

FOR OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN: AN EDUCATOR'S INTERPRETATION OF
DENE TESTIMONY TO THE MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE INQUIRY

by

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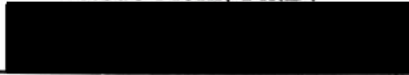
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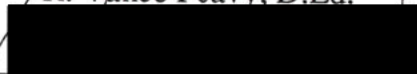

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ABSTRACT**SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR ANTOINETTE A. OBERG**

This study is an educator's interpretation of the transcribed testimony of four Dene witnesses to the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry conducted by Justice Thomas Berger in the Canadian north during the mid-1970s. This study uses Calvin Schrag's (1986) notion of communicative praxis to provide a form of critical hermeneutics for the interpretation of text. Communicative praxis offers us a way to understand texts as discourse *about* something, *by* someone, and *for* someone. The world, the self, and the other are all displayed in any particular communicative event and thus it is in the holistic space of communicative praxis where thought, language and action interplay and are contextualized in our everyday lives. The orienting question brought to the reading of each of these texts has been "What is going on in this person's testimony?" In other words, what is this person's experience of being human, and of being Dene, and in what way is that experience disclosed through the language of their text? This piece explores who the four speakers were (the backdrop of historical circumstances as well as social practices and traditions within which the witnesses lived their lives, and in which they gave their testimony to the Inquiry), what they were saying (particularly what the speakers referenced about their lived world, as well as what they signified about the cultural, linguistic and historical tradition in which they stood) and to whom they were speaking and how they were saying it (the rhetorical moment). The speakers employed metaphor, irony, personal stories, as well as more rational forms of persuasion to call into question the morality of white people and those Western social and institutional practices which had dramatically altered the landscape of Dene lives and Dene land, and were continuing to do so. The interpretation elucidates the Dene ideal of respectfulness of "the other," a notion of the other which includes human life, as well as all living beings and the Earth itself; and a call to envision the future in terms of our children and the-yet-to-be-born. The study concludes with a personal elucidation of the pedagogical significance of the text interpretations.

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I cannot thank Florence Erasmus enough for all she has taught me about the north and its people, about parenting and respecting others.

I want to thank my mother for the courage to take her young daughter to the north, and the people of Fort Good Hope for their kindness and patience with a sometimes unwilling student.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends, especially Patricia E. D. Young, for without their support this dissertation would not have been written.

We know that our grandchildren will speak a language that is their heritage, that has been passed on from before time. We know they will share their wealth and not hoard it, or keep it to themselves. We know they will look after their old people and respect them for their wisdom. We know they will look after this land and protect it and that five hundred years from now someone with skin my colour and moccasins on his feet will climb up the Ramparts and rest and look over the river and feel that he too has a place in the universe, and he will thank the same spirits that I thank, that his ancestors have looked after his land well and he will be proud to be a Dene.

It is for this unborn child, Mr. Berger, that my nation will stop the pipeline. It is so that this unborn child can know the freedom of this land that I am willing to lay down my life.

Frank T'Seleie
Fort Good Hope, N.W.T.
August 5th, 1975

For my children
Kris, Ché, and Theresa Erasmus

PREFACE

This study is an educator's interpretation of the transcribed testimony of four Dene¹ witnesses to the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry. The study probes these four texts in the hope of elucidating the texture of communicative praxis. Using Schrag's (1986) notion of communicative praxis as a philosophical frame, this piece explores who the speakers are (culturally and historically), what they were saying (particularly what the texts reveal about the lived world of the individual speakers, as well as the cultural tradition in which they stand), and to whom they were saying speaking (rhetoric). The study concludes with a personal interpretation of the pedagogical significance of this study.

The Question

The texts of these four testimonies to the Berger Inquiry ask and answer many questions. As an interpreter of text, my task was to seek continually and consciously the questions which these texts were answering (Gadamer, 1985). As the task of the study is the probing of the communicative praxis of the Dene in a cross-cultural context, the orienting question brought to the reading of each of these texts has been "What is going on in this person's testimony?" In other words, what is this person's experience of being human, and of being Dene, and in what way is that experience disclosed through the language of this text?

Answering the Question: Communicative Praxis

Hermeneutics as a method, philosophy and critique is one orientation in which interpreters of text have stood (Bleicher, 1980). Hermeneutics has travelled a long and varied path from its original purpose of biblical exegesis, moving to a general theory of interpretation, growing into an orientation for understanding the ontology of being, and offered by Schrag (1986) as a means for interpreting all human action and discourse. In *Communicative Praxis and the Space of Subjectivity*, Schrag (1986) puts forward the

notion of communicative praxis as a form of critical hermeneutics, the project of which is to interpret discourse within the holistic space of discourse and action occurring in a particular communicative event. Texts, as the product of purposeful speech or writing, are both discourse and action and therefore fall within the holistic space of communicative praxis. Communicative praxis offers us a way to understand and interpret texts as discourse *about* something, *by* someone, and *with* someone. This view provides a way into texts which incorporates what the text is referencing in the real world, the role of the speaker, and the reality of the audience in a communicative event. Schrag (1986) puts it thusly:

Communicative praxis thus displays a referential moment (about a world of human concerns and social practices), a moment of self-implicature (by a speaker, author, or actor) and a rhetorical moment (directedness to the other). (p. viii)

Thus, in any particular communicative event, the world, the self, and the other are all displayed. This is the holistic space which comprises communicative praxis, and it is this space in which thought, language and action interplay and are contextualized in our everyday lives.

In proposing his project of communicative praxis, Schrag seeks to deconstruct the traditional philosophical aim of seeking epistemological foundations for knowledge. As well, he moves beyond seeking purely ontological grounds to a space of hermeneutical inquiry.

The space in which we move in our shared and singular projects can be said to be hermeneutical rather than epistemological. It is hermeneutical in the originaive sense of the term because it is a play and display of understanding, of both a theoretical and practical sort. (p. 6)

The principal task in elucidating the texture of communicative praxis is describing what is going on in the saying of the text (Schrag, 1986). More concretely, the purpose is to describe the *topos* (from Greek, meaning "place"), or lifeworld, of human affairs as it is disclosed through discourse and action. As all discourse is *about* something, *by* someone,

and *for* someone, the following three questions aid our interpretation of what is going on in the saying of these texts.

1. *Who is speaking?* Who are the Dene people? What is the backdrop of attitudes, social practices, and cultural memories within which these texts were spoken?
2. *What are they saying?* What do the texts express and signify about the lifeworld of the individual speaker, the lifeworld of Dene affairs specifically, and about the lifeworld of human affairs more generally?
3. *To whom are they speaking?* In what ways do the speakers direct their discourse to the others in their presence?

Parts I and II of the dissertation address each of the above questions in turn. Part I, which is comprised of Chapters 1 and 2, seeks to answer the question, "Who is speaking?" by highlighting some of the more significant threads from the historical and cultural context in which the Berger Inquiry took place. Part II, which is comprised of Chapters 3 through 6, probes directly the question, "What are they saying?" by thematizing the lifeworld of the individual speakers, including their community, as disclosed in these texts. Each of the four chapters in Part II addresses one of the four texts, and there are four themes for each text. Part II also points up the rhetorical turn in the texts by focussing on the question, "To whom are they speaking, and how are they speaking?" The "how" is not a question of technique but one of intentionality: the directedness (of discourse and action) to the other, which in this case is the public audience of the hearings. Because of my pedagogical interest, the text interpretations probe quite deeply the moral ground on which each speaker is standing. Finally, the Epilogue discloses my personal journey, as a pedagogue, through and in these texts, from the world of historical and cultural facts to the world of ethics. The interpretation of these texts addresses very basic issues involved in our being in the world in an ethical way: a way of being in the world which permeates everything that one does, not only as a professional, but as a human being.

The Method

Text Selection

The voices of the Dene who spoke to Justice Thomas Berger are now quiet. Their words are hidden deep within the microfiche filing cabinets and library shelves of archives and libraries across Canada. In 1975-76, their words were heard from coast to coast on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation radio and news telecasts from the Canadian north. There are many images from those broadcasts. One particularly stubborn memory is of a young man from Fort Good Hope, Frank T'Seleie, accusing Bob Blair, President of the Foothills Pipeline Corporation, of being a modern day Custer, and promising to give his own life in an effort to stop the pipeline. Frank T'Seleie was one of a thousand voices, voices of Canadian aboriginal peoples, who spoke to Justice Thomas Berger, the Commissioner of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry. For many aboriginal people in Canada's north, this was the first time a white person, someone with political power, had come to their homeland to listen to them speak.

And speak they did. The people talked about their lives as they had been in the past, were at the present and would be in the future in the event that a pipeline was built. People shared their frustrations, as well as fond memories of the past and their fears for the future. Lazarus Sittichinli, now deceased, warned the Commissioner, "I can see the future, and I don't like what I see." They shared their knowledge and personal experiences, their beliefs and values. The discourse of these thousand voices was carefully translated, recorded, transcribed and analyzed to aid Justice Thomas Berger and his staff in preparing the Commission's report, and then interred in library basements. These voices are rich; they offer a window into the world of the Dene people, and into our own world as well.

The Commission travelled to 21 of the 26 Dene communities and heard testimony from over 1000 witnesses (Berger, 1977). The words of these witnesses comprise 3052 pages of testimony transcript: a virtually endless sea of texts from which I had to select a limited number for interpretation. Since my task was not an overview but rather an in-depth

interpretation of each text, it was neither possible nor desirable to select from a variety of communities. I began to read the transcripts from particular communities. I started with Fort Good Hope, which was the community in which I had lived most recently, and in which I had lived both as an adult and as a child. I had a rational, intellectual knowledge of the community, and an emotional, intuitive connectedness to the land, the people and the impact of the last two decades. My notations of the speaker's name and the page numbers of their text were followed by notes about each text: summaries of the major points, direct quotes, and comments on the speaker's rhetorical style (for example, their use of particular similes or metaphors). These notations were interspersed with other comments, notes, interpretations, and inspirations.

Having once read the Fort Good Hope transcripts, I was unsure of where to go next. Examining the transcript volumes, I documented every Dene community where hearings were held, noting for each community the location of that community's hearings in the 70 volumes of transcripts of community hearings, the number of speakers, the number of pages of transcripts, and the culture and gender of the speakers (using my knowledge of surnames; because of the extended kinship system and relative isolation of the settlements, the Dene people in each community have distinctive surnames, which in most cases are easily discernible from non-Dene surnames). In addition, I forecast potential advantages and disadvantages of pursuing the texts of a particular community. This process gave me some limited insight into what the hearings must have been like. In three of the larger settlements, between one third and one half of the speakers were white, a much larger ratio than the whites represented in the actual population. Men spoke more than three or four times as often as women, depending on the community; in some communities no women spoke at all. Who spoke first was decided by each community (Joanne Barnaby, personal communication, October 31, 1988). In some communities, like Aklavik, it was an elder such as Lazarus Sittichinli. In others, like Fort Good Hope, the Chief and Band councillors spoke first, followed by elders, and then other members of the community.

Women tended to speak after the hearing had been in progress for awhile. (Aklavik was a noticeable exception to this.)

I would like to say that this information, this cursory analysis provided me with a rational basis for text selection, but it did not. I decided that I did not want to select texts from those communities where a large number of the speakers were white. This did not turn out to be as rational a decision as it might first appear. The question "*What is going on in these texts?*" could be asked of any, and all, of the Dene testimony, regardless of community. At any rate, keeping the notion of communicative praxis foremost in my mind, I did not want the particular communicative practices I described to be infused with the dynamics of the "anti-Dene" testimony of a substantial number of white witnesses at the community hearings. Ironically, this tension between the Dene and the white people who participated in these hearings permeated much, if not all, of the testimony. This tension was a substantial thread throughout the texture of the testimony, regardless of the racial mix of the speaker roster or how many white people were present at a given hearing. Who the Dene are today is increasingly defined by their interactions with whites and by the history of those interactions. All the Dene now live in a world they share with the whites.

Without a clear, rational means of text selection yet available to me, I continued in my reading of the texts. The hearings at Fort Good Hope occurred at the apex of Justice Berger's journey through the river valley. Justice Berger conducted the community hearings over a one-and-a-half year period. I pondered on the impact of this prolonged period, with its extensive media coverage and intensive community development work by the Dene Nation, on the testimony from the very beginning of the hearings to the end. So I next read the transcripts from the Aklavik hearings, the first community hearing held, with the goal of next reading the transcripts from the last community hearing at Detah, near Yellowknife.

I took notes on almost every speaker in Aklavik, much in the same way I had in Fort Good Hope. Here I ascertained, to the degree which I was able, whether each speaker was

Inuvialuit (Western Arctic Inuit) or Dene (Gwich'in speakers in this particular case). The transcripts of the Aklavik hearings were overflowing with rich and moving texts, testimony filled with stories and imbued with metaphor and irony. The interpretation of many of these texts would have been rich in meaning. This discovery provided me with more options, rather than with criteria for narrowing the decision which eventually had to be made.

Next, I read the Detah transcripts. In 1975, the Dogrib language was still the *lingua franca* of the community, and thus most speakers opted to speak in Dogrib and to have their testimony translated by a local interpreter. Wherever a similar process was used, the translation of testimony was problematic. Unlike in most simultaneous translation, where interpreters are spelled off after short periods of time, at the Berger Inquiry typically one person translated for an entire day of the hearings, several hours on end. The quality of the transcripts depends upon the interpreters hired and on how tired they became as the day proceeded. At Detah, the quality of the interpretation was particularly poor. Major points were translated, but the ebb and flow of the language, the richness of metaphors, which I believe would have been in the original Dogrib texts, was sadly lacking in the English record of the speakers' words.

What was most remarkable about these texts was the marked similarity of the themes across three communities. In spite of some important differences in the three hearings: the timing of the hearings; the racial, cultural and linguistic differences in speakers; the historical context of the communities; the impact of development to date; and the personal experiences of the speakers, the essential themes of the speakers remained the same. Their concern remained with protecting their rights to the land, with seeking the collective freedom to be aboriginal peoples, and with fulfilling their responsibility to future generations.

It was at this point that I decided to select a limited number of texts within a single community. Primarily because of my familiarity with Fort Good Hope, I chose it over the

other communities. Moreover, most of the Fort Good Hope texts were given directly in English. (Although one of the texts I selected to interpret is an English translation, I had a much wider range of English texts to choose from than I would have had in other communities.)

