature. Thus, as discussed in the previous chapter, a more

relevant category in terms of Cree psychology of individuality would be

"ecocentrism," with "eco-" encompassing the full environment, that

includes others and non-human beings (Stairs, 1992, p.119-120). Just

as the collective is implicated in the construction of the Self, land and

animals also constitute dimensions of the Cree Self. Becoming a

person entails participating in an interrelationship with the physical

environment as well as with the social world.[50] This indigenous form of

individuality allows for multiple meanings and definitions of Self, which

relate more easily to Cree mytho-logic.

What I have noticed among the Cree people is that knowledge

is formulated in concrete and pragmatic terms and it is this highly

personal and idiosyncratic, keyed to individual experiences. It is

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[50] Nuttall (1992, p. 75) describes a similar process of personal identity development
among the Inuit people in Greenland.

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conceived as the result of the individual's personal experience. Bush consciousness is characterized by non-intervention in others' lives, and foreign elements are integrated into the reality set only if they do not threaten an individual's personal view. "Respect" for others is not a moral value as it is among Euro-Canadians. Instead, it is an acknowledgement that the Self is inextricably implicated in the surrounding world, be it physical or social; harming others or the environment is harming oneself. For instance, while I was in the bush gathering berries for the first time with an informant, Sid, I was tempted to pick all the berries in sight. Sid was quickly attuned to my apparent greediness and so, he asked to just watch him. He picked berries from each plant he saw and only from those within his reach, along our path. I carefully watched Sid and picked a few berries myself. The second time we went berrying, I asked Sid why he never picked from the first plants we saw, and he responded, "the first berries you see should be respected and left alone just in case they are the last ones in the bush. They belong to the animals." He also told me that berries are viewed as *iiyiyuu miichim*, forest food and part of the pure spiritual domain of the forest.

This experience is also suggestive of the emphasis placed on an individual's ability to construct knowledge and to integrate it with the

sum of past knowledge, including knowledge that comes from the

collective-in the Self, and knowledge that comes from nature-in the

Self. Knowledge in not enforced upon people. Rather, the individual

should interpret a given experience when ready and not before

(Scollon & Scollon, 1981; Preston, 1975). The experiential

interpretation of events attaches a subjective meaning to reality (cf.

Ghostkeeper, 1996). According to Ghostkeeper, Cree "traditional"

knowledge is in contrast to Western scientific knowledge, which

accentuates that objective interpretation reveals the scientific meaning

of reality (Ghostkeeper, 1996). I disagree with Ghostkeeper's approach

because he constructs a dichotomous relationship between Cree and

Western notions. Most of my Cree informants do not view the

differences in this fashion. They do not necessarily discount Western

ways, as also seen during their first encounters with the Europeans,

presented in Chapter 2. Oftentimes, Cree people will adopt ways that

they feel are effective and necessary, such as biomedical treatments.

Many Cree believe that the experiential basis of knowledge is

spiritual and ecological, and it is adapted to perception and

imagination, where Western scientific knowledge is removed from it.

Mythological knowledge and certain forms of understanding based, say

the Cree, on empirical reality, are valid, even though many Westerners

usually discount them because in a modern world driven by technology, science seems to provide the absolute authority for all knowledge (cf. Kirmayer et al., 1994, p. 50).

Lévi-Strauss' (1966, p.14) comparative analysis of "traditional" knowledge and scientific knowledge is similar to Ghostkeeper's (1996) approach. According to Lévi-Strauss, "traditional" knowledge approaches the physical world in concrete terms, recognizing its sensible qualities, while the Western form approaches it in abstract terms, recognizing its formal properties (p.269). Traditional knowledge is defined by Lévi-Strauss as analogical thought, where analogical relationships between an individual's life and the life of nature are established instantaneously (cf. Lanoue, 2000). Although this comparative analysis may seem too black and white, what is significant is that these different perspectives fundamentally determine the type of knowledge that is obtained and each is endowed with originality, internal coherence and intellectual integrity (Lévi-Strauss, 1966). Lévi-Strauss underlines Giambattista Vico's idea that myths underlie the cognitive structures and processes that allow humans to make sense of the perceived environment (Danesi, 1993, p.49; cf. O'Neill, 1994), and this view appears pertinent in describing Cree reality. Because in

Cree reality knowledge is represented in experiential terms, it is automatically metonymised when communicated to others

This definition of the Cree knowledge system shows how it is closely linked to the physical environment as well as to the metaphysical dimension. Among the Cree there is no apparent distinction made between the physical and metaphysical dimensions. Thus, contrary to Leach's (1976) perspective, mytho-logic thought, for the Cree, does not necessarily conflict with the empirical rules of the physical environment. The Cree use of mythical symbolism is often directed toward some logic of practical, social or environmental knowledge (Scott, 1996, p.70-71). The coherence of myths depends much more on a unity of feeling than on logical rules. Many of my Cree informants believe that reality is constructed and not discovered, and it is a continuous process. As Lyne noted: "My grandparents always told me that we learn through experience and the more experience we have the more knowledge." She then added: "to understand the present we also need to listen to the stories from our past." Myth allows more truths to be "constructed" because it works on metonymy, not metaphor. Myths express images that provide a source of knowledge. The social context of mytho-poesis is that the myths are circulated among and between others as tokens of identity, and they

are used as tools to arrange and interpret life experiences and help

make transcendental realities more coherent (cf. Kirmayer, et al.,

1994; Shweder, 1990).

Cree mytho-logic thought can be best described as "a symbolic

process resting on images that are not simply reducible to verbal

articulations of experience" (Ewing, 1990, p. 268). For example, during

one of my bush experiences, a Cree informant mentioned that he

hunts the animal only when the animal is ready. Moreover, the hunter

will wait until the animal tells him he/she is ready to be given to him

and the nourishing substance of the animal is received as a gift

(Ingold, 1996; Scott, 1996; Tanner, 1979; Feit, 1973). Many of my

informants, both male and female expressed their belief that animals

are sensitive to any lack of respect shown by humans (cf. Tanner,

1999). "According to many Cree hunters, the relationship between

human beings and animals cannot be understood solely in terms of an

ecosystem model that only looks at materialistic interchanges among

life forms; for them, there are moral and spiritual aspects to be

considered as well" (Tanner, 1999, p. 126). The interpersonal dialogue

between humans and animals is metaphysical and the mytho-poetic

dimension is that qualities of personhood are assigned to humans,

animals, spirits and certain geophysical agents (Ingold, 1996, p.131).

There is a poetic sensibility, a poetic logic in Cree discourse in that

they seek aid from their imagination to explain the transcendental and

make sense of it. Their narratives and myths are not only an

embroidery of reality but a way of coping with it (cf. Hawkes, 1977,

p.12). According to Vico, the purpose of such 'poetic wisdom' is for an

individual to create accounts and myths that manifest his/her

perception of the world, and in this process the individual is also

constructing his or her Self.[51]

    Mytho-logical thought or what Lévi-Strauss (1966) preferred to

call mythical thought works with images and events that are

meaningful while providing aesthetic satisfaction while helping people

understand reality (Lévi-Strauss, 1966). I found a parallel in my Cree

patients' use of myths in art therapy and Lévi-Strauss' (1963)

explanation of the use of myth narratives in a ritual context,

specifically a curing rite among the Cuna of Panama. Lévi-Strauss

(1963, p.188) claims that the myth narrative permits the patient, who

is undergoing a shamanistic curing ritual, to cope with a psycho-

physiological trauma by providing a type of "objective correlative" for

the patient's repressed and inarticulate experience of trauma, made

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[51] For more on Vico's theories on myth and his notion of 'poetic wisdom,' see O'Neill
(1994), Danesi (1993), and Hawkes (1977).

possible by a metaphorically induced parallelism between the myth world and the patient's own experience (cf. Shore, 1996, p. 254; Lanoue, 1989). According to Lévi-Strauss (1963), during the ritual the inexpressible is sensed. Similarly, my Cree patients often refer to myths and folktales to help make sense of the conflicts or traumatic experiences that have affected them and this process somehow helps them to reframe and re-articulate their life experiences, which leads to feeling more grounded and secure. A Cree legend I have often heard is about a poor little orphan girl who was abandoned by her family and then, as she was about to die of cold and starvation, a grey bird with a white head, referred to as Whiskey-jack (Canada Jay bird), landed beside her. He proposed to save her if she would promise to give him food for the rest of her life. She promised and then Whiskey-jack grew before her eyes, told the girl to climb on his back and he brought her to a new camp where they fed and clothed her. Everyone respected her because she had a powerful guardian spirit. The girl kept her promise and fed her feathered friend and she lived for many years, until she had snow-white hair, like the bird. As one of my patients noted, this legend was told to him by an elder who had noticed the young boy's feelings of helplessness and despair and who had manifested suicidal ideation, in hopes to inspire

him. The patient told me that he believed it was a good legend to share with my other patients, who were feeling the same helplessness and despair he had felt.

4.2 - Animal-Doctor Relationships

In my fieldwork with the Quebec Cree, an example of their narrative discourse is their description of animal-doctor conversations, which are considered a very important component of the Self. Metonymic and metaphoric associations are reflected in Cree animal-doctor relationships, which are an integral element of Cree reality. A way of life of the past that is considered by many of my informants as a source of well-being is contact with "animal-doctors," an English term used by the Cree to describe animals who confer messages and power on people. Animal-doctor discourse may be seen as a new form of the traditional relationship to the past used as an instrument of persuasion (cf. Lincoln, 1989) that both modifies and maintains the Cree social formation (Tanner, 1997; Scott, 1996); in other words, this discourse has important social implications. It is an instrument of ancestral knowledge that modifies Cree social formation because the knowledge of an animal also gives a person the ability to affect the behavior of people around him. It maintains Cree social structure

because it is considered by many as a cultural template that is a mainstay in Cree society (Tanner, 1997), although it has been heavily modified by the vicissitudes of modernisation, and can thus be seen as only a partial representation of the past (Lanoue, 1999). In other words, these individuals are reconstructing the past and taking what they need in order to develop a more balanced sense of Self. By maintaining their belief in animal-doctors, which is a commonly shared belief according to my informants, there is a link to the "past" ways of life that define the Cree as a collectivity. It also reflects the characteristic trait of Cree mythic discourse that encourages the maintenance of harmony with the natural and spiritual worlds.

For many Cree individuals, usually male[52], the basis of Cree identity is the psychological sensibility to 'conversations' with animal-doctors, and these are as private as they are intensely moving. Women are not excluded from this relationship to animals, and their role entails "the maintenance of the proper negotiation between the spirit world and the world of the Cree" (Adelson, 2000, p. 69.). In the bush camp, both women and men are expected to demonstrate the same respect towards animals (Adelson, 2000). The men usually hand

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[52] These relationships usually occur among Cree males, both young and old, because traditionally this spiritual contact was between the (male) hunter and the animal. I have, however heard from my Cree informants about female encounters with animals in the bush who were sent on a vision quest.

the women their hunting bags, which includes their kill, and the women unpack it in silence (Tanner, 1979). The hunter who has made a significant kill (eg. bear, moose, caribou or beaver) does not openly brag about his success. Although they are proud, there is a taboo placed on bragging about their success. Women help the men lay out their kill for others to admire. Their intense curiousity, excitement and pride are expressed nonverbally, for example, by laying out particular parts of the game (Tanner, 1979). According to my informants, the silence that occurs during the return of the kill is primarily to demonstrate respect towards the animals, who gave up their lives for them. Respect for the animals is a constant throughout the hunting experience – from the initial encounter, the kill, the return to the camp, and the cleaning of the killed animal to the feast that follows. As described by Tanner (1979, p. 180), these ritualized aspects assure the continuity of the animal world, as well as that of the people.

A 46-year-old female patient related to her role as a woman in the bush as being essential to maintaining a balance between "this world and the spirit world of the animals." She described this after drawing Figure 8, which depicts how she would prepare a fire to smoke goose meat. As I noticed while in the bush camp, all the women present, young and old, were keeping busy maintaining a

clean dwelling in the wigwam and they derived great pride from the fish they had hung to be smoked. Many Cree believe that if the dwelling is not clean then the animals will not want to enter it because it is unworthy of their presence (Adelson, 2000, p. 69). As Scott (1996, p. 82) also notes, when a goose is killed it is later received as a guest into the lodge by the women of the hunter's household, thus illustrating the important role a woman plays in the bush.
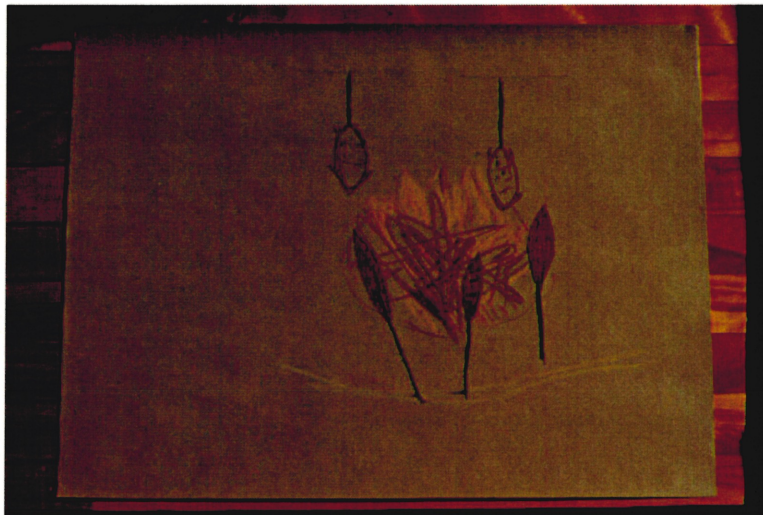

Figure 8 – Smoking Goose Meat

The communication between humans and animals is silent. This interpersonal dialogue is "integral to the total process of social life wherein both human and animal persons are constituted with their particular identities and purposes" (Ingold, 1996, p.131). According to

Cree perspective, the social interaction between humans and animals

is made possible because animals live in social groups or communities

similar to those of humans, yet they remain superior to humans

(Tanner, 1979, p.137-8) because for example, animals survive without

tools and language. Through these conversations and interactions,

humans receive the nourishing substance of animals as a gift. There

are overlapping dimensions of resemblance and difference among the

categories of humans, animals and the interactions between them,

which are also reciprocally defining (Brightman, 1993). "[T]he

existence of particular modes of interaction is based on the understood

character of the animal; reciprocally, the character of the animal is

built up in terms of the role it plays in human social life" (Brightman,

1993, p. 34).

Contact with animal-doctors is an intensely private experience

for many Cree and is therefore difficult to study. It appears inherently

dangerous since animals are believed to be superior to humans as a

class of living entities, yet they are both part of a network of

reciprocating persons (Scott, 1989, p. 195). Animals are seen as

superior in the sense that they can be role models for humans, and so,

respectful activity towards the animals is enhanced. When respect is

demonstrated towards the animals, then the animals are more ready

to give themselves to the hunters. Also, the sharing of animal gifts among hunters and their household is an important dimension of respect for the animals (Scott, 1996, p. 82). Both of these propositions allude to the human-animal reciprocity and social-ecological principles of Cree knowledge.

When these animal-doctor relationships are disclosed in the clinical setting, images of the animal often appear in artwork, usually with the intention, conscious or unconscious, of articulating and recording a person's dreams of the animal or to describe a past experience with an animal-doctor. Although this information on animal-doctors may be considered fragmentary and problematic because it mostly surfaced in a therapeutic setting and not in a "normal" context, I believe it provides an enriching ethnographic account that should not be dismissed. The descriptions of animal-doctor relationships may be the Cree individuals' reconstructions of the past, which allow them to face the future. In this form of narrative construction, they may be using a motif of the return to the forest. However, I believe that the therapeutic space becomes an appropriate context for revealing personal engagement of a present institution that is not normally discussed openly.

Many Cree people experience modern animal species and their attributes as icons of the protoanimal characters in myth, resembling them in name and physical and behavioral traits (Brightman, 1993, p.57).[53] My Cree informants also believe that there was a time when the proto-animal giants of myth hunted and ate people. Through time these animals transformed and evolved into their present form, yet their power remains. These proto-animal giants of myth are usually positively portrayed and are said to have given to humans the use of fire, tools, and other aspects of culture.

When an individual becomes possessed and believes he has the power to eat other humans, which usually occurs in the form of dream visits by the cannibalistic spirit referred to by the Cree, like many Algonquians, as "Windigo" or *atuush* (Marano, 1982).[54] Unlike the proto-animal giants of myth, *atuush* is monstrous and ethically sub-human. I have not actually met anyone who experienced the Windigo phenomenon firsthand but I discussed it with individuals who had seen it in others. In these cases, the victim was usually treated by a shaman, who administered Cree medicines from plants and trees. I

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[53] Although Brightman's (1993) works deals with the Western Woods Cree of Northern Manitoba, specifically the Rock Cree, his study on human-animal relationships is relevant to my observations of the Northern Quebec Cree.

[54] The Cree people form part of the linguistic group known as Algonquian, which also include the Ojibwa, and the Innu. This 'family' of hunting peoples spoke a dialect of what linguists refer to as the Algonquian language (McFarlane & Haimila, 1999).

was told the individuals were not marginalized mainly because the people around them believe their condition is real. In Ridington's (1990) comparison of the Athapaskan and Algonquian's belief in a cannibal monster, he shows that the Athapaskan belief in Wechuge and the Algonquian's belief in Windigo actually are similar, and that these beliefs are very ingrained in the values of each group. "Both Algonquians and Athapaskans share a common mythical background of belief in giant person-eating animals, a transformative culture hero, and some form of association between supernatural power and the eating of creatures who are sentient and volitional" (Ridington, 1990, p.162). The expression "windigo" refers to a cannibalistic monster or ghost that haunts human settlements, and it has been reported by a number of authors (Jenness, 1977; Marano, 1982; D.H. Turner, 1978), who have often considered this phenomenon as a psychological weakness and a culturally patterned form of psychosis (Ridington, 1990, p. 160). The person possessed by the Windigo spirit acts like a cannibal monster with a compulsive desire and craving for human flesh (Ridington, 1990, p.180). Windigo behavior is believed to be genuine by the afflicted individual and those around him.

Dreams are important vehicles by which humans communicate to animal-doctors and keep alive a mytho-poetic approach to

knowledge, like these 'conversations.' Images are found in dreams and they may be kept as private experience and without word form (Preston, 1982, p.305). As Hallowell (1966, p. 271) claims in his description of the role of dreams in the Ojibwa culture, which is also relevant to Cree people, "imaginative processes linked with traditional values play a vital role in psychocultural adaptation." Dreams are also interpreted by Cree individuals as "actual experiences of the Self" (Hallowell, 1966, p. 271). Many informants told me that their continuing belief in sorcery is one reason Cree people place emphasis on their dreams. Several Cree men and women have told me how they use their dreams and powers to help each other through illness, other troubles, and to hunt better to feed their loved ones.[55] Dream revelations are often used to predict animal behavior and improve hunting success (Niezen, 1998).

Essentially, animals are ascribed intellectual, emotional, and spiritual characteristics that in many respects parallel those of humans (Tanner, 1979; Scott, 1989; Brightman, 1993). It is important to note, as noted by Preston (1975), Tanner (1979) and Scott (1989), that animals are not necessarily anthropomorphized natural forces, which would assume the primacy of human beings; this is categorically

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[55] Cf. also Brightman (1993, p. xii).

rejected by many Cree people. From the Cree perspective, both

animals and humans are different forms of personhood, sharing a

common existential status (Ingold, 1996). Cree also believe animals

have dual forms of existence, the physical and the transcendental,

spirit forms. The physical attributes, that is, arms, legs, fur, and face

have evolved through time but the spirit form remains the same.

