

# **Building Birch Bark Canoes: Oral Histories, Colonial Archives, and Stories of Survivance**

by

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## Abstract

Colonial archival practices have promoted the absence of Indigenous knowledge as part of broader attempts at cultural assimilation and erasure. 20<sup>th</sup> century anthropology's 'salvage ethnographies' reduced cultures to their material objects, largely muting the complex social and linguistic forms to which those objects belong.

I examine one such object, the birch bark canoe, in two related archives: documentary films produced predominantly by the National Film Board of Canada between the 1920s and 70s; and the canoe researches of American artist, journalist and ethnographer E. Tappan Adney (1868-1950). Archival agendas and conventions give way to what Anishinaabe writer Gerald Vizenor has named practices of *survivance*, aesthetic expressions which challenge "isolated and stoical" portraits of Indigeneity. Canoe building, a practice that invariably belongs to scenes of everyday life – to people in particular places, and to local languages – enlivens each archives with "motion, presence, and survivance", telling stories of cultural resilience and humanity.

**Keywords:** Birch bark canoes; Survivance; Salvage Ethnography; Oral history;  
National Film Board of Canada; E. Tappan Adney

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# Introduction: Building as Survivance

## 1.1. The Construction of Objects: Birch Bark Canoes

This thesis brings together stories about how birch bark canoe building enabled the endurance, adaptation, and resiliency of languages and cultures in Canadian Indigenous communities, during times of colonial oppression, violence, and instability. Building is considered as a practice involving aesthetics, politics and labour, but more than any one of these, the comings and goings-on of everyday life, of particular people in particular places. I focus on canoe building, just one of the myriad and complex ways these objects have figured in encounters between Indigenous and non-Native peoples, because as a detail-oriented practice, it inevitably brings out the kind of details that invoke stories of humanity, not difference.

There is no singular or essential birch bark canoe. Built for millennia by North American Indigenous peoples, these objects have always been as multiple, distinct and changing as the cultures, languages, and localities at whose intersection they are made.

For every one of the many species of birch, there are tenfold or more types of birch bark canoe. The number of possible canoes becomes overwhelming when you consider that they can and have been made from other types of bark, including spruce, elm, chestnut, hickory, basswood and cottonwood.<sup>1</sup> A similar form of canoe was sometimes made from moose hides, “in the spring of the year and [were] only made to go down river”,<sup>2</sup> from two or more hides stitched together and supported with a frame of stiff hardwood poles. A 1982 film, *The Last Mooseskin Boat*, shows a Shotah Dene canoe that is constructed from more than twenty hides.<sup>3</sup>

Captivated by the beautiful birch bark canoes they saw everywhere in their new world, colonial writers and artists were right to liken them to the landscapes in which they saw them. At that time, everything needed to build a canoe could be found locally; as a result, the canoes from one region took on distinct characteristics, the sorts of

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<sup>1</sup> Adney, E.T, and Chappelle, H. *Bark and Skin Boats*, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Adney, Travel Journals. 287.

<sup>3</sup> Yakeleya, R. *The Last Moosekin Boat*.



idiosyncrasies that make spaces into places. But the written, sketched and painted accounts recording them, which were voluminous, lacked much of this rich detail and specificity, and over time contributed to the idea that, as art historian and anthropologist Charlotte Townsend-Gault has put it, the people whose aesthetic practices these were could be “distinguished, if not known, through their objects”.<sup>4</sup> This process can be called many things – objectification, reification, a kind of fetishism. Certainly it is essentialism; it is especially evident in the union between static, unchanging landscapes and stoic, still Indigenous figures poised with their birch bark canoes, all of which (object, figure, and ground) were edited and embellished with great inaccuracy.

I argue that one of the things contributing to this process was that the fact that the process by which a canoe was built was frequently overlooked. In fact, the first detailed descriptions of a build did not appear until a man named Tappan Adney recorded them in the late 1880s. As will become clear, the building process was as important as the objects themselves ever were. It is in its making where this object can be said to truly come into existence.

Even the most elementary considerations of a birch bark canoe quickly dissolve stable, western notions of permanence, equivalence, and the potential for exchange value that form the basis of what we understand to be economy, and more broadly our worldviews and philosophies. Canoes were constantly in need of repair because of the extreme thinness, and thus fragility, of their bark coverings.<sup>5</sup> Yet this was also the property that made them lightweight enough to be easily portaged overland – a feature without which the fur trade and broader interior commerce<sup>6</sup> would have been impossible. The beauty of a canoe of this type was its ability to draw materials from the lands it passed through for repair (though it was common practice to prepare extra spruce root lashings in advance, and to pre-process the ‘pitch’ needed to waterproof a canoe – children were often tasked with the chewing of spruce gum, when at home or when travelling). The fact that a canoe was constantly repaired – remade – in this way means it was hardly the same object from one day to the next. Such fluidity stands in more than metaphorical contrast to the fixed, frozen, and commodified form indicated in the

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<sup>4</sup> Townsend-Gault, C. “Not a Museum but a Cultural Journey”, S51.

<sup>5</sup> Explorers and settlers, typically far less skilled paddlers and navigators than their indigenous guides and coworkers, frequently expressed frustration at how easily the bark could tear.

<sup>6</sup> Standen, D. “Canoes and Canots of New France”.

category of objects, something which extends from landscape paintings, to museum objects, to wider valuations of land and natural resources.

Similarly, anthropologist Julie Cruikshank has written that “[o]ral traditions are not natural products. They have social histories, and acquire meaning in the situations in which they are used”.<sup>7</sup> Yet, she says, speaking from her work with Yukon and Alaskan communities, the central structures of many oral stories remain, and they outlast time. They are not unlike bark canoes in this way; while Indigenous nations always looked to one another for forms and techniques, and traded materials to improve designs long before the influence of Europeans, the central form remained consistent. When canvas began to replace bark in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – in part because of an overharvesting of birch and in part because of wartime availability of canvas – building continued much as it had. “The change from bark to canvas was regarded as an improvement from both the builder’s and user’s point of view...The basic technique [by which] the canvas was staked out, gunwales and stem battens attached...ribs and sheathing inserted in the canvas ‘pouch’...is exactly the opposite of the white man’s ‘factory’ technique, which involves building the framework over a form and adding the canvas cover in the final stages”.<sup>8</sup> While steel cutting edges didn’t revolutionize basic building techniques, they made new levels of intricacy possible, in both structural and decorative elements. Builders in many places readily adopted commercial paints, roofing asphalt and resins, nails and tacks, among many other materials. It may be that the birch bark canoe provided an antidote to the evils of the Industrial Revolution, in the collective settler imagination anyway, but the adaptation of these canoes to new materials and material processes, and the broader social changes that arrived with them tell a far more complex story.

“If we think of oral tradition as a social activity rather than as some reified product, we come to view it as part of the equipment for living rather than a set of meanings embedded in texts waiting to be discovered”,<sup>9</sup> Cruikshank writes. Canoe building, from bark and otherwise, is little if it isn’t the process of discovery through oral tradition. The ability to construct a boat first depends on an intimate understanding of the dynamics

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<sup>7</sup> Cruikshank, J. *The Social Life of Stories*, 40.

<sup>8</sup> Taylor, *Cree Canoe Construction*, 9.

<sup>9</sup> Cruikshank, J. *The Social Life of Stories*, 41.

and properties of materials, the seasonal considerations of where and when those materials are found, the suitability of a craft to where one is, and where one is planning to go. These tangible intangibles can only be learned only from observation and doing, such that it takes the better part of a lifetime before one knows enough to assume responsibility for a build. “To harvest their resources”, Cruikshank writes, “subarctic peoples developed material cultures based on principles that could be combined in a number of ways...Principles underlying snare construction, for instance, could be applied to hunting ground squirrels or large animals like moose and caribou. The critical issue was to learn the idea of how to construct and use a snare. *Oral tradition, tools of the mind, weighs nothing and can accompany a traveler anywhere*”.<sup>10</sup>

The ability for a traditional form to change and yet remain constant complicates cultural myths of what it means to be modern: myths which considered, for instance, the eclipse of local oral traditions by the universalizing practice of writing – writing is detached from locality – as a natural and inevitable process. The decline of oral language, however, was really the unnatural process now referred to as *linguicide*<sup>11</sup> - the result, among other things, of land expropriation, forced migrations including the allocation of reserves, and the squeezing out of resources rendering traditional land-based practices and associated oral traditions less and less accessible.<sup>12</sup> With this in mind, canoe building reveals itself as a resilient practice through some of the most difficult times in Indigenous history, for instance during the Indian Act years – here I refer to the period between the establishment of the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857, until the 1951 revision that lifted the official ban on traditional cultural practices.<sup>13</sup> During that time, building wasn’t banned outright, as settler economies were still far too dependent on canoe production, though building songs were prohibited where they could be.<sup>14</sup> Yet

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<sup>10</sup> Cruikshank, “The Social Life of Stories”, 102.

<sup>11</sup> Nicholas, Andrea Bear. “Linguicide and Land Expropriation”, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Cruikshank, “The Social Life of Stories”, 16. Cruikshank makes an important point in her discussion of land claims in the Yukon. The proceeding focused on specific places, but elders expressed great concern that it was equally the trails *between* places that were critical in terms of access. It follows that oral traditions are often constructed as travel narratives; it is not the product of coincidence that Indigenous languages are overwhelmingly verb-based.

<sup>13</sup> Hanson, Erin. “The Origins of the Indian Act”.

<sup>14</sup> Taylor, G. *Cree Canoe Construction*, 33. Writing about Eastern Cree building around Great Whale River, Taylor writes, “The abandonment of building songs..was probably related to intensive missionary influence around 1910. [Anglican missionary Reverend Walton] was responsible for suppressing a number of traditional practices, including drumming and singing...”

an anthropologist who worked with a Cree community in the 1970s recorded 20 building songs.<sup>15</sup> Candice Hopkins notes of the Potlatch Ban of the same era (early C.20) in the Pacific Northwest, that ceremonies “went underground”; days of celebration were “deliberately disjointed” and gifts became ‘presents’ to display Christian ideals of charity and even took on the form of “relatively banal European goods: the 1,500 sacks of flour in this image, for instance”.<sup>16</sup>

The Anishinaabe writer Gerald Vizenor (Minnesota Chippewa) has coined a term for the kinds of Native stories that speak of presence, creativity, and adaptability: *survivance*. Survivance stories escape and exceed the kinds of objectification and romantic sentiment that has defined birch bark canoes, along with much of Indigenous cultures and traditions: “Survivance...is not a mere romance of nature, not the overnight pleasures of pristine simulations, or the obscure notions of transcendence and signatures of nature in museums... Survivance is a practice, not an ideology, dissimulation, or a theory”<sup>17</sup>.

## 1.2. Made-to-be-Ready: Survivance, and Materiality beyond Objects

I first heard the term in a panel discussion accompanying a Vancouver exhibition by Dana Claxton, a Hunkpapa Lakota Sioux artist. One of the speakers referred to “survivance” in her reflections on a work Claxton titled *Uplifting*, a looped film installed on one wall of the darkened gallery in which a woman in a red dress moves from one side of the long frame to the other, rising gradually – painfully it seems – from a crawl. The film is as a subtle and powerful expression of a journey. The expanse she moves across is an open plain; towards the end, as she rises, she produces an object of Lakota heritage, a pouch, from the folds of fabric around her neck and raises it above her head. The gesture was echoed in another image in the gallery, two overlaid silk panels

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. See especially the section “Building Songs”, 28-33.

<sup>16</sup> Hopkins, “Outlawed Social Life”, 8.

<sup>17</sup> Vizenor, G. “Aesthetics of Survivance”, 11.

picturing a woman holding a bright white buffalo skull, first bowing her forehead to it with a lowered gaze and then raising it above and in front of her, gaze uplifted. These images spoke for themselves, but survivance, the word Claxton was responding to when she made *Uplifting*, stayed with me. A reviewer of the exhibition referred to it as “survival and resilience”.<sup>18</sup> Others have said it means survival and resistance.<sup>19</sup> Vizenor himself acknowledges that the term is elusive of definition, saying only that it demands “[N]ative presence over absence, nihility, and victimry”<sup>20</sup>.

The title of the exhibition was *Made to Be Ready*, a play on Marcel Duchamp’s famous critique of the connoisseurship, collecting, and general structure of value underlying the European artworld through his ‘readymades’ – commonplace objects placed into institutional contexts (the Parisian ‘Salon’) in order to expose the institutional framework and gaze and in a sense, to turn it back on itself. Claxton’s reworking of the readymade similarly challenges the status and category of objects, but her critique goes beyond the artworld to encompass the wider Western world’s fetishism of Indigenous objects – a fetishism that has stretched across centuries and disciplines, from anthropology to fashion, and remains an insipient presence in contemporary representation. *Made to Be Ready* evokes the purposefulness, belonging, and vitality of things that were wrenched from their original contexts in First Nations families and social structures and placed into the great storehouses of colonization<sup>21</sup> – one writer’s description of collections, museums, and galleries – where, of course, they spoke much more of the interests and desires of the purveyors and participants of those institutions, than they did about Indigenous peoples. The interventions provided by the rest of Claxton’s exhibition are, as she says, at once ancient and contemporary, often full of irony and always attuned to the value-laden context of display. But the ‘mechanics of display’ can be readily overturned by good storytellers (something that I have tried to address in what follows). A female model wearing a beaded headdress, an immaculately styled dress and designer heels graces the main wall in a backlit photographic lightbox. But Claxton has named it a ‘firebox’, juxtaposed against ‘windboxes’ displaying another work – that pairing referring in colour and content to Plains imagery and mythology. The

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<sup>18</sup> Laurence, Robin, “Dana Claxton Disrupts”.

<sup>19</sup> Gere, A.R., “An Art of Survivance”.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>21</sup> Nicholson, Marianne, “Seeing You and Looking Back”, 2. Nicholson is a Dżawada’enuxw First Nation from Kingcome Inlet and of Scottish descent.

made to be ready object is the headdress, is the buckskin robe the model wears over the dress that trails behind her in the frame, is the amalgamation of ceremonial rattles and beads, strung together and dragged behind. The title of the piece is *Cultural Belongings*.

Birch bark canoes are *made to be ready*. In addition to their obvious functionality as objects, the making of canoes was a highly functional means through which the development and maintenance of broader skills that were used to survive on the land could be 'encoded', as one writer puts it.<sup>22</sup> But beyond only "survival, function, or subsistence",<sup>23</sup> in the sense of automatic or reactionary response, Vizenor is clear that survivance means creativity and creation, "tragic wisdom", and that it arises "by a consciousness and sense of incontestable presence that arises from experiences of the natural world"; he calls this 'natural reason'.<sup>24</sup> These are the stories that are interwoven into the 'materiality' of the canoe.

### 1.3. Material Metaphors of Survivance

Natural reason and survivance can be found in a series of 'made-to-be-ready' objects that Quebecois archaeologist and ethnographer Francois Guindon studied in a Mistissini Cree community in Quebec between 2010 and 2012. In his work there is again little distinction between where 'materiality' ends and stories begin. Community members explained the concept of *maamahtaaukaschintaau*, the closest translation of which Guindon can give being 'resourcefulness':

[T]he expression frequently surfaced in conversations with people collaborating in my research. It became fairly clear to me that [it] was a cultural disposition with considerable value in the eyes of many Mistissini, and especially for elders who had lived in the bush and who were *maamaactaaukaschitaau* people themselves.<sup>25</sup>

As he says, his focus was mostly on knowledge gained via life in the bush, specifically the adaptation to and improvisations with non-indigenous materials between the 1940s and 70s. These produced a number of objects that were recovered during

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<sup>22</sup> Nicholas, Andrea Bear. "The Role of Colonial Artists", 33.

<sup>23</sup> Vizenor, "Aesthetics of Survivance", 11.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Guindon, F. "Technology, Material Culture, Well-Being", 80.

archaeological excavations of old Cree campsites and hunting grounds, in land that was slated to be flooded in the 2000s. Ranging from an ice chisel made from an old gun barrel to a broken bottle of cod liver oil, these items in the hands of community members (many of whom were older and had lived at least part-time in the bush in their youth) provoked the telling of lively oral histories, which give a local, personal perspective on rapidly changing times, some of the most difficult there have been for First Nations like these Cree. Together with the stories, the objects indicate, not tragedy, but practices of survivance.

Guindon's conclusion is ultimately that "[m]aterial transformations, in this context, sustained the productive practice and resourceful existences of Mistissini men and women rather than leading to dependency and disempowerment".<sup>26</sup> He also links *maamaactaaukaschitaa* to a contemporary, ongoing context of community healing and social well-being, noting that in the stories animated by these objects, important relationships to land, kin and belonging are reaffirmed. This is especially potent given that an entire generation of Mistissini attended mandatory Residential Schools, where "their capacity to learn, participate in productive activities, and to develop strong identities as Mistissini" was drastically impacted.<sup>27</sup>

'Objects' or 'materials', inert terms, thus do not adequately describe the things Guindon found. Things *made to be ready* is more fitting. In many cases, he noted that a found object of foreign or non-Native manufacture had been modified in some way to suit an existing purpose, often by its combination with materials indigenous to the area. One of these 'composite objects' was a "primer punch...used to remove primers off reusable shotgun shells...made from a young tree branch and a metal stem, most likely from the rim of an old lard pail".<sup>28</sup> Guindon finds the most striking 'creative appropriation' to be a broken bottle of cod liver oil. This substance had initially been supplied by the federal government following the second world war, "as a fortifier to counter the frequent starvations and epidemics effecting the East Cree", conditions which were created and exacerbated by federal policies, laws and programs, as well as general cultural ignorance.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>27</sup> Guindon, A. Technology, Material Culture, 88.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 84.

Woman such as Mary Swallow realized that its oily texture was perfect for softening moose hides before the tanning process. She poured an entire bottle into a basin filled with water and oats and then soaked her hides in this mixture...Tommy Neeposh...an experienced trapper, he knew that the fishy smell could attract bears and therefore...poure[d] the content of one bottle over each trap he set...[S]ome men used cod liver oil to lubricate their outboard motors when motor oil supplies were exhausted. "It really worked! ... but the smell would get stronger and stronger as the motor warmed up and heated the oil."<sup>29</sup>

At the beginning of this research two years ago, a friend recommended a film that focused on an Indigenous craftsman building a birch bark canoe. Upon watching it I was captivated by how slowly the time seemed to pass on screen, and by the fact that the building was the only thing that happened. The process was sensuous, vividly material. In fact the focus was so singular and the shots so long that I described it to others as video, not film. Since then I have seen *César's Bark Canoe* (1971, National Film Board of Canada) countless times, often having to pause it to record a caption or study the detail of a frame. It is telling that when I watch it now, I still see it as I first did, a slow and meditative unfolding.