Having once selected the community, I faced the task of choosing a limited number of texts within the community. Rereading the texts, I was again reminded of the number of texts which spoke to me. My experience with interpreting Lazarus Sittichinli's text, an interpretation which I have re-worked several times over the last one and a half years (see Chambers, 1987; Chambers Erasmus, 1989), made me aware of what is required to uncover the layered complexity of a given text: the time, the reading and the discourse with oneself and with one's colleagues. I knew I would have to select a very limited number. I decided that I wanted equal numbers of men and women: I wanted to hear both stories. As well, I wanted texts from both younger people and older people. Rereading the roster of speakers in Fort Good Hope, I divided the speakers into one of four categories: elderly women, elderly men, young/middle-aged women, and young/middle-aged men. Rereading my notes on each of the texts, I selected a few from each category which I thought would be fruitful. Finally, I reread each of these texts and I selected one from each category. One criterion which I consciously used was whether or not the speaker touched on the themes which were so prevalent in almost all of the texts. Ultimately, however, I selected those texts which had the most to say to me. Texts are like transcripts of interviews, and as in an interview situation, one of the important characteristics for a text is that it be articulate. It is through language that we come to understand the world of the text and what that world presents to us.

The Interpretation

Communicative praxis, and its hermeneutic project, offers an orientation for text interpretation, not a set of procedures for analysis. Communicative praxis offers a way into discourse which ranges over "phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical theory, linguistic

philosophy, structuralism, and deconstruction" (Schrag, 1986, p. *viii*), but rejects any one of these areas as foundational. By grounding interpretation of texts in the holistic space of communicative praxis, numerous windows for interpretation presented themselves as ways for the "opening up, and keeping open, of possibilities" in the text (Gadamer, 1985, p. 266). Each window reveals slightly different questions, and to shut oneself off prematurely from the possibility that the text might answer one of these questions is detrimental to the project of seeking an interpretation of the multi-layered nature of the lifeworld and of the discourse patterns through which that lifeworld is disclosed and constituted. Retaining the notion of beginnings and openness to possibilities, I explored two potentially rich notions for proceeding with the text interpretation: theme and rhetoric. I now turn to a brief description of these two notions and of what they brought to my interpretation of the texts.

Themes

One way of making sense of texts is to thematize them. Van Manen (1984) claims that themes which seek to describe the world as experienced are "the experiential structures which make up that experience" (p. 59). However, he cautions that themes are not "conceptual formulations of categorical statements" (p. 59). Themes uncover the structures of the experiences referred to in the text. Moreover, themes are only one way of making those structures accessible to the reader of the study. I selected a number of van Manen's suggested "procedural activities" for conducting a thematic analysis as being potentially appropriate to the interpretation of the Berger texts: uncovering themes, isolating thematic statements, and composing linguistic transformations.

Themes are powerful when they enable researchers to disclose the essential elements of the conversation between themselves and the text. Neither a theme, nor the thematic phrase used to bring the theme into view, is able to capture fully what has been disclosed through the researcher's interpretation of the text. Thus the thematic phrase is not a fact,

nor a generalization; rather, it is a linguistic turn which "only serves to point at, to allude to, or to hint at" (van Manen, 1984, p. 59) some aspect of what is disclosed in the texts.

Interpretation of these texts disclosed many themes at work: respectfulness for others, artful leadership, traditional pedagogy, authentic discourse, and harmony as an appropriate relationship with the environment or the *ecopolis* (Gough, 1989), as well as many more. Conducting the thematic analysis ensured that the interpretation of these texts was not purely anecdotal but penetrated to a deeper level of understanding, and thus avoided a superficial description of appearances.

Van Manen suggests two approaches to isolating the thematic statements in a phenomenological study: the highlighting approach, and the line-by-line approach. With minor adaptations, I used both in this study. To highlight, I read the text several times, asking, "What statements or phrases seem particularly essential or revealing about the experience being described?" (van Manen, 1984, p. 61). These statements or phrases were then circled or highlighted. In the line-by-line approach, I addressed every single sentence with the question, "What does this sentence or statement reveal about the experience being described?" (p. 61). In addition, I asked how it spoke to the text as a whole. As I studied the texts with the intention of describing the lifeworld contained within and of noting the emerging themes, certain experiential themes recurred as commonalities. These recurring themes were noted and captured by lifting from the text particular phrases which elucidated them, and by capturing the essence of each theme's meaning in a single statement. For example, Georgina's text critiqued the governance of the white bureaucracy and pointed to the necessity of human compassion for morally defensible leadership. This theme was captured in her own metaphorical questioning of her audience, "Do you have hearts?"

Once themes and thematic statements were gleaned from the texts, through a series of writing and rewritings I composed "phenomenologically sensitive" paragraphs (van Manen, 1984, p. 61) which attempted both to capture and elucidate the theme in an expanded form, and to integrate what the speaker said with how he/she said it. This

process was one of preparing notes and paragraphs based on repetitive rereadings of the texts, of asking the texts the question "What is going on in the saying of this text?", and of the "opening up, and keeping open, of possibilities" (Gadamer, 1985, p. 266).

The goal was to capture those themes which best illuminated the text as a whole. An additional goal was to draw upon those themes which were the most universal. In the initial stages of this study, I had thought I was probing and describing Dene communicative praxis, the Dene lifeworld. Yet, as I discovered and wrote about the various themes, it became increasingly apparent that these themes speak to the human condition, and thus are more often than not universal, rather than particular, in their character.

The Rhetorical Turn

Rhetoric, as conceived in this study, is neither a theory nor a set of public speaking techniques. Rather, rhetoric is an integral component of communicative praxis. Schrag (1986) claims all expressive discourse is *for someone*; that is, it is intentional and therefore rhetorical. It is the insertion of this directedness to the "other" in discourse and action, previously emphasized by Aristotle (see Ricoeur, 1975), which prompts Schrag to include rhetoric in the texture of communicative praxis. Following Aristotle, Schrag generalizes the other to "encompass the hearer in the dialogic transaction, the audience of a public assembly, the reader of a text, and the respondent citizen in the *polis* of a praxis-oriented existence" (p. 179).

It becomes immediately apparent how it is that Schrag's rhetorical notion of the other fits with the communicative context of the Berger Inquiry. First of all, the witnesses' testimony, unbeknownst to them at the moment of speaking, would later become texts for many readers,² including myself. Secondly, the speaking of the testimony was a dialogic transaction, as speakers directed their words to their hearer, Justice Berger. Yet, the "other" was not a single man, but a multitude of people. As indicated earlier, these hearings were large public events attended by locals and outsiders, Dene and non-Dene people. Moreover, these hearings were widely publicized through radio and television,

extending the notion of "the other as public assembly" to a public far beyond the community in which the testimony was actually spoken. Each speaker's cognizance of the impact of their testimony on this wider audience cannot be ignored. Perhaps it was the presence of the white people both at the community hearings and in that wider public audience that prompted Dene witnesses to recollect vividly the impropriety of white actions in the past, the present and potentially in the future.

Finally, the "other" in these testimonies encompasses those citizens "in the *polis* of a praxis-oriented existence" (p. 179). Schrag aligns himself closely with Aristotle as he ruminates on the meanings of praxis and *polis*. Praxis is synonymous with "action," "performance," and "accomplishment." In contrast to "practice," which implies habitual action (OED), the term "praxis" implicates the intentionality of our discourse and action in our everyday speaking and acting. It is instructive at this point to consider what praxis is not. For Aristotle, praxis is not theory. While theory follows the dictates of epistemology and seeks to discover knowledge for the sake of knowledge, praxis encompasses the sphere of human action and is guided by practical wisdom. Perhaps the most consequential feature of Aristotle's definition of praxis is its directedness "toward the achievement and maintenance of the virtuous life among the citizens who constitute the *polis*" (Schrag, 1986, p. 20). The *polis*, from the Greek word meaning "city" or "state," is more than simply a physical or political space; rather, it is the space where both the ethical and political life of human beings intermingle, where human beings exercise practical wisdom. For Schrag, "It is the institutionalized context provided by the *polis* that regulates and vitalizes the interaction of human beings in the ongoing life of society" (p. 21). It is from within the space of the *polis* that the citizens, members of a community in this instance, take practical (i.e. political) action. Thus, the "other" in the discourse and action of the Dene witnesses to the Berger community hearings was those citizens who were living a praxis-oriented existence, that is, those who were interested in and prepared to be involved in the (political) decisions which remained to be made. Should a pipeline be built? If so,

under what conditions? How could Dene rights to the land best be settled? How ought political autonomy be restored to the aboriginal people? How ought we to best live on and with the earth? How ought we to live with each other? These were not, and are not, theoretical questions, but practical ones. To seek answers to such questions places one in the realm of a "praxis-oriented existence," and it was from this realm that the Dene witnesses spoke.

Rhetoric is an art, and in classical terms rhetoric is concerned with the art of persuasion. Schrag (1986) claims persuasion is more than argumentation. While argumentation presumes a background of rationality, persuasion "proceeds by dint of a showing, a making manifest through the evocation of new life styles and new ways of seeing the world" (p. 182), or what Habermas and Apel (cited in Schrag, 1986) call "argumentation struggling for agreement and consensus" (p. 182). In Aristotle's view of the deliberative rhetoric of public oratory,

[The speaker] seeks to effect a common orientation among the hearers within a situation calling for responsible judgement and action. Deliberative rhetoric broadens the space of rhetoric to include the common good of the *polis*, the interests of the rhetor, and hearers alike, and the rationality of practical wisdom as guide for deliberation and action. (Schrag, 1986, p. 183)

While in the classical model, rhetoric is concerned with a prescription for argumentation, in critical hermeneutics rhetoric is the art of persuasion which seeks understanding and mutual enlightenment. The classical concept of reasoned argumentation as the basis for knowledge and understanding is an artifact of Western ethnocentrism. This Western view assumes that all humans reason in the same way and that appeal to reason is of a higher epistemic order than is the appeal to beliefs and ideals. Keeping in mind this distinction between argumentation and persuasion proved helpful for probing the rhetorical turn of these texts.

Thus, through rhetoric we return to the idea that communication, that is, all discourse and action, is *by* someone, *about* something, and *for* someone. Part I of this text elucidates

who the speakers were, as well as the historical circumstances, cultural practices and traditions within which they stood. These two chapters provide the background necessary for an informed reading of the texts and the text interpretations. Part II offers an interpretation of what each of the four texts was *about*, that is, what each speaker referenced in his or her lived world, as well as what their performances signified about that lived world. The project of Part II, the elucidation of a meaningful interpretation of those texts, cuts across the other two aspects of communicative praxis: the historical and cultural context (who the speakers are), and the rhetoric (for whom, to whom, they spoke). It would have been impossible to have offered an interpretation of those texts without pointing to the belonging-ness of the actors/speakers to their world of historical conditions and social practices (that which was treated in Part I). It would have been equally impossible to have offered an interpretation of those texts without alluding to rhetoric, to the speakers' intentions to persuade their audiences (to a particular course of action), and the art of their doing so. Thus, the elucidation of the rhetorical moment of these texts is interwoven with the interpretations of what the speakers were saying.

We begin to see that this study is as much an *example* of communicative praxis as it is a *description* of it. As such, it displays a referential moment, that is, it is *about* something; it discloses a moment of self-implicature, that is, it is discourse *by* someone; it discloses a rhetorical moment, that is, it is discourse *for* and *toward* someone.

This text has been *about* the testimonies of four speakers to the Berger Inquiry. This study was written *by* me and it was written *for* you, my reader. That an educator, not a historian, linguist, psychologist, or philosopher, wrote this study is not insignificant. My pedagogical interest has guided each decision and each interpretation from the inception of this study to its end (if this can be called the end). As an educator, I am called to make what Schrag (1986) has called a "fitting response." A fitting response is an ethical one; it does not arise from first principles or value theory, but from the moral responsibility of self (me) and other (you) in the space of communicative praxis to take action and to speak

words which are timely and appropriate to this situation in which we find ourselves, or have placed ourselves.

At the conclusion of this study, we find ourselves ruminating on the pedagogical implications of this piece, on what it might be to offer a fitting response. You, as reader, are left to construct and offer your fitting response; I, as writer, following the Western tradition of dissertation writing, am obliged to provide my fitting response in the form of a final chapter. To elaborate that response I speak of my own life, and what, in an anticipatory way, constitutes a fitting response. Such a response breaks from thesis/study reporting tradition in that it does not offer guidelines for others' actions. Rather, my fitting response is to offer imaginings of myself in future pedagogical situations. The final chapter, called an epilogue, fulfils my responsibility to imagine a fitting response.

This preface has attempted to lay out in a linear, sequential and rational fashion the description of a process which started many years ago, and which even at this writing continues, a process which defies closure. Actually, the simplest and possibly most accurate description of this study would be to say that it was, and continues to be, a circuitous and intuitive engagement, involving thinking and rethinking, reading and rereading, and writing and rewriting. As such this study is part of the current transformation of human science research, of which educational research is a significant part, from the discourse of logico-mathematics, experimentation and truth claims derived from verification and proof, to the rhetorical discourse of our lived world which seeks truth consensually through our continual engagement in the conversation of humankind. Murray (1984) writes:

A transformation is occurring in our appraisal of science in general and human science in particular; in our appraisal of rhetoric's truth claim in human living in general and in the human sciences in particular. Those transformations have the potential to beget the birth of many new realizations that can enable the human sciences in particular to grow towards greater self-clarification and productivity.

No longer may they settle for dubious clarity and findings that spring from self-defeating or questionable reductionism. Better by far to move directly into the ambiguity of human life and study it with instruments culled from life as it is lived with all its metaphorization, analogies, stories, myths, symbols and imaginative leaps. (p. 194)

I have already passed through the vortex of the hermeneutic hurricane which has commanded my life with these texts over the past several months. What I have learned in the writing of this text has changed my life as a pedagogue, and as a human being living on this Earth. It is in the spirit of "life as is it is lived with all its metaphorization, analogies, stories, myths, symbols and imaginative leaps" that I share with you now an exploration of the testimony of four Dene witnesses to the Berger Inquiry.

Footnotes

¹ In the anthropological and linguistic literature, the Dene are referred to as the northern Athapaskan Indians. The word "Dene" is a pan-tribal term, a somewhat Anglicized adaptation of the Athapaskan word for "person, people," referring to the Athapaskan peoples living in the Western Arctic of the Northwest Territories. There are four major Dene languages in the Western Arctic: Dogrib, Chipewyan, Loucheux and Slave, with the latter consisting of several major dialect areas. These dialect differences, for example between South Slave and Fort Good Hope Slave (Hare), are great enough to prevent easy mutual comprehensibility.