Humans connect with the atemporal dimension, that is, the

transcendental spirit-form of the animal and not the corporeal

dimension. Thus, humans make contact with the invisible rather than

the visible realm. Cree men who want to be successful hunters seek

knowledge from animals by contacting this invisible dimension (Scott,

1996).

"In certain ritual contexts, the identity of the hunter merges radically
with that of the animal, a merging accomplished through body-spirit
reciprocity. [...] In a dream, the goose may be a guardian of the
hunter's power and essence and may protect him from sorcery.
Throughout his life, the hunter receives the gift of geese, and at a
hunter's death, it is often a goose that represents his soul on its
journey from this life. [...] The hunter's experience of animals as
interpretants of his essential self renders all the more poignant the
inevitable separation of hunter from prey, and all the more compelling
the morality that joins them in the reciprocity of life-giving and life-
taking. The transcendence of this tension ... is the experience of the
sacred" (Scott, 1996, p. 84).

This analysis of the animal-human reciprocity illustrates how animal-

human relationships become instrumental in the metonymic

construction of Self (Lanoue, 2000), which essentially relates to how my Cree patients incorporate their experiences with animal-doctors in their construction of a new sense of Self, especially in relation to the embodiment of the Self-in-nature.

Similar to some Northern Athapaskan peoples (Desgent & Lanoue, 2001; Mills, 1986; Goulet, 1994a, 1994b; Moore & Wheelock, 1990), my Cree informants also believe animals have special abilities on which they depend to live, and they give humans only the powers they no longer need. "An animal chooses someone to receive these leftover powers, a person who has treated the animals with respect" (Goulet, 1994a, p.159). With these powers, one's life is enhanced. For instance, hunting prowess is a sign of successful contact with animal-doctors (Tanner, 1979). One becomes familiar with his/her animal helper through a personal and private encounter with the animal. Animals are believed to understand a hunter's state of mind and they give themselves only to people with whom they had made contact through dreams (Tanner, 1979).

Animal-human "dialogue," which is silent, is considered much more significant than dialogue with humans. As Scott (1989) explains, "animal behavior can become a model for human relations" (p. 198). Human conversation is of a much lower order because humans play

only a small part in the universe and they must use words, learn language explicitly, etc. Emotions are engaged more with animal-doctors and emotional extremes are avoided because they upset the equilibrium. Many Cree people believe that the public manifestation of strong emotions that lead to social conflict also cause animals to cease contact with humans. Some of my patients as well as other informants have said that the loss of contact with the animal-doctors and the lack of harmonious relationships between animals and humans are the root of many of the problems facing the Cree today. Some Cree elders I spoke with believe the animal-doctors have retreated into the bush or have gone away (cf. Johnson, 1988; Smith, 1973; Storm, 1972). These elders also feel that they are now in a state of disequilibrium because the connection is lost.

Animal-doctors or helpers may be more familiar to the elders than to the younger generation in Cree society. However, I have met with young people who have had encounters with animal-doctors. These young individuals have lived in the bushcamp more than some of their peers and they also maintained close ties with their elders. As among the Dene Tha (Slave) (Goulet, 1994b; Mills, 1986; Sharp, 1988; Smith, 1973), some Cree parents continue to encourage their children to go to the bush to find their animal-helper. In fact, some

interpersonal, interfamilial conflicts are still handled in part by recourse to animal-doctors. An example of this process among the Cree was a six-year-old boy who was in residential treatment for his anti-social behavior. While in treatment in Montreal, 750 miles away from his northern Cree village, this child developed suicidal tendencies. His parents lived in the bush throughout the year. When I met with them and his Cree community worker, they discussed this boy's need to return to the bush to find his animal helper. With this in mind, as his primary therapist, I made the recommendation to the agency that this boy be removed from treatment and the school system and that he return to the bush. My recommendation went against the agency's regulation to maintain the child in the school system. This regulation is also imposed on the people in the northern communities and many Cree people feel that the children are forced to attend school and often miss out on the bushlife. This case exemplifies how this regulation could become a source of tension. While in the bush with his family, this boy's suicidal tendencies disappeared. According to his family members, this child's quest was complete as he connected with the natural and animal worlds.[56]

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[56] In several Cree and Ojibwa community schools in Northwestern Ontario, affected by high suicide rates, I helped the people develop programs that involved extra-curricular bush activities for the students. Evidently, these programs helped decrease their suicide rate significantly.

Thus, in contrast to the Sekani, an Athapaskan group of

northwest Canada studied by Lanoue (1999), many Quebec Cree

continue to initiate contact with their modern spiritual embodiments

and their relationships to animals have involved profound connections

that empower them. My patient, Tom (cf. Ferrara, 1996), actually

described an encounter he had with a caribou, initially in a dream and

then in the bush. He symbolized this experience in Figure 9. Tom only

drew this picture after his encounter. He took two full sessions to

complete this piece, from which he derived a great sense of pride.

Tom had placed it in his room as a reminder of his encounter and the

gift he received from the caribou. He expressed that this interaction

actually made him a better hunter and also put him more in touch with

ancestral spirits, depicted in Figures 10 and 11. These drawings

illustrate the day spirit and night spirit of the bush camp, respectively,

and they both represent ancestors of this particular bush camp. Tom

believed that his dreams had direct implications on the subsequent,

successful bush activities, both his own and that of his kin. Also, Tom

said that the caribou helped him to connect with his ancestors,

especially after his father had passed away. The caribou

gave him the strength to carry on as a skillful bushman. According to

Adelson's (2000) description of animal spirit, *mischinaakw*, Tom's

hunting success was because the animal spirit of the caribou lived within him. In one of our sessions, Tom had referred to *pihkutiskwaauu,* "the Lady Spirit of the Caribou," which according to Cree animal taxonomy, belongs to the highest order of spirits in the hierarchy of animal, human and supernatural beings (Adelson, 2000, p. 69).[57]

Tanner (1997) recently noted that the younger generations of the Cree may want non-Cree people to believe that animal helpers do not exist as they did before. They simply refuse to talk about their encounters in their private world because they see this as a violation. [58] They develop this form of resistance because their cultural beliefs have been threatened and some magico-religious customs, such as this one, have been invalidated or criticized by Whites.

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[57] As elucidated by Adelson (2000, p. 69), the hierarchy of power is associated with three important, interdependent elements: type of habitat, type of locomotion (four paws, flight, swim) and temporal-spatial distribution (seasonal migration).
[58] In my work, I usually ask my informants' permission to record notes on their accounts of encounters with animals. Sometimes they ask that parts of the conversation remain private (cf. Goulet, 1994b).

Figure 9 – Tom's Caribou
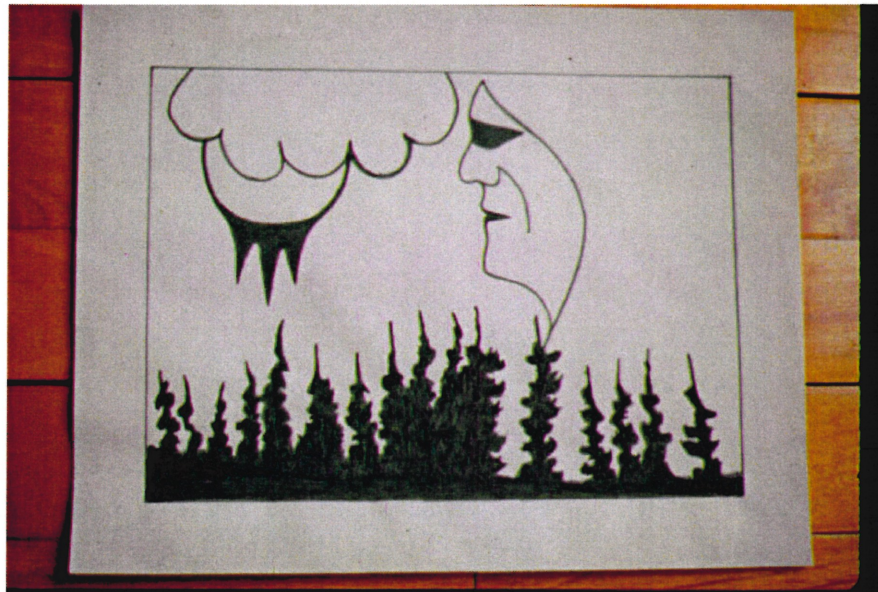
Figure 10 – Tom's Day Spirit

Although the associations of people to the bush may now be much weaker than in the past and this particular way of life may be practiced by a Cree minority, Tanner (1997) believes human-animal-doctor relationships remain common in Cree society today, yet there is a reluctance to talk about them.

In addition, the Cree individuals I have worked with may have chosen the motif of the return to the forest to regain a sense of self-worth through these affirmations. This phenomenon plays a significant

role in the image the Cree want to create and project to the Euro-Canadian world. I believe it also alludes to the problem of hierarchy, which is "vertical" in the eyes of many.

Figure 11 – Tom's Night Spirit

In other words, the representation of hierarchy is usually perceived as one with a vertical and social orientation and the territorial representation as more horizontal and spatial. It may not be that surprising that the impossibility of resolving the "vertical" conflict between the Euro-Canadians and Crees is projected "horizontally" onto the "friendly" forest, where the constant struggle for recognition is non-existent, thus, resulting in individuals feeling more competent

(Lanoue, 1989, 1990). Perhaps what they would like non-Cree people to see is that they identify themselves with nature and animals because it elicits a positive image of themselves. However, many Cree people feel that they do not necessarily need to "return" to the bush because they feel they never left it. They believe they are in the process of maintaining certain cultural patterns that they are combining with selected Euro-Canadian traits.

This type of experiential interpretation of behavior invokes a subjective meaning of reality that creates an individual mythical space. In this space, things that cannot normally be experienced become visible, especially the transcendental spirit-form of the animal (Lanoue, 1999, p.2). Other aspects of the Cree Self are also instrumental in their projection of this image. It is important to note that Cree individuals only explain their encounters with animal-doctors to me once I have shown my understanding and when they feel that their beliefs are not threatened. This suggests that these contemporary narratives differ from the traditional narratives that describe the mythical past because there is a much stronger element of self-affirmation in contemporary narratives.

Even if in the context of art therapy, this discourse involves the creation and projection of positive images, it often entails the

expression of imagery that is highly emotionally charged for the Cree. Although the therapist-patient relationship may contribute to structuring these narratives (Schafer, 1981; cf. Irvine, 1982; Besnier, 1990), they are also expressive of the implicit hierarchical dimension of Cree speech, which, as I have pointed out above, is somewhat problematical for the Cree. These narratives probably reflect the same ambiguity. Because animal-doctor-human relationships are said to take place only in the transcendental dimension created by the metonymic shifts of mytho-logic (cf. Desgent & Lanoue, 2001), the narratives describing these relationships take on a mythic quality. By transcendental, I mean that the animals do not actually talk but communicate with and confer power to the Cree individuals by metaphysical means, as we would describe it. Cree people say they "just know." The narrated stories are understood to have originated as discourse about actual events, either related by eyewitnesses and handed down through the generations or learned about in dreams (Brightman, 1993, p.57). They are not subject to verification or measured and evaluated in terms of experiential or empirical reality, and so are reified and present themselves to their Cree creators as impersonal and "objectively" true, thus reinforcing their identity choices.

Through this mythic form of thought, the individual constitutes

behaviour by reference to mythical guidelines (cf. Korovkin & Lanoue,

1988). In fact, my informants say that myths address important truths

about the human experience in society. As "true" statements, these

myths generate meaning and coherence of certain life experiences that

may otherwise be inexplicable, such as the conflict of identity choices

facing the Cree. The process of objectification of these narratives

allows them to become highly individual, because what is "objectively"

true is "universally" true, and what is "universally" true must be true

for each individual. Because these narratives are believed to be based

on lived experiences, they become more meaningful for each

individual.

A case example is Luke's experience of killing his first goose.

When he turned eleven years old, he had gone into the bush and he

had a "conversation" with a goose. According to Luke, who happened

to be in the final stage of therapy with me at this time, the goose told

him he was ready to be killed by him. The goose then flew overhead

and Luke shot him down. For many Quebec Cree people, the killing of

the first goose symbolises the entrance into manhood for young

adolescent boys. Luke was aware of this and he was thrilled about this

important life experience. He had always heard about it since his

parents are among the few who actually live in the bush 8-9 months of the year. Luke was eager to attend art therapy to tell me all about his experience and to draw it (Figure 12). He also described the ritual that followed in his bush camp, with the goose head displayed in the centre of the wigwam (Figure 5), and his family feasting and eating the roasted goose.

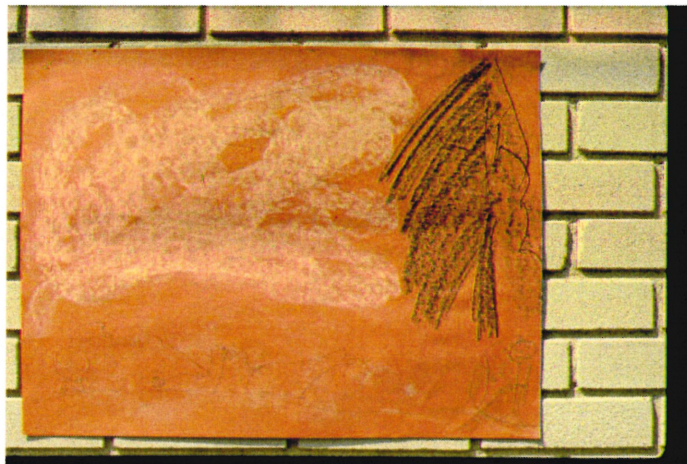Figure 12 – Luke's Killing of the Goose

Luke drew himself in the blind in the bottom right-hand corner with the goose he had killed.

Luke's experience characterizes the transcendental type of conversation between humans and animals and the reciprocity of life-giving and life-taking (Scott, 1996). On the experiential level, Luke subjectively engaged in the metaphysical reality of human-animal

conversation, making the mythical seem concrete. The experience was embodied and then a narrative was created. In art therapy, the narrative was verbalised and visualised in a form of a drawing. Luke's sense of Self became inseparable from the narrative that encapsulated the diverse aspects of his personality into a single meta-narrative. What was generated through this narrative was a public Self that was accepted by his family and peers, after many years of not having been allowed in the bush due to aggressive behaviour and having been shifted between twelve different foster homes. It also highlighted how he had gained self-acceptance and understanding as a Cree individual. He had also accepted his hearing impairment as he wore his hearing aid on a regular basis, thus diminishing his frustration and subsequent aggressive behaviour. Luke was definitely empowered by this animal encounter. After two and a half years of residential treatment, Luke returned home to attend school and remain active in bush life rituals and activities.

4.3 – Narrative Discourse

Cree mytho-poetic reality involves using narratives to communicate one's perception and understanding of the world. The narratives that surface in art therapy, whether evoked by the artwork

created by the patient or not, become vehicles for the individual's search for and definition of Self. In both clinical and non-clinical settings with the Cree, I have noticed there exists an interplay between speech acts and image acts[59] in their discourse, which often entails the expression of narratives. Bakewell (1998) defines image acts as actions, visible speech acts that are not marginal to human communication (p. 30). The images created and the body gestures of the Cree people and patients I have worked with are as important as their speech utterances, if not moreso, since nonverbal repertoires are more common than verbal in Cree society. In art therapy, the images become a source of knowledge for the patients. Narratives expressed in a mythic form become experiential knowledge, which is retained because they are meaningful to the patient.

According to Preston (1975), Cree narration serves to report meaningful events that may sometimes be remembered more as visual images than as words. Cree names are also quite descriptive. As Rob eloquently explained: "My name is *Naeepuuskumkawppaow,* which was my great-grandfather's Cree name. I am not the only one who holds his name. It means "Caribou Standing," looking over his shoulder

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[59] A phrase coined by Bakewell (1998), image acts essentially refer to the use of visual metaphors or iconic representations.

at the herd. It is a scene in nature where the lead caribou is the protector of the herd. He is in front, and as the caribou migrate, he periodically stops, looks over his shoulder to see if the others are safe, and continues to walk again." According to Rob, women's names refer to good and beautiful things in nature, like flowers, seasons.

Rob's description of his name, "Caribou Standing," illustrates the importance placed on the Cree composite Self – the Self in nature (the caribou), the Self in the collectivity (the herd), and the individual-in-the-Self (Rob), and how all knowledge is associated to one individual. Rob stressed that there can be no leader of a herd without the herd, but it is noteworthy that he identifies himself as looking back at the herd and not ahead into the "unknown," as Western representations of leaders sometimes suggest. In relation to the Cree composite Self, if the Self is not well grounded in the collectivity, the whole Self becomes unstable. Rob's name (like many Cree names) also exemplifies the interplay between speech acts, the act of speaking and image acts, the use of visual metaphors and how they function together to provide the listener with a comprehensive perception of the event. Images are more of a presentation than a re-presentation (Bakewell, 1998, p. 22). In other words, the name "Caribou Standing" does not simply relate to the caribou or representative of the caribou but rather to an illustration

of a specific behavior or role of the caribou as the protector of the herd. Both systems of communication, that is, speech acts and image acts, coexist and are co-dependent in Cree narrative discourse. This example also shows how Cree names possess a mytho-poetic quality, carrying what Meletinsky (1998, p. xix) would refer to as "a mythological inheritance."

As Sapir (1921, p.228) noted, "single Algonquian words are like tiny imagist poems," which also applies to Cree narrative discourse. For example, in a Cree folktale I have often heard, entitled 'Why the muskrat's tail looks the way it does,' there are several words that once translated become a complete and almost exact description. The word, *miyuuskamiyik* relates to the time during spring when the ice begins to break up in the water, one could still walk on the ice if one was very careful. This is a manifestation of how some words are used to create concise images to assure the message is conveyed as precisely as possible. It also demonstrates how the stories expressed are iconic. In Cree narration, the significance is not only placed on the narrative itself but on the individuals, animals, and events described.

Narratives are seen as versions of reality and partial representations of the world as the individual knows it.[60] Ochs and Capps' (1996) definition of narratives as verbalized, visualized and/or embodied framings of a sequence of actual or possible life events is relevant to Cree narrative discourse. Cree narratives often integrate two or more communicative modes, such as visual representation, gesture, facial expression and physical activity that can be combined with talk, song or writing to convey a tale. What are considered as meaningful events worth communicating are often conveyed to others in a storytelling fashion rather than explained in the form of simple facts.

Cree elders often spoke to me as well as to others through visual metaphors so as not to impose a view of the world on those who listen to them and also attempt to personalize mytho-logic thought (cf. Darnell, 1981,1988). Moreover, verbal messages are validated by accumulated life experiences, which are largely non-verbal (Darnell, 1988). For instance, when I was in the bush with a Cree friend of mine, I asked if he was going to set snares for rabbits. This question triggered a descriptive narrative rather than a direct response

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[60] See Ochs and Capps' (1996, p. 21) for a definition of narratives of personal experience.

to my question. He said he was 6 years old and it was a cold autumn

day, when he followed his father into the bush, listening closely to the

sounds they were making as their feet hit the ground. He had left his

mother in the wigwam cleaning and smoking fish and taking care of

his younger siblings. His father stopped in his path, took a deep breath

and told him that before you go hunting or setting snares, you go into

the bush and ask the animals if they are ready to be hunted. He

described the area in the bush in which this conversation took place,

the scented pine trees, the sun coming through the trees, the smell of

winter approaching. It seemed like he was trying to recreate the

location of this important memory. The preceding week he had asked

a rabbit if he was ready and it answered that it was not. Thus, he was

just going into the bush to pick berries.