The film also goes by the names *César et son Canot and d'Écorcé* and *Wikwas Tikaman César*, the latter being its Atikamekw title.<sup>30</sup> The craftsman depicted is César Newashish, of the Atikamekw of Manawan First Nation; the film was shot on the Manawan First Nation Reserve, roughly 200 kilometers northeast of Montreal. I feel as if I know this man well now, having heard his life story told in his own voice and words in a two-part story he told to filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin before he passed (*History of Manawan Part 1 and 2*, National Film Board of Canada, 2009). In addition to being one of Canada's most skilled canoe builders, he was an Elder, a storyteller and an activist involved in territorial disputes on his community's behalf. In the last years of his life, these roles merged when he provided important oral testimony for a land claim affirming the right of access to land that had never been ceded to the forestry companies who controlled the resources and waterways of the Upper Mauricie region through the 20<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>30</sup> It was credited as Cree, based on the officially recognized designation of Atikamekw peoples at the time, which was Tête-a-Boule Cree.



century. The Atikamekw First Nation eventually won this claim in the late 2000s. His is a story of survivance.

Building canoes was central to the seasonal lifestyle Newwashish remembered participating in with his grandfather in his youth; recalling places and routes on the land where that building and where travel by canoe had taken place served as a memory aid from which he could tell recount such a story. The detail he recounts to Obomsawin is incredible, attesting to the fact that memory in oral languages is powerfully developed, and powerfully tied to places to which one goes and returns – to territorial presence. Canoes figure prominently in the oral history he tells in *History of Manawan* and affirm a connection to land and place is direct, political, and as *César's Bark Canoe* demonstrates, ongoing. For instance, in addition to building canoes, he remembers how his grandfather, Chief Louis Newwashish, travelled to Ottawa three times by a combination of birch bark canoe and showshoe to request the creation of a reserve for a number of Atikamekw families, recognizing the territorial reorganization that was taking place at the behest of industry (first hunting, then logging, and during the younger Newwashish's lifetime the boom in pulp and paper) and sanctioned by the federal government.<sup>31</sup>

Building in the film happens rhythmically enough so that conversation can always be carried. Conversation signals a division of labour that the title, *Cesar's Bark Canoe*, somewhat obscures; the tasks are actually shared evenly between Newwashish and his wife, Marie-Agathe Boivin, and their children and grandchildren help as well. Boivin is clearly as practiced as her husband, as we see her perform hundreds of sewings, in which double-loops of split and boiled spruce roots are pulled taught through holes pierced in the bark. Close-up shots show two sets of fingers toughened by years of work and many canoes. These scenes of a family working together are scenes of survivance, given the strains imposed on traditional seasonal patterns and the associated family structures by restricted access to traditional territory, labour reorganization in which Atikamekw men took on waged positions (mostly in forestry) for increasing parts of the year, and the eradication of generation linguistic structures imposed by residential schools. Cruikshank (1998) tells a related story of Yukon women whose families were made to settle in villages after wartime construction of the Alaska Highway: "Possibly the

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<sup>31</sup> Wyatt, S. "Coexistence of Atikamekw and Industrial Forestry Paradigms".

hardest aspect for these women was confinement to villages where children could attend [mandatory] day schools, but where women could no longer accompany spouses to continued to hunt”. In the next chapter, Newwashish describes nearly identical wartime social reorganizations in *History of Manawan*.

The film’s untranslated dialogue, Atikamekw<sup>32</sup> with a smattering of French, is mostly muted by the ambient sounds of work. The spruce roots creak against the bark, cedar is split and scraped smooth. While this makes the film wonderfully quiet, language is nonetheless paramount. The only narrative elements are a handful of title frames in English, French, and Atikamekw explaining the building steps in plain, instructional language. Yet one hardly needs these titles, nor translations, to understand that language is as integral to this practice as the physical elements. In short, to understand that spoken and embodied language, oral tradition, *is* canoe building – not something auxiliary to it.

## 1.4. Chapter Organization

The discussion that follows is organized into two chapters, followed by a conclusion. The first chapter was born out of a long engagement with the three mediums just mentioned: oral history, land-based material practices like canoe building, and film. At first glance, film is my ‘archive’. But oral histories equally provide the archival materials for films about Indigenous practices and embodied relationships to materials and places – archives themselves. My original intention with this chapter was to write exclusively about the canoe in *César’s Bark Canoe* – something like an ‘object study’ – as opposed to the film itself. Yet I came to see them as inseparable; the film gets its unique qualities from the nature of building. As it turned out, so little has been written about the film that I found myself constantly having to explain it; this inevitably involved deeper research into its context. Watching films like *Cree Hunters of Mistassini* and a number of other National Film Board documentaries from the same era got me thinking about the role played by language, and especially about the absence of language in much ethnographic work of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which ultimately led me to the insights of Chapter 2.

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<sup>32</sup> Credited in the film as Cree (there is much similarity because of proximity and historic trade relationships, and some consider the two cousins).

Backgrounding Chapter 1 is the tradition of *salvage ethnography* that was enabled by, among other social, economic, political, and technological factors, the development of still and moving pictures of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The significance of representing of Indigenous people on film is massive, to anthropology broadly and ethnography as a communicative practice more specifically, as well as to the history of art. In fact, film ‘unified’ representational conventions across various disciplines; the ideological violence that these have been complicit in continues today. But the archives contained by the films are also unending in their contribution to practices and stories of survivance. Vizenor and many others, including many of my favourite contemporary Indigenous authors and artists, draw on these archives constantly to endlessly creative and empowering ends, through humour and irony, refusal, through reworking and retelling – re-presenting, re-membling. These archives can tell us endlessly about cultural vitality and presence, despite authorial intention.

In short, if salvage ethnography and the cultural “formalism and fetishism”<sup>33</sup> it structures are the background of this chapter, practices of survivance foreground it and define it. I include much transcription of others’ voices in this chapter, to the point that it reads as a sort of ‘ethnography’ of its own, of the many survivance stories told in these beautiful films, animated by many beautiful objects that we see made to be ready. In addition to canoes, one of my favourites, which appears in *Cree Hunters of Mistassini*, is a winter hunting lodge whose interior walls made of split cedars reflect natural light better than house paint. The scene of this structure being worked on is one of the most memorable of any film I have seen, and is made all the more potent learning that the hunters in the film abandoned these structures annually, as their hunting grounds shifted. Like the bark canoe, this makes engrained notions of value and ownership, permanence and change that underlie western economies, philosophies, and worldviews look far less stable than they typically appear. In sum, Chapter 1 details interactions between people and land-based practice, stories people tell themselves and other people about places, and the stories people tell one another – conversation. Conversation is also a word that defines the next chapter, which continues my concern for archives and practices and stories of survivance.

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<sup>33</sup> Simpson, Audra. “Chapter 4”, 97.

It took a few departures from and returns to the archive I focus on in Chapter 2, that of Tappan Adney (1868-1950), before the stories of survivance began to disclose themselves. Adney was an American settler who spent most of his adult life in Canada as an artist-illustrator, journalist, photographer, and natural conservationist; through this work he also became an “amateur anthropologist of no mean ability”,<sup>34</sup> producing voluminous depictions of the material cultures of (mostly) subarctic Indigenous peoples. While he is best known for his documentations of birch bark canoes in northeastern North America, especially a collection of intricate miniature canoes he built by hand, he was also a skilled linguist. A large part of his archive consists of pages of words and names, writings on the structural elements of Indigenous oral traditions, and verbatim transcriptions of many, many oral stories he heard. I came to see that the canoes and the other ‘material’ elements were intimately intertwined with these names and stories, so much so that to consider them as discrete archives was to hardly consider them at all.

Cruikshank (1998) has noted of the historical development of ethnography and anthropology more broadly that words and things, material cultures and oral traditions, have been ‘compartmentalized’ as separate realms. Yet their treatment has been nearly identical: “Both were originally treated as collectible objects...”<sup>35</sup> This has certainly happened with the Adney Collection: one hundred and ten of an estimated one hundred and fifty model canoes that Adney built during his lifetime are together at the Mariner’s Museum in Newport, Virginia; the written material dealing with canoes is kept nearby at the Mariner’s Museum Library; the writings dealing with ethnology and Native linguistics are at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. The ‘folklore’ – that is, the documentations of oral traditions that take the form of stories – are dispersed, some collected by the Maine Folklife Centre and compiled with another archive of folktales from New Brunswick and Upper Maine.

The most extensive act of separation that has happened in the archive has been that of the ‘canoe material’ from the rest. This has almost entirely been the result of the volume *Bark and Skin Boats of North America* (1964), writings and drawings that Howard Chapelle, the curator of transportation at the Smithsonian Institution in the 1960s, compiled from the Adney archives posthumously. In a way it is unfortunate that

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<sup>34</sup> Walls, M. “Countering the Kingsclear Blunder”.

<sup>35</sup> Cruikshank, J. *The Social Life of Stories*, 101.

this is the book for which Adney is best remembered. When I read it now, I see it as a metaphor for the sheer volume and complexity of birch bark canoes; not only are the numerous variations in 'tribal' and geographic origin recorded, but the suitability of certain models to specific uses and the many changes in and crossovers between forms over time are traced as well. The fact that change was a constant preoccupation of Adney's becomes crucial in my discussion of survivance stories in his archive. When I first encountered *Bark and Skin Boats* however, yellowed pages clad in an institutional green hardcover, a quintessential history book, I could only notice what it lacked.

The people who built and used the canoes it describes in such detail are hardly mentioned, and when they are it is in the language of historical classification, periodization, and comparison. The personal anecdotes I now know to be central to Adney's style were absent (so was his humour). The descriptions were written in the past tense; the language of erasure and its historical inevitability were overbearing. Even the line drawings, diagrammatic profiles of canoes and canoe parts, including sketches of 'markings' (they are not even elevated to the status of 'symbols'), while beautiful, felt disembodied and archaic. This stood in stark contrast to what I knew of canoes, for instance from the films in the NFB archive, and the role of canoe-building in cultural revitalization projects and community programs, both of which spoke of the liveliness and dynamism of tradition in the language of survivance.

Separation was precisely what had Chapelle intended. In his introduction to *Bark and Skin Boats*, he writes,

I have not attempted to present in this work any of Adney's theories regarding the origin or significance of the canoes discussed. I have followed the same practice with those Adney papers which concern Indian language, some of which relate to individual tribal canoe types and are contained in the canoe material.

While Chapelle's interest is strictly material, Adney never drew such a line in his own work. In fact, the history of Adney's research into canoes make Chapelle's preoccupation appear quite ironic; Adney received advances for a book about canoes he never published, becoming largely distracted from his work on the subject by research into treaties and land transactions affecting his Indigenous colleagues. His friend Peter Paul had been arrested for cutting timber illegally, and Adney spent months collecting local oral histories in order to trace family lineages that could support a claim of rights to

access. Such emphasis on the politics of land, and the language and storied presence that defines that land as *territory*, are really what define Adney's work. That these stories of connection to the land were never secondary to a focus on 'material culture' fits with progressive tendencies in contemporary ethnography and museum studies (and I would add art history and cultural studies) that Cruikshank describes. These kinds of storytelling "sugges[t] that spoken words are primary and that material objects provide the essential illustration for particularly meaningful stories".<sup>36</sup>

In a well-known article,<sup>37</sup> Adney detailed his encounter with a man who could build birch bark canoes in 'the old way'. He noted how "younger, more progressive Indians" often looked at the man slightingly, calling him old fashioned, for they, "having learned the commercial value of time, had taken to the habit of throwing them together with nails and tacks, instead of patiently split sewings of root and fibre".<sup>38</sup> The culmination of Adney's research was a hundred scale models, which record in painstaking detail every sticth, fold, flourish and pattern, of every type of birch bark canoe (and related forms, including skin boats) you could imagine. But also – every nail, carpet tack, smearing of roofing asphalt, patch of commercial blue paint, and racing stripe. Adney was a young man when he wrote the article I just mentioned, in which he clearly believed that there was an authentic, traditional, "Indian Way" to build canoes. But the old, arthritic Adney who finished building the last of his models in the late 1940s (he died in 1950) had no such illusions. This extended beyond his consideration of canoes, beyond "material cultures", to Indigenous histories more broadly. Late in his life, he wrote prophetically, "I find the details so fascinating, so much is revealed, that I have difficulty generalizing at all, and that is a fault".<sup>39</sup>

The models, the subject of Chapter 2, have much to say about their time – including the silences. Most ethnography of Adney's day was remarkably insensitive to the minute markers of difference, the changes, adaptations, and endless instances of cultural creativity these miniature canoes record. By contrast, ethnographies overwhelmingly contributed to the 'canonization' of cultures, as Haudenosaunee anthropologist Audra Simpson (Mohawk) has helpfully described it, involved in the

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<sup>36</sup> Cruikshank, *The Social Life of Stories*, 104.

<sup>37</sup> Adney, E.T. "The Building of a Birch Canoe", 185.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Adney in a letter to Speck, F., quoted in Wheaton, "More than Canoes".

writing of cultural stories.<sup>40</sup> The personalities, the specificities of language, the storied landscapes that one finds in the archival materials surrounding Adney's models are almost entirely absent from ethnographic work of his day – and indeed much later. Voices that might have told their stories on their own terms are eclipsed by stories of absence and salvage, by “memorable form, procedure, and function”.<sup>41</sup>

As Simpson suggests in *Mohawk Interruptus* (2014), anthropology is still dealing with this baggage. For the ‘definitions’ of Indigeneity in representation were never separate from, but were in fact foundational in defining the material circumstances of Indigenous communities in Canada. The late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a period that not by coincidence saw an explosion in anthropological research, was also one of the most openly oppressive periods towards Indigenous populations on the part of the state – assimilationist policies and the criminalization of cultural practices being just two examples. Ethnography, however, is being put to use in a very different light than it once was. In fact, it has become a crucial means by which the grand colonial narratives of the past are being confronted and little by little dismantled, in land claims, in survivor testimonies of residential schools and Sixties Scoops,<sup>42</sup> in women's accounts of patriarchal models of Indigenous governance,<sup>43</sup> and in broader discussion of Indigenous human rights. Simpson uses the term “ethnography of refusal” to describe politicized ethnographic work that is critical of the baggage of colonialism, “a violence of form”, as Simpson says, that manifests itself equally in contemporary times as it did in Adney's.

## 1.5. Stories of Survivance

The box camera was invented during Adney's lifetime, and quickly became invaluable in his work as a journalist and illustrator, professions that both funded and

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<sup>40</sup> Simpson, Audra. “Chapter 4”, 99.

<sup>41</sup> Simpson, Audra. “Chapter 3”, 92.

<sup>42</sup> Thousands of Indigenous children were removed from their homes and communities and placed into foster care of mostly non-Indigenous people, contributing massively to the degradation of traditional languages.

<sup>43</sup> Million, D. “Felt Theory”, 58. The highly gendered Indian Act involved the “intimate realignment of Indian social relationships...[something which was] at the core of what colonization meant in practice”. Million's article describes how “personal narrative and personal testimony empowered individual experience... ‘bearing witness’ was a powerful tool.”

informed his ethnographic research. His “5x7, Premo Box Camera...Gundlach Star Lens of about nine and one half focal length, fitted with a B & L Iris Diaphragm shutter”<sup>44</sup> represents a radical shift in representation because of relative inexpense, the conditions in which an image could be captured, and portability. Adney’s camera was light enough to travel with him into the deep woods of New Brunswick, along with “a tripod and a little grub on my back, and the Winchester rifle”.<sup>45</sup> Vizenor writes about the box camera in “Anishinaabe Pictomyths”, noting that in contrast to the stoical and poised figures of the 19th century’s studio portraits (requiring non-natural lighting and the subjects to hold a pose in a frame for a long time), box cameras allowed Indigenous peoples to be captured in common scenes of everyday life and work. “The box camera...inspired a new perception and consciousness of the real, of humans and nature, a new expressive, wondrous world of black, white, and grey hands in distinctive, arrested motion”.<sup>46</sup> Though he does not refer to Adney’s work, one of his main examples of “common, untouched poses, at home and at work”, are of the various stages of a family building a birch bark canoe.

The *anishnaabe* hunt, fish, gather *manoomin*, wild rice, pick berries, prepare hides, maple sugar, and build various structures. There are several stages of building a birch bark canoe. These active communal scenes ... provide a visual continuity of community activity...These are pictures and stories of survivance.<sup>47</sup>

The title of Vizenor’s article – “Anishnaabe Pictomyths” – is a characteristically tongue-in-cheek reading of tradition. The archival photographs he refers to, it turns out, are pictomyths of their own, an extension of ancient images, “painted and incised pictures of animals, birds, and miniature characters on birch bark, wood, and stone”<sup>48</sup>. New and old, the images are scenes of survivance. They intervene within a historical record, composed of institutions – natural history collections, geographic societies, art museums etc. – whose very compositions depended on assumptions about Indigenous erasure and cultural absence, and the idea that cultures could be “distinguished, if not

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<sup>44</sup> Adney, E.T. *Travel Journals*, 310.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 250.

<sup>46</sup> Vizenor, G. “Anishinaabe Pictomyths”, 182.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, 180.



known, through their objects”.<sup>49</sup> The scenes recorded by the contemporary pictomyths, as in Adney’s photographs, illustrations and writings, do not show objects. They show, or perhaps tell of things that are made to be ready. In that showing and telling, and in that making and readiness, is the continuity Vizenor describes as a practice of survivance.

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<sup>49</sup> Townsend-Gault, C. “Not a Museum but a Cultural Journey”. S51.

# Chapter 1. César's *Bark Canoe*: Ethnographic Film, Oral History and Survivance

## 1.1. How Indians Build Canoes

*How Indians Build Canoes* is one of two films composing a 1946 series called *Portage*. A co-production of the Canadian Geographic society and the International Film Bureau, this ten-minute documentary depicts an Indigenous family, mostly a father and son, building a bark canoe in an area the narrator describes vaguely as 'The Eastern Woodlands'. We know now that the film was shot in the Ottawa Valley, that the family name was Bernard, and that they were Anishinaabe, hailing from what was then the Golden Lake 39 Indian Reserve.<sup>50</sup> In the film though, they are Indians, and their canoe, a traditional Algonquin style made of bark from the silver birch tree, is just a canoe.