²The Canadian economist, Mel Watkins (1977), wrote his classic book, The Dene nation: The colony within, based primarily on testimony given to the Berger Inquiry. Martin O'Malley (1976), Canadian journalist, would write Our past and future land, also based primarily on the Berger Inquiry transcripts, augmented by his personal experiences during the hearings.

PART I
WHO WAS SPEAKING? WHO WAS LISTENING?

CHAPTER ONE
IN THE BEGINNING

The Family

When the People walked the arctic landscape alone they called themselves "the People."³ The People lived in harmony with their brothers and sisters, the plants and the animals (Asch, 1981; Nelson, 1983). Such a close family were the People and the Other Living Beings that they spoke a single language, a language of many consonants, few vowels, and a musical quality where variation in meaning was marked by changes in tone. Through the trickery and foolhardiness of Raven, the animals lost their right to language. The People and the Other Living Beings sought to continue their communication with each other through the spiritual world of dreams and visions. Although the Other Living Beings were now mute, the People persisted in their deep respect for these creatures, especially for their intelligence, their cunning, and their powerful ability to elude the snare, the hook, the arrow and the spear.

Thus, since the beginning, the People have lived on their homeland as a family, speaking one language, living one way. As the People lived the life of the hunt, they followed the four-leggeds to the four corners of the boreal forest and beyond. When the Others arrived, the People were the largest and most widely disbursed family of aboriginal peoples living on the North American continent. They lived throughout the boreal forests from the Great Ocean in the West to the Great Ocean in the East, down the Great River, across the Prairies to the Great Desert of the South.

As they spread farther and farther apart, their language began to change, sometimes slightly, sometimes significantly. For example, their name for themselves, the word for "People" (which also translates as man or human being(s)), began to vary slightly from group to group. The People of Rádelj Kóǵ (what is now called Fort Good Hope), in fact the People all down the Great River, called themselves *Dene*. The People who lived away from the valley of the Great River, amongst the moonscape of the Precambrian Shield,

called themselves *Dene*. Hundreds of thousands of the People who wandered far to the south, to live amongst the red bluffs, deep canyons and dried arroyos of what is now the American southwest, called themselves *Diné* (Young & Morgan, 1980).⁴ The explorers, linguists and anthropologists of the later centuries who would seek to know and understand these Peoples, their languages and their lifeways, would name the large family of the People the Athapaskans (spelled variously Athapaskans, Athabaskans, Athabascans). In time, the surrounding tribes and the Others named the different groups of the Dene, and now they go by such varied names as Navajo, Apache, Hoopa, Sarcee, and Beaver. The Dene of boreal forests north of the 60th parallel, in what is now the Northwest Territories, are called the Slavey, the Chipewyan, the Dogrib, and the Gwich'in. Surrounding tribes, and later the Others, differentiated further. The Slavey People, who lived up and down the Great River Valley, were subdivided into the South Slavey, the Mountain People, the Hare(skin) People, and later the Bearlake People. Regardless of the subtle shifts in words and sounds from place to place, and group to group, the Dene of the boreal forest retained much more in common than they gained in difference.

Until the coming of the Others, the People expected only to hear the various languages of the People. They never expected these differences in language to be a barrier to communication, for the People were members of a single family, united by a common mother language, a common history, and a rich way of being in the world. Little did the Dene know that they also shared with their brothers and their sisters a common future: a life in the presence of the Others.

Hunters and Trappers

"The New World was the Outer Space of fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe" (Brody, 1981, p. 49). European powers sent forth explorers into uncharted waters and on to unknown lands. These adventurers returned with stories of seas rich in fish and of lands rich in gold and furs, as well as a legal and ethical problem. Were the savages of the new land truly human? In Spain, a lengthy public debate ensued between two monks--Las

Casas and Sepulveda--as to whether the conquistadors should respect the North American aborigines' way of life and their political, economic and ethical ideals, or should conquer them (Brody, 1981). This debate, cast in different terms throughout time, has set the stage and provided the story line for the interplay between aboriginal and white people.

As subarctic hunters, the Dene were to be seriously affected by the themes woven through this debate (Brody, 1981). These people were hunters whose survival depended upon their flexibility, mobility, and adaptability. Unlike the prairies, where herds of buffalo supported large communities, the thinly dispersed game of the subarctic boreal forests only supported small groups of people in a particular area. Such small groups did not require an elaborate or hierarchical social system. Rather, people were free to move about and travel as they wished, joining this group at one time and that group at another. People moved to where the fish and game were, or to where their experience or intuition suggested they might be. Such mobility did not allow for a large accumulation of chattels.

For the Europeans, such a way of life was savage. These were heathens living a life of destitution and ignorance. For Western man, civilization began at the very least with agriculture and progressed to industrialization. The Puritans, part of the first wave of European immigration to North America, believed in thrift, discipline and hard work. From the perspective of the traders, missionaries and other emissaries of European civilization who were to encounter, and later to manage and administer the Dene, the hunters were "seemingly haphazard, wasteful, greedy, impoverished, and yet indifferent to material goods" (Brody, 1981, p. 51-52). To the Europeans, a people more dedicated to "careful, rational planning, saving, and above all to the accumulation of material goods" (Brody, 1981, p. 52) than any other in history, the hunters of North America were less than human. The way of life of the Dene hunters was diametrically opposed to everything for which the Western European way of life stood. As Brody (1981, 1987) and others (Page, 1986) have noted, when it came to the arctic and subarctic peoples, these stereotypes were intensified by European visions of the north as a harsh, almost inhuman,

environment. Rather than viewing the northern aboriginals as people rich in culture, history and tradition, who had adapted successfully to a particular environment, the immigrants saw them as marginal people eking out a mere existence in a marginal land.

By the late 18th and early 19th century, fur traders had reached the Mackenzie Valley. The Northwest Company, in fierce competition with the more sedentary Hudson's Bay Company, sent Sir Alexander Mackenzie in search of the Northwest Passage, an as-yet fictitious combination of a short cut and the Yellow Brick Road to the Orient. Carrying the Nor'westers flag, in 1789 Mackenzie travelled down the Great River, which was later to bear his name, eagerly searching for the Pacific Ocean. His diary provides the first European impressions of the Hare Dene.

We observed several smokes beneath an hill, on the north shore, and on our approach we perceived the natives climbing the ascent to gain the woods. The Indians, however, in the two small canoes which were ahead of us, having assured them of our friendly intentions, they returned to their fires, and we disembarked. Several of them were clad in hare-skins, but in every other circumstance they resembled those whom we had already seen. We were, however, informed that they were of a different tribe, called the Hare Indians, as hares and fish are their principal support, from the scarcity of rein-deer and beaver, which are the only animals of the larger kind that frequent this part of the country. They were twenty-five in number; and among them was a woman who was afflicted with an abcess in the belly, and reduced, in consequences to a mere skeleton; at the same time several old women were singing and howling around her; but whether these noises were to operate as a charm for her cure, or merely to amuse or console her, I do not pretend to determine. A small quantity of our usual presents [beads, knives, awls, etc.] were received by them with the greatest satisfaction. (Mackenzie, 1927, p. 173; cited in Hara, 1980, p. 30-31)⁵

The interests of the fur trade were best served by nurturing hunter/trapper dependence on such trade goods. The competitive advantage of the Northwest Company was its policy of bringing the trade to the trappers. As part of this market thrust, forts were established in Hare country as early as 1806. In the early years, the forts were frequently moved in order

to seduce the maximum number of trappers into bringing in their furs. Fort Good Hope was moved several times up and down the Mackenzie River, until 1836, when the Fort was established at its present location, now in the possession of the Hudson's Bay Company (Hara, 1980).

European goods lured the Dene into trading fur, and altered the way the People lived their lives. With time, the People became dependent upon the axes, guns, knives, files, cooking pots, and European clothing which could be received in exchange for fur. The nature of establishing and maintaining a trapline meant that decisions about where to hunt were balanced with decisions about where to trap, and time devoted to trapping meant time away from hunting. Trapping ensnared the Dene into the complex web of the market economy. No longer did their livelihood depend solely on a combination of providence, ability and personal industry (Brody, 1981).

Soon, the People made trips to the trading post, once, twice, and later several times in a year for supplies, and soon the fort became a gathering place. Their trips became a time for celebration: the People pitched their tipis around the fort, visited with one another, danced and feasted (Hara, 1980). Some of the Dene found work interpreting at the fort, as well as hunting and fishing to supply the fort. In time, some built temporary homes at the fort.

In addition to restricting the mobility of the people (and consequently their freedom, as they define it), the fur trade began to alter the nature of Dene leadership. Prior to the establishment of trading posts within Dene territory, the Dene did not have formal chiefs. Leaders in the various groups or bands were typically the most successful hunters and were the people willing to undertake specific tasks such as organizing trading (with other tribes or middlemen), war or communal hunting. Such leadership activities incurred respect, but bestowed no authority upon the leader. A leader was not entitled to make decisions on behalf of others, and members of the group were in no way bound by any decisions made

by such a person. Persons disagreeing with a leader, or with the group consensus, were free to leave and join another group.⁶

The white traders craved a less fluid system, one which would ensure a steady stream of furs. They wished to bargain with a representative of the people, so they established the position of "trading chiefs." Choosing hunters who already enjoyed some degree of social influence and the respect of their peers, the Company sought to enhance the prestige of these chiefs with the trappings of authority: medals, suits of clothes, a red stroud coat trimmed with lace, and the giving to them of gun salutes (MacNeish, 1956).

These practices only met with limited success in altering traditional patterns of leadership. Samuel Hearne, who travelled and traded with Chipewyan from 1770 to 1772, was more aware than many of his day (as well as our own) of the true nature of Dene leadership, and of the lack of authority which those designated as chief for trading purposes actually had. Their role was rather to ensure group solidarity and prestige during the bargaining with the white traders. Hearne (cited in Fumoleau, 1976) astutely reflected:

Indeed, the generality of Europeans who reside in those parts, being utterly unacquainted with the manners and customs of the Indians, have conceived so high an opinion of those leaders, and their authority, as to imagine that all who accompany them on those occasions are entirely devoted to their service and command all the year; but this is so far from being the case, that the authority of those great men, when absent from the Company's Factory, never extends beyond their own family; and the trifling respect shown them by their countrymen, during their residence at the factory proceeds from motives of interest. (p. 151)

The fur trade brought the Dene into the presence of the Europeans, their way of life and their values of hard work, thrift and accumulation of wealth. Yet the activities which the Dene pursued for their part in the fur trade were so much in tune with their traditional lifeways that the effects of the trade were subtle, and at first were neither seen nor understood. Initially their lifeworld of hunting in small family groups, moving about freely on the land, speaking their language, and living their lives much as they always had

remained intact. With time, however, their movements on the land changed. They became less free. The system of trading chiefs established an hierarchical social arrangement in which one individual was accorded institutionalized power over others, and this power was enshrined in symbolic activities and clothing.

As we have seen, in the years following the introduction of the fur trade, the material world of the Dene was subtly altered. Not so subtle, perhaps, was the transformation of the Dene's spiritual world by "the ones who pray."

The Bible and the School

By the late 19th century, education of the young in white society had become a process which took place within the context of an institution under the auspices of specifically trained professionals who were invested with the responsibility for learners and the learning process. By way of contrast, education of the young in Dene societies was learned on the land, by engaging in concrete tasks in the accompaniment or under the direct supervision of a member of the immediate family. Through their education on the land, the Dene young learned many basic and enduring values: the importance of responsibility for oneself and one's kin, hard work, silent perseverance in hardship, being careful, thoughtful, watchful, resourceful, and most importantly, keeping one's wits about one at all times (Tetso, 1970).

Issues of proper conduct toward other humans and Other Living Beings were addressed through discourse. The young were to ask questions thoughtfully and the wise were to answer, perhaps through a story. Elders often told stories which carried a variegated array of messages: historical, ethical, moral and humorous. The stories cautioned against incest, greed, and sloth, while bringing to life the humour and tragedy of falling folly to such human failings. Stories were offered as explanations of universal phenomena, such as the order of the lifeworld of the Dene and the Other Living Beings. For the Dene, attuning and orienting oneself by watching and listening was what marked

true learning. With the coming of the missionaries, the people were to experience an entirely new way of educating their young.⁷

Following a pattern established throughout Canada, the missionary followed the trader. Their passion for conversion of heathen souls drove the missionary order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) into the Mackenzie River valley during the 1850s (Chalmers, 1972). Soon, Father Grollier of the OMIs arrived at the trading post of Fort Good Hope and said the first Roman Catholic mass in the homeland of the Hareskin Dene on September 2nd, 1859 (Hara, 1980). Seven years later, the Church of Our Lady of Good Hope was completed at its present site. The artfully illustrated and sculpted structure was built entirely with hand tools and was decorated with natural pigments and fish oils. It still stands today as one of Canada's most northerly national historic sites.

From this mission the word of God was spread, and by the 20th century most of the Dene who traded at Fort Good Hope were nominally Roman Catholic through baptism and confirmation, and, while traditionally polygamous, were now for the most part monogamous (Hara, 1980). Journeys to the fort were no longer solely for trade. The holy events of the church calendar became an important part of the annual cycle of the People. Soon trading trips coincided with the Church's celebrations of religious renewal. The People's traditional dancing and feasting was now combined with weddings (several couples at a time), baptisms, and the celebrations of Christmas, New Year's, Easter and the Day of Assumption. The missionaries learned the language of the people and conducted the mass in Dene. Using an adaptation of the syllabic orthography James Evans developed for Cree, the priests prepared hymnals and prayer books in the Dene language. For the first time the People saw their language written down. Father Petitot, an able and avid ethnographer and linguist of the late 19th century, prepared a voluminous, comparative dictionary of several of the Dene languages, including Hareskin. Moreover, he recorded many stories of the People: myths, legends, folktales and oral history (The Book of Dene, 1976).

The people adapted Catholicism to their own view of the world. For example, Genesis says that God made the world in six days and on the seventh day He rested. Thus, out of respect and observance, Western Christians have traditionally celebrated the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship. The Dene have adopted and adapted this practice to their own understanding of the world and how it works. They believed strongly in the power of the spirit world (and continue to do so today). Offending the spirit world is to court disaster and work on the Sabbath has become a source of such offence.