The images used in Sid's narrative were vivid and emotionally

charged. When I wondered about the communication he had with a

rabbit, he said that what he actually spoke to was the spirit of the

rabbit. Interestingly, this narrative indicates how many Cree people

embrace animals rather than excluding them, as described above, and

the hunting events are experienced and described as ongoing

instances of social interaction (Brightman, 1993, p.2). Moreover, in the

story above, we see how the Self is inseparable from the narrative,

which is characteristic of narrative constructions (Kerby, 1991). Sid's notion of Self is given content and embodied by his individual experience. In narrative constructions such as Sid's, self-understanding is dependent on the coherence and continuity of one's personal narrative (Kerby, 1991, p. 6). As exemplified in Cree narration, narratives are fundamental to one's conception of the world and one's sense of place within it (cf. Kerby, 1991; Ricoeur, 1984). In regards to Cree narration, Brightman (1993, p. 57) remarks that the narratives and the persons and events they describe are alternately signs of one another, which shows how they are all metonymically linked. In other words, in Cree narration, we see how different levels of experience remain contiguous.

4.4 – Metonymy and Metaphor

Metonymy and metaphor are characteristic elements of Cree narrative discourse. Metonymy involves taking one trait of an entity to represent the entity as a whole, whereas metaphor contains an implied comparison focusing on the similarity of attributes between two entities (cf. Lakoff, 1987). Metonymic associations highlight one aspect of an entity by decomposing the totality of the object and singling out one of its attributes (Fernandez, 1991). According to Fernandez (1991,

p. 195), metonymy is highly individualized and it is assembled and

disassembled according to particular experience and circumstance. In

relation to my patient in art therapy, Tom, oftentimes his imagery

involved a move from a part to a whole – the part relating to an

element in his artwork that symbolized his Self as a whole. An example

of this process can be found in Figure 13 where Tom drew a rabbit and

a lynx placing emphasis on an X-ray view of both animals.[61] There is a

sense of the inside and of the outside of each animal figure, and both

dimensions have been combined into one entity. Interestingly, Tom's

artwork, as seen in this drawing, illustrates features commonly found

in Algonquian artwork, as described by Warner (1978). What is evident

in Tom's work is a pronounced emphasis on line and form with an

absence of background and the emphasis on x-ray vision, or the

drawing of internal organs. Warner (1978, p. 76) notes that for

Algonquian people, as hunter-gatherers, "the concept of showing both

internal and external aspects of a figure in a painting seems to be

natural enough."

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[61] The order of the figures representing Tom's artwork in this paper does not reflect the actual order he created them in. Some of his artwork was created during our sessions while others were made outside of our sessions.
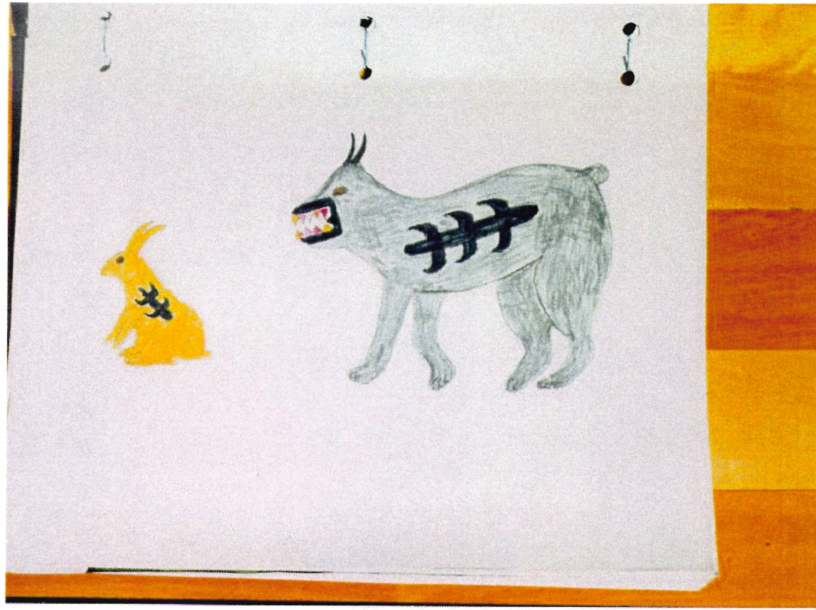
Figure 13 – Tom's Rabbit and Lynx

Figure 14 – Tom's Bush Cabin

Tom's interpretation of this drawing (Figure 13) was that it represented his need to go within to try to sort the fragments of his Self, the chaos within. He had created this drawing while he was grieving the death of his father and also dealing with his mother's hospitalization and diagnosis of cancer. For the first time in his life he felt alone and misunderstood by everyone around him, and he was living in the community, a foreign place, away from home, the bush. Tom's house in the community was used as a safe haven for the alcoholics in the area. As a result, in order to feel accepted by his peers, Tom began drinking and abusing alcohol, which led to his aggression towards others and vandalistic acts in the community. At this point he was waiting for placement in a residential treatment center in Montreal – another foreign place – for treatment for his alcoholism and for him to attend sign-language school. This drawing (Figure 13) depicted a transition period from a focus on the external in previous drawings (Figure 14) to an emphasis on the internal. For Tom going within was less anxiety provoking than the external chaos surrounding him, and so he would use his drawing journal that I had given him as his sanctuary. He felt that he needed to address his inner insecurity and feelings of despair primarily caused by the loss of his father and from having been placed into foreign surroundings.

Tom often expressed his connection to the animal world in his artwork. A characteristic of Cree reality in general and Tom's in particular, is that the fundamental basis for self-understanding is the metaphoric analogy between the human and animal domains (c.f. Tilley, 1999, p.50). In Tom's imagery, he would use animals to draw elaborate pictures of his Self. Human categories and animal categories are metonymically linked, yet metaphor is used to reveal the potential relationship between two things rather than a figurative relationship. Used as models for understanding the world, metaphors are pervasive both in thought and in action (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The Cree disposition, as seen in Tom's case, appears to include the assumption that connections among people, animals and other entities exist, both in the physical and metaphysical dimensions (Scott, 1996; Ingold, 1996). As Ingold (1996) argues in terms of the metaphoric associations made between humans and animals, "the force of the metaphor is to reveal the underlying ontological equivalence of human and non-human components of the environment as agencies of nurturance" (p.134). Similar to Scott's observation (1996, p. 72), I have also noticed among my Cree informants that they tend to explore the nature of the differences between human and non-human entities, whereas the Western conventional attitude is to assume fundamental

differences rather than possible connections that are to be explored. Metonymic and metaphoric analogy between the animal and human worlds are evident in Cree animal-doctor relationships, as described above.

4.5 - Synaesthasia

One of my Cree informants once told me how she learned the Cree syllabics[62] as a child. Her parents would encourage her to look for the phonetic symbols in the trees and bushes. They believed that if she would see the symbols visually she would better intergrate Cree syllabics. This form of pattern recognition reflects a dimension of an interdependence of sensory realms, in this case a cross-modal shift between vision and sound, which may be considered as a synaesthetic element. It also demonstrates the interplay between speech acts and image acts, as described in Cree narrative discourse above. Synaesthasia is a process whereby a sensation produced in one modality induces the application of another sensory modality (Dann, 1998, p. 5), such as the example above, where a phonetic sound

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[62] Cree syllabics relate to a linguistic lexicon that was introduced to Cree people by the missionaries in the late-19th Century and it is still used today.

induces the visualization of an image.[63] Synaesthasia is defined as "a phenomenon of meaning" where "sensation develops to perception" (Wheeler & Cutsforth, 1922, p. 220). In the above description of Cree reality, the characteristic traits that appear similar to the concept of synaesthasia include its sensible qualities in that the knowledge system is adapted to perception and imagination and it approaches the physical world in concrete terms.[64] Moreover, the shifting from one sense to another is entirely consonant with mytho-poesis and the multi-dimensional embodiment of the collectivity in the Self and nature in the Self described above.

Lakoff's (1987) notion of "image schemas" is also relevant here in terms of the synaesthetic elements of Cree perception and how objects are classified on the basis of shared shape or movement, as seen in the example above of Cree syllabics being taught in the bush. Image schemas are defined as "schema transformations" that are visual or kinesthetic in nature and they are "direct reflections of our experiences" (Lakoff, 1987, p. 443). Lakoff (1987, p. 37) describes the

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[63] According to Dann (1998, p.8), there are four synaesthetic associations that occur naturally, which include: (1) visual-auditory (sound-induced visual percepts); (2) tactile-visual (sight-induced sensations of touch); (3) tactile-auditory (sound-induced sensations of touch), and (4) kinaesthetic-olfactory (smell-induced bodily sensations).

[64] It is important to note that although I have noted synaesthetic elements in Cree perception styles manifested by my patients and informants, it appears to be more of an individual rather than social process (cf. Fulford, 2000a).

process of categorization as being dependent on "experiential aspects

of human psychology," including "gestalt perception, mental imagery,

motor activities, social function, and memory." This description

parallels the Cree process, which is defined by Preston (1975, p. 182)

as a "personalized mode of perception [that] yields a more event-

specific categorization of the environment," where the environment is

not separated from the social and mental contexts. As both Fulford

(1998; 2000a) and I have noticed, many Cree individuals demonstrate

the capacity to "read the world on the basis of fundamental iconic

forms" (Fulford, 2000a, p. 3), and the function of Cree language and

synaesthetic associations is based on the need to express meaningful

experience.

Synaesthasia is not presented as a form of expanded

consciousness nor is it linked to a transcendental set of meanings

(Dann, 1998). Rather the process of synaesthasia allows one to attach

meaning to the transcendental by making it tangible through

sensations and images. Synaesthasia was often considered as being a

process that involved emotions and one that interfered with logical

thought (Dann, 1998). Howes (1991, p.6) states that in Western

society, we are used to our senses being dissociated from each other.

What I have noticed in my Cree patients and informants is more of an

integration of senses rather than dissociation. As described in the example above with the Cree syllabics, they appear to be manifesting a visual-type synaesthasia where a phonetic sound might evoke a visual image or a visual stimulus might evoke a sound, taste or tactile sensation (cf. Dann, 1998, p. 11).

As Luria (1968) described in "The Mind of a Mnemonist," his synaesthete subject would convert senseless words into intelligible images. Similarly, when Tom arrived in Montreal for residential treatment, he attempted to make some sense of what he was experiencing by creating visual images. He drew a drawing of a baseball and two bats crossed over after having seen the word "baseball" and a game and finding it so strange (Figure 15).

Figure 15 – Tom's Baseball Drawing

He felt that by drawing the baseball bat and the ball he would try to

better understand something that was so foreign to him. It appeared

that he was trying to attach some meaning to an experience that was

culturally meaningless to him. Tom's experience demonstrates how

cross-modal shifts allow an individual to frame new words, melodies

and other auditory stimuli into what they perceive to be a familiar

experience, as described by Wheeler and Cutsforth (1922, p. 368). On

another occasion, Tom had seen the words "Rocky Mountains" and

before seeing an actual picture of the Rockies, he created a painting

(Figure 16) and then made a series of paintings depicting these

mountains, which he had never seen before in his life. Tom also

responded extremely well to sign language probably because it combined the visual and tactile modalities, thus creating an interplay of the senses.
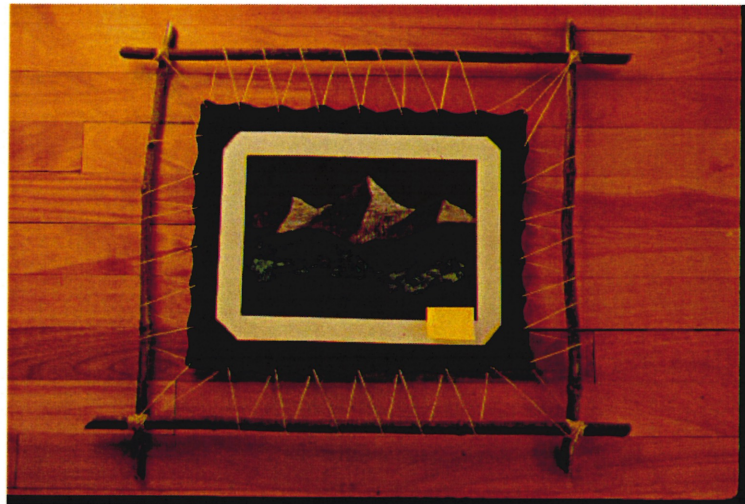
Figure 16 – Tom's Rocky Mountains

I found interesting correlations between Wheeler's (1920) study of a blind synaesthete and my patient, Tom (cf. Ferrara, 2000). Both individuals experienced color imagery in response to tastes, odors and tactile sensations. For instance, in one of our first sessions, Tom described the odor and taste of a beaver as gray. When asked if he would like to create it in art therapy, he chose the gray clay and made a beaver (Figure 17). For Tom this piece captures the taste, odor, color and image of his sensory experience of a beaver. As a result, Tom derived satisfaction from this piece especially because it

encapsulated both the thought and feeling of his own experiential knowledge of the beaver. Tom said that he remembers his first taste and smell of beaver he had as a child and gray is the color that best describes his experience, which was initially unpleasant and then with time he became accustomed to the taste and smell. This example demonstrates cross-sensory equivalences, indicating an interdependence not only of the sensory realms but also of thought and feeling (Dann, 1998). Also it exemplifies how Tom shifted from one embodied dimension (sight) to another (taste) in his statement that "the beaver looks and tastes gray." As in the animal encounters described in the preceding section, the experience of making the intangible visible resembles an element of the synaesthasia phenomenon.

Figure 17 – Tom's Clay Beaver

Tom also experienced color imagery in his dreams, whereby forms and figures were identified by their color. He would often dream of the day he was born and all he sees through a log cabin is a ray of yellow light. He depicted this dream in a pencil drawing (Figure 18) and then, in a painting (Figure 19). The colors, images, tastes, odors and tactile sensations Tom described always involved several sensorial dimensions, often in unexpected combinations. He would not describe one of these dimensions in isolation but always in association with other dimensions. He would not derive the part from the whole but rather he would focus on the part within the whole, which is consistent with the metonymic quality of the synaesthasia phenomenon. In other words, synaesthasia is consistent with Cree mythopoesis because it involves shifts, that is, shifting from one embodied dimension to another.[65] As in mytho-poetic thought, the multiple dimensions involved in synaesthasia allows for multiple meanings.

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[65] Cf. Marks (1990), who argues that metaphor and other tropes such as metonymy are extensions of cross-modal similarities.
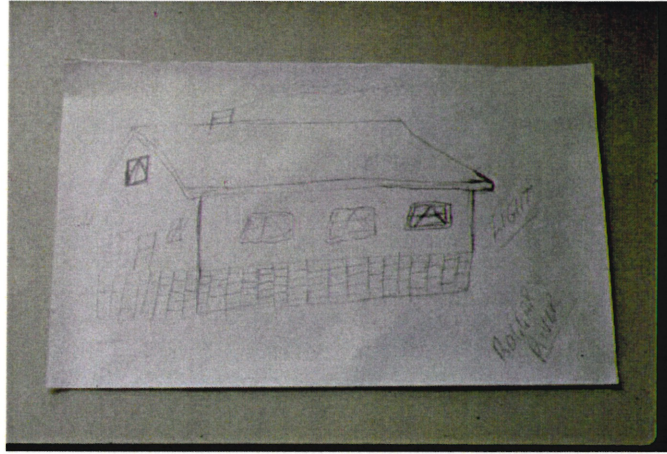
Figure 18 – Tom's Dream (Drawing)

Figure 19 – Tom's Dream (Painting)

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This chapter addressed the Cree process of reality construction,
that is, how knowledge is experientially produced and embodied. The
elements of mytho-poesis, such as narrative discourse, metonymic and
metaphoric associations as exemplified in animal-doctor relationships,
were also presented. Multi-sensorial or synaesthetic experience
characteristic of Cree reality is illustrated and I showed how it is
coherent with mytho-poesis because it involves shifts, that is, shifting
from one embodied dimension to another.

Chapter 5 – Ritualizing Space through Art Therapy

What is common among many of my Cree patients is how art therapy becomes a ritualized space where their mytho-poetic reality set is encouraged, which in turn helps them gain greater insight. I have remained faithful to my training by providing and structuring a space defined by the rules of formation of art therapy. Because of the formulaic aspect of this therapy, our engagement becomes a ritual space and these repetitive elements contribute to the ritualization of the art therapy and of its signs. I then negotiate the space with them, deciding when to meet and for how long, what materials to use, what to create and what to talk about. This space is then given meaning by my patients. My Cree patients undertake to change the initially semantically-void art therapy space into an articulated space, but the semiotic void has already transformed this space into a ritual field, in which the paucity of elements augments the semiotic power of those few elements in the field. This space becomes a place of healing characterized by constant elements, such as the same therapist, same materials, same room, and the on-going engagement, which provides a sense of continuity.

In this chapter, I will initially explore the notions of space and place, illustrate the elements of the art therapy space, as well as describe the Cree conception of space and show its relevance to my patients' art therapy experience. In addition, I will analyze the metonymic links between the art therapy experience and the bush experience. I will then present my theory on the ritualization process in art therapy, illustrating the elements that constitute the process, as well as examining the relationship between ritualization, mythification and speech.

5.1 – Space to Place

Space is a construct created by humans and it is constructed differently by different people and given meaningful configurations in different ways. Hallowell (1955) states that the perception of space requires the participation of several sense modalities. According to Hallowell, the perception of space is not only intersensory but it also involves self-identification. In other words, the Self is the reference point in perceiving space. As Hallowell (1955) writes, " the individual must not only be aware of himself but of his own position in some *spatial schema*" (p. 185, author's emphasis). We immerse ourselves in the space and we also modify its influence (Casey, 1996). As Moore

(1986) asserts, "space may be understood as neither the reflection of cultural codes and meanings, nor the reflection of practical activities and functional requirements; it must be understood as the product of both" (p. 191). Lefebvre (1991) also writes on the production of space and he notes that space is not a neutral form or container but rather a set of culturally constructed relations between things within the space. Space is defined as a medium, a milieu, an intermediary, and "its role is less and less neutral, more and more active, both as instrument and as goal, as means and as end" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 411).

The meanings we attach to a given space are not necessarily inherent in that space. The actions of the individuals are informed by the conceptual schemes that organize space but the actual meaning given to the space is dependent on the meanings attached to the nature of the activity concerned (Moore, 1986). Applying Bourdieu's (1977) 'theory of practice,' Moore adds that "meaning is invoked through practice and is thus context-dependent" (p. 78). Bourdieu (1977, p. 2) maintains that the meanings are not just the products of action but also function as principles that inform action. Consequently, both the 'actions' and the space where the actions take place are given particular meanings by the individuals involved.