*The Indians built their canoes from things of the forest. They built them of bark from the trees; birch bark was strong and had natural gum, that preserved it for long.*<sup>51</sup>

Though the narrative announces itself in the past tense, we see not archival footage but building taking place in the present tense. We see the two men erect a makeshift scaffold so that the younger one can scramble to the middle of the trunk, where with his crooked knife,<sup>52</sup> "won in trade from the White Man", he makes a long vertical incision then begins to pry it loose. Slowly, through various teasings, heatings and shapings, the

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<sup>50</sup> The Golden Lake First Nation was renamed the Alognquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation.

<sup>51</sup> *How Indians Build Canoes*. Directed by Frank Crawley. Produced by Crawley Films. International Film Bureau, Inc., 1946. **Note:** In the following chapter, text indicated in block quotes, (where not a citation of a book chapter or journal article), is from the films named in the passages to which the quotes correspond. Italics indicate the voice of the narrator, regular text indicates the voices of individual subjects speaking in the film.

<sup>52</sup> Crooked knives were typically made from recycled iron files with one edge worked down until sharp. The crookedness refers to the knife's upswept tip; these knives are uniquely suited to canoe building because the cutting direction – the 'draw' – is performed in toward the body, allowing the user to work on a piece with no vice or bench. This was ideal for builders during canoe travel. Crooked knives were mentioned by explorers and missionaries in accounts as early as the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and in fact are seen by some to contradict the idea of 'discovery' – Indigenous peoples may have very well have discovered and adopted European iron implements (from sunken ships) before Europeans "discovered" them.

bark begins to resemble a canoe. But even then work is only getting underway. The most technical aspects follow, like the ‘sewing’ together of the various components, a task only the women perform. We see a highly specialized and industrious practice; the work is intricate, labour intensive, but the burden is shared by everyone in the family.

*The craft has been handed down to Matt Bernard, the son of an Algonquin chief, who still knows the secret of building as the ancient Indians built.*

Bernard and his son build, but when the talk turns to “Indians”, it is always that they *built*. The suggestion seems to be that the “Ancient Indians” the film describes, their skill and knowledge, are merely remnants, remainders, something preserved.

The word that 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century anthropology preferred was ‘salvaged’. *How Indians Build Canoes* belongs to a tradition known as “salvage ethnography”, dating back to the early writings and photography of Franz Boaz and the photography and film of Edward S. Curtis, two forefathers of anthropology, but just as much a 20<sup>th</sup> century project. Musing on salvage in a 1970 article for *The American Anthropologist*, Jacob Gruber, the man who first coined the term “salvage ethnography”, wrote,

The loss of the savage, so real to the anthropologist, pointed up his value. Salvage provided the opportunity for human contact and human contrast. Here savagery met civilization, the presumed past met the present, stability met change. In the knowledge of the savage and the realization of his extinction we came to know that unless we know all men, we can understand no man. For throughout, in the stress for salvage, we feel that in the disappearance of the savage, in the irrevocable erosion of the human condition, we inevitably lose something of our own identity.<sup>53</sup>

Gruber’s article, presented as part of a panel called *The Vanishing Savage*, describes a widely-held belief within in discipline: that salvage research was imbued with a “profound humanism”, that it participated in the noble gesture of collecting and classifying the last of old peoples, old ways, and old worlds on the brink of erasure.

*How Indians Build Canoes* reveals the irony of such lofty pretenses. Despite the language of cultural absence, what the film really shows is presence. In the very fact that we are seeing “the old ways” so irrevocably present, we see both stability and change, not their collision, as Gruber understands it. In the final scene, a smiling young child

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<sup>53</sup> Gruber, J.W. “Ethnographic Salvage”, 1298.

stands next to the canoe his grandparents are putting finishing details on, his small hands touching but lacking the dexterity needed to spread pitch over the seams and make the canoe waterproof. Instead he resorts to watching, though he watches the camera too.

*Matt and his wife hand down to the new generation the skill of their hands and the law of the woods.*



**Figure 1: Still from *How Indians Build Canoes* (1946).**

*How Indians Build Canoes*. Directed by Frank Crawley. Produced by Crawley Films. International Film Bureau, Inc., 1946.

## 1.2. Survivance

Whether explicitly or implicitly, salvage films concerned themselves with the loss of culture and the languages, skills, traditions, laws, and economies that compose it, a loss that as Gruber's article describes, was considered inevitable. In practice, of course, they not only recorded, but *enacted* the survival of these elements. In *How Indians Build Canoes* for instance, that happens both through transmission to the younger generation and the transmission to a wide audience. Hesitant to use the term "survival", precisely because of the connotations it holds within the salvage legacy, the Gerald Vizenor prefers to call narrative currents like these expressions of *survivance*, a concept that is found throughout his critical work and informs most of his fiction. In "Aesthetics of Survivance: Literary Theory and Practice", he writes, "Native survivance is an active

sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion...Survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, detractions, obtrusions, the unbearable sentiments of tragedy, and the legacy of victimry.”<sup>54</sup>

Practices of survivance confront “a native sense of presence”<sup>55</sup> within colonial archives, institutions and histories that were for the most part formed on the basis, or at the very least with the presumption, of “native absence”. Oftentimes survivance stories are found within colonialism or settler colonialism’s most celebrated stories, its Great Traditions, within its treasured documents and institutions, but they also exist in the silences. It is my contention that survivance’s political character lies in its invocation of memory, because Indigenous memories – personal and collective – were so often the target of colonial erasure: the rewriting of maps destroying traditional place names, the theft and display of personal and communal objects as artifacts, the suppression of Indigenous language and traditional practice. In this chapter, memory as survivance appears through names and places, objects, practices and the oral histories, what Vizenor calls “visual memory”<sup>56</sup> they retain.

Vizenor gives the example of Ishi, “named the last of the Stone agers, [who] became the celebrated survivor of cultural genocide” of American Indians in California after the Gold Rush. Ishi was captured by the state and then put on display at the anthropology museum at the University of California, where he became a famous curiosity.

“The spirit of this native hunter, captured almost a century ago, has been sustained as cultural evidence and property. Ishi was humanely secured in a museum at a time when other natives were denied human and civil rights”.<sup>57</sup>

Vizenor is no apologist for the fact that had Ishi not been “housed” by the museum, he may very likely have become a victim of “the unspeakable hate crimes of miners, racial terrorists, bounty hunters, and government scalpers”.<sup>58</sup> For throughout Ishi’s life, “many of his family and friends were murdered... the calculated victims of cultural treason and

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<sup>54</sup> Vizenor, “Aesthetics of Survivance”, 1.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 5.

rapacity.”<sup>59</sup> Vizenor’s point is that the stories Ishi told, always in good humour and with care and consideration for the non-native people who he found himself with, his legacy, and indeed his exile, have allowed others since his time to “bear his exile as our own, and by his tease and natural reason create new stories of native irony, survivance, and liberty”.<sup>60</sup> Ishi, touted as evidence of a civilizational break – “the last North American Indian untouched by civilization” – writes Paul Chaat Smith sarcastically, even in his day in the early 1900s pointed out the irony of such grand narratives. Chaat puts it beautifully:

One day, they took Ishi on a field trip to Golden Gate Park. An early aviator named Harry Fowler was attempting a cross-country flight. You can imagine the delicious anticipation of the anthropologists...What would [Ishi] make of this miracle, this impossible vision, this technological triumph?...

Ishi looked up at the plane overhead. He spoke in a tone his biographers would describe as one of “mild interest”. White man up there? <sup>61</sup>

Ishi’s story shows how survivance is concerned with form, with the way things appear or are made to. The form Ishi was most subjected to was his name, not his real name but one bestowed on him by anthropologist Alfred Kroeber in the early days of his captivity. Vizenor notes that while “[Ishi’s] museum nickname, more than any other archive nomination, represents to many readers the cultural absence and tragic victimry of Native Americans in California,” it equally recalls the story of “a native humanist”:

Ishi never revealed his sacred name ... but he never concealed his humor and humanity... He was a visionary, not a separatist, and his oral stories were assertions of liberty... He was a fugitive in his own native scenes...yet he endured without apparent rancor or mordancy and created stories of native survivance.<sup>62</sup>

Capture, study and display were all forms that salvage ethnography took in Ishi’s case. “This gentle native [who] lived and worked for five years in the museum of anthropology at the University of California” may be the discipline’s purest expression to date.<sup>63</sup> But perhaps its most ironic to date, for Ishi’s humour, his ease and understanding among

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>61</sup> Smith, Paul Chaat. “Every Picture Tells a Story”, 1.

<sup>62</sup> Vizenor, “Aesthetics of Survivance”, 4-5.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 4.

people wholly misunderstanding of him, are forms of survivance which undermine the savage that salvage constructed as its object. Newspapers of the day bore headlines like INDIAN ENIGMA IS STUDY FOR SCIENTISTS: TRIBE'S REMNANT AWED BY WHITE MANS LIFE, which began, "Deciphering a human document, with the key to most of the hieroglyphics lost..."<sup>64</sup>, yet Ishi's oral stories and his actions, his "fugitive poses", as Vizenor would describe them, punctuated and punctured the record. Ishi is what Vizenor calls a 'storier of survivance'.

He visited the sick in the wards [at the medical school] with a gentle and sympathetic look which spoke more clearly than words. He came to the women's wards regularly, and with his hands folded before him, he would go from bed to bed like a visiting physician, looking at each patient with quiet concern or with a fleeting smile that was very kindly received and understood.<sup>65</sup>

Salvage and its cousins collection and preservation are sets of codes and narrative devices, techniques and editorial choices, and exclusions, that link Ishi's story to films like *How Indians Build Canoes*, or films like *Porpoise Oil*, made ten years earlier in 1936. Self-described as "an attempt to record the activities of a few Indians who still remember the Porpoise", *Porpoise Oil* was actually a dramatic *reenactment* of a traditional practice performed by the Digby County Mi'kmaq (Bear River) community for a film crew and researchers from Columbia University.<sup>66</sup> What sounds like a degrading parody, however, is actually a survivance narrative. Despite its intentions, the film does not provide a caricature but a record that is both useful and empowering. "Accuracy", that sanctity of Western archival traditions, turns out to be far less important than the opportunity for an Indigenous culture, some of whose ways were indeed under serious threat at the time by regional industry (petroleum only one of them), to record a body of knowledge for the next generation. The film shows a successful hunt and the processing of the porpoise carcass for oil, and the skillful use of canoes to navigate frigid and unpredictable coastal waterways. A man builds a cedar strip canoe, while women weave baskets nearby. Another woman changes a spruce bough floor in a tent. "The hunt" turns out to be a single scene out of multiple days of community activity in which everyone from the youngest to the eldest is involved. By the end of the film, porpoising

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<sup>64</sup> "Ishi: An Article from 1911".

<sup>65</sup> Saxton cited in Vizenor, "Aesthetics of Survivance", 4.

<sup>66</sup> *Porpoise Oil*. Dir. Dr. Alexander Leighton. Canada: Nova Scotia Archives, 1936.

has proven itself to be a natural, sustainable and clearly viable method of harvesting a product with multiple ends,<sup>67</sup> one of which is a substantive food source – we are told “porpoise meat has a rich and gamey flavour”.

The point is not a nostalgic revival of the hunt (or at least it is not that for the Mi’kmaq) but a celebration and affirmation of relations that they have maintained through memory and through oral tradition. The hunt had first emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when, as the film describes,

[T]he axe and plow broke up the hunting ranges, [and] these Indians went abroad on the unfenced stretches of the sea. From the Porpoise Blubber they made oil for the White Man’s Mills and Farm Machines...

This had become a way for Mi’kmaq to earn an income seasonally, but “when Petroleum Products were developed they put an end to the ocean chase because of their cheapness”.<sup>68</sup> Though the hunt had not been undertaken for some years leading up to the film, it is carried out perfectly smoothly and efficiently. In this way, the footage shows how traditional knowledge always existed in continuum with contemporary realities: the memory of the hunt does not only recall but *enacts* how cultural practices adapt to suit changing times and economic conditions, without sacrificing age-old community connections with the land and water.



**Figure 2: Still from *Porpoise Oil* (1936). Porpoise in the canoe.**  
*Porpoise Oil*. Dir. Dr. Alexander Leighton. Canada: Nova Scotia Archives, 1936.

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<sup>67</sup> Partway through the process, for instance, some of the oil is skimmed from the top of the iron pot and put to work conditioning a pair of leather shoes.

<sup>68</sup> *Porpoise Oil*.



The film ends ironically, in a way that Vizenor might say shows “participat[ion] by stealth and cultural irony in the simulations of absence in order to secure the chance of a decisive presence in national literature, history, and canonry”.<sup>69</sup> The lead hunter of the group, an elderly man named Matthew Pictou, shoulders one of the barrels of porpoise oil the community has just finished producing and carries it into town. He approaches a gas station adorned with logos of Firestone and Atlas Tires – petroleum giants – and offers it to the attendant there. The man waves him off dismissively. Undeterred, Pictou sets the oil down next to a gas pump then sits on the curb, smoking his pipe as he waits for the next car to pull into the station for fuel. The shot of the barrel of oil next to the gleaming gas pump is an ironic critique of the growing, unnatural dependency of North American consumerism on the oil industry. The last frame shows the empty barrel soaring into a garbage pile at the bottom of a hill, and the old hunter walking away triumphantly with his dog at his side.



**Figure 3: Still From *Porpoise Oil* (1936)**

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<sup>69</sup> Vizenor, “Aesthetics of Survivance”, 17.

### 1.3. How Indians Build Canoes in the 1970s: *César's Bark Canoe*

*César's Bark Canoe*, also *César et Son Canot d'Écorce* and *wikwas timanikan César*,<sup>70</sup> is a more contemporary film that can be read as a survivance story in its own unique time, place, and politics. It is something like a modern sequel to *How Indians Build Canoes*. I say that because the films not only resemble one another, but record a nearly identical building process despite the elapse of almost 30 years between them. This in itself signals the 'ance' of survivance, the simple but crucial aspect of continuance, "a visual continuity of communal activity"<sup>71</sup> in the face of cultural oppression that was both overt and an indirect result of social and economic changes. The skills to build a canoe in the old way have been handed down to another generation, despite the former one having seen the denial of their rights and cultural freedoms in the form of increasingly restrictive policies towards accessing land and resources, the expansion of the reserve system and the policing of those reserves by federal Indian agents, the ration system jointly enforced by the federal government and the Hudson's Bay Company altering traditional diets, and the residential school system, among other things.<sup>72</sup>

One of the most explicit refusals of Indigenous sovereignty in Canadian history came at exactly the time this film was being made, in the form of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's White Paper of 1969. Glen Coulthard (Yellowknives Dene) writes that the document, officially called *The Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy*, was "designed as a once-and-for-all solution to Canada's so-called 'Indian problem' ", but one which Indigenous peoples viewed, to use the words of the National

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<sup>70</sup> *César et Son Canot d'Écorce/César's Bark Canoe*. Directed by Bernard Gosselin. Produced by Paul Larose. Canada: National Film Board of Canada, 1971. *Wikwas timanikan César* is the Atikamekw translation of the title; though it appears in the credits, it is not officially credited in catalogues, etc. by this name.

<sup>71</sup> Vizenor, G. "Anishinaabe Pictomyths", 190.

<sup>72</sup> Maria Campbell (Métis) provides a personal vantage on Indian agents in her famous autobiography *Halfbreed* (1973). She was a child of the 1940s and grew up in Northern Saskatchewan. The book is incredibly significant because it links a powerful personal account with a broader critique of "Indian Policy" and "The Indian Problem", among broader social attitudes towards First Nations and Métis peoples. For an analysis of the political import of *Halfbreed*, and personal, feminist narrative to First Nations and Métis rights, especially in the 1970s, see Million, Dian, "Felt Theory".

Indian Brotherhood,<sup>73</sup> as “a policy designed to divest us of our aboriginal...rights. If we accept this policy, and in the process lose our rights and our lands, we become willing partners in cultural genocide”.<sup>74</sup> While the White Paper’s stated goal was to “unilaterally enfranchis[e] Indigenous individuals as Canadian citizens under the law”, its real intentions amounted to individualizing the *collective* rights held by Indigenous Nations, in order, writes Coulthard, to undermine Treaty rights and bring the land under “Canadian property laws and the pressures of the capitalist market”.<sup>75</sup> Trudeau’s statements from this time reflect an obvious agenda of cultural assimilation, only thinly disguised as citizenship equality:

“...[T]he time is now to decide whether the Indians will be a race apart in Canada or whether they will be Canadians of full status. And this is a difficult choice. It must be a very agonizing choice to the Indian peoples themselves because, on the one hand, they realize that if they join our society as total citizens, they will be equal under the law, but they risk losing certain traditions, certain aspects of a culture and perhaps even their basic rights, and this is a very difficult choice for them to make and I don’t think we want to try to force the pace on them any more than we can force it on the rest of Canadians. (But) here again is a choice ...whether outside, a group of Canadians with (whom) we have treaties, a group of Canadians who have ...many of them claim, aboriginal rights or whether we will say we’ll forget the past and begin today. And this is a tremendously difficult choice...”<sup>76</sup>

At the same time, his government was busy fabricating a theory of multiculturalism, supposedly oriented toward recognizing the very cultural differences his statement writes off. This took form as “the protection and promotion” of “other cultural interests, including ‘Indian and Inuit languages’ and ‘rights to traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, and trapping’ ”.<sup>77</sup> We could easily add canoe building to the list. But as Coulthard notes, these kinds of limited rights were completely uncoupled from meaningful political rights to land, resources and the right to self-government: “In securing these [cultural] rights...the federal government insisted that it could not endorse a call for the

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<sup>73</sup> It has since been replaced by the Assembly of First Nations.

<sup>74</sup> Coulthard, G., *Red Skin, White Masks*, 5.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 95.

<sup>76</sup> MacDonald, David, B. “Aboriginal Peoples and Multicultural Reform”, 74.

<sup>77</sup> Coulthard, G., *Red Skin, White Masks*, 95.

establishment of political jurisdictions allocated ‘on grounds that differentiate between people on the basis of race’.<sup>78</sup>

Multiculturalism was signed into official policy in 1971, the same year as *César’s Bark Canoe* was released. Knowing this begins to shed light on the film. Was a documentary about traditional practice simply a way to signify multicultural nationhood, without asking the difficult questions about what the resources of those cultures actually consist of? To ask this another way, was it anything more than ironic for a film produced by a federal body to celebrate Indigenous connections with the land, when that same government’s policies clearly enabled the exploitation of that land by industry? I do not find it a coincidence that the National Film Board’s 1978 catalogue lists *César’s Bark Canoe* under the heading “Creative Arts: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Crafts”,<sup>79</sup> and not in a section entitled “Canada - Past and Present: The Indian”,<sup>80</sup> many of which dealt with Canadian expressions of Red Power advocacy and the politics of Aboriginal treaty and title.<sup>81</sup> The image of one of the last Indians to build canoes “in the old way” seems to recall the early salvage films, which in nostalgic hues assume the inevitable loss of culture, while willfully ignoring the structural reasons for that loss, which is more aptly described as *attempted erasure*.