Parochial schooling came hand-in-hand with the Bible. While the South was celebrating its Confederation into the Dominion of Canada, the Grey Nuns were establishing the north's first Roman Catholic residential school in Fort Providence. These men and women of the cloth who first brought schooling to the north were the northern version of those "Managers of Virtue" who administered public schooling in America in the latter part of the 19th century (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Their concerns lay more with the moral and spiritual development of their young wards than with their intellectual development. Dene children experienced a curriculum focused exclusively on the catechism and hymn-singing, with minimal emphasis on the basic literacy and numeracy which would be of assistance to them in trading. Moral development consisted primarily of developing the habits of thrift, industry and hard work. Much of the children's school day was spent in sewing, cooking, gardening and various forms of manual labour. Moreover, although the Dene children spoke only their own language, they were instructed primarily in French.

Between the years 1900 and 1915, five boys and five girls from the Fort Good Hope people were sent to the Fort Providence mission school (Hara, 1980). Because of the great distances involved, they were not allowed to return home until their schooling had ended, usually a period of five to ten years. Very young when they left, and exposed almost entirely to French at school, these students returned home strangers in their own land.

An elderly Fort Good Hope man who was sent to the Fort Providence School around 1910 at five years of age did not return home for nine years. His story aches with his school experiences and their consequences in his life:

At Fort Providence we talked in French. . . . Out there was not much grub. We had butter and lard. Beans once in a while, sometimes rice. No cream, no milk, no coffee. We had tea, flour, bread, fish and bull ox. The mission got meat [caribou or moose] once in a while. Sisters [the Grey Nuns] taught us. It was just for learning all year. I was sick about Mom and Dad. If we cry, the Sisters won't like it, so we never cry. When I came home, I forgot how to talk Slavey, after one week I started to talk a little bit. When I came home, snoring was the first thing I did. When I got home they told me to go snare the rabbit. When I was strong, I learned how to fish, set traps and shoot.

(From an interview conducted by Hara in 1960-61; reported in Hara, 1980, p. 37)

By the year 1900 the Others had been in the Dene midst for over a century. The Dene were slowly becoming enmeshed into the lifeways of the Others: their economy, their religion, their languages, and finally their way of schooling their young. Now, a new day was dawning in the lives of all the Dene. With the discovery of gold, and later oil, in the Dene homeland, the invasion of the Others into the physical, social, economic, and political lifeworld was intensified. To clear the way for this invasion, the government of Canada sought legal title to Dene land through the "taking of treaty." For the Dene, the treaty bound white and Dene together in a friendship which was to last "as long as this land shall last;" for the whites, it was little more than a profitable real estate transaction.

"As Long as This Land Shall Last"

Treaty 8 - 1899

Gold was discovered in the Yukon, and by 1898 the Klondike Gold Rush was more than an event; it was an epidemic. Men crazed with gold fever searched for quick passage to the gold fields. Some sought the eastern route north of Edmonton to the Upper Mackenzie River Valley and east across the Mountains. They were the first wave of white migration into the traditional Dene homelands. Many of these men stayed and traded in

their gold pans, pick and shovel for the steel trap and the rifle, competing with the Dene for limited supply of game and fur.

For the Dene, hunting and fishing had always provided the staff of their life, meat. Later, trapping became essential for providing the equipment necessary for hunting: rifles, shells, nets, and traps, as well as basic items such as cloth, tobacco and tea. The success of the hunt depended on a continued supply of game and fur. It was in the Dene people's interest to ensure that the delicate balance between harvesting wildlife in the present and ensuring survival of the species in the future was maintained. The mobility of the Dene hunters was the key to maintaining this balance. Rather than over-hunting or "trapping out" a particular area, the Dene would move nomadically, frequently changing locations, allowing the game in areas previously harvested to replenish. The Dene neither had, nor needed, a way of dealing with transgressors of the law of the land. It was really quite simple; if one was to survive, one must be respectful of the fish and the animals and their way of being.⁸

These white trappers, traders and prospectors brought a new way of life with them, a new attitude to the land and the animals. Land was to be owned, and animals were to be exploited for short-term profit. Although they had been trapping for over a century, the Dene feared for their livelihood for the first time, as white trappers gained unfair advantage through using poison baits. Soon these and outlawed hunting and trapping practices, as well as the spread of the liquor trade, brought the North West Mounted Police (N.W.M.P.) into the north. By 1897-99, the N.W.M.P. travelled by dog team throughout Dene lands, enforcing Canadian law in a territory not yet surrendered to Canada (Fumoleau, 1976).

The arrival of the N.W.M.P. is a window into the mixed blessings of government intervention on Dene behalf, which has continued to be characteristic of Dene-government relations into the present. The N.W.M.P. were required primarily, at least in the early days, to police non-Dene offenders. Yet the Mounties also enforced federal game laws drafted to protect endangered species, particularly the bison, from over-hunting (Fumoleau,

1976). These laws severely limited the Dene's freedom to hunt and trap according to their own practices of game management, practices which up until the white intrusion had been successful. Thus, the protection afforded the Dene by the N.W.M.P. (and later the treaties) was a double-edged sword, benevolently protecting the Dene on the one hand, and restricting their greatly desired freedom to be Dene, to be hunters, on the other.

When gold and oil were discovered in the Northwest Territories, the heads of government turned northward. The north was no longer a wasteland. Rather, it was a harsh and unknown treasure box, occupied by a destitute and savage people devoid of any worthwhile economy or way of life. The potential mineral wealth of the north, and the settlement required to develop those resources, pressed the federal government into entreating with the northern Dene.

The Privy Council Report of 1891 makes clear the necessity of entreating with the aboriginal peoples and the government's intended purposes in doing so:

On a report dated 7th of January, 1891, from the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, stating that the discovery in the District of Athabaska and in the Mackenzie River Country, that immense quantities of petroleum exist within certain areas of those regions, as well as the belief that other minerals and substances of economic value . . . are to be found therein, the development of which may add materially to the public wealth . . . appear to render it advisable that a treaty or treaties should be made with the Indians who claim those regions as their hunting grounds, with a view to the extinguishment of the Indian title in such portions of the same, as it may be considered in the interest of the public to open up for settlement. (cited in Fumoleau, 1976, p. 41)

These "negotiations"⁹ took place against the backdrop of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which outlined the British policy towards Indians. This legislation, which would be in effect for the next two centuries,

laid the foundations of four great principles which became embedded in Canada's treaty system: that Indians possess occupancy rights to all lands which they have not formally surrendered; that no land claimed by Indians may be granted to whites until formally surrendered; that the government assumes

the responsibility of evicting all persons unlawfully occupying Indian lands; and that surrenders of Indian land may be made only to the Crown, and for a consideration. (Harper, cited in Ponting & Gibbons, 1980, p. 4)

These principles provided the legal basis for the treaties signed with Canadian Indians in the 1890s. Perhaps most significant of these were the 11 numbered treaties. The first seven of these treaties paved the way for white settlement of the Canadian prairies and for the Canadian Pacific Railway. Similarly, the purpose of Treaty 8, and later Treaty 11, was to permit the unchallenged extraction of the oil, gas and minerals which were believed to be abundant in the Athabasca and Mackenzie basins. "Prospective oil reserves were an important, if at times fanciful, aspect of dreams about the frontier as early as the 1890s" (Brody, 1981, p. 64). Such dreams were still alive nearly a century later when the Mackenzie Valley pipeline was proposed, and it was the purpose of the treaties to pave the way for such dreams.

As Canada approached the dawning of a new century, the 3,500 people of the Chipewyan, Slave, Dogrib, Loucheux and Hare Nations were living much as they had for the past century, hunting and trapping on lands which had not been formally ceded to the Crown. The history of the preparation and signing of Treaties 8 and 11 was a significant event in the lives of the northern Dene. It is an episode which dramatically altered the manner of Dene leadership, the People's relationship with the non-Dene, and their freedom to be Dene. In the treaty "negotiations," the Dene people argued passionately for their right to continue to hunt and trap, to live as they always had, much as they would several decades later at the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry.

Treaty 8 was signed in the summer of 1899. Travelling by boat, the Treaty Party met with the various Dene nations occupying the land the federal government wished to own outright. After meetings of one to three days in length in each community, a chief made his X on the treaty document. In thus doing so, the text of Treaty 8 claims that the Cree, Beaver, Chipewyan, and Slave Indians did "HEREBY CEDE, RELEASE, SURRENDER

AND YIELD UP to the Government of the Dominion of Canada . . . all their rights, titles, and privileges whatsoever, to the lands included within the following limits," which encompassed northeastern British Columbia, northern Alberta, and the land south of the Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories. In exchange, the Indian people received an initial cash payment of \$12 each, with more for chief and headmen, as well as a promise of \$5 per person cash annuities, teachers' salaries, and farming implements. Each band had the option of taking a reserve "not to exceed one square mile per family of five."

The reserve system, which had earlier been established in southern Canada during treaty negotiations, was not implemented in the north. As Father Breynat said, reflecting on the treaty signing at Fort Chipewyan:

Discussions were long enough but sincere; Crees and Chipewyans refused to be treated like Prairie Indians and to be parked on reserves. . . . It was essential to them to retain complete freedom to move around. (Fumoleau, 1976, p. 78)

The Treaty Commissioner also recognized the contrast in social organization between the prairie tribes and the Dene. In 1899, he wrote:

From what I have been able to learn of the north country, it would appear that the Indians there act as individuals than as a nation, and that any tribal organization which may exist is very slight. They live by hunting and individual effort, very much as the halfbreeds in that country live. . . . The reserve idea is inconsistent with the life of the hunter, and is only applicable in agricultural country. (cited in Fumoleau, 1976, p. 61)

The Indians believed that the treaties assured them of their freedom to hunt, fish and trap forever on their homelands. However, a clause in the treaty reads:

They shall have the right to pursue their usual vocations of hunting, trapping and fishing throughout the tract surrendered as heretofore described, subject to such regulations as may from time to time be made by the Government of the country, acting under the authority of Her Majesty, and saving and excepting such tracts as may be required or taken up from time to time for settlement, mining, lumbering, trading or other purposes. (Treaty #8 reprinted in Fumoleau, 1976, p. 70-73).

Wherever the treaty commission travelled the story was the same. While the Treaty commissioners offered promises of reserve lands and treaty annuities, the Dene were primarily concerned that this agreement protect their freedom to hunt, trap and fish in perpetuity. It was only when the Dene were assured of such rights that they agreed to sign (Fumoleau, 1976).

Thus, there was a world of difference between the actual terms of the treaty and the Indian signatories' understanding of it (Brody, 1981). The Crown believed they were buying the land, and the Dene believed they were signing a peace treaty. For the Dene to "take treaty" meant a reaffirmation of their way of life, a guarantee of their right to live as they always had, freely hunting, trapping and fishing. The conflict in interpretation of the intent and terms of the treaty, specifically the Dene belief that they had never ceded their rights to their traditional homeland, is basic to understanding the conflict underlying Dene action against hydrocarbon development projects in the Mackenzie Valley during the 1970s. This tension continually informs the texts of the witnesses to the Berger Inquiry.

Fumoleau (1976) makes a strong argument that the Dene were neither fully informed as to the implications of the document they were signing, nor were they fully capable of understanding those same implications. These were people who had lived their entire lives in the bush, who were neither fluent nor literate in English, whose economic experiences were limited to hunting and barter, and who had no conception of land ownership nor of the potential wealth lying beneath the earth's surface. Antoine Liske, a former Dene sub-chief from Yellowknife, reflects back on the first treaty:

At first, when the first treaty, the chief didn't talk about things like we are having now. They were only concerned with wildlife, etc. . . but for minerals these were the things they didn't understand that would bring in money. True, wildlife was the essential thing, then it was worth twice as much as today. (cited in Fumoleau, 1976, p. 215)

As the Dominion of Canada entered a new century filled with hope of economic expansion and creating a new society, the Dene fell on hard times. A dramatic influx of

white trappers had increased competition for a limited supply of game and fur. The concomitant scarcity of wildlife brought periodic starvation to a people decimated by foreign diseases such as Spanish influenza and measles (Fumoleau, 1976; Hara, 1980; Helm, Alliband, Birk, Lawson, Reisner, Sturtevant & Witkowski, 1971; Savishinsky & Hara, 1981).

Times were made harder by the enactment of federal game laws which restricted the hunting of animals which formed the basis of Dene survival: the bison, moose, deer, mink, otter, beaver, muskrat, swan, wild duck, and goose. The Northwest Territories Game Act of 1917 limited Dene rights to hunt out of season off-reserve (which because they did not take reserves meant everywhere) to instances where the taking of such game would prevent starvation (Fumoleau, 1976). Such laws seemed absurd at a time when people were dying from starvation and ravaged by disease. Finally, in 1920, the fur market crashed and the Dene people's only source of purchasing power virtually disappeared, at least temporarily (Fumoleau, 1976). It was in this historical context that oil was first discovered in the Dene homeland.

Treaty 11 - 1921

Yamozha was a giant. He lived long ago when his brothers and sisters, the animals, were also giants and could speak. Yamozha roamed from one end of the Dene world to the other, engaging in many of the adventures and misadventures of a great hunter and warrior.¹⁰ Each event, each place he rested, is imprinted on the earth like the pages of a giant history book. When the Dogrib people look towards the flat topped mountain near the north shore of the Great Slave Lake, they remember that is where Yamozha slept. Only the weight of a giant could flatten a mountain top.

As he travelled down the Great River,¹¹ or Dehcho or Diesho, Yamozha spied three beaver. Drawing back his magnificent bow, he killed all three of the giant animals. An amazing feat--to stalk such intelligent animals, and to

shoot so rapidly and with such force as to kill all three of them at once--before they had the opportunity to broadcast a warning with the loud slap of their broad tails on the water.¹² Where the clear waters of the Bear River merge with the silt-laden Diesho, Yamoza skinned his beaver. Scraping off all the flesh and fat, he laced the edges of the skin with hide and wove a supple branch through the lacing. Tying the ends of the stick together, a circle was formed stretching the beaver pelt in all directions at once. Yamoza nailed each stretcher to the southwest side of Bear Mountain. In a new age, many years into the future, three large circular indentations, paler than the rest of the mountain, would remind onlookers of Yamoza's great feat.

The beaver is coveted because of the richness of his meat.

Yamoza was very hungry and he began to prepare his meal. As the meat sizzled over an open fire, grease fell to the ground like giant teardrops. The beaver were so great in size and so fat that the grease continued to fall like the autumn rain. The grease of the beavers fueled an eternal smoulder at the mouth of the Bear River. Hundreds and perhaps thousands of winters after Yamoza had left the earth, his cooking spot still smokes and burns, marking the people's knowledge that oil rested beneath the surface of their land like a sleeping giant. What people did not realize was that in the 20th century this giant would awaken, and that like Yamoza, it would forever change the landscape of their lives.