When the amorphous space is given meaning by an individual, it becomes an articulated place (Tuan, 1977), that is, one defined by the actual experience (or activity) occurring in the place and the meaning attached to the experience. Space is abstract and undifferentiated and place is concrete, particular and emotion-laden (Ryden, 1993, p. 37). Ryden (1993) further elaborates that although space contains place, place is more than an object of thought. Place is a "center of meaning constructed by experience" (Tuan, 1975, p. 152). Casey (1996, p. 9) argues that the experience of space is not a secondary grid overlaid on the presumed primacy of space. "Rather (...) place is the most fundamental form of embodied experience – the site of a powerful fusion of self, space, and time" (Casey, 1996, p. 9). My Cree informant's description of Cree land, *iyiyuu estchee,* highlights how the sense of place captures the fusion of self, space and time. According to Ella, "*iyiyuu estchee* is not just a geographical location, but a state of mind." She explained to me that she thinks *with* the landscape and not just *about* it. Ella added that the animals, the plants, the berries, the sunset and sunrise are as much a part of her as her mother, her ancestors and her Self. Ella's description concords with Jackson's (1995, p. 125) observation of the Warlpiri's perception of landscape, noting that "the human body and the body of the land

share a common language. Person and place coalesce. Whatever

happens to the one, happens to the other." Thus, there appears to be

a metaphoric condensation of the notions of place and Self.

Another example of the experiential value placed on the sense

of place is when Sid brought me to a hydro-electric dam and pointed

out to me where he was born and raised. "We had our wigwam right

there where all the rocks and water is now. I could just picture it

exactly the way it was then and I could see my parents, my brothers

and sisters and myself playing in that whole area surrounded by pine

trees. Now there's nothing left because it was flooded." This

"remembered place" has served as a memoryscape, in which the past

is anchored to space and becomes "place," and as a symbolic anchor

of a sense of Self for Sid and other Cree people, whose sense of Self

has been partially deterritorialized (cf. Gupta & Ferguson, 1992;

Nuttall, 1992).[66] There is a sense of a bounded locality characterized

by memories of past events and geographic space is often used as a

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[66] Interestingly, this capacity to create memoryscapes resembles Yates' (1966) theory on the art of memory, which according to Yates is an art that "seeks to memorise through a technique of impressing 'places' and 'images' on memory" (p. xi). I found a parallel between landscape, memoryscape and Yates' discussion of memory loci drawing on the mnemonic techniques of Greek and Roman orators. The techniques described by Yates draw on the use of visual templates (i.e. the mental image of a familiar room where key ideas can be temporarily stored) and might be compared with the way in which Cree people name the landscape and code stories associated with the names into the image of the place. Thus, instead of storing key ideas in an imaginary room, a Cree person may encode the landscape in a series of names which themselves constitute a mental map (cf. Brody, 1981,p. 37 & p. 177).

metaphor for self-identity (Nuttall, 1992; Lanoue, 2000). As demonstrated in Sid's narrative, when actual places become blurred and indeterminate, ideas of culturally and ethnically distinct places may become even more salient (Gupta, & Ferguson, 1992), and become subject to metonymisation. Although Sid's important 'place' has been drastically modified, it remains a point of security and stability in an uncertain world, providing a firm anchor in a known and valued past (cf. Ryden, 1993, p.264; Knapp & Ashmore, 1999, p. 15). Sid's narrative shows how a particular place in the landscape is imbued with meaning, given form, perpetuated and shared (cf. Ryden, 1993). Through his memoryscape, Sid gains a sense of place, which is best described as "a way of imaginatively engaging with one's surroundings and finding them significant, a personal and cultural appropriation of the world" (Tilley, 1999, p. 182). For Sid and many other Cree people I have met, these tangibly marked places constitute a link to their past when there existed a secure definition of what it meant to be Cree, consisting of a core set of values that helped situate individuals in a social space.

Casey (1996, p. 18) claims that places constitute "things, experiences, histories, languages and thoughts," which implicitly relates to the fundamental quality of the continuity of meaning, and

thus, Sid's sense of place as described in the above narrative can be seen as having been transmitted intergenerationally. In a similar vein, Cruikshank (1990) shows how three elderly women from the Yukon model and interpret their own experiences in the context of geography and of the exploits of their ancestors. As among many Native Americans, place names are often related to their sense of being and are seen as cultural artifacts and they serve as "touchstones in autobiographical narratives" (cf. Thornton, 1997, p. 220). As seen among the Cree individuals I work with, the sense of place they experience in a given landscape and the continuity of meaning conveyed through their narratives are instrumental to the construction of individual experience. It is precisely this sense, I argue, that is important in the art therapy milieu, which, I have pointed out, is partly ritualized by using the same place from session to session.

5.2 – Art Therapy Milieu

Applying Lefebvre's (1991) framework on the production of social space, the art therapy milieu can be viewed as constituting three interrelated dimensions: 1) physical space, 2) mental space, and 3) social space. In the art therapy physical space, there are explicit boundaries of space. It is a limited space because of its internal

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structure to create art. With a variety of accessible art materials, the art therapy physical space can be defined by its 'practico-sensory activity' in relation to the art making involved (cf. Lefebvre, 1991, p.27). A therapeutic environment that is both physically and psychologically safe is created and maintained (e.g. privacy and confidentiality are ensured). The development of a sense of trust and familiarity leads to the creation of an environment to create art, and to engage in self-reflection. Thus, the physical space or what I like to refer to as the external landscape eventually is conducive to the internal landscape or mental space (Lefebvre, 1991).

Lefebvre's (1991, p.27) description of mental space as being occupied by sensory phenomena, such as products of the imagination, applies to the art therapy mental space. Art therapy depends on art as its chief therapeutic agent. "Its healing potentialities depends on the psychological processes that are activated in creative work" (Kramer, 1971, p. 25). Kramer (1979) claims that "art and the creative process involves a complex comprehension both of the physical handling of art materials in order to form them so that they serve as symbolic equivalents for human experience and the psychic processes that motivate creative work" (p. xxvii). I will show in a subsequent section how ritualization is also a significant therapeutic agent.

Art therapy can be viewed as possessing two types of discourse, both occupying a particular mental space, one relating to the art-making (i.e the process of giving form to feeling, Langer, 1953, 1962; Kramer, 1979) and the other relating to talking about the art or the interpretive dialogue. In both interdependent forms, art therapists employ certain techniques that draw the patient into a specific discourse that defines and delimits the patient's narratives of Self (cf. Franklin, 1992; Rubin, 1984; Wilson, 1979; Ulman & Dachinger, 1975; Kramer, 1971). These features appear to constitute similar elements of Foucault's (1971) notion of discursive practice in that the patient is subject to the discourse as the patient's narratives are shaped in some ways by the art therapy discourse. The art therapy 'discursive practice' helps establish the boundaries of the art therapy space, which are to create art and then to describe the experience or process and/or the product. The therapist's interventions (e.g. "tell me about your drawing") can be seen as a 'technique of the self' as defined by Foucault (1979) because it places the patient in a self-reflective stance and it forms the patient's understanding of his/her distress as a problem of the Self. The therapist's interventions also aim to induce the patient to focus on the vicissitudes of her subjective experience and go beyond the narrative to find the essence (cf. Gerhardt &

Stinson, 1996; Ricoeur, 1970). The 'rules' that constitute the art

therapy discourse usually involve the creation of spontaneous

expression based on whatever the patient is feeling at the moment.

The art making may occur without any verbalized intention on the

patient's behalf and without any suggestion made by the art therapist.

At other times, I may ask the patient to complete specific art therapy

diagnostic procedures, where the patient is given specific instructions

(Figures 20-23).[67] My Cree patients have inserted themselves into the

art therapy discourse, following its 'rules' and sometimes modifying

them, and in turn, producing a new discourse, a new space – one that

is ritualized, which I will elaborate on in a subsequent section in this

chapter.

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[67] These four drawings, created by a 40-year-old Cree woman, are an example of the Ulman Personality Assessment Procedure. I often use this procedure in pre-, mid-, and post-treatment stages. In the first drawing the patient is asked to create a free drawing and this woman chose to draw symbols of the bush. The second one involves a kinaesthetic-movement drawing, where the patient creates arm movements in the air and then records them on paper. This woman's response was to draw the human figure doing the movements, which is a common response among my Cree patients (cf. Ferrara, 1998a). The third is a scribble drawing, where the patient is asked to close his/her eyes, scribble on the paper and then, open his/her eyes and look for an image in the scribble and develop it through. In the fourth drawing, the patient could either create a free drawing like the first or a scribble like the third. Although she did return to a stereotypic form (a heart), this woman chose the scribble again, showing her readiness to engage in spontaneous expression. Cf. Ulman and Dachinger (1975) for more information on this art therapy assessment, and Ferrara (1998a) for a demonstration on how it was used in a cross-cultural study on emotional expression.

The Ulman Personality Assessment Procedure (UPAP)

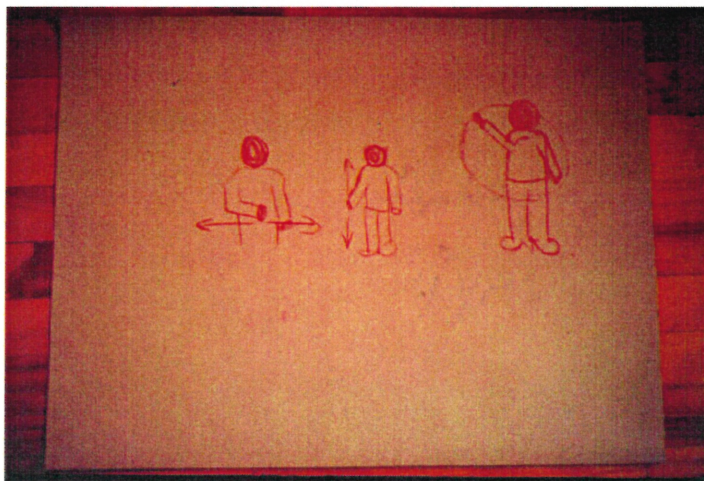## (Figures 20-23)

Figure 20 – UPAP #1: Free Drawing

Figure 21 – UPAP #2: Kinesthetic Drawing

Figure 22 – UPAP #3: Scribble

Figure 23 – UPAP #4: Scribble

The art therapeutic milieu is not a neutral environment. There is a clear purpose – a dialogic encounter that promotes an analytic stance of self-reflection, which also constitutes the art therapy mental space, like other therapies. The reflexivity involved in the therapeutic discourse is a type of autobiographic activity. Akin to Ricoeur's (1970) theory on self-reflection, in order for the therapy to be effective, the individuals must see themselves in "the mirror… of the objects, acts, works and signs which the self produces and wherein the self is disclosed. [Self-] Reflection is thus the effort to recapture the subject or self in the 'mirror' of the objects" (cited in Moore, 1990, p. 87).[68] Often times, the artwork created acts as a mirror, which plays a significant role in an individual's gradual development of self-awareness.[69] My view of the role of art making concords with both Langer and Gusdorf's definitions. Langer defines (1962, p. 90) "the primary function of art" as objectifying feeling "so that we can contemplate and understand it. It is the formulation of so-called 'inward experience,' the 'inner life.' That is impossible to achieve by discursive thought, because its forms are incommensurable with the

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[68] Moore (1990) provides a thorough analysis of Paul Ricoeur's theories on narratives and self-reflection.

[69] Also relevant here is Lacan's (1949) discussion on the mirror image where he shows how psychoanalysts have brought out the major role that this image plays in the child's personality development. The artwork in art therapy, like the 'mirror stage,' creates a sense of permanency and a primitive notion of self is internalized.

forms of language." As Gusdorf (1980, p. 32) claims, during the self-reflexive quest for personal meanings, the individual "distinguishes that which is without from his own within, he sees himself as another among others; he is situated in social space, at the heart of which he will become capable of reshaping his own reality."[70] In this self-reflexive quest, the goal is to reassemble the scattered elements of one's individual life and regroup them into a comprehensive sketch (cf. Gusdorf, 1980, p. 35).

In art therapy, both the creation of the image and the creation of the dialogue (in the form of narratives) about the image(s) created are reflexive in nature. Although the narrative discourse in art therapy may also be found in verbal psychotherapy, the 'dialogue' between the artist-patient and his/her creation has no exact parallel in talk therapy (Kramer, 1979, p. 140). In art therapy, the artwork and the narratives provide a concrete experience of personal reflection and both establish a context for an epiphany, or a moment of heightened self-awareness, which may or may not be facilitated by the therapist. Although the process of creating art is in itself therapeutic for many of my patients, significant meaning is created during the moments of epiphany, and

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[70] Gusdorf (1980) also discusses the importance of the mirror in the literary genre of autobiography where moments of reflection are created, which is nonetheless relevant to my discussion here on the therapeutic activity as autobiographical.

once the clinical space transforms into a lived-in place through the agent of making and talking about the artwork, the space becomes ritualized. As Rubin (1984, p. 139-140) also claims, the "potency" of art therapy is due to the combination of 'a powerful, deeply involving experience with a distancing, organizing perspective. Through both vision and words, the looking at, considering, capturing, and comprehending of the experience become possible...a true "in-sight ("seeing in").' The therapy becomes meaningful when such moments of insight lead to a reassembling of the elements of the individual's inner world.

The art therapy milieu also becomes a social space due to the therapeutic relationship established, which is based on trust. According to Lefebvre (1991, p.83), the social space is a social product that incorporates actions and in relation to art therapy, the interpersonal interactions between therapist and patient whether in regards to the art process or not, characterize this particular social space. In my interactive and dialogically conceived-type therapeutic encounter, I am recognizing the reciprocal influence between myself and the patient (cf. Gerhardt & Stinson, 1996). This approach functions to structure my mode of listening and my interventions, which in turn, play a role

in shaping the patient's experience and mode of response.[71] In art

therapy, all three spaces - the physical, mental and social as described

above - are interrelated and they are intimately bound up with function

and structure (cf. Lefebvre, 1991, p. 11-12). It is also possible that the

creation of these multiple dimensions of art therapy makes this

approach appealing because it concords with the creation of multiple

Selves-within-the-Self that I have described above. Because the

multiple dimensions allow for the possibility of multiple meanings, the

limited number of elements within the space becomes ritualized. The

art therapy space becomes a marked place for many of my Cree

patients, one with semiotic potential (cf. Tuan, 1993). My Cree

patients to temporarily 'dwell' within what becomes a semantically-

filled art therapy space.

5.3 – Ritual Space

According to Victor Turner (1973), a ritual is a sequence of

activities involving gestures, words, and objects performed in a

sequestered place (p. 1100). Essentially, a ritual is transformative (V.

Turner, 1979), and it is a performance, an enactment and not just

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[71] Gerhardt and Stinson (1996, p. 456) note the recent trend in psychotherapy toward more interactive and dialogically conceived accounts of the therapeutic encounter and they recognize this as a paradigm shift in psychotherapy.

primarily rules or rubrics (V. Turner, 1981, p. 160). This definition of ritual can easily be applied to psychotherapy in general and art therapy in particular because both are healing rituals with their own symbols. Bell (1997, p. 102) claims that psychoanalysis and ritual theory possess many parallels, in that "the process of human individuation that leads to the achievement of a mature sense of self" is promoted in both.[72] Both ritual and psychoanalytic experiences effect transition in the psychological and social spheres, and both usually occur in a sequestered place. Art therapy is an experience that occurs on the peripheries of everyday life. By promoting self-reflection, the art therapy process may invoke transition, such as a broadened self-awareness, a stronger sense of inner security.

My Cree patients undertake to change the initially semantically void art therapy space into an articulated space. As mentioned above, this space becomes a place of healing characterized by constant elements, such as the same therapist, same materials, same room, and the on-going engagement, which provides a sense of continuity.

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[72] Lévi-Strauss (1963, p. 180-183) also found links between shamanistic rituals and psychoanalysis; for example in both the goal is to help the patient integrate contradictory elements. The author also noted some distinct differences; for example the shaman feels and speaks for the silent patient whereas in psychoanalysis, the patient talks to the listening therapist and relives the initial situation that caused the disturbance. Dow (1986) also addresses how shamanism and Western psychotherapy invoke similar psychological processes.

Because of the formulaic aspect of this therapy, our engagement becomes ritualized and these repetitive elements contribute to the ritualization of the art therapy experience and of its signs. By ritualization, I mean that art therapy becomes a way of acting that is distinct from other activities in the individual's life. Bell's (1992) theory on ritualization is relevant here. She defines ritualization as a strategic way of acting that creates and privileges a qualitative distinction between the 'sacred' and the 'profane' (p.74). The art therapy space has structure and consistency, which become highly significant in the process of ritualization, and its formality enhances its communicative efficacy (cf. Rappaport, 1999, p.210). According to both Bell (1992, p. 92) and Rappaport (1999, p. 51), rituals are intensive forms of communication by virtue of their repetition and sacredness.

The art therapy ritual is not simply a matter of routine; it is granted a privileged distinction because it occurs in a delineated and structured space to which access is restricted (cf. Bell, 1992; Rappaport, 1999). I agree with Rappaport's (1999) declaration that "ritual is not simply an alternative way to express any manner of thing, but that certain meanings and effects can best, or even *only* be expressed or achieved in ritual" (p. 30). I believe that the art therapy ritual is a unique structure differentiating itself from other 'spaces.'

Although none of its elements, such as performance, formality and repetitiveness, belongs to it alone, the relation among these elements is unique to the art therapy ritual space.

Strategies for differentiating itself from other ways of acting are intrinsic to ritualization (Bell, 1992). Art therapy can be seen as a 'way of acting' that makes the following distinctions: a) a special time for the occurrence of the art therapy session with the art therapy 'specialist,' b) the internal orchestration of the art-making process (i.e. the patient may either choose the type of art activity, or suggestions are made by the therapist, or specific art materials are provided for particular art therapy assessments), c) the specific codes of communication or what Rappaport (1999, p. 151) defines as ritualized gestures and words are used (i.e. verbal and gestural combinations such as the therapist placing the artwork at some distance for the patient to describe his/her experience and piece). The ritual acts and objects in the art therapy space, such as the art materials and the artwork created, have special communicational qualities (cf. Rappaport, 1999). All these features of the ritual form add something to the substance or the symbolic meaning of the art therapy ritual space.

There is a double ritualization that occurs within art therapy, which, first, involves my role in recreating the art therapy space that I was trained to create. I am structuring the situation by offering the patient a limited number of art materials and a limited amount of time in the art therapy milieu. The space becomes defined by such limitations and the structure defines what people can do or think. It becomes a space with a purpose, a symbolic space grounded in experience (cf. Tuan, 1993, p. 175).