One aspect of the film that at first appears to support this argument is its use of language. Prior to each stage of the building process, title frames appear in multicoloured lettering, each one translated into French, English, and Atikamekw.<sup>82</sup> But while the recognition of languages was part of the multicultural agenda on paper, the Atikamekw translations begin to look ironic when one considers the extent to which Indigenous languages were being practically denied – erased, in fact – at the time. There had already been decades of mandatory residential schooling, and before that a

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 72.

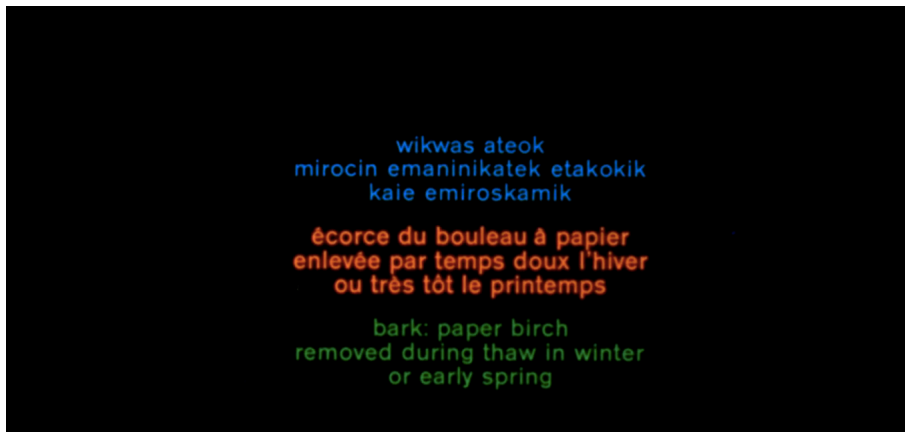
<sup>79</sup> National Film Board of Canada, *Catalogue 1978*, 59.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>81</sup> Most of these were made as part of the National Film Board’s (NFB) initiative Société Nouvelle/Challenge for Change. *You are On Indian Land* (1969) recorded the single-day blockade of a Canada-US border crossing by Mohawks of the St. Regis reservation, *Battle of the Crowfoot* (1968) was the first Indigenous-produced NFB film, and *Cree Hunters of Mistassini* (1974) captured the seasonal activity of northern Cree families in the James Bay area, eventually becoming politically instrumental in a land dispute involving their traditional hunting grounds.

<sup>82</sup> The film incorrectly credits it as Cree, though there is significant overlap. The Atikamekw language is spoken in the region of the First Nation of the same name.

long history of missionary influence in Indigenous communities. But at the time the film was made it was the Sixties Scoop, a notorious federal initiative relocating Indigenous children from their homes and communities to non-Native foster care for the purposes of assimilation, that was having particularly devastating effects in the realm of language.<sup>83</sup> With such contradictions in mind, the film might seem to have hardly improved from the old salvage ethnographies, in which non-Western languages were either ignored or used as tokenistic props.<sup>84</sup>



**Figure 4 Still from César's Bark Canoe (1971)**

*César et Son Canot d'Écorce/César's Bark Canoe*. Directed by Bernard Gosselin. Canada: National Film Board of Canada, 1971.

Yet I have said that the film can be read as an affirmation of *survivance*; as “an active resistance and repudiation of dominance, obtrusive themes of tragedy, nihilism, and victimry”.<sup>85</sup> There is one way that it differs markedly from *How Indians Build Canoes*, and that is the fact that it is silent. Even if there are indicators of nostalgia, a past-tense, the pretense of a “lost art”,<sup>86</sup> there is no paternalistic narrator telling us of “how the ancient Indians built”. We see only building, present tense, and although it isn't translated we hear only Atikamekw. We see creation and not loss. For an hour we

<sup>83</sup> The extent of this and the numbers of children involved (during the time of writing newly estimated as being over 20,000) is still being uncovered.

<sup>84</sup> For an example of the mockery of language, see Robert J. Flaherty's 1922 film *Nanook of the North*, a reenactment of Inuit life in the arctic.

<sup>85</sup> Vizenor, G. “Aesthetics of Survivance,” 11.

<sup>86</sup> This is what the NFB' description says.

witness a man and his family fashion a handsomely proportioned object using only simple hand tools and the natural, indigenous materials they gather from the surrounding forest. We hear them talk; building becomes a real family event with dogs running around everywhere and various kids wandering in and out of the frame to investigate. We see cedar used in nearly every structural process and are told that it is *kicik*; spruce roots split to impossibly thin dimensions for “sewing” the bark to the frame in a step translated as *otabi minaiok marcike oskis ekackikwatcikatex tciman*; and of course the bark, *wikwas*, of a tall paper birch felled expertly with an axe in the opening sequence of the film by the protagonist, a weathered man who is introduced as “César Newashish: 67 years old, Tête-de-Boule Indian (Cree)”.<sup>87</sup> Soon after the film’s release, Newashish’s people successfully pursued a legal name change to what they had called themselves and their language historically – Atikamekw<sup>88</sup>, meaning ‘whitefish’ or ‘lake whitefish’. This was both a declaration of political independence from their Cree neighbours, and recognition of one of their important food staples and seasonal habitations. It also represented the abandonment of the name French colonists had used to describe them around the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (‘tête-de-boule’ or ‘round-head’ Cree<sup>89</sup>), which persisted for more than 200 years.

Vizenor writes that “Native names are collective memories”.<sup>90</sup> For Newashish, names contain the resiliency of the old ways of his ancestors, which were threatened many times by colonial interests in the region, especially by the logging and pulp and paper industries which brought as many as 7000 timber cutters to the area by 1869.<sup>91</sup> In every case, it was the Atikamekw’s traditional territories, which they collectively refer to as *nitaskinan* (“Our Land”) and its rich resources at issue. *César’s Bark Canoe* does not name the land as *nitaskinan* but instead introduces us to the Manawan First Nation Reserve.<sup>92</sup> Over the course of the film we are told nothing of the place other than that it is “112 miles north-east of Montreal”. But in a related film, *History of Manawan* (2009),

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<sup>87</sup> The First Nation now refers to itself as the Atikamekw of Manawan, but until the early 1970s the peoples’ official designation was Tête-de-Boule Cree.

<sup>88</sup> First recorded by Europeans as *Atikamegouékhî*. Among themselves, they refer to one another as Nehirowisiw<sup>88</sup> (Indian people).

<sup>89</sup> Although the language family is similar because of proximity in trade and so forth, the Nations have always been politically distinct entities.

<sup>90</sup> Vizenor, “Aesthetics of Survivance,” 3.

<sup>91</sup> Wyatt, “Coexistence of Atikamekw and Industrial Forestry Paradigms”.

<sup>92</sup> In the film, the Manouane Reservation. The name changed to the Attikamekw spelling in 1991.

which records an oral history César Newashish told to Abenaki filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin,<sup>93</sup> this name and the place with which it is associated begin to reveal things about itself – “collective memories”, as Vizenor would say. Manawan retains an origin story of how the Atikamekw people “came to be *in the land*” (this is the way Marianne Nicholson has so beautifully used the phrase to talk about the history of her people, the Kwakwaka’wakw).<sup>94</sup> As it turns out, Newashish’s own bloodline was directly involved in establishing an Atikamekw presence in the land where they now live. The story of his grandfather Chief Louis Newashish is a source of pride and survivance for the community of Manawan, because it was this man who recognized the changing value of his people’s territories at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and negotiated their protection through the federal system (which was less than receptive to Indigenous advocacy). He travelled to Ottawa three times in a birch bark canoe to demand a reserve at Manawan for his people.

Birch bark canoes appear throughout *History of Manawan* as what Vizenor calls “material metaphor[s] of survivance”.<sup>95</sup> Throughout César Newashish’s life, changes in canoe building and the use of canoes reflect changes in social organization, but also attest to the stability and persistence of the old ways. Though often reinvented and combined with new ways, new materials, new economies and new political circumstances, old ways retain original associations, such as the Attikamekw’s observance of six distinct seasons. The idea that traditional knowledge is something maintained and reinvented, stable and changing is a crucial, if not *the* crucial aspect of survivance. It is this that “creates an *active* presence, more than the instincts of survival, function, or subsistence”, as Vizenor says.<sup>96</sup> What does he mean by this distinction? The old ways, canoe building among them, historically *were* a means of survival, function, and subsistence. A good boat ensured the safety and success of a builder, his family, and frequently other members of the community. He is simply saying that it is important to keep in mind the unique historical appearances of the old ways, in order to avoid thinking about them as the “mere romance of nature...or the obscure notions of

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<sup>93</sup> See her 2009 NFB film *History of Manawan*.

<sup>94</sup> Nicholson, Marianne, “Seeing You and Looking Back”, 56. Original emphasis.

<sup>95</sup> Vizenor, G. “Aesthetics of Survivance”, 15.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, 11. My emphasis.

transcendence and signatures of nature in museums”<sup>97</sup>, for that plays again into past-tensing and salvage. If canoe building is a practice of survivance it is because it is characterized “by *natural reason*, not by monotheistic creation stories and dominance of nature...Monotheism takes the risk out of nature and natural reason and promotes absence, dominance, sacrifice, and victimry” (11, my emphasis).

#### **1.4. Natural Reason: *Cree Hunters of Mistassini***

A film which very clearly deals with natural reason and not “naturalism”, that favourite pastime of salvage, is *Cree Hunters of Mistassini* (1974), a documentary of the same generation as *César’s Bark Canoe*.<sup>98</sup> It deals precisely with the fact that traditional knowledge is as adaptable and innovative as it is stable and resilient. In fact, its resilience can be located *precisely* in its malleability. Unlike *César*, *Cree Hunters* was met with critical acclaim as a political film on its release.<sup>99</sup> It engages with a famous land dispute from the early 1970s, in which the traditional hunting grounds of the James Bay Cree were slated to be flooded by the dams and reservoirs composing Hydro-Québec’s massive James Bay Project. In addition to the threat posed to those thousands of square kilometers of low-lying terrain, essentially a patchwork of small lakes and rivers, innumerable others were to be leveled in order to build roads, airports and other infrastructure. For years, Cree families from the James and Ungava Bay regions had flown into northern camps in the fall, where they stayed until the following summer hunting and trapping game. Communities that had always lived this way as a means of survival continued to do so when they began to engage in the trade in pelts; for more than a century, they had sold furs to traders from the Hudson’s Bay Company. (Furs from Mistassini communities were particularly sought-after because of the cold temperatures of the region, and Cree expertise in the skinning and preparation processes.) The film follows three Cree families who live and travel together during a winter hunting season as the people of their region have done annually since time immemorial. The film’s protagonist is the leader of the group, a man named Sam Blacksmith who, aware of what is at stake in the land dispute, agreed to allow

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> *Cree Hunters of Mistassini*. Directed by Tony Ianzelo and Boyce Richardson. Produced by Colin Low. 1974.

<sup>99</sup> Stewart, Michelle. “Cree Hunters of Mistassini”.



filmmakers onto his land “to show outsiders the reality and quality of the Indian life”. The same directors also made another film about this issue, *Our Land is Our Life* (1974), which recorded some of the meetings of the James Bay Cree, who had politically unified for the first time in order to fight the project.<sup>100</sup> But as Michelle Stewart (2010) points out, it was the less politically explicit of those two, *Cree Hunters of Mistassini*, which raised immediate and widespread awareness about the ecological and social issues masked by the James Bay proposal. The film eventually came to intervene, even if minimally, in the overall impacts of the project on the surrounding First Nations communities.<sup>101</sup> But perhaps *Cree Hunters*’ most important political contribution was that it redeployed a regional oral history to other communities who had historically hunted in the James Bay region, but who had distanced themselves from the practice over the years. According to Stewart, it prompted, amazingly, “many of the trappers [from the communities of Fort George and Great Whale] to return to the bush in the winter. The reasons given were [that] the film [had] revived memories of what that life was like”.<sup>102</sup>

Because of political pressures being felt at the National Film Board during the time of its conception, the film was initially proposed to the committee as an anthropological piece titled *Cree Family*. In Michele Stewart’s interview with director Boyce Richardson, he explains how “instead of being a film about Aboriginal rights, the project was metamorphosed into a series of four half-hour films about the place of Indians in Canadian society.” *Cree Hunters* “would deal with the Indian attitudes to the land. It was pretty clear that [the producer] sold this to the committee on the assumption that this would be *of a more ethnographic, rather than political, nature*”.<sup>103</sup> *Cree Hunters* is undoubtedly ethnographic, in substance and style. But Stewart argues that had it not been, it could not have served the function it did as a potent mnemonic device, which was in turn became a political device confirming the “cultural singularity of the Cree way of life, establishing this difference as a valid basis for sovereignty”.<sup>104</sup> The film did not resonate because of a distinctly activist character – as Stewart writes, it lacks elements like the “heavily ironic juxtapositions” found in many of the NFB’s Société Nouvelle films.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 183.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 189.

<sup>102</sup> Zannis quoted in Stewart, Michelle, “Cree Hunters of Mistassini”, 189.

<sup>103</sup> Richardson quoted in Ibid, 183.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 187-88.

It was potent because, as Stewart says, “from the opening ... the viewer is carefully placed within the geographic and cultural space of contemporary Cree reality”.<sup>105</sup>

*Cree Hunters* reminds me of *César's Bark Canoe*. It quietly and unobtrusively documents the various steps involved in the erection of a winter shelter, the setting and regular observation of traps, and the skinning and processing of animals for food and fur. Tasks that are incredibly time-consuming and laborious never appear tedious. Cree philosophy, or as Vizenor would say, *natural reason*, grounded in a communal way of life and division of labour present themselves in a series of shots showing a black bear hide being stretched inside a frame made of saplings and a lattice of woven tree roots, where it is scraped clean while the meat and organs are simultaneously prepared and then eaten by the three families living together in the winter lodge.

(Protagonist Sam Blacksmith speaking:) We have a feast when we kill a bear. We eat only half the bear, including the head. When all the meat is taken from the bones, it's boiled into a special soup... If the bear knows he is not respected, its very hard to kill him again....

I was alone on my ground, so it was good to invite Ronnie and Abraham to hunt with me. When you take other families on your own ground, you hope they will do well, and will get as many animals as you do.

Ecological reciprocity, a form of natural reason, appears again and again. For example, we learn at the beginning of the film that one of the hunters has not trapped on his territory for more than two years so that the animal population there has had ample time to renew itself. Later on, we realize that one of the corollaries to this ecological stewardship is a unique social orientation toward property and ownership: after having watched the three families labour for days to construct a sturdy lodge before winter sets in, we are told that it will be abandoned at the end of the season and never returned to, a pattern the Cree repeat each year when their camp shifts location. This is confirmed by J. Garth Taylor, who documented a Cree canoe builder in the James Bay area in the late 1970s. The old builder remembered from his youth “the annual abandonment and replacement of [birch bark] canoes... Winter travel was heavily influenced by the availability and location of game, particularly the migratory barren-grounds caribou, and

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 183-4.

in spring people were seldom located at the same spot where they had abandoned their canoe the previous autumn”.<sup>106</sup>



**Figure 5 Still from *Cree Hunters of Mistassini*: (1974) A black bear hide is stretched over a frame of saplings.**

*Cree Hunters of Mistassini*. Directed by Tony Ianzelo and Boyce Richardson. Produced by Colin Low. 1974.

The families remain on the land for more than six months without any outside contact aside from a priest and fur trader.<sup>107</sup> We hear of their struggle – winter has come earlier than expected, and so their supply of big game has had to be augmented by trapping smaller animals, which will in turn effect the revenue they can generate from the sale of their pelts and thus their affordability for the remainder of the year in Mistassini – and begin to grasp the extent to which the impending land developments risk putting an end to vital mainstays of their cultural life. It promises to have immediate economic impacts as well. Blacksmith explains at one point, looking over his ledger, “We have got some beaver but not too many. We’ve made enough money to pay our bills, and the plane trips, which are very expensive. And we’ve paid all of this from beaver and other fur.” His family’s situation exemplifies the fact that traditional activities are not at all

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<sup>106</sup> Taylor, *Cree Canoe Construction*, 17.

<sup>107</sup> This includes the film crew, who left for the winter and returned to the camp during the spring thaw.

bounded by the past: in fact, hunting is how hundreds of Cree from this area made a living at the time, and doing that effectively simply demanded a continued commitment to living and working on the land as their parents and grandparents had.<sup>108</sup>

For Blacksmith, the most experienced hunter of the group whose land the film takes place on, the territorial threat goes further than the fact that his more than 1200 square miles of land will be altered irreversibly. His greater concern is that the sixteen children who are here with him, participating in a way of life passed down through countless generations of regular seasonal activity, learning to read and respond to the land and being taught these skills in their language, may not be able to carry on the same continuous thread of knowledge and responsibility:

(Sam Blacksmith speaking): I have been hunting on this land for 30 years. This land was given to me after the old man who hunted here died. I have hunted on it and looked after it well, and I hope that one of my family will do the same.

...I'm going to talk about this now: the reason I hang this up [here Sam refers to a tied bundle of bear bones wrapped in birch bark, which he has hung on a high tree branch] is because the bear wants to be well-respected. The front arms are especially important. This is the birch bark we wrap the arms in. Long ago we started to hang the bones along the shore... I do not know why. But that's what we have always done.

As the scene ends, the camera pans the trees along the lakeshore and comes to rest on another one of these bundles; as it zooms in, we see that the birch bark covering has long since disintegrated, leaving the exposed bones and skulls to be bleached by countless seasons of sun and rain.

*Cree Hunters* involves no "mere romance of nature, not the overnight pleasures of pristine simulations, or the obscure notions of transcendence and signatures of nature in museums".<sup>109</sup> Natural romanticism, contemplative and abstract, belongs to the salvage genre because it evokes absence and loss as opposed to presence. Natural reason, on the other hand, belongs to "presence and situational sentiments of chance",<sup>110</sup> and to survivance. While the hunters show expertise in relating to the natural world, the film invokes neither the glorification nor mastery of nature – in fact just the

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<sup>108</sup> For Cree children, this meant not attending regular school for more than eight months straight.