In their efforts to complete a stocktaking of the country's resources, the Geological and Natural History Survey of Canada sent representatives into the Mackenzie Valley in the early 1880s, north of the area ceded under Treaty 8. The fruits of these surveys soon revealed that the far north was much more than a barren wasteland. Robert G. McConnell, a member of the Geological Survey staff, reported:

Near Fort Good Hope several tar springs exist, and it is from these that the Hudson's Bay company now obtain their principal supply of pitch. The springs are situated at some distance from the river

and were not examined. Still farther down, in the vicinity of Old Fort Good Hope [approximately 140 miles North of present Fort Good Hope] the river is bordered for several miles by evenly bedded dark shales of Devonian age which are completely saturated with oil. (Fumoleau, 1976, pp. 39-40)

Oil was discovered in what is now called Norman Wells in the summer of 1920, and by the following summer Treaty 11 was signed. The record of events of that summer reads like a replay of 1899: the same script, pre-written in Ottawa, with slightly different Dene actors desperately trying to alter the lines, but to virtually no avail. The Treaty Commission arrived in Fort Good Hope, as they had arrived in each settlement all the way down the Mackenzie River, with a document in hand ready for the signature of a chief, but none were to be found (Fumoleau, 1976). There is some confusion in people's recollection as to whether the Hudson's Bay manager or the Hareskin people picked T'Seleie (Ground Squirrel Coat) to be the chief. Taped interviews with local Dene witnesses provide these views on this historic event:

Gregory Shae: The whites asked us if we wanted reserves. . . . But we told them that it would be kind of crazy to own little pieces of land. Because if the animals and furs disappear from that little piece of land what would the owner eat. We told them that we would rather hunt and trap all together

Louis Caesar: If the people were to own small pieces of land and if the animals never come there, they would have to move onto someone else's territory and there would be fighting and arguing. The chief said: No. The people wanted to go where they wished when they wished The treaty party continued to make promises to the people that the government would help them if they needed it. . . . We agreed to the treaty because of these promises, and in those days nobody lies. . . .

After the treaty, the government built a two storey log house for the chief. They said that they were going to send food and rations for the upstairs part. They said that they were going to do this whenever it was empty. The chief moved into that house with his family and waited for the food and rations that were for his people. He waited until he died . . . (cited in Fumoleau, 1976, pp. 182-183).

Consequences of Treaties

Leadership

Theoretically, the Treaties and the Indian Act offered Western European notions of democratic representative leadership to the Dene. However, this was simply a deception. While these newly appointed chiefs were given the awesome responsibility of signing the most important legal document in the history of their relationship with the Canadian government, they subsequently found they had very little authority and were paid little heed by the government who had created them.

The treaties institutionalized Dene leadership. Treaty # 11 reads:

AND WHEREAS, the Indians of said tract, duly convened in council at respective points named hereunder, and being requested by His Majesty's Commissioner, to name certain Chiefs and Headmen, who should be authorized on their behalf to conduct such negotiations and sign any treaty to be founded thereon, and to become responsible to His Majesty for the faithful performance by their respective bands as such obligations as shall be assumed by them, the said Indians have therefore acknowledged for that purpose the several chiefs and Headmen who have subscribed thereto (Treaty #11 reprinted in Fumoleau, 1976, pp. 165-68)

No such institutional leadership positions existed in Dene society. As Fumoleau explains, "The power of decision was vested in the total membership of the group or band, and unanimous consent was required before action was taken; the chief was but a spokesman for his fellows" (p. 151). Leadership which had once been fluid, informal, and situational, became static, formal, and legally entrenched. But a government committed to democracy and representational government needed to deal with spokespersons; it needed treaty signatories who "represented" the people.

At each treaty negotiation, the people were asked to elect chiefs and councillors. The government imported this system from its previous dealings with prairie tribes, where chiefs had some authority to speak on behalf of people by virtue of their position. The fur trade with its tradition of choosing "trading chiefs" laid the groundwork for the people's

acceptance of this procedure. To the extent possible, the Dene employed traditional, if not somewhat pragmatic, notions of what constituted good leadership when choosing chiefs for treaty negotiations. Victor Lafferty, interpreter to the 1921 treaty signing, reaffirms that hunting skill, organizational abilities and generosity were paramount for Dene leaders:

Paul Lefoin, that's the only man they wanted for Chief because he was a good hunter. He was a good hunter and he never kept anything for himself. He'd kill a good fat moose, he'd tell them 'Go down and get it,' he'd send them to get that meat . . . also send some fellows for wood and make a big fire and boil up all that moose. (from an interview with Liz Petrovich of Yellowknife on October, 1972, cited in Fumoleau, 1976, p. 169)

The treaties provided chiefs with medals, a suit of clothing and a larger annuity than other folk (\$20 instead of \$5), thereby legally entrenching an hierarchical social structure rooted in differential power and authority, as well as differential access to resources.

Belonging

Not only was a new form of leadership solidified by the treaty and by its legal relative, the Indian Act, but the very identity of the people was reformulated. Rather than simply providing leadership for his own hunting group, the chief, as outlined in the Indian Act and inherent in the treaties, was a person elected to represent an entire "band." Traditionally, the People did not live in bands but in dispersed family hunting groups. Larger gatherings of the People occurred only for short periods of time during the summer, for feasting and renewal. While one or more hunters typically provided leadership for each family group, certainly no one person or group of persons was invested with the authority to act or to speak on behalf of the larger group. It is significant that there is no term for "band" in the Dene language (Hara, 1980). The Dene of Fort Good Hope traditionally did not belong to particular "bands," nor did they see themselves as members of a band (Hara, 1980). The notion of a "band" as a sub-unit of a larger tribe was imposed on the people initially for trading purposes, and later for other administrative purposes of the federal government (Ponting & Gibbins, 1980).¹³

Traditionally a Dene person's identity came not from membership in a band, but from the geographical area where he or she typically liked to hunt and dwell. If Peter liked to hunt and live in the Mountains he was *Shitá Got'ine* or Mountain person, Mountain people. Since there would be several individuals who favoured the same hunting spot, there would be several who called themselves Mountain People. Some families liked to hunt up the Ramparts River, others along the Big River, others on lakes to the east of the Big River, others on rivers to the north and east, near the barren lands. People might be identified, or might identify themselves, with several different geographical names at once, depending on the conversational context. Giving an example similar to Hara's (1980), just as an individual can be a Westerner, a British Columbian, an Islander, a Victorian, or from Oak Bay depending on the conversational context, so could a person be a Dene, a Slave, a Good Hoper, a *Dala Got'ine*--a person who hunted on the east side of traditional Hare areas to the east of Big River, a *Tusho Got'ine*--a man of Aubrey Lake, his most favourite hunting area, or a *Tuhotá Delin Got'ine*--the name of the river where he was currently camping and hunting.¹⁴

People's names could change in the course of their lives. If, for example, they chose not to hunt continuously in the same area, they could cease being one of the Mountain people and become one of the River people. In later times, those people who moved into town and who never returned to the bush in any significant way were designated according to their favourite hunting location during their life in the bush.¹⁵ The designation of women could be affected by the decisions of their parents, husbands, and other relatives.¹⁶

Regardless, these groups were not organized in any formal sense, and belonging to them did not carry any obligation or institutionalized responsibility. Like other aspects of Dene social organization, they were entirely fluid and dynamic. For example, decisions about hunting location were based on ecological factors such as the possibility of game and fur, as well as social factors, that is, which friends and kin would be going to that area that

particular year. Hara (1980) succinctly states how the notion of "band" for these groups can be misleading:

The sharing of a common "band" name, however, neither indicates group solidarity nor implies recognition of mutual rights and duties binding together the members, such as the rules that apply temporarily to persons actually camping at the same place. On the contrary, the individuals and families who share a single band name are simply those who favor the same area for camping and hunting, irrespective of whether they camp together at the same place at the same time, or whether they visit it separately at different times. Indeed, there may be two individuals who like the same spot but who try to avoid each other by camping there only when the other is absent. Such behaviour is rare. Nevertheless, in such a case both would have the same "band" name [and I would add, the same right to be there!]. (p. 27)

People were not obligated to return to certain areas. They were free to choose where they would hunt and consequently how they were named. This freedom to be who you choose to be, to choose how you wished to be identified, to make your own fortune, stands in stark contrast to the supermarket of permanent labels, each laden with differential power and status, to which the Dene have had to adjust.

For the Dene, what is important is a person's relationship to the animals and to the land. In a statement such as "Jean Marie likes to trap marten, he really knows how to trap marten, that's why he goes up Anderson River way," it is Jean Marie's skill and pleasure in marten trapping, as well as his knowledge of the Anderson River country, not his affiliation to a particular group of people who might constitute a "band" in an administrative sense, that identifies him as a person "from" the Anderson River country.

Citizenship

Through the treaties, the Dene were placed in a legal relationship with the Canadian government. These destitute nomads had agreed "to conduct and behave themselves as good loyal subjects of His Majesty the King" (Fumoleau, 1976, p. 168). As "treaty

Indians," the Dene assumed special legal status, namely *status* Indians, as defined by the Indian Act of 1876.

The Indian Act of 1876 continued the British tradition established under colonial law, reified in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, and further entrenched in the British North America Act of 1867. The Crown wished to retain its somewhat dubious role as protector of the Indians. In an effort to protect native peoples from the potential negative actions of provincial and local governments, as well as those of the white frontiersmen not known for their sensitivity and generosity to the native peoples, the British North America Act (1867) had designated legislative jurisdiction for Indians and their lands as a responsibility of the new Canadian parliament (Ponting & Gibbins, 1980). All of the legislation and policy objectives pertaining to Indians were eventually consolidated into one piece of legislation, the Indian Act (1876). Later significantly amended in 1951, this statute has served as the central pillar of Indian/non-Indian relations for the past century (Ponting & Gibbins, 1980).

In spite of numerous amendments (most recently to remove the discriminatory clause relieving Indian women who marry non-Indians of their Indian status), the original intent of the Indian Act has remained intact. The Indian Act defines the social organization of Indian communities, that is, what constitutes a "band," as well as who shall govern those communities (i.e., the chiefs and counsellors), how they shall be elected, and the limitations on their authority (i.e., sovereignty). Grounded in a social policy dedicated to protection of aboriginal people (from themselves and from others) and the civilization of aboriginal people (i.e., their assimilation into the dominant society), the Indian Act has indirectly enabled the Canadian government to infiltrate virtually every aspect of Indian life. Most pointedly, the Act defines who is and who is not an Indian. This legislative power, which ultimately determines what constitutes community and family membership, has had a powerful and enduring influence on aboriginal people, excluding many people from Indian status and dividing their communities both physically and psychologically.¹⁷ Dr. Munro,

former assistant deputy minister of the Indian Affairs branch, describes the scope of this document:

The Indian Act is a Lands Act. It is a Municipal Act, an Education Act, and a Societies Act. It is primarily social legislation, but it has very broad scope; there are provisions about liquor, agriculture and mining as well as Indian lands, band membership and so forth. It has elements that are embodied in perhaps two dozen different acts of any of the provinces and overrides some federal legislation in some respects. . . . It has the force of the Criminal Code and the impact of a constitution on those people and communities that come within its purview. (cited in Ponting & Gibbins, 1980, pp. 8-9)

While the treaties took their land, it was the Indian Act which placed Canadian Indians under the legal jurisdiction and subsequent administrative control of whites. The Indians and their lands, as defined by the Indian Act, have been administered by a federal bureaucracy since the first Indian Affairs Branch was established at Confederation, and the subsequent growth of Indian Affairs' monolithic bureaucracy is legendary.¹⁸ The Indian Act established this ever increasing platoon of bureaucrats to be a defender of aboriginal people's interests. The bureaucracy dominated the life of aboriginal people and reached into their every home, as it gradually assumed responsibility for education, health care, housing, and much later for recreation, community and economic development. This bureaucracy and its early representatives, the Indian agents, were charged with implementing government policy, the cornerstone of which was assimilation. Officials believed their actions served the best interests of the aboriginal peoples, as well as the more pressing needs of Canadian society as a whole, namely economic growth and expansion through resource extraction and industrial development. Brody (1981) writes:

Moreover, the bureaucrats repeatedly sought to ensure that white men's dreams of freedom, wealth, and unlimited expansion should not be disturbed by Indians. They could often do their work in good conscience: bureaucrats, by and large, believed that Indians would prosper if their lands and resources were under the developmental aegis of the white man and his economic devices. The stereotype of the Indian as a person without a viable way of life was helpful, as usual. (p. 70)

Indian objections to development were taken to mean that they did not understand what was good for them, or that they had not understood the terms of the treaty.

The treaties giveth and the treaties taketh away. Most directly, Treaties 8 and 11 enabled the biggest land grab in Canadian history, opening up nearly one half million square miles of land, in the Northwest Territories alone, for settlement and resource development. This land was exchanged for promises of reserves that the Dene did not want and promises of freedom to hunt and trap that were never honoured. Moreover, the treaties imposed a foreign system of leadership and governance on the Dene. The Dene leaders filled positions which were impotent. Their own social traditions limited their right to speak or act on behalf of the *polis*, while treaties and legislation very narrowly defined their leadership role. The Dene leaders stood by powerless as the emerging government bureaucracy imposed a foreign process of governance.

Law and Order

Traditionally, the northern Dene have above all else been hunting societies. Following a yearly cycle, their hunting activities have varied somewhat from season to season. The people traditionally travelled in small family-based groups to various locations in various seasons, making maximum use of minimum resources. A group might hunt moose in one area one fall, and then not return to that particular area for a number of years. The Dene trapping activities, like their hunting, were patterned and thoughtful. The people's ability to survive and thrive in the boreal forest depended on their adaptability and mobility. Although there are numerous Dene language and cultural groups in the north, such as Dogrib, Loucheux, Hare, Slave, Chipewyan and Beaver, with many differences among them, they share a "readiness to adapt to new environments, to use different resources, and to seize new technological advantages" (Brody, 1981, p. 86). Rather than retaining the "old ways," Dene hunters shifted first from bone and rock to steel and iron, then from the bow and spear to the rifle, from willow and bark to twill and twine fish nets, from pack dogs and toboggans to the snowmobile. They have been quick to endorse technology

which has increased their freedom and ease of movement on the land, and consequently their harvest. Mobility on the land has been the key to the Dene people's effective use of resources.¹⁹ Unencumbered by the chattels of more materialistic and sedentary societies, the Dene hunters have been free to travel where the fish and game are. A brief description of the seasonal round provides some insight into the people's central preoccupation with hunting and fishing, and later trapping.