The other dimension of the ritualization process is the patient's role and how they attach meaning to the structured space. This is illustrated in Luke's drawings of the two of us in art therapy (Figures 24 & 25). It was only once Luke felt accepted and understood by me that he was ready to draw himself. In Figure 24, he drew me looking at and listening to him, and in Figure 25, Luke drew the two of us hugging each other. Both drawings also relate to the safe and nurturing context Luke experienced, thus, symbolizing his sense of containment while in art therapy.
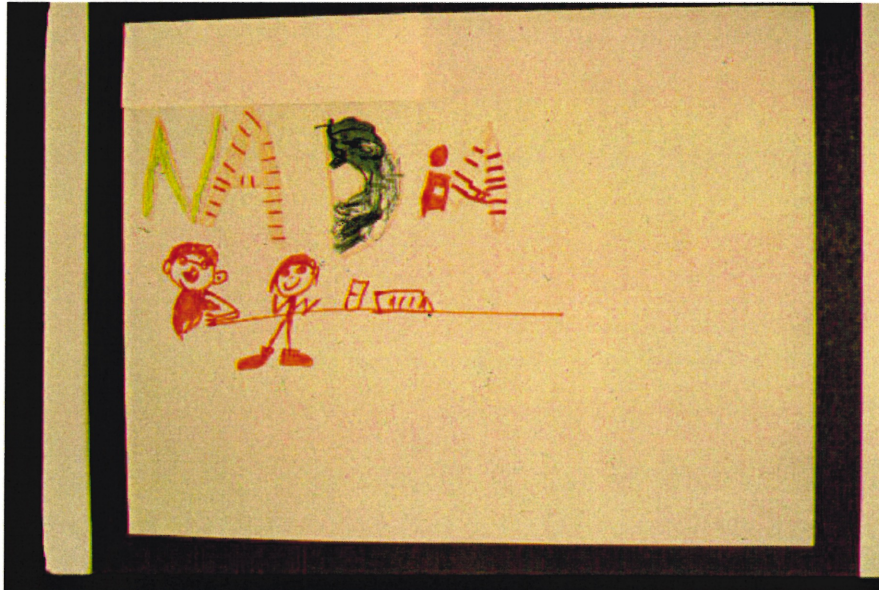
Figure 24 – Luke's Drawing of the Two of Us
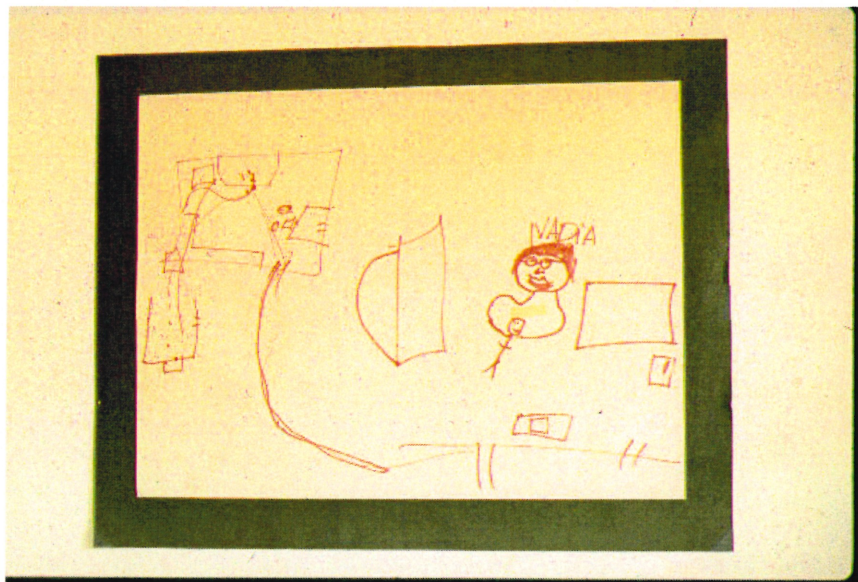
Figure 25 – Luke: The Bush & Art Therapy

The drawings illustrate how Luke, like many of my patients, attached meaning to the creative art process, the artwork he produced (from which he derived a sense of pride) and to our therapeutic relationship. The interactive dialogue or "dialogic exchange" (Schafer, 1981) between the patient and myself, which becomes both a medium and product of this interaction, is instrumental in attributing meaning

to the ritual space.[73] This dialogic exchange inspires the patient to engage in a self-reflexive narrative, which I believe allows the patient to establish some distance among the various components of the Self (individual Self, Self in-the-collective, Self in-nature). The interaction between the therapist and the patient as narrator serves to construct the meaning of the personal narratives and the meaning attached to the therapeutic milieu. I am also employing a ritualistic form of therapeutic rhetoric to empower the patient, which is an element in most psychotherapeutic approaches (Frank & Frank, 1991). This ritualized therapeutic rhetoric involves listening to my patients with interest, acknowledging what they say, and validating what they create. My therapeutic interventions rely on the patient's narratives of Self. Both my faith and the patient's faith in the intervention I provide along with the patient's trust in me, play a significant role in the ritualization of art therapy, which I believe leads to my Cree patients' positive responses.

In my interpretation of art therapy as a ritual space, Victor Turner's theoretical framework on the ritual process has assisted me

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[73]Cf. Pred (1990, p.10) on how people reproduce and transform social and spatial structures. Pred argues that social and spatial structures are dialectically entwined, adding that 'not only is the spatial socially produced, but social life, the engagement of people in their "lifeworlds," is always spatially dependent' (p. 10). Bell (1992, p. 89) also notes that ritual forms of behavior define, model and communicate social relations.

into organizing my observations both as a clinician and ethnographer. I have found V. Turner's (1969) work on "The Ritual Process," and Arnold van Gennep's (1909) theory of ritual as a separate social space relevant. In his book, "The Rites of Passage," van Gennep (1909, p. 13) demonstrates that many types of rituals have three distinguishable stages of varying duration among various cultures: 1) separation (preliminal) stage involves the detachment of the individual from an earlier fixed point in a set of cultural conditions, 2) margin or limen (liminal) stage is ambiguous and it is the "betwixt and between" stage where the transition usually occurs, 3) reaggregation (postliminal) involves the consummation of the passage characterized by stability. Van Gennep argued that rituals are often performed when individuals need to experience a change of state or status as defined by their cultural group (cf. V. Turner, 1974, p. 196). The *rites de passage* are not necessarily confined to culturally defined life-crises but they may accompany any change from one state to another (V. Turner, 1979). In this case, I am not arguing that the liminality of the therapy space is in itself transformative, but that the distancing of the components of the Self temporarily places each in a separate, unique, and, for the Cree, highly artificial (and therefore liminal) space.

Although there are ritual elements in art therapy as discussed

above (e.g. structured space, repetition of elements, emotionally

cathected symbols and narratives), the art therapy experience may not

be a "sacred ritual" with an inherently spiritual purpose. However, by

its nature it could be recognized as what V. Turner (1974, p. 15) refers

to as a "liminoidal" event, characterized by marginality, creativity,

reformation, and transition. On the other hand, art therapy is hardly a

spectacle, as are many liminoidal events. So perhaps it is a "sacred"

ritual in a "secular" world. I view the goals of transformation and

empowerment in art therapy as parallel to the goals of re-establishing

harmony in the social dramas as expounded by V. Turner (1967, 1969,

1981). Thus, the art therapy ritual may provide (temporary) resolution

to the individual's 'dramas,' as it helps my patients re-establish

personal harmony through the process of self-reflection, individuation,

and reintegration of the components of the Self.[74]

By validating their creations within the limited ritual space, I

enrich the semiotic power of the interpretive signs they attribute to

their work. These interpretive signs have properties of what V. Turner

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[74] Here, I am reminded of the psychoanalyst, Melanie Klein (1961) and her observation of the therapy she provided as an island of calm for troubled children, but at the end of the session, the child has to return to his/her dysfunctional family to continue muddling through a dysfunctional world. I will elaborate more on this notion of containment in therapy further on in this section.

(1967, p. 28; 1965) calls condensation and multivocality in his

discussion on dominant ritual symbols.[75] Condensation refers to many

things represented in a single formation, which is saturated with

emotion. Multivocality suggests the referential openness and ambiguity

of a symbol, and it promotes the possibility of transforming an

individual's understanding of social conventions and cultural beliefs

through associations made between private symbols and public

symbols (V. Turner, 1965, p. 50; 1967). This is similar to the

metonymic associations found in Cree narrative discourse, as described

in Chapter 4. Essentially, the multivocality of ritual symbols helps

interconnect individual experience with social experience. In art

therapy, the artwork, as the dominant ritual symbol, possesses two

poles of meaning, relating to the property of "polarization of meaning"

(V. Turner, 1967, p. 28), as well as that of multivocality and

condensation. The two poles of meaning include the sensory and the

ideological, where the former evokes desires and feelings and the

latter relates to the values and norms of the social group (V. Turner,

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[75] V. Turner (1967, p. 27-32) discusses another property that will not be addressed here, which relates to the unification of disparate significata. Turner also differentiates between dominant and instrumental symbols, where in the latter the meaning is context-dependent. Instrumental symbols can be found in art therapy as well, as in theme related artwork, where the patient is asked to draw a family picture for instance. I will limit my discussion to the properties of the dominant ritual symbol that appear relevant to the art therapy process.

1967, p. 28). V. Turner adds that at "the sensory pole, the meaning content is closely related to the outward form of the symbol" (ibid.). Tom's drawing of the caribou (Figure 9), discussed in the section on animal-doctor relationships in Chapter 4, illustrates the properties of the dominant symbol as defined by V. Turner. The sensory pole in this drawing relates to Tom's animal-doctor relationship with the caribou and the ideological pole relates to how Quebec Cree people honor the caribou as a game animal that represents power (cf. Adelson, 2000, p. 126 n.11). For Tom, the caribou symbol was transformed into an agent of well-being, as he received the gift of strength from the caribou during his encounter. This transformation resembles V. Turner's (1967) definition of a symbol's property of multivocality because it illustrates how the caribou as a Cree symbol was given personal meaning. Tom also drew a "medicine wheel" (Figure 26), which he interpreted as representing a childhood memory of his father.[76] His father had explained the medicine wheel as combining the four races, four directions and four seasons and he did so by carving it out in birchbark while in the bush. Tom was told that it symbolized life. Particular to Tom's interpretation of the medicine wheel is the drumsticks he added

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[76] This image of the medicine wheel is highly syncretic and heavily influenced by pan-Indian symbolism.

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behind the wheel, which in a sense doubled as an image of the traditional Eastern Cree drum. This related to his memory of his father playing the drum while in the bush. Also, the five feathers he added around the wheel symbolize Tom and his siblings. When Tom drew this picture using watercolor markers, he was also in the process of developing closer relationships with his siblings. Because Tom spent most of his life in the bush, he rarely spent time with his siblings, who lived primarily in the community. After being relocated to the community following his father's death and his mother's illness, he began re-acquainting himself with his siblings, who in turn were quite involved in Tom's healing process. During his residential treatment, Tom was learning how to use his voice during drumming ceremonies held at the house, as he would hum while feeling the vibrations of the drum. Thus, this medicine wheel that he drew symbolized a link to his past as well as a symbol of the healing process he was engaged in.
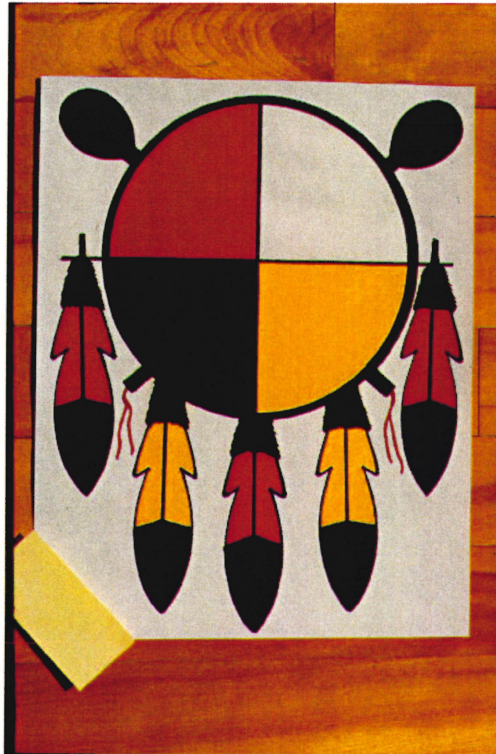
Figure 26 – Tom's Medicine Wheel

In the ideological dimension, the medicine wheel has come to

represent, for many Aboriginal people I have worked with, the unity

and continuity of First Nations Peoples as it is seen as a culturally

universal symbol.[77] Thus, as I understand it, a dominant symbol can

integrate both personal and collective representations, creating an

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[77] Although as noted by Brass (1999, p. 45), there exists sparse historic and ethnographic information on the indigenous practice of the medicine wheel, it is seen as a pervasive and culturally universal symbol and vehicle of healing. The medicine wheel could also be considered as a pan-Indian symbol.

interchange of qualities between both poles of meaning (V. Turner, 1967).

The "rules" of the art therapy process frame the ritual process, but the ritual process transcends its frame, especially when the patient uses the art therapy ritual to transform him/herself, that is, to engage in some form of transition or resolution. Within the art therapy space, there are what V. Turner (1969, 1974) would refer to as symbolic operators or vehicles (i.e. the artwork, narratives that stem from the artwork, the relationship between patient and therapist) that can effect change on the individual occupying the space. During the therapeutic process, the patient engages in a self-discovery process that usually leads to self-transformation and the resolution of conflicting feelings and issues. The transitional period resembles a threshold, which can be defined as a liminal transition, a domain of action or thought (V. Turner, 1974, p.52). The period of margin or liminality is an 'interstructural' phase, as V. Turner (1979, p. 234) defines it, one that involves reflection of one's thoughts and feelings.[78] In this process of reflection, the individual engages in the undoing, dissolution and

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[78] Victor Turner's development of the liminality notion is seen by Rosaldo (1984) as 'a concept designed to "recover" energy and affect within the context of a structuralist perspective' (p. 151, n.2). Turner also recognized the importance of embodied knowledge as a significant way in which cultural models, such as rituals, bridge the gap between personal experience and social convention (Shore, 1996).

decomposition of aspects of one's Self. This experience is then accompanied by "processes of growth, transformation and the reformulation of old elements in new patterns" (V. Turner, 1979, p. 237). Unlike V. Turner (1969, p. 103), I do not believe that the "neophyte in liminality must be a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate." I believe that the ritualizing aspects of the art therapy session act as a liminal phase, interrupting "normal" thinking and encouraging (if not obliging or simply allowing) individuals to rethink and reformulate old patterns. The artificial nature and limited number of elements in the art therapy ritual space metonymically set in motion a deconstruction of old patterns as "superfluous" elements of the Self are shed, while remaining elements are re-semioticised and then reshuffled. I ritualize the space by providing the patients with constant elements and they ritualize it by engaging in deconstructing elements of the Self and then re-incorporating them. Essentially, what heals is that they are healing themselves in a ritualized space.

An example of the process of undoing and decomposition is apparent in Luke's experience of drawing and then destroying his artwork and creating clay sculptures and breaking it up into pieces. This often occurred during the beginning sessions of therapy. In one session, Luke destroyed a clay sculpture by throwing all the bits of clay

across the art therapy room. Pieces of clay were on the walls, ceiling and the floor. He then gathered all the pieces together and created a large coin, as he called it (Figure 27).

Figure 27 – Luke's Clay Coin

Luke was dealing with a fragmented sense of Self, experiencing frustration, anger and sadness about being away from home and his family, being hearing-impaired, when at home, not being allowed to go to the bush because of his hyperactivity, and while in Montreal, being surrounded by the Euro-Canadian culture, which of course was foreign

to him. This art experience also represented a perceived disintegration of all that was of value to Luke. His clay "coin" symbolized the tension between undoing and reformulating "the having been and the becoming" or between his fragmented Self and his healed Self. It symbolized his need to deconstruct the old and reformulate his new sense of Self. Luke was physically detached from his family and his community and this forced him to confront his fragmented Self. Once he gained an inner sense of security, facilitated by the sense of containment he experienced in the art therapy ritual space and the trust he developed with me, he was able to transform the ambiguity and ambivalence into stability and clarity and consequently a more secure, better-integrated sense of Self. Near the end of therapy, Luke's "passage was consummated" (cf. V. Turner, 1969, 1979) when he had gained an autonomous, healed Self, which was recognized by his family as they brought him into the bush to experience the killing of his first goose (Figure 12).

"Healing" for the Cree is not getting back to a norm, but creating a new Self by deconstructing the old, redefining the components, and building a new, multi-dimensional and more harmonious Self. While in residential treatment in Montreal, Tom also experienced an ambiguous state of not being here nor there. While in

the self-reflective state, he experimented with images of the foreign

symbols surrounding him (Figures 15 & 16). He would then create

images that symbolized more of his internal struggle as he interpreted

it (Figure 28). Once he resolved his issues and developed a sense of

inner security, Tom's transition was consummated during his

reintegration into his community, which relates to the reaggregation

phase of rituals (cf. V. Turner, 1969; van Gennep, 1909). Tom's Cree

community worker and I organized an art exhibition of his artwork, re-

introducing him back into the community as an artist.

Figure 28 – Tom's Dragon

Many of my Cree patients experience a sense of containment in

art therapy, as noted above with Luke. The development of trust and

stability leads to establishing a sense of containment in the therapeutic

milieu where emotions, dialogue and interactions are contained

whether within the artwork, the art-making process or the therapeutic

relationship or in all three. Winnicott (1949, p. 245), a renowned

psychoanalyst whose theories I often apply in my own work as a

psychotherapist, developed the notion of "the holding environment,"

which relates to the containment and the safe and nurturing context

provided in therapy, similar to that provided by a mother for her

infant. According to Winnicott (1971), this holding environment

becomes a psychological transitional space, where the individual

relates to the inner and outer realities by using symbols, referred to as

transitional objects. The art therapy milieu often becomes a

transitional space, when patients use it to engage in self-reflection and

self-transformation and the artwork becomes the transitional object.

Winnicott (1971, p.126) also claims that within therapy a "potential

space" is created, which he defines as an intermediate area that is

neither inside nor outside but somewhere in between; a space

between shifting fantasy and reality realms where boundaries are not

yet firmly established. Also, in this potential space, creative and

spontaneous gestures are initiated and it is where the transitional

object resides. As described by Rudnytsky (1993, p. xiii), Winnicott

views art as a refuge where "precarious oscillations between illusion and reality" that occur in the potential space are negotiated.

Winnicott (1971, p. 64) also affirms that the process of self-reflection enables the individual "to postulate the existence of the self." As seen above in my case illustration of Luke, art therapy became a transitional space, a refuge, a space apart to reflect on problem areas, rectify them when he felt secure enough and then translate his inner sense of security into his outside world to reengage himself within it. This space apart also resembles V. Turner's (1969) notion of liminality, as discussed above, where the individual needs to be separated from the daily realities of social life in order to engage in self-transformation. Bachelard's (1969, p. 231) work on the poetics of space also seems relevant here in that he defines this 'space apart' as a space where "the meditating being might be free to think." My argument is that in regard to my Cree patients a similar process of self-reflection and sense of containment occurs in the bush; hence the associations made between art therapy and the bush. The bush may also be viewed as a transitional space as seen with Luke's killing of his first goose and the goose head, which is hung in the center of the wigwam during the ritual that follows (Figure 5), as his transitional

object, appropriated by Luke as a subjective object (i.e. one symbolizing his self-transformation in the bush).

The art therapy ritual space creates a condition of atemporality and a temporary loss of the problematic social Self, which according to my Cree patients is akin to what they experience in the bush.[79] There is a withdrawal from normal modes of social action during the designated art therapy time and place, which allows a reconfiguration of signs that possibly concords with mythological meanings of a "healed" autonomous Self. This is illustrated in Tina's drawing of the bush and her description of how she is separated from "the outside forces" and allowed to be herself, which was the same feeling she experienced in art therapy (Figure 29). According to Tina, a 40-year old Cree woman, "the animals, the land and the water are part of just the way it is in the bush – simple not complicated like what is on the outside in the Whiteman world, stuff that's not Cree. In the bush, I'm allowed to be Cree and just be who I am." Many Cree people, like Tina, feel constrained in Euro-Canadian society due to norms and codes enforced upon them. The bush provides a sanctuary where they can free themselves of the troubled and ambiguous collective Self.