<sup>109</sup> Vieznor, G. "Aesthetics of Survivance", 11.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

opposite. Presence is invoked through *risk*, Vizenor says, which at times in this film means failure. Life is hard on the trapline; the land gives but often it takes just as much. Stewart writes that in depicting a reality of successes and struggles, *Cree Hunters* “underscores the possibility (and tension) of maintaining traditional Indian ways in contemporary Canada”.<sup>111</sup> We see this tension clearly in the scene with the Hudson’s Bay Company fur trader. As he scrutinizes the pelts, carefully measuring them, the families and in particular the women look on nervously. The logic of exchange is made quite transparent in the next scene, when a small quantity of goods - bags labeled FLOUR, SALT, etc. are unloaded from the plane. As it takes off, one of the women double-checks the receipt, weighing the seasons labours against the sack of flour dragged back to the lodge in the next scene. Although these moments are telling of the encroachment of a Western value system upon traditional practices, those systems are far from total. Other scenes like a memorable one of a moose hunt tell of the continuation of much older economies, much older *modes of life*<sup>112</sup>: principles like the communal distribution of wealth, reciprocation with animal populations, and collective social responsibility confirm that it is indeed possible to maintain the tenants of the old ways in the midst of rapidly changing circumstances.

*This success [the hunters have killed four moose] means that when they leave the bush, they’ll have enough to take back with them to Mistassini to share with their relatives...*

(Blacksmith speaking): We give a little of the life of the mother to the calf, so that the moose will continue to flourish. This is always done.

The Nishnaabeg-kwe scholar Judy Da Silva (Grassy Narrows) tells a related story about hunters in her community:

When a hunter kills a moose, there is a certain part of the moose that the hunter takes off, and leaves in the forest, and with that the hunter will say a few words to thank the moose for providing food for his family...My brother said our grandmother told him that you do not get an animal because you are a good hunter, but because the animal feels sorry for you and gives himself to you to feed your family. This is why when our

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<sup>111</sup> Stewart, “Cree Hunters of Mistassini,” 184.

<sup>112</sup> Coulthard, S. *Red Skin, White Masks*. Coulthard takes this term from Marx, which as he has helpfully pointed out, Marx often used interchangeably with the more widely recognized concept of a *mode of production*. For Marx’s original use of the term, See Marx, Engels, and Tucker, “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, 150.

people hunt, these thoughts are ingrained in their minds and their hearts and they have great respect for the animals they get.<sup>113</sup>



**Figure 6 Still From *Cree Hunters of Mistassini* (1946). A sack of flour purchased from the HBC trader.**

*Cree Hunters of Mistassini*. Directed by Tony Ianzelo and Boyce Richardson. Produced by Colin Low. 1974.

In a way, *Cree Hunters* initially set out with the intentions of describing loss. Yet in the end it achieved just the opposite. The skill and knowledge survived by the film showed life on the trapline not as faltering, but healthy and imminently viable (though difficult and hard-won) at the beginning of the 1970s. Stewart writes that “the film, via Blacksmith’s commentary, confirms the basis of Cree sovereignty”.<sup>114</sup> Here is no tragic account of cultural decline – only a portrait of shrewd, tough individuals carrying on responsibilities greater than themselves. Sam Blacksmith isn’t a victim, but as Vizenor would say, “a storie[r] of survivance, prompted by natural reason, by a consciousness and sense of incontestable presence that arises from experiences in the natural world, by the turn of seasons...”.<sup>115</sup> By the most desolate of northern winters. Perhaps the most memorable scene, and one which attests to a sense of responsibility “that is communal

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<sup>113</sup> Da Silva cited in Simpson, Leanne, “Looking after Gdoo-naaganinaa: 26.

<sup>114</sup> Stewart, Michelle, “Cree Hunters of Mistassini”, 189.

<sup>115</sup> Vizenor, G. “Aesthetics of Survivance”, 11.

and creates a sense of presence and survivance,<sup>116</sup> involves Blacksmith's lesson to his son of how to trap beaver:

Here are more signs of the beaver. He's chopped a tree down and taken it up the creek. He's been by here not long ago. Here's the beaver dam. He built it to have more water up where he lives [gestures upstream]. He uses this trail to climb over the dam. When you're alone you'll know where the beaver is by seeing the dam. He's chopped some branches so he can close up the dam. Here's a good place to set a trap when you're alone. You set the sticks so the beaver will enter the trap. He'll want to eat the twigs you set out for him. But shoot him only when he goes up on the land. You see how he's secured the dam? The water is low now. It'll be higher in the spring.

Do you think you'll be able to look for the beaver now?

## 1.5. Visual Memory: *History of Manawan*

*César's Bark Canoe* too, is about natural reason. The film locates us in an Atikamekw seasonal context<sup>117</sup> with an opening title frame reading *wikwas ateok micocin emanikatek kaie emirokamik*, or "bark: paper birch, removed during thaw in winter or early spring". In this scene, Newashish strips the bark off the large tree he has just felled, skillfully removing it in a single, gigantic piece. Canoe building for the Cree,<sup>118</sup> according to J. Garth Taylor's 1978 study, was historically "a regular and predictable event within the annual cycle".<sup>119</sup> It made up the bulk of the preparations for the autumn hunting season, and was always undertaken in the springtime before the canoes were paddled out to coastal locations for summer trading, then back inland in September and

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>117</sup> There are six seasons, which all center around specific activities and locations. They are *sikon*, pre-spring; *miroskamin*, spring; *nipin*, summer; *takwakin*, autumn; *pitcipipon*, pre-winter; and *pipon*, winter. See: Conseil des Atikamekw d'Opitciwan. "Cultures Et Traditions."

<sup>118</sup> Although the Atikamekw are politically distinct from the Cree – they are politically aligned with Innu via the Atikamekw-Montagnais Council – their economic activity – traditional seasonal hunting and trapping patterns, and especially material infrastructure like canoe building – has historically been similar. I have found more reliable information about Cree canoe building (especially for southern Cree) and its place in cultural life than about Atikamekw building specifically, and so have taken some liberties in extrapolating from that research. But given the historical development of canoe- building techniques, in which patterns and elements frequently crossed boundaries between regions and communities mostly due to trade, I feel I am not assuming too much.

<sup>119</sup> Taylor, *Cree Canoe Construction*, 16.

October for the big game hunts and winter trapping. Building was also highly seasonally-specific in the sense that materials changed dramatically in quality over the course of the year; for example, there is a window of only a few days in each year for the harvesting of quality “canoe bark”, suggesting that Newashish must have selected this particular tree well in advance.<sup>120</sup> Taylor describes the annual pattern that was still followed by many Eastern Cree around WW1:

Spring (May-June): Built canoes at inland locations. Hunted ducks, geese and otters; trapped muskrats. After break-up, travelled downstream to the coast in new canoes.<sup>121</sup>

Anthropologist Wade Davis has pointed out that the designation “nomadic” or “semi-nomadic” that is often ascribed to Indigenous societies is somewhat misleading. As this passage by Taylor explains and as we have seen earlier with *Cree Hunters*, seasonal life was *cyclical* in terms of both time and place; Crees returned to designated (“pinpointed”, Davis says) camps across their territories each year where they built and repaired canoes, modified traps, and “made new snowshoes, snow shovels and ice chisels”.<sup>122</sup> Understanding the particularity of place, but also the relationships between places, is essential to the structure of Indigenous oral traditions, which are often structured as travel narratives. As American anthropologist Keith Basso says of his extended work with the Western Apache, “Wisdom sits in places... Learning to read [the landscape] becomes the way in which one connects this modern world to the traditional world of our ancestors. Learning to read connects us to their memories, values, and understandings”.<sup>123</sup> Places are considered ‘watertight’ receptacles of wisdom from which learners are said to ‘drink’: ‘ “*Drink from places*”, Apache boys and girls are told, “*Then you can work on your mind.*” ’<sup>124</sup>

But like Cree Hunters, *César* speaks to the possibility, as well as the tension, “of maintaining traditional Indian ways in contemporary Canada”, as Stewart says. Newashish builds his canoe not in a seasonal camp as families did in his youth, but next to a few ramshackle outbuildings on his rural property; not far off we can see a handful

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<sup>120</sup> Vennum Jr., Thomas. “The Enduring Craftsmanship of Wisconsin's Native Peoples.

<sup>121</sup> Taylor, G. *Cree Canoe Construction*, 16

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Basso, K. “Wisdom Sits in Places”, 78.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.



of white postwar houses with clapboard siding. As he signs his name into the side of the canoe towards the end of the film, we are reminded that he will most likely sell this boat to a museum or a private collector, and probably not use it for fishing (aside from a scene in the film), or for transporting the heavy cargoes of game it is capable of carrying. In Alanis Obsawin's 2009 film *History of Manawan*, which translates an oral history told by Newashish, he remembers how as a child he had used birch bark canoes extensively with his grandfather: "One day, someone had killed a bear. I heard my grandfather sing for this bear, as we were coming back with the bear in the canoe".<sup>125</sup> The freedom to hunt, gather and travel in accordance with seasonal shifts was undermined in communities like Newashish's by the growth of pulp and paper producers beginning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many Indigenous people of central and southern Quebec were absorbed at that time into the wage labour economy - if not completely than at least partially. Coulthard explains,

By the 1950s, many families supplemented income derived from hunting, trapping, and fishing with a combination of paid labour, welfare, and family allowance. Assuming that the fur trade would never recover...the federal government initiated policies to forcefully... integrate adult workers into the wage economy and provide a context conducive to educating Native children in the skills required for menial employment within an emerging industrial capitalist economy.<sup>126</sup>

Newashish lived through all of these transitions. He saw the initial surveying and construction of the railway near Manawan and the logging boom of the 1920s that resulted in the majority of the region being ceded to forestry companies within the span of a single decade, and later in his life the building of major road networks connecting formerly detached localities. He witnessed the encroachment of Western religion and educational systems, and changes to diets and lifestyles.

While I was young it was still like that [the seasonal life]. They would gather the meat of the moose and the bear and the beaver for the winter. The women too, they went hunting. Today, since they have started to teach our children, the women can no longer go with their husband to the bush. Since there was no school, no church, and no store... A long time ago, before they started to sell their furs, they were able to trap in the

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<sup>125</sup> *History of Manawan: Part 1*. Dir. Obomsawin, Alanis. National Film Board of Canada, 2009.

<sup>126</sup> Coulthard, G. "Place Against Empire", 151-2.

summer and the winter, because they would make their clothes out of these furs while they were out trapping for the summer.<sup>127</sup>

In the late 70s, Taylor similarly noted of Eastern Cree canoe builders that the seasonal context in which construction was anchored changed considerably over the course of the century. Whereas making canoes, along with other products made from natural materials like bark containers and snowshoes, had once occupied men and women for the better part of a season,

With the total adoption of factory-made craft, the skills and knowledge required to make canoes in the traditional Cree manner are rapidly disappearing. In 1978, only three men in the Cree community at Great Whale River [near James Bay] could remember how to build canoes in the old way.<sup>128</sup>

César, however, is hardly a portrait of loss. On the contrary it shows that tradition is not at all immune to change, but resolutely innovative and adaptable. In the same way that the families in *Cree Hunters* are able to subsist under contemporary economic conditions while at the same time maintaining ancestral ways, Taylor goes on in his book to explain that Eastern Cree families apparently welcomed the availability of canvas for canoes in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (this represents an intermediate stage before factory production became dominant). They continued to build according to the same principles as they did with bark, and used them identically in seasonal hunting and fishing. In his study of the forestry industry around Manawan, geographer Stephen Wyatt similarly points out how seasonal work “clearing the rivers in July, followed by tree felling from September to January, transporting logs to the rivers in February and March, and finally floating log downstream to mills in April and May... was convenient to the Atitamekw, enabling them to undertake particular jobs at specific times of the year, while continuing their other activities on their territories” for the rest of the seasons.<sup>129</sup> César and *Cree Hunters* also importantly testify to just how recent “the old ways” actually are. Manawan only became a permanent settlement for the majority of families as late as the 1950s when the larger logging outfits and dams finally began to force the Atikamekw off the land where many had continued until that point to hunt, trap, fish and gather food and materials year-round:

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<sup>127</sup> *History of Manawan: Part 1.*

<sup>128</sup> Taylor, *Cree Canoe Construction*, 11.

<sup>129</sup> Wyatt, Steven. “Coexistence of Atikamekw and Industrial Forestry Paradigms.”

(César Newashish speaking) Here, Manawan...what we call Manawan. It is not so long ago, not even 70 years that it exists. Me, I am 68 years old. I think I almost saw when they came to measure the land destined for our people. I remember when my father carried me on his back the first time I went to the bush... I did not go to school. I watched my father; I watched him hunt and trap. I was not even ten years old when I started to go hunting with my father. Everywhere we stayed, we did not have a wooden house: we always stayed in the tent. On the other side [of the river] there was the [Hudson's Bay Company] store. That's where the priest stayed when he came. I followed my father, I watched him all the time. That's where I learned to work and to hunt, and how to lay traps during winter for beavers. I helped, sometimes, to make canoes, toboggans and snowshoes. When I was young, I listened to the old men and the old ladies when they would tell their stories. These old people of long ago are not here anymore. They all have died...

Newashish also remembers in detail how his grandfather Louis Newashish, the first acting Chief of the Atikamekw of Manawan, travelled to Ottawa around the turn of the century by birch bark canoe and snowshoe to demand the creation of a reserve for a number of Atikamekw families. He made these visits, which eventually yielded the present-day reserve of about 2000 acres, because the quality of access the Atikamekw had to their territories was rapidly deteriorating due to the combined presence of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Consolidated Paper Corporation – the first to establish pulp mills around the Upper St. Maurice. The land was beginning to be overforested, in addition to already being overfished and overhunted; paper mills also require huge volumes of water. Chief Newashish believed that through the reserve system, he could secure land that would remain free from non-Native interference, especially in terms of hunting jurisdiction. But the government refused his plea, arguing that a prior reserve established at another location, Wemotaci, should be significant enough to accommodate all of the Atikamekw. To that Chief Newashish retorted, "There are only rocks in those mountains [near Wemotaci]. We wish to cultivate a little". The government tried the same tactic even further away at Manawaki, but when Newashish approached the Chief there to ask if his people "could all come and establish themselves", the latter refused, citing the identical reasons of wanting land exclusively reserved for *his* people. That Ottawa attempted to concentrate the diverse peoples of the Upper St. Maurice region into the geographic, political and cultural space of one or two reserves (today the Atikamekw occupy three)<sup>130</sup> speaks to the broader process of federal land appraisal. In this and numerous other cases, reserve lands were negotiated – or

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<sup>130</sup> Manawan, Wemotaci, and Obedijwan.

renegotiated, as was the case with the Joint Indian Reserve Commission in British Columbia (1876-78)<sup>131</sup> – so as to interfere as little as possible in the functioning and expansion of settler industries. This was as true of land slated for railway development, or later for forestry operations, as it was for fertile growing tracts in previous centuries.

The etymology of the place name *Wemotaci* tells a clear story of these motives, and it confirms the Atikamekw's awareness of and resistance to them that exists in a lineage through multiple generations of Newashish's family. Place names, Neal McLeod writes, "are poetic narrative markers and condense the richness of our classical narrative traditions, as well as the contemporary elements." They "populate the landscape with Indigenous consciousness, [helping] us retrace the wisdom and knowing of the ancestors through poetic meditation".<sup>132</sup> And as Vizenor says, they are collective memories. Translating to 'the mountain from which one observes', *Wemotaci* came into use in fairly recent history – in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century – coinciding with increased controls the Hudson Bay Company began to place on the hunting practices of their main suppliers and trading partners in the region, the Atikamekw. Newashish explains,

.The Hudson Bay Company would buy the furs from *Wemotaci*. That's the name we gave to the place where the Hudson Bay Company would watch our people from. It was something like a lookout ... There are two mountains, and in the middle there is the railroad track. On the highest one, that's where it was established: the Hudson Bay Company [trading post]. From there, they could see four rivers – the Manawan River, and the other rivers.<sup>133</sup> That's where they stayed, so they may see the [Atikamekw] hunters at springtime. This is why we gave the name 'Wemotachi', because: 'he watched, or surveyed from his lookout, the Indian people coming'.

He goes on to say that the name not only functions mnemonically in the sense of recalling past events, but that in doing so it also contains a message for current, as well as future generations – in this case, a warning of sorts.

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<sup>131</sup> Harris, Cole. "Chapter 5: The Joint Indian Reserve Commission".

<sup>132</sup> McLeod, Neal. *Indigenous Poetics in Canada*, 9 See Neal McLeod's edited collection *Indigenous Poetics in Canada* for a number of informative essays on the significance of place names in historical and contemporary contexts. See especially Alyce Johnson's essay "Kwadây Kwańdur—Our Shagóon" (pg. 137) and Leanne Simpson's essay "Bubbling Like a Beating Heart: Reflections on Nishnaabeg Poetic and Narrative Consciousness" (107).

<sup>133</sup> Trois-Rivières.

In the beginning, the Hudson Bay Company only asked to buy beavers, and furs of all kinds. The Consolidated Paper Company only asked permission to cut the trees. When they were through asking to buy the furs and cut the trees, they shook hands. A Frenchman and an Englishman shook the hand of an Indian man. That's the time the HBC stores came *everywhere* the Indian people were...

Apparently the conditions of that deal, which Chief Newwashish experienced the degradation of over the course of his life, had even been physically recorded at the Hudson Bay store in Wemotaci:

We saw this on the walls of the Company stores – everything was written. They wrote a kind of commitment text (Nespitapowewin). It represented the Nehirowisiw<sup>134</sup> offering his hand to trade ... It was written, but today everything has been removed. It was recorded by means of pyrography<sup>135</sup> - a kind of cloth of a red or pink color.

This is not an uncommon story in the relationship between North American colonial society and Indigenous peoples. The 'Original Treaties', as they are known, included the Two Row Wampum of 1613. That agreement, which many Nations consider a precedent for treaties in the New World, was represented by a birch bark canoe and a merchant ship travelling parallel, but always separate paths together on a single river. It was emblemized in a beaded Wampum belt, with two purple rows against a white background, presented by the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) who replied to the Dutch settlers who apparently proposed the friendship treaty: "You say that you are our Father and I am your Son. We say we will not be like Father and Son, but like Brothers...Neither of us will try to steer the other's vessel."

Newwashish is careful to point out that despite the shortcomings of the Hudson's Bay deal and what it came to mean over time – the changes, for instance, in how the Atikamekw used and valued furs and other materials they once had scarcely any reason to trade – his people's traditional practices persisted throughout these times. The annual cycle of six seasons remained almost entirely intact; in fact, after the trading season each year, he remembers how "in the month of September, we would all go back

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<sup>134</sup> The Atikamekw's name for themselves.