The Seasonal Round

The moose run in the autumn, but the Dene hunt them all year around. A moose is a bonanza of sorts; a single animal may bring a ton of dressed meat and several square feet of hide for tanning. Regardless of who made the kill, moose meat is distributed among the hunters, who then divide their share with members of the community. None who ask for meat ought to be refused. As well as red meat, which is the preferred staple in the Dene diet, the moose offers delicacies such as the head, the nose, the large intestine and other offal. The hunter has the option of keeping some such choice foods or offering them as a gift to someone special. For example, in Fort Good Hope, only elders are to eat the rare treat of a moose fetus.

Each fall on their migration from their calving grounds in the barren lands, the caribou pass through the Dene homelands providing the People with meat rich from the fat of summer grazing, as well as with hides for clothing and moccasins. While the moose is a solitary and intelligent animal, requiring a great deal of luck and skill to kill, the caribou travel in herds, like the buffalo, and also like the buffalo can be killed in large numbers.²⁰ Sometimes the caribou alter their migration routes, leaving the people hungry for red meat and without a winter supply of dry meat.²¹

In the deepest, darkest, coldest months of midwinter, the big game animals become elusive. When it is so cold trees snap and groan, the people say the animals "stop moving." Noise carries over great distances in the cold, making the hunter's task of closing in on his quarry next to impossible. At these times and others, the people sought

the hare and the fish, not always more reliable food sources. The tender white meat of the snowshoe hare has continued to be a food staple into modern times, while the soft warmth of rabbit skins has traditionally been used for blankets by all Dene and for clothing by the Hare people in particular.

Sometimes even the principal support of the rabbit failed, as the cyclically fluctuating hare population reached a low point every 7 to 10 years (Savishinsky & Hara, 1981). At these times, the people's snares would hang empty over the deserted rabbit trails.

Traditionally people wintered at the fish lakes and their tributary creeks to harvest the whitefish (round, humpback and broad whitefish), suckers (longnose suckers), loche (burbot or ling cod), lake trout, conny (inconnu), herring and greyling (Gillespie, 1981).²²

Primarily in the spring, when the ice on the lakes and rivers begins to melt, the People have hunted the beaver and the muskrat. Originally trapped, and now shot with a .22 calibre rifle, these two rodents provide fur for market, as well as a source of rich meat. Beaver tails are roasted on open fires, the burnt scaling removed and the rich flesh inside consumed as a delicacy.

Perhaps tiring of grouse, the ptarmigan, spruce hen and sharp-tail grouse, the People anxiously await the return of the ducks and geese each spring, the birds' sleek feathers hiding the rich layer of fat built up from their winter feeding in southern grain fields. For a people accustomed to a low carbohydrate diet, as well as to a climate and lifestyle requiring high levels of energy, fat and grease are much sought after. Praising the richness of the meat was, and is, the highest possible compliment one could pay to a Dene meal. "My! Those ducks were fat," or "Those caribou ribs are really fat," or "Whitefish from Wool Bay are especially fat" are examples of comments one might hear.

Summertime brings respite from long, demanding northern winters: traditionally, and to some extent currently, it is holiday time in the boreal forest. But, the summertime is not without its difficulties. The bush is infested not only with blood-thirsty insects, but the feared *rare?i* (literally 'he hides'). In the wintertime these unsocialized, forest-dwelling

bush-creatures are believed to "hibernate." But come spring and summer they lurk in the bush, awaiting opportunities to steal unwary women and children.²³ Wide, exposed riverbanks and breezy lakeshores offer respite from such demons of the bush, as well as plenty of fat fish and the occasional moose also seeking refuge from his insect tormentors. People gather in fish camps, preparing fish for the coming winter, visiting, and awaiting the time of year when the living will not be so easy.

Before the arrival of the Others, conserving natural resources was not legislated; it was a way of life for the Dene. Their conservation practices were, and continue to be, based on "freedom of access, flexible use, and rotational conservation" (Brody, 1981, p. 86). In short, these practices were based on the law of the land. With the advent of the fur trade, the Dene incorporated trapping into their yearly round and traditional patterns of hunting and "system" of conservation. Winter camps were located where a trapline would be the most productive, but also where there would be meat and fish. No hunter or trapper "owned" a particular area; rather, all were free to travel, hunt, trap and fish where they wished. The decision as to where to go on any particular occasion, be it trapping for several months or a weekend hunting trip, was (and continues to be) a combination of intuition (of how productive the area might be), relationships (with others who may be in that area), and knowledge (of the land and animals in the area). This system of checks and balances enabled the people to hunt and trap successfully for many generations. But that was all to change.

Trappers and Traplines

In the 1920s and 1930s white trappers came north in droves. The North was to the 20th century what the West had been in an earlier time. Restless and hungry southerners, many of them immigrants, came north seeking their fortunes in a land of new opportunity. This was a place where last names did not matter, where people were judged on the basis of their actions, not their past. The "outside" world, drunk with the prosperity of the 20s, demanded the luxury of fur, such as mink and fox stoles, for adornment. Rising demand

brought rising fur prices, which touched the dreams of whites coming north like Midas, turning fur into gold. Equipped with steel traps the Dene could not afford, bringing a cheap southern grub stake, and unencumbered by a family to hunt for, white trappers took up their new-found occupation with a dangerous singularity of purpose. For two decades, the white trappers extracted the maximum number of furs possible, competing directly with the Dene for an ever-diminishing supply of fur and game.

These hundreds of white trappers came primarily from Western European cultures, where the social, institutional and cultural practices reified private property, individual ownership, and accumulation of wealth, as well as the virtues of hard work and maximizing profit. Their traplines, the stretch of land where traps are set, were like farms for these men. The trapline was like private property, a place where the trapper had exclusive rights to harvest furs (Brody, 1981). This was a radical departure from the Dene system of freedom of access and rotational conservation which enabled them to flow with the seasons and with the animals.

These differences in ecological and economic philosophy did not go entirely unnoticed by the white writers of the time. Chick Ferguson was an American trapper who came to the Fort Providence area in 1927 and remained for nearly 20 years before returning to the south as a writer and photographer. He and his wife had eight cabins on their 800 trap line. Compared to the 30 or 40 traps the average Dene had, such numbers enabled Ferguson to consistently sell the most fur in the district. Ferguson's interpretation of the Dene actions and motives reflects the intensity of the negative tension between the whites and Dene:

The northern Indian is a wanton slaughterer, anything but a conservationist . . . the Indians, and certain whites with bread and butter, wail that it is the white trappers who are responsible for the dwindling game and fur supply.

It is not the white trappers! There are only a few hundred of us in the entire million and a quarter square miles of the Northwest Territories, and it isn't we who are responsible. On the contrary,

the blame lies squarely with the Indian. It is he who boasts of wiping out a whole brood of young ducks with a single blast from his shotgun. It is he who cannot resist the temptation to shoot whatever animal or bird crosses his path so long as he has a round of ammunition. It is he who leaves traps and snares set during the closed season. It is he who wipes out the last beaver on a creek and last marten in the foothills. I know what I am talking about, for I have seen him do it. (cited in Fumoleau, 1976, pp. 241)

Others were more generous in their assessment. Just prior to the onset of the WWII, Ralph Parsons, Fur Trade Commissioner for the Hudson's Bay Company, remarked in an article to the Canadian Press:

Very few white people, taking up trapping as an occupation, give any thought to conservation. The great majority take up trapping in the same way as they would take up any occupation--to obtain the largest possible return in the shortest possible time. . . .

The Indian may be lazy, improvident and shiftless, but, insofar as the conservation of the wild life is concerned, these failings may be almost regarded as virtues. Hunting is the only occupation for which the majority of Indians are adapted, but, whereas the "White" trapper will go into a territory and not be satisfied until he has cleaned it out, the Indian will only take what he requires to see him through from day to day. . . . The Indian is unwittingly a good conservationist. When fur is plentiful, he will probably take all he needs to buy his requirements. When they are scarce, he very soon becomes discouraged and does not consider it worthwhile to trap. (cited in Fumoleau, 1976, pp. 239)

Thus, for Parsons, it was an unusual twist of fate that the spiritual-cum-economic law of hard work and thrift bringing maximum profit simply did not work in harvesting wildlife. He (mis)interpreted the positive results of the Dene approach to trapping as not being the outcome of thoughtful actions arising from a spiritual interconnectedness between human beings, the land and the wildlife, but as the fortuitous consequences of habitual adherence to particular cultural traits which in all other instances were unacceptable to whites.

Closed Season: Protection for Whom?

The tension between whites and the Dene was not resolved by government efforts to legislate change. The over-hunting and over-trapping which followed in the wake of the thrust of the new frontier throughout western and northern Canada precipitated the passing of a series of laws to protect game and wildlife. Such laws provided the first frontal attack upon the northern Dene way of life. First the buffalo and certain migratory birds, then later the beaver, as well as other fur-bearing animals and ungulates, were brought under the protection of a series of laws and government policies which established "closed season" on specific species. The establishment of closed seasons brought great hardship to the Dene, and deepened their resentment against the whites and their laws. The laws and regulations restricted the Dene people's way of life and denied them the freedom to hunt and trap as they had always done.

These laws in and of themselves were a direct violation of the Dene people's right to a way of life guaranteed in Treaties 8 and 11. The enforcement of these laws had direct consequences on the day-to-day life of the people. Besides no longer being able to travel where they wished, to hunt what they needed, and to trap as they saw best, now their lives came under the control of a plethora of laws and policies administered by a growing army of government officials, Indian agents, members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (R.C.M.P.), and territorial officials. No longer were the bureaucrats simply providing assistance to the Dene in their time of need (rations, treaty payments and annuities); now these people had the power to restrict and control the actions of the Dene people.²⁴ As Brody (1981) notes, both the laws themselves and the manner of their enforcement demonstrated "persistent and ruthless disregard for Indians' right to maintain the economic life" guaranteed in Treaties 8 and 11 (p. 102).

The Dene had understood that their right to hunt and trap freely throughout their land was guaranteed by the signing of the treaties. On the other hand, the federal government acted as if the intent of the treaties was to protect the Dene people's ability to hunt and trap

only on established reserves. The federal government established an appointed council to rule what is now the Northwest Territories. Game management--implementing territorial game policy within the guidelines of federal legislation--was one of the first responsibilities transferred from the federal government to the nascent territorial administration. Reluctant to enforce the reserve system, yet anxious to provide some minimum amount of protection to the Dene and the wildlife, the newly established territorial government administration unilaterally established three game preserves in 1923.²⁵ Preserves for the game, rather than reserves for the Dene, was the lesser of two evils.

These game preserves may have been literally few and far between, but to the Dene they appeared to be better than nothing. The Dene of Fort Good Hope requested a game preserve on February 7th, 1928. Other bands continually requested that game preserves be established in their areas, but for the most part all such requests were firmly denied. The government did not agree to set aside a "group trapping area"--land set aside for the exclusive hunting and trapping of the people of Fort Good Hope--until after the Berger Inquiry (J. Barnaby, personal communication, October 31, 1988). The territorial government, unlike its federal counterpart which had direct legislative responsibility for the well-being of the Dene, was firmly committed to ensuring the quality of life for white residents and to nurturing the nascent mining and hydrocarbon industries. Establishing land for the exclusive use of the Dene was not in their interests.

Soon, the Northwest Territorial Council--still a federally appointed body residing in Ottawa--would no longer be confined to implementing game management policy. By 1948, the federal government had given the Council the power to enact game legislation laws. In keeping with the territorial council's commitment to upholding the rights of its white citizenry and to promoting resource development, and their concomitant disregard for the Dene people's freedom to hunt and trap as guaranteed in the treaties, they used their new legislative power to abolish the existing game preserves. By 1956, they had abolished all the game preserves (T. Andrews, personal communication, October 18, 1988).

Freedom Lost

Treaties 8 and 11 had supposedly enshrined Dene rights to hunt and trap freely in their homelands. Any attempt to confine or restrict Dene mobility and hunting was a violation of their rights. By 1939, the Game Branch of the Territorial Council administration had passed legislation which limited trapping to long-term northern residents and aboriginal people. But this action was akin to establishing an ecological preserve after the last species was extinct; what little fur was left after two decades of fierce competition and over-trapping had plummeted in value. White trappers turned to prospecting, while the Dene turned to the land and picked up the pieces.

The various legislative restrictions on hunting and trapping which were brought in over the years greatly reduced Dene freedom. No longer able to hunt and fish as they had always done, the Dene were now imprisoned by a new a set of laws and a new administration which governed their economy and way of life. Though in the early days such laws were often ignored, enforcement of the law was at the whim of the Indian Agent and R.C.M.P. officer, giving bureaucrats immense power over Dene lives. The bureaucrats had not only legislative power, but the power of policy and the power to implement it.

The deep-seated tension between the Dene and the Others--the unsettling effect of settlement, upon the Dene, which speaks so loudly in the Berger texts---has its roots in this period in northern history. It was a time which brought white intrusion into Dene land, flagrant disrespect for the Dene right to maintain a way of life guaranteed in the treaties, and the incipient bureaucratization of their lives. For modern Dene, the fight to continue a life on the land has taken on special meaning. Ironically, the Dene people's success in stopping the pipeline through the Mackenzie Valley led to the oil companies suggesting an overland route through the Yukon and northeast British Columbia. Although speaking of the Beaver, a more southern Dene people who were to be directly affected by the "Alaska Pipeline," Brody's (1981) insights speak about the northern Dene as well:

For some individuals the fight in defence of a trapline is a fight for the possibility of making money from furs. For everyone, active trapper or not, it has become the struggle for the right to be an Indian. (p. 99)

Footnotes

³Some Dene people believe that in the beginning, Raven and Wolf made the Earth (Asch, 1981; Nelson, 1983). For others, the origin of Creation is not clearly delineated. Whatever their traditional beliefs, many of the People are convinced that the truth of their origins has eluded academics. Most pre-historians believe the aboriginal peoples of North America originated in homelands in northeastern Asia. Archaeological evidence suggests the earliest of these adventurers travelled across a temporary land bridge which spanned the Bering Strait. Hunters that they were, these people may have been following game along the new openings provided by the receding ice caps of the last ice age. There are numerous and conflicting theories about how the population spread into the new land, but the one thing on which the prehistorians do agree was that they came. *When* is also a matter of controversy. Early guesses suggested 10,000 years ago, while more recent archaeological evidence has pushed the date back to 40,000 years, and one pre-historian has boldly suggested 100,000 years ago (Brody, 1981).