Figure 29 – Tina's Bush Drawing

Unlike V. Turner's affirmations, the art therapy ritual is not a social mechanism that affirms group unity. However, it does appear to evoke mytho-poetic thinking and communication patterns. According to V. Turner (1969, p. 167), in the liminal phase, social relationships are simplified and myth and ritual are elaborated, which also seems to

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[79] This will be developed further in the subsequent section on the metonymic links between art therapy and the bush.

relate to my Cree patients. In art therapy, there is an amplification of culturally relevant categories such as myth, from which my Cree patients often derive narratives in relation to the imagery they create in their artwork. As described in Chapter 4, narratives expressed in a mythic form become experiential knowledge, which is retained because they are meaningful to the patient. In other words, the narratives become a source of knowledge for the patients. The narrative component attempts to express Cree values in a forum and in a style in which there are no obvious referents to lived reality, which in turn makes cultural sense. V. Turner (1981, p.168) refers to this as the narrative's task of "poesis," that is, of remaking and re-articulating cultural sense, and this appears relevant to my Cree patients, who feel the need to make sense of how they failed at particular life experiences. For my Cree patients, art therapy permits them to contextualize modern problems in a mytho-poetic manner. The art therapy ritual is more than just another medium where cultural values find expression, such as narratives and myths. As described above, the narratives and myths become significant elements in the art therapy ritual process as they facilitate the patient's self-transformation in helping the patient restore balance as he/she reformulates old elements into new patterns and a more secure sense of Self.

I believe that art therapy creates a ritual space that is outside or on the peripheries of everyday life and its qualities promote transition. The transition that occurs in art therapy involves a fragmented Self becoming a healed Self, within which coherence and meaning are found. Moreover, when the art therapy experience is ritualized, it could transform into a sacred condition and become a liminal ritual phenomenon, as it facilitates the process of the ordering of one's life, infused with values of balance, rhythm and affect (cf. Tuan, 1993, p. 172).

5.4 – Metonymic Links Between Art Therapy and the Bush

The bush includes ways to symbolically transmit Cree cultural knowledge through bush rituals, such as goose break and moose break and the sharing of stories and folktales (cf. Preston, 1975; Scott, 1996). The life ways in the bush constitute part of the "mythic world" of many of my Cree patients and informants[80]; in the bush an individual is allowed to connect and explore the component of nature in his/her composite Self. As described above, the art therapy space allows the Cree patient to express elements of his/her "mythic world" and reaffirm the Cree Self. As previously mentioned, many of my Cree

informants and patients often express: "I am just there and I forget everything else," in relation to both their art therapy and bush experiences.[81] It illustrates how the sense of place that is experienced in both the bush and the art therapy settings is metonymically linked to the sense of Self. As metonymy refers to the indirect representation of the whole by a part, I am suggesting that there is a metonymic link between "Self" (the part) and "society" (the whole).

Brody (1981) refers to the "transformation in people" when they set out for the bush. He adds that "everyone feels a sense of well-being that comes only with tasks and activities which they find deeply satisfying, which they know that they know best" (Brody, 1981, p. 253). Along the same lines, Bierhorst (1994, p. 142) notes that Cree hunters "think of themselves as leaving the unclean settlement and entering the pure spiritual domain of the forest," and Speck (1977, p. 20-21) also observed that hunters were "under the thrall of the spiritual forces of the forest." In the bush, there is a "blending of the metaphysical and the obviously pragmatic" (Brody, 1981, p. 37). This is what patients apparently experience in art therapy as well, where they connect with their notions of Self, which is metaphysical in nature

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[80] Dow (1986, p. 59) defines the notion of "mythic world" as an individual's culturally specific beliefs, metaphors and idioms.
[81] This statement was expressed by both my female and male patients and informants.

and they do so mostly through the art-making process, which they consider a pragmatic activity. In both the bush and art therapy "spaces," not only is self-reflection promoted but other common elements include pattern and predictability, non-verbal activity, transformative dialogue where the individual becomes empowered, and mytho-poetic narrative discourse.

Tom often made associations between the bush and art therapy. These associations were made later on in therapy and his drawings of the wigwam symbolized these links (Figures 30 & 31). Tom entitled Figure 30 "Going Home," and Figure 31 as his wigwam.
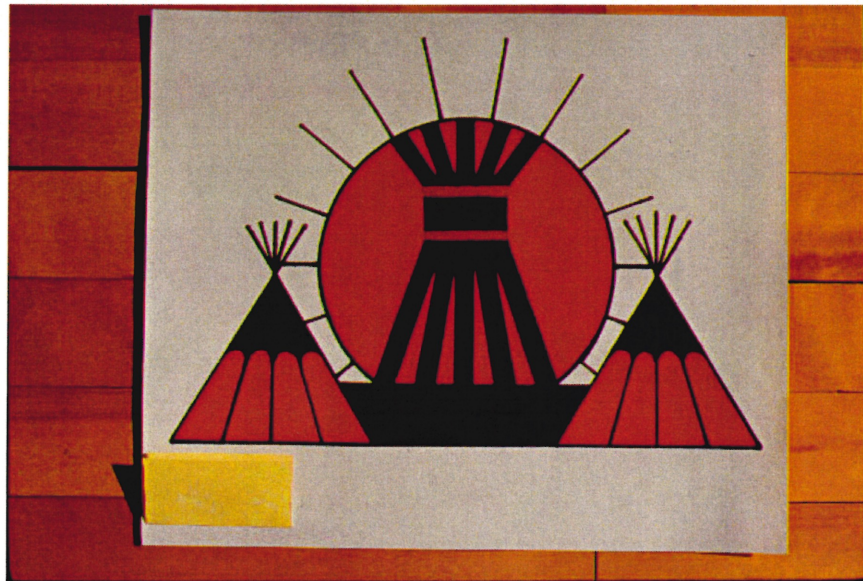
Figure 30 – Tom's "Going Home"
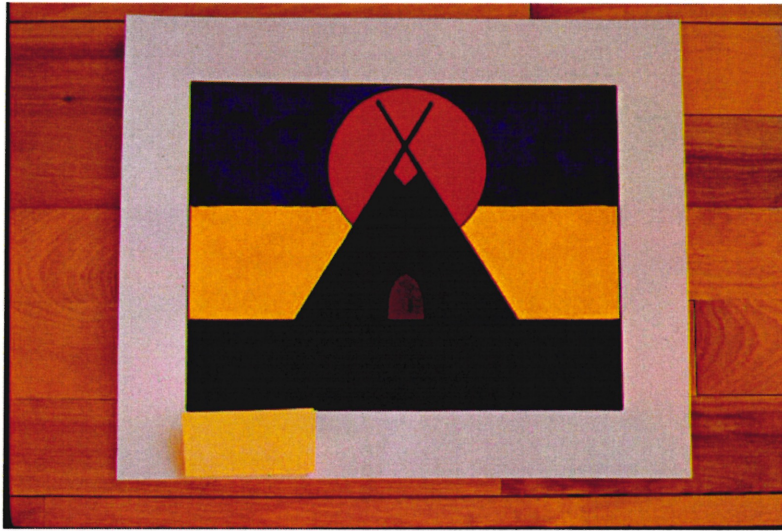
Figure 31 – Tom's Wigwam

According to Tom, what he felt in a wigwam was the same as what he was feeling in art therapy - a sense of comfort and security and a special time to connect with his Self. Luke's artwork also demonstrated this type of metonymic association in his drawing of the two of us in art therapy and then, on the same drawing he drew a reinforced line that connected to his experience in the bush represented by a sketch (Figure 25). Luke created a clay sculpture of a fishing boat immediately after this drawing, which he described as the boat he used to go fishing with his father for the first time (Figure 32).

Figure 32 – Luke's Clay Boat

Both the drawing and the sculpture symbolize the sense of containment he experienced in art therapy and the bush, where in both settings his new sense of Self was emerging. Also, Luke was aware that his art therapy experience helped him to eventually return to the bush, where he was not allowed to go for most of his life due to his impulsive behavior, which was symbolized by the double line he drew in Figure 25, connecting the bush and art therapy.

With several of my Cree patients, the mythic space created in the bush is somehow recreated in the ritual of art therapy. The mythic space frames the pragmatic space offered by art therapy. Tuan (1977, p. 86) describes the "mythical" space as one that "surrounds the field of pragmatic activity, to which we do not consciously attend and which is yet necessary to our sense of orientation – of being securely in the world." The mythic space also couples identity with the sacred and it is pregnant with personal meaning. In both emplaced, lived experiences, there is a facilitation of being in the world.[82]

According to a Cree elder I spoke with whose son was my patient, the association between the bush and art therapy was not surprising. "It's important to see, hear and touch what's around you and what's inside." She said that in both all the senses play a

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[82] Cf. Casey (1996) for more on emplaced experiences.

significant role and this type of intersensory experience gives form to feeling, which is associated to the Self. Along similar lines, Langer (1953, p. 397) wrote on how art gives form to feeling, noting that art "formulates our conceptions of feeling and our conceptions of visual, tactual, and audible reality together. It gives us *forms of imagination* and *forms of feeling*, inseparably; that is to say, it clarifies and organizes intuition itself" (emphasis in original).

The experience of giving form to feeling involves a self-reflective process, which as discussed in the previous section, occurs during the liminal phase. The spatial-temporal quality of "I'm just there," relates to the individual not being connected with the having been and the becoming, or what V. Turner (1979) defines as the "betwixt and between phase." The liminal phase is characterized by simplicity, continuous reference to mystical powers, transition, sacredness, and silence (V. Turner, 1969).[83] Interestingly, according to my patients and informants, their experience in the bush is also characterized by most of these properties. The features of transition, sacredness and silence are also relevant to their art therapy experience. In both the bush and art therapy ritual spaces, "the

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[83] The binary oppositions of these properties respectively are: complexity, intermittent reference to mystical powers, state, secularity, and speech. Turner (1969) outlines several more discriminations (p. 106-107). I have selected these particular ones for the purpose of my analysis.

symbol vehicles [inherent in the liminality stage] may be unimpressive, but the messages they convey are highly complex" (V. Turner, 1974, p. 196). For instance, the messages conveyed from the artwork are self-reflective, symbolizing personal struggles and gains, a fragmented sense of Self, a harmonious sense of Self, etc. The symbol vehicles in the bush are the animal-human relationships that are instrumental in the metonymic construction of Self (Lanoue, 2000), as illustrated in Chapter 4. The introspection or self-reflection process is fundamental to both ritual forms. Both my therapeutic stance in art therapy and the bush milieu essentialize the Self and the restorative notion of balance is present in both. Many of my patients and informants often relate to the introspection that occurs in the bush, whether during a vision quest or not. According to Bob: "the bush is just where I need to be. There, I feel the strong attachment to nature and my ancestors. The animals, the sunrise, the sunset – things that haven't changed through time and that is why they're so reliable in allowing me to think and feel about who I am." Emphasizing the bush de-emphasizes the collective in the composite Self.

The metamessage intrinsic to the bush ritual form is simple yet rich in cosmological meaning, and it is silent moving beyond verbal discourse. The art therapy ritual may be seen as a symbolic portrayal

of myth and cosmology, and what becomes apparent in the foregoing

analysis is the relationship between mythification, ritualization and

speech. The ritualization involved in both the bush and art therapy is

"designed to do what it does without bringing what it is doing across

the threshold of discourse or systematic thinking" (Bell, 1992, p. 93).

Although both ritual spaces involve an intensive form of

communication, they are in some ways a particularly 'mute' form of

activity (cf. Bell, 1992).

The nonverbal quality of art making resembles the nonverbal

exchange with animals in the bush.[84] Langer (1953) would refer to

both of these rituals as non-discursive symbolic forms that express an

affective experience and evoke an emotional response. The dialogic

relationship with non-human persons in the bush must move beyond

word. As one informant explained, "the bond between man, animal

and nature exists beyond the limits of human language." An example

of this is Scott's (1996, p. 82) description of the Cree hunter's goose

songs as expressing the spiritual and aesthetic aspects of the

exchange between the hunter and the goose, and the songs include

vivid images of the ways in which geese fall to the hunter. This

illustrates how presentational symbolism or thinking visually is more

accentuated than verbal thoughts (cf. Langer, 1942). If one is capable

of such communication, then, I believe, the individual may have the

proclivity to extend this capacity onto human-to-human

communication. That is, the individual, like many Cree people I have

met, may have a more enhanced model of communication because of

this capacity to move beyond words. This is apparent in my Cree

patients' and informants' use of narratives and metaphoric language,

and how these narratives are metonymically linked to the Self and

constructed to better situate their Self in the world. An image by a

Cree informant that is relevant to this discussion is one I have heard

often and it is also described by Darnell (1981, p. 57). "If you look at a

tree and its branches you could see how social interaction works. The

strong roots are provided by cultural traditions and the branches are

the people, one by one bound by their relationships to each other not

by their talk."

Moreover, in the dialogic exchange with animals there is no

"vertical" hierarchy, as discussed in Chapter 4, and in art therapy,

many of my patients feel that the hierarchical doctor-patient

relationship is nonexistent. Western codes of healing implicitly

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[84] For more on the Cree experience of the nonverbal exchange with animals in the bush see Preston (1975).

legitimize explicit hierarchies (i.e. where the doctor-therapist as the authority figure is ranked above the patient, who is seen as helpless), and they promote a rhetoric of alienated individualism, which is often inadequate in dealing with most problems of Cree people. Once trust and a sense of comfort are established, my Cree patients are able to transcend the fact that I am a White, Euro-Canadian, and the vertical hierarchy between the Cree and Euro-Canadians somehow is not projected onto our relationship. Consequently, the dialogue that occurs in art therapy, both on the verbal and nonverbal levels becomes more enhanced, more intense and more effective.

In the establishment of trust, a significant factor is my sensitivity in regard to how the Cree people have been collectively marginalized socio-politically by Euro-Canadian mainstream society. I believe marginalization plays an underlying role in the association made between the bush lifeways and the art therapy ritual, in that both have been marginalized in Euro-Canadian society. In other words, in Euro-Canadian society, art has been marginalized because it is considered as an activity for qualified specialists (i.e. artists), and this transcends into the art therapy milieu, which itself has been marginalized in the psychiatric arena because it is unconventional. Many of my Euro-Canadian patients are apprehensive about creating

art in the therapy setting because they are "not artists" or they "can only draw stick figures," but this type of apprehension is absent with my Cree patients.[85] I am not suggesting that Euro-Canadians cannot respond to art therapy or to experiences in the bush. They can surely be symbolically rich for both Euro-Canadian and Cree patients. Nevertheless, art appears to have a different meaning for my Cree patients in that it is not seen as a separate activity for those with a special talent. In addition, the Cree experience of being marginalized collectively may also allow them to detach more readily in order to engage in the transitional, liminal phase. V. Turner (1974, p. 52) describes liminality as a form of outsiderhood and structural inferiority, implying solitude rather than society. Such involvement in the peripheries of social life may not be as challenging as it is for those who are not marginalized and part of the mainstream society. Perhaps my understanding of being marginalized as an artist and art therapist allows me to better comprehend my Cree patients' experience of being marginalized, and my sensitivity is conveyed to my patients facilitating their therapeutic experience and promoting a better dialogic exchange.

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[85] For a cross-cultural analysis on Euro-Canadians' and Cree uses of art therapy see Ferrara (1998a).

5.5 – Relationship between Place and Being

My Cree patients' description of being in art therapy, *"I am just there,"* exemplifies how the concepts of place and being are intimately linked. The art therapy place is metaphorically and metonymically tied to their sense of Self (cf. Feld & Basso, 1996, p. 11). Brody's (2000) description of hunter-gatherers' perception of place and its relationship to their sense of Self applies to my Cree patients. "The affirmation of an existential bond between self and place is very striking among hunter-gatherers," he writes. "The ties to a place and its resources may be more clearly affirmed than ties to history, community or even family" (Brody, 2000, p. 320). Ingold's (1996) analysis of hunter-gatherer notion of "dwelling" is also pertinent.[86] According to Ingold, what is significant is not the construction of place but the actual engagement with its constituents. In hunter-gatherer ontology, one does not necessarily formulate an intentional world[87] prior to engagement in this space. Rather, there is an active and practical engagement with the constituents of the dwelt-in world (Ingold,

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[86] I believe that Ingold (1996) is borrowing from Heidegger's (1977) notion of dwelling, which deals with how individuals perceive and apprehend space. According to Heidegger (1977), "spaces receive their essential being from particular localities and not from 'space' itself" (p. 332). Dwelling consists in the lived relationships that people maintain with places (Heidegger, 1977). Heidegger's conception of 'being-there' appears quite similar to the Cree notion of "I am just there," as described above, in that they both possess a spatial-temporal quality and both allude to the existential relationship between self and place.

1996). As Ingold writes "...apprehending the world is not a matter of construction but of engagement, not of building but of dwelling, not of making a view of the world but of taking a view *in* it" (p. 121, original emphasis). The difference between the 'construction of' and 'engagement in' the space is that in the latter the individual is not creating the space but actively participating in the existing space.

Dwelling in a landscape involves the incorporation of its features into a pattern of everyday activities (Ingold, 1996, p. 144). Ingold (1996) has coined the term 'interagentivity,' which he uses to highlight the constitutive quality of the 'dwelt-in world' of hunter-gatherers like the Cree. In other words, human beings engage intimately with one another as well as with non-human components of the environment.[88] According to my informants, they engage in dialogue with things in the environment as much as they are *with* them. Thus, Ingold argues that the hunter-gatherer perception is more interagentive than intersubjective because it includes their intimate knowledge and

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[87] Shweder's (1990) concept of intentional world relates to the process of creating mental representations.

[88] Hallowell's anthropological studies of the Ojibwa people of Northern Ontario is relevant to my study here. Hallowell refers to these non-human components as "personified natural objects" 1966, p. 275), defined elsewhere as "living entities who are integrally related to human beings...and constantly interact with them" (1963, p. 272). Preston (1975, p. 239) also notes that Hallowell's distinction between humans and other-than-human persons corresponds to Cree perception. Preston adds that other-than-human persons are viewed as "inhabitants of the [Cree] hunter's world."

relations with the non-human environment (Ingold, 1996). Nature is more of an agent and an active participant in the construction of reality than a passive backdrop. The metaphorical connections drawn between landscape and behavior form a fundamental part of the Cree notion of Self. Metaphors provide the ontological basis for 'dwelling' in the landscape and for reflecting on the process of interacting with the landscape (Ingold, 1996; cf. Tilley, 1999, p. 51).

Many of my patients expressed how in the art therapy place they are allowed to think and feel through their art production. There is a dialectal process between their direct engagement in the art-making process and the thoughts and feelings expressed in the artwork. The art therapy place combines both an 'action space' characterized by the art-making, and a 'thought/feeling space' characterized by the thoughts and feelings symbolized in the artwork (cf. Nuttall, 1992, p.40). Ingold (1996) emphasizes the dynamism of the relationship between the two spaces: "action does not serve to translate pre-existent form from one domain (the mental) to another (the material); rather, form arises and is held in place *within* action: it is movement congealed" (p.146, author's emphasis). The meanings attached to a given space are created, sustained or manipulated through the actions executed in that space (cf. Moore, 1986).

In the Cree dictionary, art is associated with *miyupimaatisiiun* or "being alive well" (cf. Adelson, 2000). Art-making involves work that relates to life, and this suggests the Cree are more sensitive to process rather than to the final result.[89] The individual engaged in art-making is working in order to feel better. Luke's drawing of the two of us in art therapy (Figure 24) illustrates the dialectal relationship between 'action space' and 'thought space.' Luke drew this picture at the mid-point of his therapeutic process. He initially said all he wanted to draw was what he saw and he pointed to my arm, mid-torso area and my head, all of which had communicative value for him because he was hearing impaired. This was the first time Luke drew himself in art therapy, which symbolized his increased sense of security with his Self. He drew himself leaning with his elbows on the table and his feet grounded on the floor, suggesting how secure he felt in the art therapy space. Luke felt understood and accepted by me. He carefully wrote our names above and added the markers beside him on the table. He expressed how pleased he was with his drawing, which he simply entitled "the two of us in art therapy."