<sup>135</sup> Engraved or etched leather.

trapping. Our people went everywhere - even by the side of the ocean. They were free.”<sup>136</sup>

It was not until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that these ways began to be seriously undermined. Logging and other industry had grown to such an extent in the region that places like Wemotaci and Manawan became the permanent settlements they exist as today. Federal Indian policy not only unashamedly accommodated the needs of industry while denying territorial freedoms to Indigenous peoples, but by this point had taken on an overtly assimilationist character as well. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Mississauga Nishnaabeg) writes, “Indigenous Knowledge came under attack at precisely the same time Indigenous Nations lost control over their land...When Indigenous Nations were an obstacle toward the establishing of European sovereignty over Indigenous lands, the foundation of Indigenous knowledge was attacked...”<sup>137</sup> This materialized in the banning of Indigenous languages, the more direct role played by Indian Agents in the policing of reserve affairs, the notorious Residential School system and the outlawing of spiritual and ceremonial life, to name only the most obvious instances. Seen in these contexts, films like *César’s Bark Canoe* and *Cree Hunters of Mistassini* take on even deeper resonances. Although the dialogue isn’t translated in either production, Newashish and his wife Marie-Agathe Boivin<sup>138</sup> speak to one another and their children constantly in Atikamekw, just as in *Cree Hunters* Sam Blacksmith teaches, scolds, and banter with the children in his camp in Cree. Stewart feels that *Cree Hunters* makes one of its most powerful political points simply through the assertion of language: “the dialogue is all in Cree [but only later] are we told that all the children speak English”.<sup>139</sup>

It is not difficult to assume that canoe building would have been among those cultural practices effected by the restrictive policies in place when Newashish was growing up in Manawan. As Candice Hopkins argues of era of the Potlatch Law banning Indigenous ceremonial activity in the 1880s, the problem was not that potlatches promoted “debauchery” (the given reason for the ban), but that as a legitimate alternative economy it “brought the practices of the “uncivilized” uncomfortably close to

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<sup>136</sup> *History of Manawan: Part 2*. Dir. Alanis Obomasawin. National Film Board of Canada, 2009.

<sup>137</sup> Simpson, L.B. “Anticolonial Strategies, Indigenous Knowledge”, 377.

<sup>138</sup> From Wemotaci.

<sup>139</sup> Stewart, Michelle. “Cree Hunters of Mistassini”, 189.

those of civilized society... necessitat[ing] that those in power busy themselves in generating more distance between this custom and European traditions".<sup>140</sup> Similar logic shaped settler attitudes toward canoe building; building seems to have continued largely unquestioned during these times, no doubt because of the obvious practicality and productivity that it lent itself to (something settlers understand well, their dependency on the canoe and the production of other 'handicrafts' having been well-developed over time). But certain "customs" surrounding building did not receive equal treatment. Taylor describes how the practice of singing while building<sup>141</sup> was heavily discouraged by local missionaries:

The abandonment of building songs was probably related to intensive missionary influence around 1910. At Great Whale River, there was apparently a noticeable influence of Christian attitudes and practices between 1909 and 1912, attributed mainly to the efforts of Rev. Walton, an Anglican missionary. Walton, who is remembered as a very "strict" man, was responsible for suppressing a number of traditional practices, including drumming and singing... It is probably no coincidence that most of the songs discussed above originated with "inlanders", those of the Eastern Cree who had least contact with missionaries during this particular phase in their history.<sup>142</sup>

## 1.6. Building as Survivance

Newwashish's canoe is no caricature of the real thing. Watching him build is no "animated archival footage", as Stewart remarks of *Cree Hunters*. We are presented with a set of uniquely Atikamekw values, communicated through a decidedly Atikamekw, decidedly non-Western conception of labour and value. We see it especially in a stage entitled *obtabi minaiok matcike oskis ekackikwatcikctex tciman*, or *sewing canoe: spruce roots*. All of this work is completed solely by Newwashish's wife, Marie-Agathe Boivin, who was from Wemotaci. According to Thomas Vennum Jr., writes of the building of an Ojibwe canoe,

All sewing is entrusted to the women, using roots of the jackpine tree which are split and kept in water until needed. [The women] attended to this task, laborious and time consuming as each stitch must be doubled

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<sup>140</sup> Hopkins, Candice. "Outlawed Social Life".

<sup>141</sup> Taylor, *Cree Canoe Construction*, 28. "...[A]t several times during the construction of the canoe, the builder sang to himself as we worked".

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

for strength, that is, brought over and under each side of the overlapped bark.<sup>143</sup>

This is historically consistent across the numerous distinct Indigenous cultures that built with bark. Taylor notes that as birch canoes came to be gradually replaced by their canvas counterparts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, “the role of women was greatly diminished. The very important task of fastening the cover to gunwales and stem battens became obsolete when nails replaced spruce-root lashings”.<sup>144</sup> Knowing that, however, only makes it all the more powerful to see Boivin at work, expertly darning the tough roots into impossibly tight stitches – hundreds of which are needed for a single canoe of this size. In *Cree Hunters*, we witness much of the same; the women fell trees with chainsaws and chop the entirety of the firewood over the course of the winter while the men are hunting. They perform the majority of the skinning and the stretching of the hides, and work together in teams with the men to erect the framework for the house. Every few days they change out the floor made of spruce bows. “The Cree are seldom pictured alone in the frame, and even close-ups develop a relationship of caring or intimacy between two people”.<sup>145</sup>

The title *César’s Bark Canoe* is somewhat misleading. Canoe building is here, as it has always been, a family affair. One of the most beautiful examples showing the necessity of collaboration is the final stage, *pihikew minaiok pikiw mitc*, or “gumming seams: spruce gum and animal fat”. This begins with the collection of spruce sap from beneath the bark, achieved by scraping it with an axe blade into a container Newashish quickly makes out of birch bark; then boiling with the addition of deer tallow and straining it through a fabric sieve. In the last step, it is wrung out in order to yield the proper consistency needed for waterproofing the seams, an essential step which determines the function and longevity of the canoe. Newashish and Boivin must perform this last step in unison, each twisting their end of the frame in the opposing direction, joking and laughing together as they work.

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<sup>143</sup> Vennum Jr., Thomas. “The Enduring Craftsmanship of Wisconsin’s Native Peoples.

<sup>144</sup> Taylor, *Cree Canoe Construction*, 18.

<sup>145</sup> Stewart, Michelle. “Cree Hunters of Mistassini”, 190.





**Figure 7: Still from *César's Bark Canoe* (1971). Pitch of spruce gum and tallow.** *César et Son Canot d'Écorce/César's Bark Canoe*. Directed by Bernard Gosselin. Canada: National Film Board of Canada, 1971.

Throughout these scenes in Newwashish's life, canoe-building figures as what Vizenor calls a "material metaphor of survivance".<sup>146</sup> In *Cree Hunters*, the bear bones on the shoreline, the vacant lodges left on the territories each year, and the beaver dams are the same. They are routes of access to memories that often counterpoise the official histories on record, histories premised on the inevitability of cultural absence. The story of the James Bay Cree for instance, revolves around the documentary material of colonial history: paper trails of legal proceedings, declarations of land as the property of industry. The map showing the Cree's traditional territories at the beginning of the film would be unrecognizable today. But none of these served as powerfully as the things and places in the film, rendered there as active and present. These were material metaphors that prompted many of the families from the surrounding communities to make plans to return to the land.

For the Atikamekw of Manawan, these documents included those freehold concessions signed by the Crown in the 1920s, which by the 30s saw "almost all of the Haute-Mauricie... ceded to forestry companies".<sup>147</sup> Canoe building, however, which historically always took place in camps out on their traditional territories, recalls memories of negotiations over those lands going very differently – significantly, that they never ceded their lands as the record claims. As an old man, Newwashish provided oral

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<sup>146</sup> Vizenor, "Aesthetics of Survivance", 14.

<sup>147</sup> Wyatt, Steve, Coexistence of *Nitaskinan* and Industrial Forestry".

testimony in an Attikamekw land claim concerning *Nitaskinan*, a claim which the Nation eventually won in the 2000s. No doubt the story – composed of visual memories – the court heard was the one he told Obomsawin in *History of Manawan*. “Tell them we have never sold or traded it. Tell them we have never reached any other sort of agreement concerning our territory”.<sup>148</sup>

There is a film from 1946 called *How Indians Build Canoes*. The name is ironic because the types of canoes built by Indigenous cultures in North America number nearly as many as the distinct Indigenous cultures here do. At many points, *César’s Bark Canoe* resembles this film. Both use extended takes to capture the various material processes, and follow the same chronological progression from the harvesting of the bark to final scenes of the canoe being launched and paddled. Seeing such similarities however, is not nostalgia, but what Vizenor calls a “visual continuity of communal activity”.<sup>149</sup> As he himself has pointed out, scenes of birch bark canoes being built invariably invoke presence, escaping the “isolated and stoical” simulations of indigenous peoples that checker the colonial record elsewhere, nowhere more so than on film.

## 1.7. Epilogue

Jean-Louis Newashish, in his middle age at the time of writing, builds birch bark canoes in Quebec. In 2016 at the World Social Forum in Montreal, he constructed a miniature replica of the canoe that appears in *César’s Bark Canoe*, while the film played on loop on a projector screen behind him.<sup>150</sup> But what is a replica? Is it an imitation? Does not all creation, all language, begin with imitation? To ask it another way, what is an original? These questions are considered in the next chapter, which, I had not realized until now, begins where this one leaves off.

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<sup>148</sup> Dussart and Poirier, “Entangled Territory”.

<sup>149</sup> Vizenor, G. “Anishinaabe Pictomyths”, 182.

<sup>150</sup> Medi@s Libres. “Jean-Louis Newashish and His Bark Canoe.”

## Chapter 2. The Construction of Natural Objects: Canoe Building, Materiality and the Language of Survivance in Tappan Adney's Ethnography

[Peter Paul] says of recordings in general, that when the teller knows the story is being recorded (even by dictograph it would be the same) he greatly shortens the tale, though not to the extent of giving an abstract or summary of its contents. But he omits a great amount of detail describing the actions of characters that in life are well known to his Indian hearers. Thus a tale of, say, half an hour will be spun out to a length perhaps of hours, for the narrator is not hurried and so devotes his whole mind to one object... A good storyteller will throw such animation into the relation as to make the enthralled listeners see the whole picture of a scene before their eyes.

(Tappan Adney, Woodstock, New Brunswick, 1944).<sup>151</sup>

### 2.1. Introduction

I have only ever seen photographs of Tappan Adney's model canoes. One of these stands out in my mind; Adney is seated on a boxy wooden bed, dressed in a white sportscoat and trousers, leather hunting boots and socks to his knees, the epitome of a Victorian sportsman. In his left hand he holds up a miniature birch bark canoe. Its sides flare gracefully outward in the middle section, tapering to two symmetrical points over a length of roughly two feet. Like all of the one hundred and ten models remaining of the one hundred and fifty or so that he built, it is scaled to one-fifth the size of the original<sup>152</sup>. He is looking away from the camera, making it difficult to tell whether he is building the model from a sketch, or sketching its likeness into a scene – he frequently worked in both ways. On the floor in the corner of the photograph is a miniature toboggan, the same scale. He keeps both of these objects close to him, the way a child keeps his toys.

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<sup>151</sup> Adney and Eckstrom. "Stories and the Art of Storytelling", 14.

<sup>152</sup> See Chapelle, "Introduction" and Jennings, *Bark Canoes*, 16.

The Maliseet historian Andrea Bear Nicholas called Adney “a child of his times”<sup>153</sup>, in the sense that his depictions of Indigenous peoples and cultures in his work as an amateur anthropologist, artist-illustrator, photographer and writer between the 1880s and the 1940s are not free from Victorian assumptions about class and race typical of 19<sup>th</sup> century thinkers, and by extension, readers. Indeed, at first glance, the very gesture of Adney, a settler, miniaturizing items traditionally made by Indigenous craftspeople seems to evoke a colonial history of collecting, classifying, and, to use a popular term of early 20<sup>th</sup> century anthropology, *salvaging* cultures that were understood to be vanishing in modernity’s wake. Does modeling, and the imitation it seems to involve, not reiterate the long-held anthropological and art historical thesis<sup>154</sup> that indigenous peoples could be “distinguished, if not known, through their objects”?<sup>155</sup> Perhaps – if not for the fact that Indigenous craftspeople also built miniature bark canoes. They built them as children’s toys, as popular souvenirs for the tourist trade, and it seems, in order to exchange building knowledge between experts – Indigenous and non-Native builders. While bark canoe building is indeed a traditional Indigenous practice, it is also an important practice of cross-cultural, and, in Adney’s case in particular, multi-linguistic communication.

There is no singular or essential ‘bark canoe’; it was always multiple and constantly changing. Nations historically looked to others for forms and techniques, and traded materials to improve canoes long before the influence of Europeans. The Adney models record these changes and variations in practice in exhaustive detail – so that when, for instance, nails began to eclipse spruce root lashings in one community, one can be assured that Adney knew the length and gauge of these nails, whether they had been purchased or traded for, and who was involved in the transaction, and had modeled them accordingly. Each of these canoes can thus be seen as a minute material record of the political and economic circumstances of a particular time and place. The same is true of other Adney ‘models’ that are not canoes. In addition to three-

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<sup>153</sup> Nicholas, Andrea Bear. “Foreward”, 10.

<sup>154</sup> Their histories are not so separate. For example, it is well-documented the American artist Paul Kane’s paintings were collected by the American Museum of Natural History and treated as factual evidence of indigenous history and “custom”, when Kane is known to have amalgamated elements from multiple, distinct cultural traditions into his portraiture.

<sup>155</sup> Townsend-Gault, Charlotte. “Not a Museum but a Cultural Journey”, S40.

dimensional models, like a miniature broomstick made of cedar and dried grass I came across recently in a museum collection<sup>156</sup>, he produced numerous sketches and diagrams of Indigenous-made objects. In two volumes of his travel journals<sup>157</sup>, published recently, one can see his annotated drawings of traps, deadfalls, moose shanks<sup>158</sup>, pirogues<sup>159</sup>, pitsnargans<sup>160</sup>, fishing spears, bear traps, steel traps, toboggans, and canoe shoes, among a thousand and one other objects. These were recorded during years spent participating in the “natural markets of the Indians”, as he called them, hunting, fishing, trapping and traveling extensively by canoe in the wooded regions of New Brunswick.

His experiences in these landscapes, though they are vividly animated by descriptions of the making and use of objects – especially bark canoes – cannot be called ‘material’ portraits. Instead, his attention to ‘materiality’ provides expansive insight into the politics of land and resources. Whereas fellow artists and ethnographers nearly always understood the Indigenous cultures they encountered to be stagnant, antiquated, and traditional, their objects likewise silent and unchanging, Adney saw, or rather experienced, a wealth of knowledge that was indeed ‘traditional’, but in a sense far beyond its narrow historical casting. The objects, perhaps better called assemblages, move, change and act in his hands, and in those of his subjects. Where ethnography in the service of colonialism had as its goal collection, classification, and preservation – a which I understand to be a kind of modeling – Adney’s ethnography is a record of cultural dignity in face of intense colonial violence and racism, and of the creativity and constant adaptation tradition involves. It is a record of *survivance*.<sup>161</sup> Survivance stories oppose the Indigenous absence that ethnography historically set out to prove – and when it could not do that, to create, through stories of its own.

To animate the currents of survivance with Adney’s work, one must inevitably turn to language – for in contrast to popular understanding that canoes were his

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<sup>156</sup> The McCord Museum, Montreal notes that the broomstick is modeled after an Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) item.

<sup>157</sup> Adney (2014)

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 317. A footwear for moose hunters made from the animal’s hind quarters.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 82. A kind of crude canoe that can be fashioned quickly from a fallen log.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 324 and 344. A tool bag; from pitsæakən, a Maliseet word for ‘pocket’.

<sup>161</sup> Vizenor (1999, 2008, 2010).

foremost interest, language was truly where his relationship with Indigeneity began and ended. I do not mean 'linguistics' – although the hundreds of pages of Native words and syntaxes Adney recorded are important in their own right – because anthropological records of Indigenous languages, collected since the earliest encounters of explorers, traders, and then missionaries, were eventually made 'models' in the same way as Indigenous objects.<sup>162</sup> Adney's relationship to these languages, by contrast, was shaped in and through the embodied, land-based experiences of his ethnography – especially canoe building. The fluency he developed in Maliseet (speakers say *Wəlastəkwewiyik*) through sustained engagement with local oral traditions around Woodstock, New Brunswick, also lent him fluency in the histories of territorial presence there. The closer one examines each of the models, the more one notices that they are incredibly specific and localized social histories. The replacement of spruce gum and roots with roofing asphalt and carpet tacks in one Maliseet model<sup>163</sup>, for example, tells us much about the influence of a particular moment of industrialization; others bear names and signatures, pictures and symbols – at times 'traditional', but in other instances, such as one Passamaquoddy canoe adorned in blue paint and bearing the crest of an eagle and the painted words "Frenchman's Bay",<sup>164</sup> less so. Through these idiosyncrasies, the canoes begin to disclose their truth - they are not models, not really. Modeling, as metaphor and as historical practice, suggests copies with less power than the original, pale imitations, and fixed forms and traditions. By contrast, these small canoes, hiding nothing about the way that they are built, are conversation pieces – continuous vessels of language, memory triggers of a personal and a collective kind, repositories of stories that are told and retold, made and remade to suit new circumstances, as a bark canoe is made.

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<sup>162</sup>Cruikshank, Julie. *The Social life of Stories*, 101.

<sup>163</sup> Jennings, John. *Bark Canoes*, 34.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*, 44.



**Figure 8: Tappan Adney pictured with model birch canoe and tobaggon.**

n.d (late C. 19). Carleton County Historical Society, Woodstock, New Brunswick. Accessed May 2018. <https://www.cchs-nb.ca/html/Adney-ET.html>

## 2.2. Objects and Language

“A good storyteller...is not hurried and so devotes his whole mind to one object...”<sup>165</sup> Adney’s encounter with Indigenous storytelling began with a physical object, a handsome birch bark canoe built by a Passamaquoddy craftsman he encountered in 1887 when he first stayed for a number of weeks near Woodstock, New Brunswick. The canoes he would have seen in this region were between eighteen and twenty feet long, rather flat-bottomed, with low and rounded ends.<sup>166</sup> As he remembered in an early article about this visit, it was “the *building* of a certain birch canoe, whose graceful form, as it grew from day to day under the magic hand of its Indian builder”, that left him with his “first and most vivid impression of...the woods and wild things of the north”,<sup>167</sup> and began his lifelong project of documenting the histories of the original occupants of these territories, Maliseets, known collectively along with their neighbours, Penobscots,

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<sup>165</sup> Adney and Eckstrom. “Stories and the Art of Storytelling”, 14.