⁴Linguists believe such phonetic similarity between words whose authors are separated by barriers both political and geographical to be a clue to the close ancestral origins of the People. Krauss (1980) suggests that up until 2,000 to 2,500 years ago the people, living somewhere near eastern Alaska and northwestern Canada, may have spoken a single language, which he has called "Proto-Athabaskan" His evidence is derived from the percentage of phonetic similarity between any two languages on a list of one hundred cognates. As languages change with time, greater linguistic diversity is a clue to greater longevity in a particular geographical location, while greater linguistic homogeneity tends to suggest more recent migration and residence in a particular area. It is on the basis of linguistic as well as cultural similarity that linguists and ethnologists have labelled the People as the "Athapaskans."

⁵I offer two suggestions as to the contradiction in Mackenzie's report of the lack of big game, and the Hare people's current reliance upon moose and caribou as the staples in their diet. First of all, the Hare may have been driven as far north as their present location due to the general northward push of tribes resulting from the fur trade. Secondly, the moose may have been pushed north by the encroachment of civilization in its more southern territory.

⁶Leadership among the northern Athapaskans has prompted a great deal of scholarship. My comments have drawn upon a number of sources (Bean, 1987; Fumoleau, 1976; Hara, 1980; Helm, 1961; MacNeish, 1956).

⁷ As following chapters will illustrate, much of this description of the traditional Dene learning holds true in modern times, as well.

⁸For example, the Dene say that during the caribou migration in the fall, one must never shoot the young bulls which are the first to arrive. These caribou are the "leaders," who "know the way." The Dene believe that if the "leaders" are killed, the following autumn the herd will be lost, unable to find their way back from their calving grounds to their winter feeding areas.

⁹To call these talks "negotiations" is facetious. Rather they were very much a "take-it-or-leave-it" proposition (Ponting & Gibbins, 1980) and that is why those close to the Dene people, such as the missionaries, encouraged the Dene to sign: they believed there was no recourse (Fumoleau, 1976).

¹⁰Yamozha is the Dogrib name for this particular legendary hero. He has other names in other Dene languages. His name in Dogrib roughly translates as "around the horizon," referring to his walk all around the Dene homeland.

¹¹The Mackenzie River was so named after Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the first white man to travel on the Great River. It has been said that Sir Alexander Mackenzie was like Christopher Columbus in that he did not know where he was going and when he returned he did not know where he had been.

¹²The Dene consider the beavers' acute intelligence, aided by a powerful sense of smell, to make them an able foe and very difficult to hunt (Hara, 1980).

¹³Ponting and Gibbins (1980) state "a band. . . is a political-administrative unit created by the federal government" (p. xv).

¹⁴Although Hara (1980) was writing based on her observations in 1961-62, her assessment appears to be accurate for historical purposes. Also, my personal experiences suggest that these practices are current in more recent times, with a couple of exceptions. First of all, the number of persons who live in town and depend primarily on wages for their subsistence are the majority. However, most of those people still depend upon the bush for much of their food and firewood. Secondly, as the Dene people have assumed increasingly greater degrees of administrative control over federal (i.e. band funds) and territorial monies for municipal services, the notion of Fort Good Hope as a separate "band" has taken on a broader, and I would suggest more significant, meaning than it had in the early 1960s and perhaps even into the 1970s.

¹⁵Peter Mountain, an old man, when I lived in Good Hope, was considered *Shitá Got'ine* although he had not lived in the Mountains for many years.

¹⁶This chapter is for the most part silent on questions of gender differences in the traditions, habits and social practices of the Dene. My silence reflects partly a void in the literature upon which I drew. Moreover, the stage which is being set in this chapter, as well as the next, provide a backdrop to the themes highlighted in the interpretation of the four Dene testimonies to follow. As gender was not one of the

themes touched on by these players in the Berger Inquiry drama, an elaboration of this important tension has been postponed for a future script.

¹⁷The ramifications of this issue became particularly critical in the north where Dene people, regardless of legal status and blood lines, intermarried, lived and worked side by side. As I have already stated, being Dene is, and was, a function of how one lived, not who one was. Once they had signed the treaty, the government dictated that Métis men could not be chief, although they lived with the Dene as Dene (Fumoleau, 1976). Non-status Indians could drink but Indians could not. Non-status Indians could vote but Indians could not. Indians received rations from the Indian Agents but non-Status Indians did not. During the late 1960s and 1970s, when the Dene sought funding to organize politically, the membership categories defined by the Indian Act and maintained by the federal government sought to further divide the people. The struggle for the Dene and Métis to work collectively on issues of joint concern, which is almost every issue, continues today both in Dene communities and at the territorial level.

¹⁸ In 1978-79, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) employed 7300 people and had an annual budget of over \$1 billion dollars (which had increased to \$2 billion by 1984-85 according to The Canadian Encyclopedia). Over 55% of that \$1 billion dollars was allocated to the Indian and Inuit Affairs Programme, which is by far the largest DIAND programme (Ponting & Gibbins, 1980).

¹⁹Savishinsky (1974) claims that this very mobility is closely interrelated with social practices of communication and social stability. Northern town life is filled with stress: alcohol, poverty and factionalism. Social practices of non-confrontation, non-intervention and respect for personal autonomy have worked well for the small family hunting groups, and the infrequent larger gatherings. However, living in a settlement with large numbers of kin and other band members for most of the year is very stressful. For the Hare people, frequently going to the bush, leaving behind the tension-ridden town experience, reduces stress in their lives. In this way, being mobile continues to be an important part of being Dene. My observation was that younger Dene women with children have much less opportunity to leave the community to go to the bush. Men will organize hunting trips in which women are not typically included. Thus, this avenue of reducing stress is not open to younger Dene women to the extent that it is to men. By contrast, older Dene women would walk to the bush near town daily to fetch firewood, check their snares, and perhaps pick berries or collect rotten wood for smoking moosehide. It seemed very important for these old women to "be" in the bush.

²⁰While caribou were traditionally snared, speared or corralled, now they are primarily shot with rifles.

²¹Dry meat provides a valuable source of protein and vitamin C, without the weight and bulk of fresh meat. It is the northern equivalent of European sausage, an important means of preserving meat from warm temperatures and fly blow.

²² Some fish, such as loche, are caught on baited hooks which dangle through an ice hole. Other creek fish, such as herring and greyling, were caught in fish weirs (traps constructed of upright sticks) or gaffed with hooks on a long stick. Lake and river fish were harvested in nets made of woven willow bark. To retain suppleness, these nets were constructed and stored under water.

The availability of fishing technology and the need to feed the dog teams increased the Dene reliance on fish (Gillespie, 1981; Savishinsky & Hara, 1981). Along with the rifle, the gill net has been one of the most welcomed innovations of western technology in the north, so much so that when the treaties were signed, gill nets became part of the annuities (Fumoleau, 1976; Gillespie, 1981).

²³Hara (1980) claims that the *rare?i* reinforces the potentially dehumanizing consequences of prolonged solitude and the need for humans to "be" together.

²⁴Moreover, Fumoleau's (1976) sources suggest that these laws were not enforced fairly. The RCMP officers often favoured white trappers, who were often their friends (see pg. 242).

²⁵Fumoleau (1976) cites the land allocations were as follows:

The Yellowknife Preserve Area:	70,000 sq. mi.
The Slave River Preserve Area:	2,152 sq. mi.
The Peel River Preserve Area:	3,300 sq. mi.

The Loucheux people misinterpreted their preserve to be a "reserve" and were much distressed to discover they did not in fact own the land set aside in the Peel River Preserve (Fumoleau, 1976).

CHAPTER TWO

TEARS IN A CULTURAL FABRIC

As usual it was events far from the north which would dramatically alter the lives of people living in the north. On December 7, 1941, after the bombing of Pearl Harbour, the Americans entered the second World War, and both Canada and the United States feared a Japanese invasion of North America. Japanese submarines sinking supply ships on the Pacific spawned the need for an overland transportation corridor (Page, 1986). This led to the construction of an American highway and an American oil pipeline across Canadian soil. These two megaprojects, the Alaska Highway and the Canadian Oil Pipeline (CANOL), required the labour of thousands of American troops. Concerns about Canadian sovereignty aside, these two projects, the CANOL pipeline specifically, left their mark on the entire Canadian north and on the Mackenzie Valley Dene in particular.

Armed defence of the northwest required a secure oil supply, and the American Army agreed to finance the construction of a 4 inch pipeline from the known oil reserves in Norman Wells in the Northwest Territories to a yet-to-be-built refinery in Whitehorse, Yukon Territories. The project began in 1942, and in a two year period the American troops pushed a pipeline over the Richardson Mountains and down the Alaska Highway on the other side. The project, ill-conceived from the start, could not turn a profit and was shut down within 13 months of beginning its operation (Coates, 1985).

The CANOL pipeline foreshadowed the issues which were to plague the people of the Mackenzie Valley in the decades to come. First of all, the Dene, like all Canadians for that matter, were in no way consulted about the pipeline construction. The Canadian government assumed that what was good for the Americans was good for everyone. Second, the CANOL pipeline was a monument to government waste and insensitivity to the sensitive northern environment. Coates (1985) describes it thus:

The project left a visible and festering scar across the Canadian northwest. Contractors had displayed little concern for the environment in their race across the north. After construction, much of the

equipment was simply abandoned. Buildings were left to rot, machines, tools, and telephone wire to rust away. The right of way itself left a particularly graphic scar. (p. 179)

Thirdly, the presence of thousands of American troops contributed to the breakdown of family life in the Dene communities nearest to the bases. Three decades later, Eddie Cook, a resident of Fort Good Hope, reminded Justice Thomas Berger that history could repeat itself. Recollecting the Dene experience in Fort Smith, N.W.T. during WWII, Eddie says:

And regarding the influx of strangers, I know what consequences that occurred, took place when the U.S. Army came to the Northwest Territories, especially at Fort Smith. Many homes were broken, married husbands--wives leaving their husbands and so forth, and it so happens now at Fort Smith, you have not only browner people but even black people at Fort Smith. (Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 1975, C-Vol. 20; pp. 2035-39)

Finally, the CANOL project foreshadowed American influence on Canadian policy decisions regarding energy development. The Americans built a pipeline across Canadian soil to extract Canadian oil to meet American needs. Page (1986) comments:

Only slowly did Canadian officials realize the extent of the resource commitment involved; their embarrassment was great, for Canada possessed only very limited oil production to supply the domestic market. Warnings also came from the British government with regard to American attempts to get control of petroleum reserves in the Middle East. Norman Robertson, the Undersecretary of State for External Affairs, warned the Canadian cabinet that the Canol arrangement might be part of a wider U.S. policy to line up post-war petroleum reserves at the expense of others and that access to oil could become a serious international issue. (p. 17)

Norman Robertson was correct, of course. In the 1970s, during the "energy crisis" in which American domestic supplies of gas reached an all time low, the Canadian cabinet found itself again in a position of meeting commitments to transport American gas via an essentially American pipeline across Canadian soil (Bregha, 1979).

Wards of the State

As the pattern of the landscape was being redesigned, so unwittingly were the economy and the lifeways of the Dene. The post-depression and post-WWII years saw more federal government intervention into the Canadian economy as a whole, and into the northern economy in particular. Previous to this period, mining and oil companies financed their own operations, while the churches provided education with minimal federal assistance. Rations, primarily foodstuffs, were the only form of social assistance to the Dene, and then only to widows and the elderly. However, in 1944 the Family Allowance Act ensured that parents would receive monthly subsidies for each child. For most Canadians, these subsidies came in the form of monthly cheques. But not so for the Dene who received "payment in kind." "The money is given in 'food value' which means that the people may only buy food with these Allowances, which excludes cigarettes and alcoholic beverages," observed Hara (1980) while doing her fieldwork in Fort Good Hope in 1961-62. As Coates (1985) wryly remarks, "The government did not trust [the Dene] to spend the money wisely, or on their children" (p. 188).

The disbursement of such allowances was dependent upon child attendance at school, and although only gradually enforced, this stipulation was to have a dramatic effect on the Dene people's mobility on the land. Federal Day Schools had been built in the communities, and slowly they replaced the parochial residential schools. These schools offered the Alberta primary school curriculum to communities where previously, children wishing to attend school had been sent to mission residences in the larger communities of Aklavik, Fort Resolution, or Hay River. Teachers were to be of the faith of the community, and for many Dene communities that meant Roman Catholic.

The presence of the day schools underscored the Dene parents' dilemma. If they remained in the bush where they could hunt and trap, they would not receive the Family Allowance cheques, a secure although limited form of purchasing power. Ironically, when the Federal Day School was built in Fort Good Hope in 1949, fur prices had drastically

declined, thus increasing the people's dependence on government social programs such as Family Allowance (Hara, 1980). By 1959, Fort Good Hope Dene had a third option. They could send their children to the residential school in Inuvik for grades 1 through 6, or board their children in town. However, parents sending their children to the "hostels" did not receive a family allowance. At the time when regular day school attendance became a legitimate option, the people really had little other choice.

The rapid spread of disease into the northern communities increased the Dene dependence on the whites, their government and their medicine. In the post-war years, tuberculosis (TB) washed over the aboriginal peoples, and the government responded by removing infected persons from their home communities and confining them for lengthy periods of time in southern tuberculosis sanatoriums. In Fort Good Hope alone, over half of the adult population was sent to the sanatorium in Edmonton for many years of isolation and convalescence, the only known treatment for TB at that time (Hara, 1980). Four people never returned to Fort Good Hope. The lengthy absences, up to seven years, had deleterious effects on the people. Families were without hunters and mothers. In northern communities, primarily due to sexual division of labour and labour-intensive living conditions, it is very difficult for families to survive without both male and female adults. Temporarily orphaned, or semi-orphaned, children were adopted out. While one spouse was "outside" in the hospital, remaining spouses often found new, although perhaps temporary, mates and many out-of-marriage children were born from these relationships. Many men in particular returned from these lengthy convalescences disabled from surgery, often having lost a lung to TB, unable to be as active in the bush. Increasingly, the Dene began to rely on the more readily available government assistance programs of the 1950s, Disabled and Blind Person's Allowance, Old Age Pension, Old Age Security, as well as Family Allowance (Hara, 1980; Helm et al., 1975).

The experience of going "outside" to the hospital brought other changes as well. Many patients learned English, cut and styled their hair (long hair was thought to impede

recovery from illness), and generally had their view of the world broadened. In 1961, a former patient described his hospital experience:

In Edmonton, I met so many people, I know many white men, there were lots of pretty girls, too. I made friends with Eskimos and Cree Indians. I sang their songs. I learned many Eskimo and Cree song. Operation was hard. But I had good time. (quoted in Hara, 1980, p. 45)²⁶

Regardless of the available options and the choices individual Dene families made, the people as a whole were witnessing a rapid acceleration of the rate of change in their already dramatically altered way of life. Declining fur prices, matched with accelerating government programs, turned the tide. More Dene people began residing in the communities for longer periods of time, spending concomitantly less time in the bush.