I found similarities in Basso's (1996) ethnographic inquiry on the Western Apache's notions of space and that of the Cree people I

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[89] For a Cree dictionary, see Cree Lexicon (1987).

work with. Luke's experience also shows how the "self-conscious experience of place is inevitably a product and expression of the self whose experience it is, and therefore, unavoidably, the nature of that experience (its intentional thrust, its substantive content, its affective tones and colorings) is shaped at every turn by the personal and social biography of the one who sustains it" (Basso, 1996, p. 55). The formation of a sense of trust led to the establishment of a social bond, which Luke associated with the art therapy space. Luke had developed a significant relationship with me and a strong sense of trust, and these elements along with the sense of continuity he experienced, added to the meaning he attached to his sense of place in art therapy. Basso claims that notions of space are intimately linked to notions of selfhood among the Apache. Similar to Ingold's (1996) concept of interagentivity, Basso (1996, p. 55) offers the term 'interanimation' to describe the constant mutual molding of places and the people who dwell in them. Apparent among the Apache as well as the Cree individuals I work with is that beyond the exterior reality of place or landscape there is an interior landscape, one that belongs to the moral imagination, one that influences both the sense of place and the sense

of Self (Basso, 1996; cf. Tilley, 1999).[90] In other words, knowledge is keyed to individual lived reality and so the launching point of the knowledge process is the individual and his or her 'interior landscape.' My Cree patients' experience in the art therapy space can be described as interagentive or interanimative in that they engage intimately with the constituents of the art therapy milieu, and the artwork they create, drawing from their interior landscape, evokes metonymic connections to their Self.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

In this chapter, I have explored the notions of space and place, illustrated the elements of the art therapy space, as well as described the Cree conception of space and showed its relevance to my patients' art therapy experience. I presented my views on the ritualization process in art therapy, illustrating the elements that constitute the process. I analyzed the metonymic links between the art therapy experience and the bush experience, as well as the relationship between ritualization, mythification and speech. I described how among the Cree, there is an affirmation of an existential and polysemic bond between Self and place. In addition, I showed how art therapy

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[90] The concept 'moral landscape' refers to ethical lessons that are mapped on the land and they offer the Apache people constant cues on how they live (Basso, 1996).

allows the patient to establish some distance among the various

components of the Self (Self-nature-collective), which eventually leads

to a reintegration of the components of the Self.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion: Art Therapy as an Interstice for the Cree Self

I began this thesis with the idea that I would be exploring

reasons as to why my Cree patients have responded so positively to

the art therapy service I provide. I have realized that art therapy with

these patients becomes an interstitial space that intervenes between

Cree reality and the Euro-Canadian mainstream, akin but not identical

to the anthropological process by which a dialogic relationship

develops between anthropologist and informant. It allows the Cree

individual to focus on and try to resolve the contradictory and

ambiguous tendancies in the construction of the modern Cree Self. I

provide my patients with the space to connect with their cultural

identity, which is not necessarily recognized and validated in the Euro-

Canadian mainstream society due to continued colonialism. The art

therapy space is more than just another 'anthropological place.' Unlike

Augé's (1995, p. 51) 'anthropological place,' the art therapy ritual

space is an example of a concrete and symbolic construction of space,

which *allows* for the expression of the vicissitudes and contradictions

of social life that affect the Cree individual.

As argued here, the rhetorical structure of art therapy placed in

a distinctive semantic field leads to the creation of a ritual space. It is

not just about the silence or the ritualization process in art therapy,

but rather the recomposed narratives of Self. The epistemology of the

Cree Self is mytho-poetic and the art therapy rhetorical structure

encourages mytho-poetic shifts and substitutions among the

components of Self. The narrative discourse amplified in art therapy

exemplifies Cree mytho-poetic thought and it is used as a tool to

reconcile very distinct aspects of the Cree Self that have been given

ontological reality, such as the individual Self, the Self in nature, and

the Self in the collectivity. The narratives facilitate the transition from a

fragmented vision of Self to a healed, composed Self – an image that

is experienced internally as a whole. The patients see themselves in

the stories they tell of their life experiences, and so, because of this

self-reflection, the narratives become the most critical aspects of their

therapeutic process (cf. Brass, 1999). Narratives are fundamental to

their conception of the world and their sense of place within it, and

once the narratives are listened to and validated by another in the

therapeutic milieu, the Self is in turn acknowledged. Consequently, the

individual becomes more secure in situating his/her Self in the world.

Mytho-poetic thought gives pattern and continuity to human

perception and experience (Danesi, 1993, p. 49), and by its repetitive

character, the art therapy ritual provides a message of pattern and a

sense of continuity through which the Cree individual develops a sense of security. Continuity metonymically evokes the past and facilitates the use of "traditional" elements in the negotiated identities that appear in the ritual (clinical) space.[91]

In the following chapter, I will provide a synthesis of the hypotheses explored in this thesis. I will also present some of my personal reflections on my role as an ethnographer and a healer among the Quebec Cree people.

6.1 – Towards Recomposition of the Cree Self

The art therapy ritual space that my Cree patients have engaged in may be seen as a practice that involves the exploration and reflection of the Cree Self, which is a marker of Cree cultural identity. This process does not necessarily relate to the survival of "tradition" or past ways of life but it is more of "a complex interplay between the continual reinvention and redefinition of the self on the one hand and, on the other, a mythological interpretation of events" (Lanoue, 1995, p.4). Thus, the ritualization that occurs in the art therapy space is perhaps more of a reformulation of their notions of

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[91] The process of deriving meaning from repetition and rhythm is also a feature of traditional chants and drum songs found throughout Algonquian cultures (cf. Fulford, 1994; Scott, 1996; Preston, 1975).

Self and their mytho-logic thought – a process of negotiation of the areas of ambivalence in one's life and reconciliation of distinct aspects of the Cree Self.[92] Aspects of Cree ways of the past remain as active elements in the constitution of the world of many Cree individuals.[93]

Similar to the dynamism found in the Quebec Cree culture, McLeod (2000, p. 449) shows how the Plains Cree culture is also a dynamic entity, "open-ended and multi-layered" characterized by "narrative memory" as "an ongoing conversation with a constant play between the present, past and the future." My Cree patients and informants have shown how narratives as part of a collective discourse are constantly reshifting due to the dynamic character of their culture and the narratives are told in hopes to make sense of the liminal, ambiguous space that exists in Cree notions of their collective Self. McLeod (2000) refers to this constant reshaping of collective discourse as "narrative irony," which is quite relevant to the Cree belief shared by many of my informants that the world can always be re-described.

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[92] Hobsbawn (1983, p. 4) describes the process of "inventing traditions" in modern societies as a form of ritualization. I do not believe that my Cree patients are engaged in "inventing traditions," however, in relation to their art therapy ritualized experience, they seem to be reformulating aspects of their Cree Self as a strategy of survival.

[93] Using Tarasoff's (1980, p.15) terminology, which appears relevant to the Quebec Cree, this would be referred to as the cultural process of persistence; as the Cree culture changes due to the process of acculturation, certain elements prevail over a long period of time, such as bush life ways.

Similar to the multiple meanings inherent in mytho-poetic thought as described in this thesis, McLeod (2000, p. 450) adds that in Cree narrative "no interpretation can ever exhaust any narrative: there are always new ways of looking at stories, and each person who participates in the ongoing collective discourse adds layers of meanings and points to new interpretative possibilities." In the art therapy ritual space, patients engage in developing a narrative link between the present and the past.

Art therapy appears as a practical way of dealing with the stress some Cree individuals experience. In times of stress, we often turn to figurative language and to the argument of images to achieve a wider and more transcendent view of things (cf. Fernandez, 1986, p. 177). This strategy or need to create a sense of wholeness is also experienced at the individual level, as manifested by my Cree patients.[94] Art therapy could also be seen as a form of 'symbolic healing,' which is described by Dow (1986) as involving the use of culturally specific symbols (in this case, Cree mytho-poetic thought) that have generalizing effects on social experience and are intrinsic to a culture's model of reality. According to Dow (1986, p. 56), in the process of symbolic healing, the healer helps the patient particularize a

cultural mythic world and manipulate healing symbols within it. In art therapy, my Cree patients create narratives by relating to their 'mythic world' as a fertile source of metonyms with which new Selves can be constructed and "healed."

The narrated selfhood as demonstrated in art therapy is a type of survival for my Cree patients (cf. Brass, 1999). Also, "a narrated self founded on contextual meanings may be transitory, adapting and changing to discursive and spatial venues" (Brass, 1999, p. 98). In relation to my Cree patients, the meanings derived from their narratives of Self may be influenced by the art therapy discursive practice and symbolic space. However, what I have noticed with my patients is that the narrated Self is less transitory and in fact, it becomes more meaningful when metonymic links are made to bush experience. As shown in Chapter 4, narratives expressed in mythic form become experiential knowledge, which is retained because they are meaningful to the patient and because they are keyed to the individual's lived reality. This highly contextualized, experiential-type knowledge becomes internalised by the individual and thus, more permanent and less transitory.

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[94] Similarly, Ewing's (1990) Pakistani informants experienced this strategy to create self-representations.

My Cree patients, who have experienced collective demotivation and inconsistency in their construction of Self, have turned to the symbolic, metonymic dimensions inherent in art therapy to create more adequate representations of Self (cf. Ewing, 1990, p. 270). As they face different and evolving conditions, the Cree individuals I have met and worked with are simply shifting to metaphoric, semantic domains that they find relevant. Essentially, my patients find rhetorical coherency in the ritualized aspects of the art therapy space.

The art therapy discourse has been reinterpreted by my Cree patients to accommodate to a Cree idiom of experience, and that is, to redefine their notion of Self within a mytho-poetic framework. Preston (1988) would classify this process of reinterpretation as an example of syncretism, which was discussed in Chapter 2. The Cree use of art therapy also exemplifies a form of medical pluralism (also discussed in Chapter 2), combining a Western approach to healing (psychotherapy) and Cree mytho-poesis to deal with their fragmented sense of Self. In their assemblage of different perspectives, there are processes that "communicate an understanding of how the ancestors once did things, others attempting to define the essential Cree way of life, in contrast to the ideas and technologies of outsiders. Taken together, they provide insight into the increasingly insistent call for medical pluralism"

(Niezen, 1997, p. 466). Thus, art therapy justifies Cree epistemology,

which has been 'outmoded' in Euro-Canadian society by the fiction of

"tradition." Although the Cree people tend to adopt a more exclusionist

approach, as they are guarded in their relations with Euro-Canadians

(Tanner, 1999). They have incorporated art therapy, a Western

innovation, into their ways of doing things because I believe it is a

rhetorical strategy that promotes an effective forum in which to

recompose the Self. It allows them to return to their cultural proclivity

or what Bourdieu (1977) refers to as "habitus," which is characterized

by mytho-logic thought. [95] Mytho-poesis is a process that symbolizes

an essential Cree way of thinking and art therapy is a Western-created

healing practice that encourages the use of mytho-poetic thought.

Cree mytho-poetic discourse can be defined as a collective-type

discourse because it constitutes the conditions on how people

communicate and practice knowledge (Foucault, 1972). It is a

discourse that informs individual experience and constitutes realities by

which individuals live (cf. Abu-Lughod, 1986).[96] However, I believe

that we should not disregard the individual's active role in the

expression and constitution of identities effected through discourse. As

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[95] "Habitus" relates to the routine practice within which people experience the world
around them (Bourdieu, 1977).

shown by my Cree patients and informants, the individual is an

important source of meaning and thus, should not be decentred in the

constitution of discourse. For instance, the narratives relating to animal

imagery relate to collective, "traditional" discourse. They are perhaps

informed by this discourse, but each individual's unique experience of

an animal-doctor relationship contributes to the constitution of the

discourse. Thus, animal-doctor discourse both constitutes the realities

of Cree individuals and it is constituted by Cree individual narratives.

Cree discourse as manifested in art therapy can be seen as a

symbolically mediated and interactionally coordinated form of

behavior, which relates to Burke's (1973) theory on how rhetorical

usage affects others.[97]

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[96] Abu-Lughod (1986) provides an ethnography on Bedouin love poetry as a traditional-type discourse, which informs the social actors how they can think and feel.

[97] According to Burke (1973, p. 46), "rhetoric is the art of persuasion." Cree animal-doctor discourse can be seen as an act of persuasion or inducement to action, which in this case would be for me to listen attentively to the patient's interests or what Burke (1973, p. 46) calls, "symbol-using entity" (i.e. animal-doctors).

Because it is initially silent, art therapy does not engage some standard postulates of Western psychotherapy and it does not impose an ideologically-sanctioned rhetorical structure. For instance, psychoanalysts tend to place emotional distress into a frame of meaning or rhetorical structure, which assumes that negative informative influences, such as unresolved emotional conflicts stemming from childhood, are contributing factors to the malaise of people. The art therapy I provide allows the *patient* to interpret the events of their life and then situate them within frameworks of meaning that may be more culturally appropriate and sensitive to the individual's needs. Because my approach is more patient-centered, I try not to impose a rhetorical structure on them but rather encourage them to create one of their own, in hopes that they will better retain such experiential- based reality. Thus, my approach is effective with the Cree because of the value they place on individualised knowledge that is firmly rooted in lived reality. For my Cree patients, a rhetorical structure based on their personal narratives is more dynamic and real, and thus better integrated and remembered. It is this process that leads to a more healthy composite Self.

6.2 – Myth, Art and Self-reflection

It makes sense to my Cree patients to use art as an integral
part of their self-reflective process because my Cree patients believe,
as I do, that art is linked to the process of individuation and it is
directly tied to the process of spiritual self-control (cf. Meletinsky,
1998, p. 43), but it is individuation in the Cree sense, allowing for the
multiple Self. As Langer (1942) also claims, art provides an
intermediate sphere between the physical, biological experience and
the metaphysical, spiritual realms. Similarly, Lévi-Strauss (1966, p. 22)
defines art as lying "half-way between scientific knowledge and
mythical or magical thought." The process of producing an art object
created in art therapy becomes a schema to organize the messages
that stem from one's sense of Self. According to my Cree patients and
informants, this intermediate realm is also made accessible in the
bush. Animals are believed to possess "two dimensions of existence,
the first mundane, and the other transcendental and normally
invisible" (Lanoue, 2000, p.2). Art therapy provides the space to
express such beliefs and give tangible form to intangible experience
through the art-making process. Thus, as I have shown in Chapter 5,
the metonymic links between art therapy and the bush make a lot of
sense to the Cree patients, as well as the metonymic association made

between these ritualized spaces and the Cree sense of Self because of this relationship between the process of mythification and self-expression. The sense of place experienced in both the bush and art therapy sustains identity, and provides connections to a personal and collective past while offering an emotional center (cf. Ryden, 1993, p. 95). The bush has always been a place of healing and renewal (cf. Adelson, 2001), an arena of both ordinary and ritual activity, whereas art therapy has become a ritual space of self-discovery and healing.

Myths, like art, are "efforts to construct and maintain a sense of place – to create a world that resonates to human needs and desires out of neutral environment" (Tuan, 1991, p.687). Both myth and art can be seen as texts that are carriers of information and forms of expression that help address inconsistencies in the Self (cf. Lotman, 1990). In this sense, they both have a purpose. Because my patients are dealing with contradictions in their sense of Self, they turn to myths, which inherently address contradictions and function to resolve such inconsistencies (cf. Lévi-Strauss, 1966). Myths are appealing because they are instrumental in transforming chaos into a special, self-referential language. The nature of metonymic code switching that defines mythologic is in fact well suited to dealing with the ambiguity of identity construction between Cree and Western thought forms.

According to D.H. Turner (1979, p. 119), who presents an analysis of Lévi-Strauss' study of myth and folklore, the contradictions myths address are derived from an already constructed and meaningful reality. He adds: "Mythical thought... takes to pieces and reconstructs events which are significant within the culture – images which are already imbued with meaning." In art therapy, the process is similar in that it involves a rethinking, reconstructive process of elements relevant to the Cree Self, which are imbued with meaning. In this rethinking process, these individuals gain inner strength and security to enhance the qualities of Self that are already present and then, to take what is necessary from the contradictory rhetorics of self-making to construct a more balanced secure identity, that is, functional in both the Cree context and the Euro-Canadian mainstream.

6.3 – Cree Self – Relational or Individuated?

The self-reflection process and the narratives of Self that emerge may be influenced by the art therapy discourse, as previously mentioned. John Berry's work on Cree cognitive style (Berry, 1976; Berry & Bennett, 1992), specifically focusing on self-nonself segregation in relation to the individual's processing of information and the degree to which it is affected by the contextual field, is relevant

here. My patients have often demonstrated how they think with the art

therapy space, in that they use the elements of the space and the art

therapy rhetoric to engage in self-reflection. This type of processing

would be categorized as field dependent because the process is

dependent on and influenced by the contextual field. However, I

noticed the same contradiction that Berry (1976) notes in his research.

Rather than integration, there is a differentiation of components of the

art therapy space, which is characteristic of field-independent

thinking.[98] The process appears to be more of a differentiative and

contextualizing type and the individual is embedded in the field, as

seen in the section in Chapter 4 on synaesthasia and how Cree

syllabics were taught to children in the bush; the syllabics were taught

as being part of the contextual field or the individual's world and the

individual elements can be easily differentiated (i.e. the syllabics, the

phonetic sound, the tree, the visual element and the individual's

learning experience); therefore, the process of learning is one that

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[98] Berry (1976) also notes that the Cree, like many hunter-gatherers, demonstrate highly developed spatial ability, which is associated with right hemispheric lateralisation. However, whether field-independence among hunter-gatherers is associated with right hemspheric lateralisation or with long-term ecological adaptations is not known. Interestingly, art-making is related to relative right hemispheric dominance (Edwards, 1979). The correlations between art-making, spatial ability and Cree cognitive style are speculative and it would require further research. I believe that by defining the process as being biological or neuropsychological or as a cultural construction is limiting and unidimensional. I view the art-making process as more multifaceted combining all these dimensions.

involves contextualizing rather than decontextualizing and it also

demonstrates the empathic connection the Cree people have with the

natural world (cf. Ingold, 1996), which was also described in Chapter

4. When the individual is embedded in the field, the individual

becomes empowered because of the emphasis placed on the active

role played by the individual, which is what occurs in the art therapy

space, and because embeddedness is a metonymic evocation of the

several players that are part of the composite Self. Thus, there is a

reliance on both the internal frame of reference (i.e. the individual)

and the external frame of reference (i.e. the space). The template is

similar for the construct of Cree identity and the development of Cree

Self, where both individuality and the relationship to others and the

environment are stressed.

    As presented in Chapter 2, the problem that many of my Cree

patients face is in identifying themselves with their culture at a

collective level and at a personal level. A common dilemma most of my

Cree patients face is that "Cree" cannot be and is not a marker of an

autonomous people (and of autonomous individuals), yet they feel it

necessary in all the definitions of Self. Individuals struggle to come to

grips with a definition – "Cree" – which was not part of tradition and

which is politicised in such a way that it has little resonance on the

individual level and their sense of Self. These individuals have difficulty

finding an inner balance by resolving the contradictions that they have

internalised. Nonetheless, for these individuals, "Cree" remains

fundamental to all definitions of the Self. The elements of their

definitions of Cree Self include ways of the past, ways of thinking that

still exist today, which together make Cree individuals distinct and also

provide them with a sense of belonging to the Cree collectivity or

cultural group.