<sup>166</sup> Adney and Chapelle. *Bark Canoes and Skin Boats*, 73.

<sup>167</sup> Adney, Tappan. “The Building of a Birch Canoe”, 185, my emphasis.

Passamaquoddies (and Abenaki and Mi'kmaq, further east) as the Wabanaki. Published in 1890, his article was the first to describe building in more than passing reference, detailing scenes of gathering materials as well as the construction process itself. Bark canoes had been the subjects of colonial writers and artists for centuries, especially in landscape paintings, yet the process of building was almost never captured.<sup>168</sup>

...[A]long the St. John River, while there were many who in some fashion could build a birch canoe, those whose canoes were known for their model and substantial build could be counted on the fingers of one hand. One of these was Peter Jo...a kindly old man, willing to answer a boy's foolish questions about the names of birds and animals; explaining, while engaged at his labor, how to split and resplit the basket-ash, until it was but a thin, flat thread; how to bend the cedar without breaking, or how the jaws of the spear spring apart to grip the struggling salmon - everything a boy would want to know.<sup>169</sup>

Much has been made of how Adney's encounter with Peter Jo altered the course of his life profoundly; how under the direction of the old builder, he would begin to learn the construction process and would become the bark canoe's most diligent student – settler student – dedicating himself to recording the hundreds of types of bark canoes and constructing a history of their development. During the days Adney describes in the article, each man built a canoe a-piece, Adney mimicking and taking notes. Peter Jo later supervised Adney's early model construction; it was he that recommended the one-fifth scale, for the reason that it maintained the detail of material processes like root-sewing.<sup>170</sup> It has also been noted how this spring meeting near Woodstock sparked Adney's interest in Indigenous languages and cultures. A visit intended to be only weeks lasted two years, and other pursuits would not keep him away from the region for long thereafter. Less has been made of the connection between building and language. As one of the last men in his community who could remember to build in the old way, Peter Jo represents a wider land-based oral tradition that was under immense strain. It was no coincidence that the No-Dij-Tak-Win<sup>171</sup> – the skilled storytellers in Maliseet communities – and the old builders numbered fewer and fewer during Adney's lifetime, to the point

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<sup>168</sup> Chapelle, Howard. "Introduction", 4. Chapelle writes: "as far as is known, [Adney's] are the earliest detailed descriptions of a birch bark canoe with instructions for building one".

<sup>169</sup> Adney, Edwin Tappan. "The Building of a Birch Canoe", 185,

<sup>170</sup> Jennings, John. *Bark Canoes*, 12-13.

<sup>171</sup> The word is really the word for singer.



that he could observe in 1944, “Of the old No-Dij-Tak-Win there are none left. Of the old real narrators on the [St. John] River, the last one died ten years (about 1934)”.<sup>172</sup>

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Adney began recording them, Indigenous languages in this region, as elsewhere in Canada, had already been long encroached upon by Western value systems. Chief among these were Indian Act policies outlawing much cultural expression, and education at local residential schools. Coinciding with these explicit threats to the health of languages were subtler social changes accompanying industrialization: Indigenous men faced mounting pressures to spend greater portions of the year in waged labour positions in logging camps and mills, and the building of infrastructure like highways and railways decreased the mobility of many communities, often seasonally nomadic like Maliseets. Cruikshank (1998) describes an outcome of this for Yukon women whose families were made to settle in villages after wartime construction of the Alaska Highway: “Possibly the hardest aspect for these women was confinement to villages where children could attend [mandatory] day schools, but where women could no longer accompany spouses to continue to hunt”.<sup>173</sup>

Similarly, in New Brunswick, families’ opportunities to participate in their “natural markets” – Adney’s term for the regional industries of hunting, trapping, fishing and the production of ‘handicrafts’ for trade and for sale that Maliseets had established over generations of settler presence on their territories – were similarly being reduced. These natural markets were more than economies. They were ways of maintaining Indigenous relationships with the lands and waters, including the important maintenance of seasonal patterns despite colonial orderings of time, space and labour. They also provided direct opportunities for the continuation of Native languages. Maliseet historian Andrea Bear Nicholas explains how the connection between oral language and land that the natural markets allowed was not arbitrary, but irreducible:

[Maliseet] knowledge of the land is “developed, encoded, and transmitted through language”...[T]he strategy of imposing English on Maliseet children would begin the process not only of destroying their language, but also of depriving many of the ability to survive on the land.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Adney and Eckstrom. “Stories and the Art of Storytelling”, 16.

<sup>173</sup> Cruikshank, Julie. *The Social Life of Stories*, 17.

<sup>174</sup> Nicholas, Andrea Bear. “The Role of Colonial Artists”, 33.

Canoe building epitomizes how this ‘encoding’ of language directly relates to the kind of knowledge needed to know and survive on the land. In addition to being commodities produced for sale to tourists and traders, bark canoes figured centrally in the natural markets as practical objects used by Maliseet hunters, fishers and guides.<sup>175</sup> The many other ‘handicrafts’ for which Maritime indigenous communities like Maliseets were highly regarded, particularly basketry and beadwork made and sold by women (and often children),<sup>176</sup> provided important ways of making a living. But above all, the building of canoes and toboggans, the weaving of baskets, the sewing of moccasins, moose shanks,<sup>177</sup> and snowshoes, and the continued use of these objects for day-to-day subsistence also represent crucial means of survival in face of terrible conditions.<sup>178</sup> Nicholas (2015) describes 19<sup>th</sup> century Maliseet experience as one of intense poverty, disease and hardship, at the willful ignorance of the settlers whom they lived and worked alongside or in close proximity to. What Adney frequently called the “Indian Ways” carried on by builders like Peter Jo were indeed traditional – but tradition amounted to politicized practices of survival, made possible through the land-based structures of oral language.

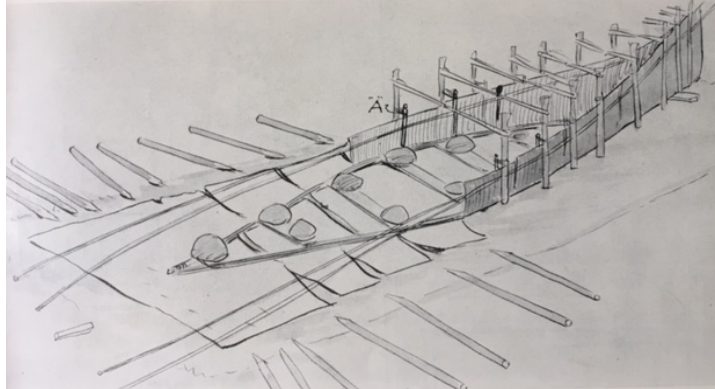
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<sup>175</sup> Frequent figures in Adney’s journals and articles, these men solicited their knowledge of, as well as access to their territories to parties of settler sportsmen.

<sup>176</sup> Nicholas, Andrea Bear. “The Role of Colonial Artists”, 65-6.

<sup>177</sup> Adney, E.T. *Travel Journals*, 292. “...[I]t was old Peter Bear. [This is Adney’s recollection]. He come up a little ways and left his toboggan...He was kinder suspicious and I watched him close. He come up close and then I see him look at my feet and then he smiled all over, for he sees that I had on moose shanks. He took us for wardens [at] first.”

<sup>178</sup> Nicholas, Andrea Bear. “Our History”.



**Figure 9: Adney's sketch of bark being positioned.**

Adney, E.T. Reproduced by H. Chapelle in *Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America*. Adney and Chapelle. United States National Museum Bulletin 230. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964, 45.

At the Mariner's Museum in Newport, Virginia, there is a model canoe about four feet long, seven inches at its widest point, and five at its highest. It has little sheer along its length, and is rather flat-bottomed with low, rounded ends. Adney built this model based on a canoe Peter Jo built the year they met – perhaps it is the same vessel that had left in Adney's mind that "first and most vivid impression" of Wabanaki culture.<sup>179</sup> If you look closely at the bow end, on a separate protective section of bark called the wulegeiss you can make out "PETER JO", in block lettering. Perhaps Adney had the old builder sign it himself; either way the inscription is his.

Perfectly symmetrical, the canoe is fastened along its length by two rows of evenly spaced, bright nails, the rest being of the old style of workmanship. The bark along the gunwale (top) edges has been scraped away intermittently to form a neat triangular pattern, like a collar. Leaning across against the canoe are a paddle and a fishing spear, a forked and sharpened length of spruce worked as smooth as furniture, with a steel spike protruding from between the prongs.<sup>180</sup> The bottom of the canoe is adorned with long cedar strips notched towards at their ends, so that they may be temporarily fastened to the thwarts (crosspieces) by rawhide lashings. These cedar

<sup>179</sup> Adney, Tappan. "The Building of a Birch Canoe", 185, my emphasis.

<sup>180</sup> Adney, Tappan. *Travel Journals*, 63, 331. It is called a leister, or in Maliseet, a nikahkohl, anglicized in Adney's day as 'negog'.

'shoes' protected the bottom of the canoe during portages, as the terrain required.<sup>181</sup> The scene the objects create is a miniature local history. In Adney's journals, one can find which stretches of the St. John or Tobique rivers shoes were used,<sup>182</sup> and how the cedar was split to fashion them; likewise, the fishing spear is unique to the Maliseets, a design that many travelers noted and which identify them in historical depictions – even when then the people themselves are not named.<sup>183</sup> Here also is a miniature political history. Fishing by spear and torch, in the "Indian Way", was federally outlawed in 1868. Yet the option to "get a fly rod and tackle and fish in a sportsmanlike way", writes Adney,<sup>184</sup> was prevented by another law which beginning in the 1880s prevented trespassing on land that had been leased to settler sports clubs. The law stated covered a third of the width of the river closest to the bank; but the structure of land grants saw the river enclosed by clubs on both banks, and allowed owners and leaseholders to "enforce their own laws". Leaving Natives no place to fish, by either method, the restriction caused much illegal fishing to take place and led to "a most deplorable shooting", where a Maliseet woman accompanying her husband fishing killed by a settler club member in his attempt to damage their canoe.<sup>185</sup>

### 2.3. Wəlastəkw

In the 1890 article, Adney described the location where he first encountered Peter Jo and his canoe:

[He] lived with aged Nokomis and a bright nephew of ten years, in a small house built of birch-bark, under the shade of some elms on a grassy point where Lane's Creek, bearing its smell of fresh, green, mossy woods, poured into the Wallastock,<sup>186</sup> or St. John River - a situation such as Indians, everywhere in the East and North, are fond of choosing for their

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<sup>181</sup> Jennings, John. *Bark Canoes*, 39. Adney's illustrations and descriptions of cedar canoe shoes in use can be seen in *The Travel Journals of Tappan Adney: Vol. 2*. Ed. Ted Behne.

<sup>182</sup> Adney, Tappan. *Travel Journals*, 115.

<sup>183</sup> Enys, John, and Elizabeth Cometti. *The American Journals of Lt. John Enys*. The journals of a British Soldier, Lt. John Enys, describe a method of fishing by spear and torchlight provided by bark torches. Enys' mention of "Indian Canoes Fishing" is unspecific, but the river he travelled was the St. John, and the method is exactly the salmon fishing "by spear and torchlight" described by Adney (2014).

<sup>184</sup> Adney. *Travel Journals*, 64.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*, 66.

<sup>186</sup> Today, Wəlastəkw or Wolastoq. Peter Jo was Passamaquoddy, not Maliseet.

summer habitations. There were two or three other families, at or near "The Point," as the Indian settlement was known, all Milicites,<sup>187</sup> or as they call themselves, "Wallastook-people," whose occupation may be described as chiefly basket-making...when not otherwise employed in spearing salmon, hunting moose, trapping, canoe-building, or guiding parties of sportsmen, according as their several tastes or necessity dictated and the season allowed.<sup>188</sup>

As Adney indicates, rivers like the Tobique and the St. John, the latter known as the 'Road to Canada' by settlers because it connects New England to New Brunswick on the way to the Bay of Fundy, were central to the natural markets, still serving as the primary transportation and trade routes at that time despite the construction of road and rail networks in the region. It is significant that Adney refers to the St. John (named for John the Baptist by Champlain in 1604) by its traditional Maliseet place name Wallastook (today *Wəlastəkw* or Wolastoq). Not only does the appearance of this word alongside the English one indicate two distinct linguistic forms, but two distinct ways of making out the world.<sup>189</sup> Oral languages, notes linguist Robert Leavitt, "structure physical and social environments not with absolutes but with relative terms dependent on particular points of view and speakers' participation".<sup>190</sup> They are verb-based, whereas English, being noun-based, frequently names places possessively. In Maliseet, *Wəlastəkw* means "the beautiful and bountiful river" or "the bright river"; the *Wəlastəkwewiyik* (*Wolastoqiyik*) – Adney approximates as "Wallastook-people" – name their language as they name themselves.

Vizenor writes, "Native names are collective memories".<sup>191</sup> The collective memories of *Wəlastəkw* involve a bright river supportive of a way of life that historically saw Maliseets, as Andrea Bear Nicholas (Maliseet) describes,

seasonally mobile, [though they] had important villages in several locations on [the river], where they grew corn and other crops...[U]nlike

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<sup>187</sup> One of a number of phonetic spellings Adney gives for Maliseet.

<sup>188</sup> Adney. "The Building of a Birch Canoe", 185.

<sup>189</sup> Basso, Keith. "Wisdom Sits in Places", 53. I follow anthropologist Keith Basso's idea of "what people make of places", beyond merely 'signifying' them, to mean the lived experience through which they come to attach meaning to localities.

<sup>190</sup> Leavitt, Robert. *Passamaquoddy-Maliseet*, 2.

<sup>191</sup> Vizenor, Gerald. "Aesthetics of Survivance", 3.

Europeans, Maliseets used all parts of their territory in a pattern of seasonal migrations from headwaters for hunting and trapping in the winter, to village sites for fishing, planting, and meetings in the spring, to more coastal areas in the summer for saltwater resources, then back to the village sites for harvesting, fishing, and preparations for the winter.<sup>192</sup>

Beginning in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century however, the bright river was darkened by an intense phase of colonial violence when an influx of about eighty wealthy settler families came from the south in search of land.<sup>193</sup> The immediate consequence of this (enabled by newly relaxed terms of free trade) was the dramatic overhunting of beaver, a prominent source of Maliseet income as well as a food source. Nicholas describes how the erasure of traditional names like Wəlastəkw from official records such as maps helped to lay the groundwork for such rapid changes:

In 1758 and early 1759...the military surveyor Captain Samuel Holland completed a map of the lower St. John River...Of interest are the place-names, most of which are French and English, while the few remaining names in Maliseet...are heavily anglicized. In its obliteration of most Maliseet place-names...this map demonstrates the first step in the colonial process described by Harley as 'toponymic colonialism'...calculated to facilitate the physical act of political possession [by removing] names strange to European ears...[and] intended to make the land more welcoming to prospective English settlers.<sup>194</sup>

A flood of settlement followed the initial eighty families. The end of the American Revolutionary War in 1783 saw as many as 15 000 settlers, consisting of “overwhelming numbers of military men, often in uniform”, move onto lands in the river valley in the span of only a few years,<sup>195</sup> effectively causing a mass displacement of Maliseet communities in the region. “By 1786”, Nicholas writes, less than three decades after the maps bearing indigenous place names began to change, “virtually all Maliseet homelands along the St. John River from its mouth north to Woodstock were settled”.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Nicholas, Andrea Bear. “The Role of Colonial Artists”, 27.

<sup>193</sup> Nicholas, Andrea Bear. “Settler Imperialism”, 24. Nicholas traces the beginnings of territorial violence much earlier, to the “two centuries between 1600 and 1800, [which] brought dramatic change and turmoil...” However, the process of dispossession and *displacement* she describes began “in earnest after the British capture of the French fort at Louisberg in 1758”.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>195</sup> Nicholas, Andrea Bear. “The Role of Colonial Artists”, 28-30.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, 30.

Furthering her point that “representations” such as renaming play a role in defining “material” circumstances, Nicholas makes a convincing case in a recent essay (2015) that depictions of Maliseets in colonial artwork of the 19<sup>th</sup> century played a very real, very violent role in severing them from their lands and cultures, as well as structuring abject poverty and the corresponding ridicule by the settler society which they found themselves a part of. Painters, especially landscape painters, “selectively highlighted the achievements of settler society and either ignored or misrepresented the tragic realities of the Maliseet experience”.<sup>197</sup> A popular convention was the depiction of Maliseets in settings that were unnamed and/or removed of distinguishable territorial markers. This makes the attention to description Adney paid in his writings, as in the model construction, all the more potent. “[E]ffectively disconnect[ing] them from any specific geographical location, [and] thus avoiding the implication that they might, in fact, belong there”, the paintings Nicholas describes played a role in dispossession by making the contradictions of settlement easier to stomach. In a painting titled *Indian Camp, New Brunswick* by a British soldier,<sup>198</sup> Nicholas finds the only identifying markers of who these Indian subjects are to be the distinct style of their bark canoes.<sup>199</sup>

Years after his first encounter with the canoe along the Wəlastəkw, this river figured very differently in Adney’s life. Martha Walls (2008) explains how in the 1940s, federal efforts were underway to ‘centralize’ a number of Maritime Indigenous communities, including Maliseets. Centralization meant consolidating multiple reserves into “limited, specifically selected sites”,<sup>200</sup> so they might be more easily managed by the Indian Affairs Bureau. In the words of a priest working in Maliseet territory in 1910, if centralization policies were successful, he felt that “the Government [would] then be able to concentrate all of their energy [on] one instead of different Reservations”.<sup>201</sup> Echoing how “The Indian Problem” was dealt with elsewhere in Canada, the project also aimed to ‘modernize’ Maliseets – the priest mentions “a work house, manual training...a jail...a magistrate, post office, police force etc.... a sure basis for the advancements of the

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<sup>197</sup> Nicholas, Andrea Bear. “The Role of Colonial Artists”, 28.

<sup>198</sup> Nicholas notes that landscape painting was commonly part of a British officer’s field training.

<sup>199</sup> Nicholas, Andrea Bear. “The Role of Colonial Artists”, 60.

<sup>200</sup> Walls, Martha. “Countering the Kingsclear Blunder”, 2.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 2.

Indians”.<sup>202</sup> The stated goal of modernization was to transition Maliseets, wrongly cast as hunter-gatherers with no understanding of cultivation, to farming communities.<sup>203</sup>

Yet the scheme was met with fierce resistance from Maliseet communities from the beginning; so effective, that by 1949-50 it had been abandoned. Local organization birthed a political alliance known as the Wulustak Tribe, a movement with which Adney was closely involved as a translator and confidant, and which Walls identifies as the critical factor blunting Ottawa’s efforts. Based on a traditional model of governance “consisting of a central council of representatives from the Chiefs of present reserves ... [each of whom would] deal with tribal affairs internally”<sup>204</sup> while making collective decisions as a Nation, the Wəlastəkw Tribe affirms the contemporary viability of an older social order, completely at odds with the one imposed by the Federal Bureau. Adney felt the most important outcome was the protection of access to the “natural markets of the Indians”, especially their waterway access for canoe travel, which also provided the means to build canoes. The natural markets were far more than economies; they amounted to no less than the continued existences of oral languages.

Language, anthropologist Julie Cruikshank writes, “is not fixed, [and] must be studied in practice, in the small interactions of everyday life”.<sup>205</sup> While the appearance of the Wəlastəkw Tribe is important, it is the smaller interactions recorded by the natural markets, carried out over years of daily labours, that really attest to how the traditional place name Wəlastəkw is not fixed object of cultural memory. Like the slow and rhythmic labour of canoe building, an oral tradition like that of the Wəlastəkwewiyik “should be thought of as a social activity rather than as some refined product...part of the equipment for living rather than a set of meanings embedded in texts waiting to be discovered”.<sup>206</sup> The ongoing and contextual creation of meaning is something Vizenor likewise sees as

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Hall, Jason. “Maliseet Cultivation and Climatic Resilience”. Hall notes sophisticated Maliseet cultivation methods long before Europeans settled in the region, and that they engaged in strategic planting practices that allowed their crops to outlast colonial warfare European agricultural monocultures.

<sup>204</sup> Adney cited in Walls, “Countering the Kingsclear Blunder”, 3.

<sup>205</sup> Cruikshank, Juile. *The Social Life of Stories*, 41.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.



essential to survivance. In fact, it is what takes this concept beyond mere survival to emphasize creativity, adaptation and resistance. The bright river maintained its shimmer, in daily practice and conversation, despite its official history of dispossession and attempted linguistic and cultural erasure.

Like his attention to each seam and lashing, each individual flourish of a builder's hand in his models, Adney's ethnography pays incredible attention to the details of the daily, small interactions Cruikshank mentions. Words, names, and personalities are the miniature elements that weave themselves into landscapes like the Wəlastəkw – landscapes that are at once cultural and material, ever animated. Part of that detail involved the documentation of the family lineages that make land into territory, spaces into places. One of these lineages is that of Andrea Bear Nicholas, as she explains in a recent introduction to his travel journals:

...I first heard about Tappan Adney decades ago from Dr. Peter Paul, who was his last major source of information on Maliseet language, culture, and history...Adney gave me a direct communication to a grandfather and other ancestors I had never had the opportunity to know.<sup>207</sup>



**Figure 10: Adney's Sketch of moose shanks.**

Adney, E.T. *The Travel Journals of Tappan Adney Vol. 2, 1891-1896*/ Tappan Adney, edited by C. Ted Behne. Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 2014, 317. (See my note 181).

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<sup>207</sup> Nicholas, A.B. "Foreward", 7.

## 2.4. Natural History and the General Type

Adney's first encounter with Indigenous languages was not through the eyes of a canoe builder, or even a student of 'material culture', but through the eyes of an ornithologist, a student of nature. He first came to Woodstock to study birds; besides the beginnings of the canoe research, another result of his extended stay there was a contribution of more than 100 illustrations – called 'text-cuts' – to Frank M. Chapman's *Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America* (1912). This was Adney's initial foray into modeling, a skill that resulted in his being hired during the war years by the Canadian military to build training models. The field research for his bird studies was extensive. Unsatisfied with physical descriptions, he began learning local Maliseet bird names, which were useful in identifying species as they often closely mimicked bird and animal sounds.<sup>208</sup> James Pilling's *Biography of the Algonquin Languages* (1891) contains an article contributed by Adney, titled in his characteristically detailed prose, "Names of birds and other animals of the Malecite Indians, with notes on Indian natural history, imitations of bird's songs set to music, etc."<sup>209</sup> In accompanying note to Pilling he explained, "The Indians came to know me very well; I brought to light several obsolete bird names as well as many unusual designations that are suggestive and interesting".<sup>210</sup>

What this shows, I think, is Adney's early development of a theory of language – not only of the content he recorded, but its *form*. The resemblances of animal languages he found in Maliseet did not, as linguists of his time had it, signal a 'primitive development' of languages. These spoken or sung names represented highly sophisticated, practical connections to specific *localities* – more than just places, this information was useful for finding one's bearings when *travelling within a landscape*. Later, during the years Adney spent in the natural markets, he documented how these words and names, many of which he understood and used himself, were put to use in daily practice, for example when "calling moose" by means of an instrument (known as a "moose call", made from a conical roll of birch bark) that skilled Indigenous hunters used

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<sup>208</sup> Adney. *Travel Journals*, 161, 337. For an example of this, see a conversation between Adney and Ambrose Lockwood (Maliseet, from Kinsgclear).

<sup>209</sup> Adney cited in Pilling, James Constantine, *Biography of the Algonquin Languages*, 551.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

to mimic the sound of the animal and to approximate its distance.<sup>211</sup> In the 1950s, anthropologist Nicholas Smith noted that the moose call was no longer in use by Maliseets, as moose population had declined considerably. However, he also noted that the call – both the principle of the instrument and the practice – had been adapted for use in hunting muskrat.<sup>212</sup> The enduring material form, inseparable from a continuity of linguistic form, is a clear instance of survivance.

Adney linked his insights about the structure of languages to the study of natural history, noting that “from a thorough basic training as an artist[,] with association when younger with scientific students (the ornithologists), I find the details are so fascinating, so much is revealed, that I have found difficulty in generalizing at all, and that is a fault”.<sup>213</sup> Natural history, on the other hand, had been all too happy to generalize. The method by which it went about identifying observable patterns and explainable phenomena? Modelling. Lorraine Daston, American historian of science, describes how illustrations of *naturalia*, dating as far as 16<sup>th</sup> century ‘herbals’, “were usually composites drawn from several exemplars of the same species, so as to capture the characteristic aspects of the plant by filtering out idiosyncratic details in the field”.<sup>214</sup> The *general type*, as it became known, was a “perfect composite view”<sup>215</sup> that was sought out both by students, and illustrators and artists like Adney in the field. In practice of course, the general type represents an impossible “view from nowhere”<sup>216</sup>, one that has since been widely criticized as the ideological underpinning of much western thought – including colonial anthropology.

Haudenosaunee anthropologist Audra Simpson (Mohawk) has written how the “methods and modalities of knowing” that were original fundamentals of her discipline – “categorization, ethnological comparison, linguistic translation, and ethnography”<sup>217</sup> – have served to create dominant, damaging, and persistent portraits of Indigeneity. In short, anthropology has made models out of cultures. Modeling has been collection,

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<sup>211</sup> Adney. *Travel Journals*, 139.

<sup>212</sup> Smith, Nicholas, and Capes, Katherine H. “Notes on the Malecite”, 12.

<sup>213</sup> Wheaton, “More than Canoes”. The quote is Adney’s in a letter to Frank Speck.

<sup>214</sup> Daston, Lorraine. “The Glass Flowers”, 237.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> Jay, Martin. *Downcast Eyes*, 18.

<sup>217</sup> Simpson, Audra. “Chapter 4”, 96.

classification, and comparison, pursued through the measurement of cranial sizes of Indigenous remains, scientific experiments on children at residential schools, the seizure of useful objects from living people as artifacts, and anthropologists' stagings of offensive and essentialist portraits. Reaching far beyond anthropology to the history of art and much of western culture, modelling has resulted in the reification – or as Simpson says, the 'canonization' of Indigenous cultures – something she knows on a personal level from analyzing the development and deployment of an "Iroquois Literature" in Lewis Henry Morgan's *The League of the Iroquois*, a text that she argues represents Haudenosaunee culture "as the pure...culture as tradition...culture as what is prior to settlement".<sup>218</sup> Most important to recognize is how all of this is not merely "representational", but that representation is couched in a wider "violence of form", as she puts it – the disconnection of peoples from belonging to places. The disconnection, for example, that is both pictured and embodied by the removal of place names like Wəlastəkw from maps and from wider settler imaginaries. Belonging has itself been 'modeled' – rendered a thing of antiquity, a "traditional connection" confined to a bygone era.

## 2.5. Models, Miniatures, and the Construction of Natural Objects

The Adney canoe models have been considered by some to be triumphant expressions of 'the general type'. Howard Chappelle, formerly the curator of transportation at the Smithsonian, posthumously compiled what he saw as the relevant content of Adney's extensive archive of canoes and building methods into the well-known volume *Bark and Skin Boats of North America*. His reading of the models is typical of a 'material culture' orientation:

Even when the watercraft of primitive man had obviously played a large part in his culture, we rarely find a record complete enough to allow the same accuracy in reproduction that obtains, say, for his art, his dress, or his pottery...“Some small Indian models are preserved, but, like most models made by primitive men, these are not to any scale and do not show with equal accuracy all the parts of the canoes they

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<sup>218</sup> Simpson, Audra. "Chapter 4", 99.

represent...Once Lost, the information on primitive watercraft, cannot, as a rule, be recovered.<sup>219</sup>

Thus dismissing “the Indian models”, Chapelle discloses what he really values: the “memorable form, procedure, and function”<sup>220</sup> that he believes is materialized by the Adney collection. He values the contribution of these objects to what he believes are ‘general types’, for their classifiable and identifiable markers of periods and regularity. Yet he overlooks what is visible any place one chooses to look, in any of the canoes, any lashing, tack or carving: the idiosyncrasies, the names and places. Anthropologist Michael Taussig would say that he has missed the sensuous quality of the reproductions – which are not reproductions – themselves.<sup>221</sup> Indeed, Taussig has said repeatedly, following Walter Benjamin, that the history of Western modernity is the history of repressing mimesis.<sup>222</sup>



**Figure 11: Frank Atwin (Passamaquoddy), source of Adney's, with model of ocean-going birch canoe he built.**

In *Bark Canoes: The Art and Obsession of Tappan Adney*. Buffalo, New York: Firefly Books, 2004, 13.

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<sup>219</sup> Chapelle, Howard. “Introduction”, 3.

<sup>220</sup> Simpson, Audra. “Chapter 3”, 92.

<sup>221</sup> Taussig, Michael. “In Some Way or Another”, (multiple sections).

<sup>222</sup> Taussig, Michael. *Mimesis and Alterity*.

The sensuousness is the sensuousness of spoken language, of conversation. By the time Adney began his work, there were few builders actively practicing their craft, and so most of his information came from the oral accounts of indigenous builders and traders (and a few non-native Hudson Bay Company traders). Sometimes he consulted existing models built by Indigenous craftspeople, such as a beautiful moose hide boat originally modeled by Noel Moulton.<sup>223</sup> But always, his building was tempered by memories of those who had built canoes, often in their youth, memories in turn tempered by the building secrets kept by the generation who still built, like Peter Jo. Picturing this working process, I see what needs no explanation when one looks at the canoes, even in photographs – they are not models. The small axe here, the neat roll of bark there, the small stick lashed to the inside of the canoes, “an ancient carrying apparatus show to [Adney] by Peter Bear”,<sup>224</sup> are stories. Like Vizenor describes of Native names, they are “collective memories”, “visual memories”<sup>225</sup> that do not recount the past, so much as they actively work and move in the present, adapting and changing in new contexts while retaining central elements that define people, places and cultures.

... [T]here are old tales that have (or had) the content of poems, and, in the originals, a noticeable rhythm. Such as these have been polished and brought into that rhythmic form that...has been found as the surest means of remembering them and passing them along verbatim to generation after generation of story-tellers.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Jennings, John. *Bark Canoes*, 41.

<sup>224</sup> Jennings, John. *Bark Canoes*, 36.

<sup>225</sup> Vizenor, Gerald. “Aesthetics of Survivance”, 2.

<sup>226</sup> Adney and Eckstorm. “Stories and the Art of Story Telling.”

## Chapter 3: Conclusion

### 2.6. Wolastoquiyik Lintuwakonawa

Towards the end of writing Chapter 2, I came across Jeremy Dutcher's *Wolastoquiyik Lintuwakonawa*, a post-classical album the Toronto-based composer and tenor, who is originally from the Tobique First Nation, released this spring. The title translates to "Our Maliseet Stories"; the eleven tracks represent five years of Dutcher's engagement with archives at the Canadian Museum of History, specifically a collection of wax cylinders from 1907. These are French anthropologist William H. Mechling's recordings of songs sung by Dutcher's Maliseet ancestors. Dutcher's elder Maggie Paul pointed him to the archive; she had found them in the 1980s and brought a number of them out for her community to hear. Yet the majority of the songs Dutcher includes on the album have not been heard in Maliseet territories for generations; older people have approached him, remembering hearing versions of these songs sung to them by grandparents.

Dutcher's gesture, which involves harmonizing with the voices heard on the recordings, relates to many of key issues I have tried to address. One of these is authorship; Dutcher points out how Micheling is often centered as a point of interest in discussions about these archives (he was a student of Frank Speck's, a famous American anthropologist), whereas he has "no interest in centering [Micheling's] voice again".<sup>227</sup> Micheling's field notes unsurprisingly reveal a highly essentialist agenda of seeking out authentic Indigeneity to document. A gendered one: Dutcher notes that in seven years' research, Maliseet women are not once heard on the recordings. Nicholas M. Smith has similarly noted that "Penobscot elders were critical of Micheling and discouraged him from continuing his research" in their communities, likely because of the same criticisms.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Dutcher, Jeremy quoted in Greene, Sarah. "Jeremy Dutcher".

<sup>228</sup> Smith, N. M. "Between the Lines", 368.

Although Adney's archives are much less prone to essentialism (though not entirely),<sup>229</sup> womens' experience is severely underrepresented. This stems, in part, from the composition of the natural markets, largely male spheres, especially as far as they meant the guiding of settler sportsman and the masculine 'cult of wilderness' with which that practice was associated. Andrea Bear Nicholas' excellent article "The Role of Colonial Artists in the Dispossession and Displacement of the Maliseet: 1790s-1850s" describes more closely the experiences of women and children in the markets, although as in the writings of the period, these were given little emphasis by settler artists, themselves an overwhelmingly male membership. She has also pointed out how the personalities of the Indigenous guides in Adney's articles and journals come across as docile, no doubt, she says, because of the social conditions of the time, when "no Indians dared walk the streets of Woodstock, New Brunswick after the [1885 Riel] Rebellion for fear of their lives".<sup>230</sup> As such, it is vital to recognize the immense limitations of these and the other archives that have been considered here, to stress that they must never be considered autonomously, and that the stories one finds in them, as Cruikshank says, cannot be mistaken for natural or reified products. They are social productions, activities "which acquire meanings in the situations in which they are used".<sup>231</sup>

Dutcher says something similar of *Wolastoquiyik Lintuwakonawa*:

These songs...tackle current issues. When I'm talking about water in the lyrics, [I'm talking about] government accountability. These are not things I am reading from a book; we experience them every day...[B]oiled water advisories are still existent in this country.<sup>232</sup>

Sealing cylinders of traditional stories in wax, like building models of canoes, suggest and embody cultural salvage and saviour, and their correlates in cultural erasure and absence. But good storytellers have a way of overturning conventions, reworking mechanics and mechanisms of display. Refigured in Dutcher's compositions, which this coming summer will be heard at venues like the Great Hall in Toronto and the Montreal Jazz Festival, the stories in those cylinders reveal themselves not as sealed-off

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<sup>229</sup> Nicholas, A.B. "Foreward".

<sup>230</sup> Nicholas, A.B. "Foreward", 8.

<sup>231</sup> Cruikshank, *The Social Life of Stories*, 40.

<sup>232</sup> Dutcher, Jeremy quoted in Greene, Sarah. "Jeremy Dutcher".



cultural objects, nor as fixed traditions, but continuous practices, collective, visual memories that as an elder in Dutcher's community remarked, "had to go underground for a while", but survived, and flourished, despite. Looking at the Adney canoe models, made of some of those same Maliseet stories heard on Dutcher's album makes one realize that good storytellers have had a way of intervening in conventions. Though Adney recorded them, the names, words and voices are not his own. As Mississauga Nishinaabeg artist and writer Leanne Betasamosake Simpson writes in a recent review of *Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa*:

What happens next seems to me to be elusive at best. I imagine Jeremy and his ancestors sitting in the sterile dry air of the archives with headphones from another era listening to the singing souls of their people, and hearing in their hearts the recordings that eventually emerge on *Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa*, tracks that bring audiences to places they've never imagined.

The songs can't be separated from the wax cylinders, in the same way that birch bark canoes, miniature or otherwise, are not separate from the history of collection, classification, and fetishism which they have been brought in line with. Yet an "ethnography of refusal", the term Simpson uses, is not only possible but vitally necessary in continuing to understand and critique, in order to continue to dismantle these histories, which belong to processes of colonial segregation objectification, "procedure, ritual, and function"<sup>233</sup> that are ongoing, playing definitional – that is, "ideational *and* material"<sup>234</sup> – roles in the present. "A form of politics that is more than representational...a governmental and disciplinary possession of bodies and territories", as Simpson says, remains overpresent in our time, as the often cutting words like hers in *Mohawk Interruptus*, Glen Coulthard's in *Red Skin, White Masks*, and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's in her many recent works make urgently clear.

In the process of the historical "accounting"<sup>235</sup> that ethnographies of refusal involve, stories of resiliency and cultural sovereignty – of survivance – appear everywhere. Dutcher's haunting operatic tones, like Dana Claxton's works, are *made to be ready*, in the way they refuse any fixity of form or context, shift them constantly. They draw on voices that made objects and stories read and shifted form and context long

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<sup>233</sup> Simpson, "Chapter 4", 97.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid, 95, emphasis added.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, 97.

ago. Cree artist Kent Monkman's massively scaled, masterfully painted scenes of eroticized colonial landscapes grace the walls of the National Gallery; "deep philosophical histories of seeing and knowing"<sup>236</sup> wilt away in the presence of the irony that this is art history. Knowing of the immense cultivations along the Wəlastəkw, planted millennia ago and maintained in and through the languages and stories to which they have been tied since time immemorial, make singular and repeatable stories of discovery, enclosure, displacement look, or rather sound, partial and impermanent.

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<sup>236</sup> Simpson, Audra. "Chapter 4", 100.

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