Many Cree individuals become entangled in the politicised

discourse wherein selfhood becomes a politicised notion.

Contradictions and ambiguous notions surface and these individuals

become caught up in the politics of selfhood. While in art therapy, the

Cree individuals who fall victim to this stress are able to reflect, give

form to the tension by understanding it, disentangle themselves from

the politicised notions and ground themselves in their own notions of

Cree composite Self. In the end, they are better able to engage in the

construction of modern Self. The Cree Self and the Euro-Canadian Self

are not necessarily opposing rhetorics where the former is relational

(i.e. where the definition of Self is always in relation to the other) and

the latter individuated (cf. Battaglia, 1995). The Cree Self somehow

combines both the relational and the individuated selves because as

explored in this thesis (Chapter 3), the individual does not only exist in definite relationships to other selves. The Cree Self is partly constituted by the process of interaction with others as well as being an autonomous Self that is distinct from other selves, human and non-human. Cree people perceive an autonomous healed Self as not one that is more individuated or more relational but balanced in both regards. Moreover, selfhood is perceived as more of an imaginative and reflective process rather than a rigid and static product (cf. Brass, 1999), placing emphasis on the individual's active role in the self-making process. Another aspect is that the "incomplete Self" becomes whole in relationship to the transcendental via animals. Foucault's (1984,p. 350-351) insight is relevant here: "From the idea that self is not given to us, I think that there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art."

This thesis could be recognized as a person-centered ethnography demonstrating how Cree individuals are not passive vehicles of their culture but rather self-conscious and active selves sharing a cultural identity (cf. Sökefeld, 1999). Inevitably, my patient-centered approach in psychotherapy has led to the creation of a person-centered ethnography. In this thesis, I have explored the Cree Self within the framework of Cree cultural identity and through my

Cree patients' and informants' narratives, I have discovered an

interdependent relationship between Cree Self and identity, where the

two are mutually implicated. Epstein's (1978, p. 101) definition of

identity is relevant here, describing identity as representing "the

process by which the person seeks to integrate his [or her] various

statuses and roles, as well as his [or her] diverse experiences, into a

coherent image of self." Cree cultural identity is in constant flux and

the Cree Self is the reflexive center of the individual, which could be

seen as a relatively stable point (cf. Sökefeld, 1999). What my patients

seek through therapy is that coherent sense of Self. When the

contradictions that surround them in the socio-cultural realm are

internalised, the result is an imbalanced sense of Self. These

individuals experience the tension between being like and being the

Other, or, as Taussig (1993) would define it, between sameness and

alterity. Cree experience this as an identity crisis. For instance, Luke, a

nine-year-old Cree patient of mine, had created an "Indian mask" (as

he called it) (Figure 33).
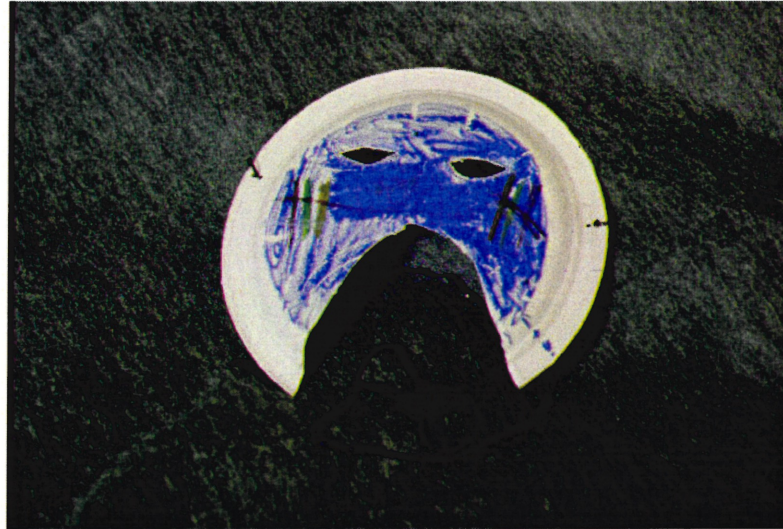
Figure 33 – Luke's "Indian Mask"

He wore it throughout the session and then removed it at the end of

the session, saying that none of his friends would like it and he only

wanted to wear it while in art therapy. Luke was the only Cree boy in

the residential treatment unit and he experienced a strong sense of

alienation. Also, before coming to Montreal for treatment, Luke had

not been allowed to go to the bush, where his parents lived

throughout most of the year. During his two-year treatment, he was

able to eventually develop self-worth and an inner sense of stability

and engage in 'mimesis,' registering both sameness and difference (cf.

Taussig, 1993), being accepted by his peers both in Montreal and his

Cree community as "one of them," as well as accepting his distinct

traits (a hearing-impaired child, a Cree individual from the north).

"Creating stability from this instability is no small task, yet all identity formation is engaged in this habitually bracing activity in which the issue is not so much staying the same, but maintaining sameness through alterity" (Taussig, 1993, p. 129).

I also discovered that the Cree notion of Self is not that different from my own. I have noted more similarities than differences and the dichotomous split between Western Self versus Cree (non-Western) Self was not predominant (cf. Spiro, 1993). I did not find an unbounded, unintegrated, "non-Western" type Self where individual interests are subordinated 'to the good of the collectivity' (cf. Sökefeld, 1999). Instead I found in both my Cree patients and informants a strong sense of personal autonomy. In fact, Cree ethos appears to stress independence and individuality. I agree with Sökefeld (1999) that it may be useful to try a paradigm of more similarity for conceiving of others' selves rather than difference. However, I believe that such examination should be done in a cautious manner. Also, the anthropological study of Self should not be seen as an alternative to society. As Cohen (1994, p. 192) claims, "the rehabilitation of the self in social science...proposes a view of society as composed of and by self conscious individuals." I feel that in providing my Cree patients a space to express their notions of Self, as a clinician and an

anthropologist, I am modestly contributing to the decolonisation of the

human subject (cf. Cohen, 1994, p. 192). In the art therapy sanctuary,

these individuals recapture, reformulate and give meaning to their

sense of Self. In addition, this thesis exemplifies an ethnographic

engagement with the Cree sense of place experienced in art therapy, a

place that is highly charged with symbolic significance due to their

sense of Self being embedded within it.

6.4 – Becoming an Anthropologist

During the process of writing this thesis, what often emerged in

the foreground of my consciousness is a piece of wisdom from a Cree

elder that I find quite valuable. He emphatically said to me: "All

scholarly works by Whitemen on Native people are biased by nature

and are more about your own cultural views than about our own." This

reminded me of Rosaldo's (1984, p.147) warning to anthropologists to

remain aware of our ethnocentric projection and that "our concern

with the individuals and with their hidden inner selves may well be

features of *our* world of action and belief – itself to be explained and

not assumed as the foundation of cross-cultural study" (original

emphasis). As an ethnographer, I admit that I began with writing

abstract general locutions like "among the Cree it is believed….". This

did not accurately depict the slice of Cree reality I work with and therefore, I decided to accord primacy to the "selves" I interacted with. I concentrated on the "image-ful particularity" manifested by my patients and my interactions with them (cf. Taussig, 1993, p. 16). I have attempted to give my patients and informants a voice in this thesis, which is essentially about their notions of Self, by re-presenting their narratives and artwork. In this thesis, I attempted to create a relationship with the ideas of the Cree individuals and my framings as a clinician and anthropologist. Interestingly, this process is similar to that of listening to storytelling as described by Lotman (1990). According to Lotman (1990, p. 35), the listener of the myth transforms the story s/he is acquiring into texts of his/her consciousness. As anthropologists, we offer interpretations of interpretations, or stories about stories and views about views (Geertz, 1995).

I too believe that the inevitable starting point for my interpretation of another's selfhood is my own sense of Self (Cohen, 1994). My clinical work and fieldwork continue to provide me with a heightened self-awareness especially in regards to my role as a healer. My Cree patients and informants have facilitated my own self-discovery process as a healer. Before then I saw myself as a therapist, an artist and a teacher. I was aware that something unique was going on in the

art therapy service I was providing because of the continuous successes I as well as others had noted. In the Cree community, the 'word' soon spread from Northern Quebec to Ontario, Northwestern Ontario and Manitoba. I would explain these successes by saying that they had to do with the alternative approach of using art to facilitate emotional expression. My colleagues in art therapy and psychiatry would agree with me. The focus was rarely on my gifts, talents or capacities and more on external factors such as, the artwork, the art process, Cree culture, etc. I myself would focus on the artwork created in art therapy as the key to enter my Cree patients' world. Now I am looking at my role in this process, moving beyond the artwork alone and reflecting on the dynamics that allowed me to enter their world and help them create a space that becomes meaningful to them.

My Cree patients and informants would often encourage me to focus on my own cultural identity and how my life experiences have formed me. When they realized I was not Cree nor Aboriginal (because of my dark complexion and almond-shaped eyes), many showed an interest in knowing more about my Italian cultural heritage. A Cree elder actually encouraged me to bring my healing 'gift' to my "own people." I heeded his advice as I recently began working in an Italian community hospital in Montreal. Also, many of my Cree informants told

me to include myself in my ethnography. With all the anthropological research done on the Cree people, they unanimously felt that the works were devoid of truthful interactions between the anthropologist and the people, and they rarely show how the anthropologist gained such knowledge. They felt that most research on the Cree people was divorced from the individual, that is, from the anthropologist writing the work and his/her relationships with the 'informants,' and so, they encouraged me to include descriptions of my interactions with them because after all, my ethnography remains a work about my interpretations of their life experiences. As I mentioned above, I am operating within a post-modern sensibility by including myself in this thesis, yet it is not necessarily just about me.

As a clinician, when I moved beyond the image of the stoic psychotherapist by sharing bits of my own Self with them, my Cree patients transcended their emotional reserve. My affinity and humanity have led me to witness the profound tragedies and triumphs of many Aboriginal people, both on the individual and collective levels. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, they also appear more sensitive to what I am doing as compared to my Euro-Canadian patients and therefore, they have designated me the title of "healer" or *minwachihiwaw*. They helped me discover my gift to heal others by attentively listening,

helping them reframe their emotional and spiritual experiences and encouraging a dialogue between us. Through our dialogic exchange my patients and I transcend immediate communication and emotional barriers that often exist between Cree people and Euro-Canadians. Moreover, I heal because they acknowledge me as being part of their collectivity, and so they believe that through our dialogic creation I help them form a healthy composite Self.

What initially began as uncertain dialogue between cultural traditions, awkward greetings, and doubts (cf. Desjarlais, 1992, p. 253), developed into a sense of comfort and faith as we negotiate a sense of place to heal their fragmented sense of Self. As this thesis illustrates, our interaction patterns, the narratives and emotional discourse framed by both the art therapy rhetorical structure and mytho-poetic Cree thought are instrumental in the creation of art therapy as a ritual space.

I realize how my knowledge of my Cree informants is primarily a matter of sociality, that is, my knowledge evolves through my exchanges with them. I have been incorporated into their world and I have been bestowed the title of healer or *minwachihiwaw*. My experience is akin to that of Jackson (1995, p. 119) who writes, "the possibility of anthropology is born when the other recognizes my

humanity, and on the strength of this recognition incorporates me into his world, giving me food and shelter, bestowing upon me a name... I am literally incorporated into his world, and it is on the basis of this incorporation and my reciprocal response to it that I begin to gain a knowledge of that world."

What began as an unfamiliar setting essentially called for my own self-reflection. What is familiar, such as beliefs and values, is often taken for granted because they are so unconscious, and they could become foreign because we do not reflect upon them. For instance, a belief I had was that animals were subordinate to humans and the relationship would be made meaningful if the animal became a pet. With my Cree patients and friends, I was acculturated to a reality where animals play a significant role in communication and the formation of Self. Although I have yet to experience an actual communicative experience with an animal in the bush, I have developed an appreciation for this reality and it has become less strange to me only because I have listened attentively to so many encounters. As I described throughout this thesis, my Cree informants led me to cultivate my own subjective meaning of reality, especially in relation to my experience in the bush. When I first came face to face with a caribou, Sid, a Cree elder, understood why I was shaking like a

leaf and later ran into the van, crippled with fear. I later apologized for stalling our excursion. All Sid said with his dry sense of humour, was that it was not yet my time for my animal encounter!

During this fieldwork, oftentimes what appeared as foreign was eventually made familiar. For instance, when I first discovered the notion of synaesthasia, I immediately saw its relevance among my Cree informants and their style of perception. In my research, I noticed how both the Cree 'cognitive style' and synaesthasia were implicitly categorized as distinct styles of perception (cf. Berry, 1976; Dann, 1998). In both 'styles' we find a definite interrelationship between affect, perception, sensation and the construction of meaning. The more I researched the concept of synaesthasia and discussed it thoroughly with anthropologists George Fulford (2000b) and Richard Preston (2000), the more I saw links to Cree reality and the more I realized that it is a process I engage in myself at times. Once while in Vermont with a hearing-impaired friend of mine, and surrounded by trees and the beautiful sound of rustling leaves, I wondered to myself how she could experience the sound because I felt so selfish experiencing something I found so spectacular. I closed my eyes and allowed myself to experience the sound. I then told her to place "Rice Crispies" cereal in her mouth and experience the texture.

To me, this tactile sensation came closest to the sound of the rustling leaves.

I agree with Tuan (1993) who argues that the synaesthetic tendency remains commonplace as the blending of senses is so habitual that we take it completely for granted. Cross-modal sensory associations are often used to facilitate memory (Fulford, 2000a). Such multisensorial experience is probably a process we engage in unconsciously or without labelling it. The Cree people I work with also do not necessarily label this process as 'synaesthetic' nor as multisensorial. Like the notions of art and Self, they do not have specific terms to describe such entities or processes that for them are simply part of their life experience. As Bob told me, "the terms spirtiruality, tradition, belief, family, storytelling can't be defined separately. They are all part of a way of life." The fact that the Cree individuals I work with may not have similar terms or predefined categories does not mean they do not experience such processes or possess similar notions of such entities.

During these past twelve years working with the Cree people, I experienced firsthand, as Napier (1992, p. 147) eloquently claims, that "strangers within our midst are, indeed, the strangest of all – not because they are so alien, but because they are so close to us. [...]

They cannot be completely exotic, for, were they so, we could not recognize them." My Cree patients and informants and I created a connection between my world and theirs and we discovered degrees of familiarity (cf. Bibeau & Corin, 1995). My experience also concords with Shweder's (1990) observations; he notes that our inability to get beyond appearances of reality with methods of science or rules of logic doesn't mean we stop trying to imagine what is real to another.

Both my fieldwork and clinical work are characterized by a dialogic exchange, where my patients, informants and myself gain knowledge and insights from each other. In such an interactive and dialogically conceived-type therapeutic encounter, I am recognizing the reciprocal influence between therapist and patient. This reminds me of a drawing directive I had given to Luke during our first session together. I had asked him to draw about people doing something together, which was part of a diagnostic art therapy procedure that I was being trained to use. Luke's response to this directive was to write his name and mine, each enclosed in a box-like form and then draw a heart, divided in half and he told me that he was going to show me how to color in my half of the heart (Figure 34).

Figure 34 – Luke's Heart Drawing #1
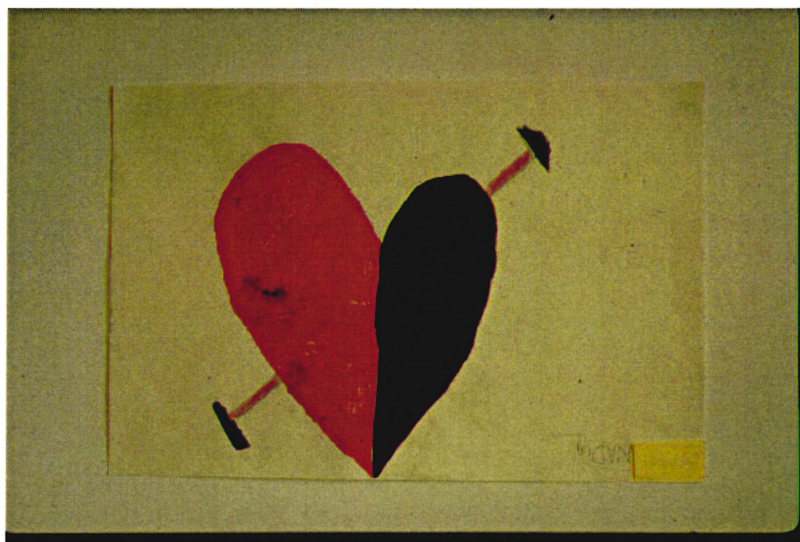
Luke gave me the black marker and he used the red and I followed his directions with no hesitation. Interestingly, my clinical supervisor reprimanded me for engaging in the art-making process with Luke because it encourages enmeshment and not separate autonomous selves. Now, in hindsight, I understand the reprimand, which exemplifies a Western culture-bound value (i.e. separate

Selves). Given my experience with Cree patients, I also better

comprehend Luke's intention and understanding of the directive. It

was not necessarily a misunderstanding but rather his interpretation of

the healing through art as an interactive encounter. I did not get the

sense that Luke was losing his sense of Self in his asking me to draw

with him. In fact, he was actually acknowledging my separate sense of

Self in giving me a separate space to color in and a different color. In

his own way, Luke was gravitating towards me to help him make

sense of the inner turmoil he was feeling. A Cree elder in Luke's

community informed me that red symbolizes a visionary or feeling

state and black symbolizes reason, and so, according to the elder,

Luke, in giving me the black marker, was symbolically asking me to

help him make sense of his feelings, that together we formed a

healthy, composite Self. Interestingly, during one of our last sessions,

Luke asked that we draw together "one last time." Once again he drew

the heart, this time it appears with more form, and Luke suggested we

interchange the markers. He noted emphatically: "don't forget to leave

a space in the middle to make the connection" (Figure 35). The heart

became symbolic of a relationship that facilitated Luke's healing

process towards a more balanced sense of Self engaged with the

Other.
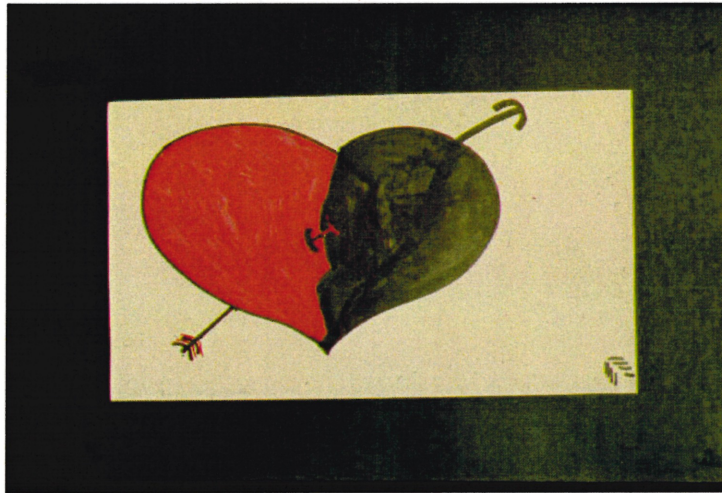
Figure 35 – Luke's Heart Drawing #2

As art therapy makes inner sense to the Cree people I work with, their mytho-poetic thought and how it is used in their healing process now makes sense to me. A female Cree elder who was working with me as an interpreter recently told a mother of a young girl I was seeing in art therapy, "*aspayimotam miyoapatisiou,*" which is translated as "have faith, she works with art."

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