Life in the communities also brought changes to the Dene and their lifeways. Leadership, social control, education and providing for the needy were no longer the responsibility of Dene hunters and families. By 1923, an R.C.M.P. post was established in Fort Good Hope (Savishinsky & Hara, 1981). Three years later, some Hare children began attending the Roman Catholic missions school in Aklavik where they learned the English language, as well the ways of the English. Indian Agents, and in their absence the R.C.M.P., dispatched relief rations, while a few decades later local teachers dispensed welfare. Rather than sharing equally according to traditional patterns, civil servants applied criteria established by government policy in determining need. The tension between Dene and non-Dene in Fort Good Hope increased. Hara (1980) writes:

The policeman as a representative of the Indian Affairs Branch has to decide to whom and when these relief goods are to be distributed. From the Indian's point of view, this is the area in which they can "talk to the police and ask for help." If the policeman refuses to give relief goods, the Indian applicant may say afterwards, "The police[man] is here in town to help people. But that damn police, he is just mean. He just likes to look for people making brew and put them in jail." (p. 47)²⁷

The purpose of most white residents in Fort Good Hope, or in any other Dene community, was to implement the policies of their particular bureaucracy, be it the church,

federal government or Hudson's Bay Company. However, it was the laws and policies which the Game Warden was to implement which had the most direct effect on the Dene and their traditional way of life. During her 1961-62 fieldwork, Hara (1980) recorded the people's feelings towards the Game Warden, one year after his responsibilities had been assumed by the R.C.M.P.. The people's direct quotes hint at the developing tension between the Dene and the government representatives who had assumed control over the only aspects of their lives with which the Dene felt confident, their life in the bush. Hara (1980) wrote:

In general, among the various white persons with whom the Hare have been in contact, the Game Warden is the most unwelcome one to the Indians because "he sets all the dates for shooting and trapping animals, cuts the number of beavers unreasonably low, and closes swans and cranes." In other words, 'The Game Warden bothers our bush too much.' (pp. 47-48)

Far to the south, Conservative leader John Diefenbaker would win the largest federal majority to that point in history, based on the rhetoric of his "Northern Vision." Prior to the reign of "the Dief," the federal government had "administered these vast territories of the North in an almost continuing state of absence of mind," stated Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier in an oft-quoted phrase (cited in Bean, 1987). During his stewardship of 1957-64, Diefenbaker's vision was enacted as a vast northern development policy which saw a tremendous influx of government capital for the development of a major infrastructure intended to pave the way for northern resource development. Alvin Hamilton, Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, was the chief architect of Diefenbaker's northern economic revival. The plan called for a massive road building campaign, funding for new railways and for northern scientific research. As Coates (1985) observes, Hamilton's perception of the north had a familiar ring. The north, Hamilton said:

represents a new world to conquer-[and] it is much more than that. It is like a great vault, holding in its recesses treasures to maintain and increase the material living standards which our countries take for granted. (cited in Coates, 1985, pp. 199)

The concrete results of the northern development policy provided a mixed blessing for the Dene. On the one hand, many Fort Good Hope Dene found seasonal employment, to offset the dropping fur prices. Good Hoppers found work in Norman Wells at the oil refinery, in the bush with the rapidly developing oil and mineral exploration industry, and in Fort Good Hope and nearby towns, building roads, airplane-landing strips, and housing and buildings for the proliferation of government administrators (Hara, 1980).

On the other hand, the post-war period saw the Dene's economic dependence upon the government dramatically increase. With the mechanization of hunting and trapping, as well as the incorporation of Western material goods into the life of the Dene, subsistence activities were becoming increasingly difficult to maintain, and hunters were becoming more dependent on the cash obtained from trapping and, in some instances, from seasonal employment. The major change was that the Dene could now appeal to outside bureaucrats, be they employees of the Hudson's Bay Company or the federal government (and to some extent the missionaries), for dispensation of justice, as well as for limited forms of financial and medical aid. The areas of their lives over which they had control and the opportunity to provide leadership were shrinking. The Dene were becoming resentful beggars in what was once their kingdom. The tension in the north almost became audible as the People of the "Metal Age" clashed with the people of the "Oil Age."

The "Terrified" Government Moves North

The Northwest Territories and its western cousin, the Yukon, have essentially remained "Canada's Colonies" (Coates, 1985). This is a dubious status which has been reflected in all federal government actions in the Canadian north. Not unlike the exploitative relationships between most imperial nations and their colonies in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the federal government's attitude towards the Canadian north has alternated between lusting after her riches in times of economic boom and fiscally abandoning her when it appeared she had little left to offer.

While never relinquishing its fiscal and constitutional control over the north, its people and its resources, the federal government has appointed a series of surrogate fathers to parent its northern wards in the best national interest. As of 1921, the federal government transferred the administration of the Mackenzie District to the newly formed territorial government, known as the Northwest Territories and Yukon Branch (Fumoleau, 1976). Although the first Commissioner of the Northwest Territories was appointed in 1905, he was virtually unknown to northerners. It was not until 1920, when W. W. Cory took over the command, that things changed slightly. Commissioner Cory appointed a four man council, and the first sitting of the Territorial council took place in Ottawa on April 28, 1921. The Council flexed their new muscles and immediately enacted legislation opening up the north for development (Fumoleau, 1976). Moreover, the Council made the first instalment on what was to become a massive territorial bureaucracy. It established a mining recording office in Fort Smith. The Territorial Government was born!

The Territorial Council and its administration was simply an arm of the federal government, and as such it was an Ottawa-centred government. The Council, which became a combination of elected and appointed representatives, met and made decisions regarding the north from Ottawa. It was not until 1951 that the Territorial Council even began sitting in the Northwest Territories once per year (Coates, 1985). Only when the rest of Canada was celebrating its centennial birthday party would the Territorial Government be permanently located in Yellowknife, the new capital of the Northwest Territories. Not until 1974 was the Territorial Council fully elected, and even then the Commissioner, a federally appointed civil servant, retained veto powers over the Council.

However, prior to World War II, the territorial administration had little power and influence in the northern territories. In fact, it was servants of the federal government, primarily the R.C.M.P. and Indian Agents, who carried out policy and implemented programs, minimal though they were. Even the most powerful territorial officials were appointees of the federal government. Thus, the people of the Northwest Territories were

ruled by a distant bureaucracy. Because it was not elected, the territorial council and its administration was not responsible to its northern citizenry, regardless of race. However, the Dene were additionally disadvantaged until after 1961 because under the Indian Act they were not citizens of Canada and were not entitled to vote in any election. Thus, the federal government was not answerable to the Dene in even the most theoretical terms.

The tides were to change once again. The increasing white population of the Northwest Territories would not stand for the lack of representative government, nor for the concomitant lack of accessible government services. The Carrothers Commission recommended that the Territorial Council and its government, which had been located in Ottawa up until this point, be moved to the Northwest Territories. In 1967, under the stewardship of the Commissioner, a single federally appointed civil servant who was responsible to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Territorial Government finally moved north, setting up "headquarters" in Yellowknife, the new territorial capital. The Commissioner was advised by the eight person Territorial Council, which was still not fully elected (Bean, 1987; Coates, 1985).

This development brought a rapid increase in the level of government services. Now government programs in the areas of education, housing, game management and local government would be administered by bureaucrats in Yellowknife, and delivered by civil servants working in the "regions" and the "settlements." The impacts of the shift of the bureaucracy north were numerous and far-reaching. A case in point was the implementation of the territorial government's model of what constituted an ideal form of municipal government, and the stages of growth through which communities were to proceed to reach this ideal.

Beyond Good Hope

One of the major political thrusts of the new government was the development of "local government." In fact, there was a government department entitled just that. It was the stated purpose of the Department of Local Government to see that each Northwest

Territories community evolved to a form of representative, municipal self-government. "As settlement councils increased in sophistication, they would move from being 'Unorganized' through to Settlement, Hamlet and finally Village, Town and City status," writes Bean (1987), a former local government officer who was working in Aklavik at the time of the Berger Inquiry.

The manner of implementation, as well as the form of local government promoted by the Territorial Government, was contradictory to its purposes and militated against political development and evolution in Dene communities (Bean, 1987). The forms of self-government legitimized by the Territorial Council did not include the consensus decision-making process traditionally used in Dene communities; in fact, it militated against it. Robert's Rules and other parliamentary procedures squeezed out use of Dene languages at the Settlement Council meetings, as there are, for example, no words for "point of order" in the Dene languages. The public was not encouraged to attend the Council meetings, and public participation was controlled by a Chairman. Such processes undermined traditional decision-making, where the community as a whole would discuss each issue fully and openly, seeking community consensus before proceeding with any action, particularly one which would affect the community as a whole. The government established a training program for settlement secretaries, offering one of the few opportunities for young, educated Dene to find work in their home communities.

Bean (1987) argues that the local government and settlement secretary system eroded traditional values in the communities and fostered the development of a small group of more powerful decision-makers in each community. The consequences were profound:

These people began to see themselves as having special responsibilities for making decisions on behalf of and for other residents. While the Councils administratively had only the powers to advise government officials, they did generate their own legitimacy within each community and thereby further stratified the local native population. In this case, the stratification involved *individuals* occupying *positions* of power. It did not involve entire families, nor was it vested within the

individual him or herself, but rather, within the position occupied by the individual for the term of office. (p. 60)

At the same time as the Territorial Government was moving north, the federal government under Pierre Elliott Trudeau was designing a drastically new Indian policy. Trudeau's liberalism could not abide the special status afforded Canadian Indians under the Indian Act, nor the special programs designated for Indians through the Department of Indian Affairs (Page, 1986). In 1969, his government tabled what has become known as The White Paper. In effect, the paper proposed that the Department of Indian Affairs should eventually be abolished and that Indians, like other Canadian citizens, should receive services such as education, health and welfare from their respective provincial governments. Southern Indians, who were already somewhat politically organized, saw the document as a clear violation of their treaty rights and quickly sought to quash the proposal. However, in the Canadian north, where there was no such organized political opposition, much of the White Paper policy was implemented. The Territorial Government assumed responsibility for services to aboriginal peoples which in other regions of Canada were administered by the federal Department of Indian Affairs, services such as education, social services, health and housing.

The birth and growth of the Territorial Government saw a concomitant decline in the influence of the Department of Indian Affairs and in special rights for the Dene in the north. The political and cultural philosophy of the new Territorial Government was, "We are all northerners." This belief was symbolized in an icon of three parka-clad figures holding hands in a circle: a Dene (then called Indian), an Inuit (then called an Eskimo) and a white (now called an "Other"), all holding hands in a circle. Under the philosophy and policy of the new Territorial Government, the Dene received government assistance because they were indigent, not because they were indigenous.

The arrival of the Territorial Government and its new policies continued the modification of traditional Dene leadership. The authority of the Chief and Band Council

system of government had been initiated by the fur trade, established by the treaties, formalized by the Indian Act and ritualized by the annual ceremony of the paying and "taking" of treaty annuities. Chief and councillors met to make decisions about their community and took action to the extent to which they had the power or resources to do so. With the decline of the role of the Department of Indian Affairs in the north, there was no government body which the Chief and Council could petition for resources or action. The Chief and Band Council system, a form of governance instituted by the whites and adopted over time by the Dene, was now ignored as the new system of local government was implemented. The Chief and Councillors remained powerless, while the newly formed municipal governments were given limited power and resources. This created a social split in many Dene communities. Fort Good Hope is an excellent case in point.

In Fort Good Hope, it was the whites and Métis who were attracted to the Settlement Council, while a majority of the Treaty people were loyal to the Chief and Council. This division on the basis of legal status had its origins in the Indian Act. Both the non-status Dene and whites were legally excluded from Indian Affairs programs and from participating in the Chief and Band Council government. In addition, the Métis, because of their special historical role as interpreters for and employees of the fur trade, the R.C.M.P., and various other government agencies, were more oriented towards business, the wage economy and general economic and political "progress." For northern whites, participation in newly evolving forms of municipal governance was what they had expected from the new Territorial Council and its administration (Coates, 1985). Although a minority in each community, whites saw a form of municipal self-government evolving which both was meaningful to them and ensured their interests.

Meanwhile, the Dene were becoming increasingly politicized through their activities with the Dene Nation (formerly the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories), the newly formed political organization of the Mackenzie Valley Dene. Some people of Fort Good Hope, like Frank T'Seleie and George Barnaby, rejected the new Settlement Council

system, which they stated to be a form of colonization, and they proceeded to organize a boycott of the Settlement Council elections (Goddard, 1985). The community split as some people sided with the Chief and Band Council system, while others sought to work with the new form of government. This internal community conflict was in full force at the time of the Berger Inquiry, as it was to a lesser degree in other Dene communities. The Dene saw what had become traditional forms of Dene decision-making and leadership being eroded by Robert's Rules and by a limited form of colonial municipal government dished out in small doses by a foreign bureaucracy.

As the Territorial Government was expanding its mandate, the aboriginal people were becoming increasingly dependent upon government services. While in previous times the people lived on the land, coming to town to trade and for seasonal and religious celebrations, by the late 1960s the majority of the people maintained a permanent residence in the community and travelled to the bush from town. As more people spent more time in town, as opposed to the bush, they began to avail themselves increasingly of government social programs: housing, schools, and social assistance.

Savishinsky and Hara (1981) summarize the impact of these events on the daily lives of the Hare of Fort Good Hope:

The experience of schooling and the economic insecurity of a more urbanized existence [meant] people postponed marriages until their late teens and twenties. The decline of bush life diminished the amount of skill and competence that younger adults had for subsistence pursuits, so that although the Hare still proudly thought of the bush as a uniquely Indian world, where Whites, by contrast were ill at ease and incompetent, the cooperation, sharing, self-reliance, and involvement that once characterized native existence in the bush were becoming less and less a part of Hare reality. The older and more knowledgeable people in these traditional areas led a more secure life because of government old-age pensions. In a parallel process, the native mythology, folklore, and gambling games that they had preserved were suffering a comparable decline as radios, magazines, movies, card games, and drinking superseded them as leisure activities. The availability of Western health services also cut

into the influence and role of traditional medicine men as curers, just as the presence of the R.C.M.P. and White administrators undermined the power of the medicine men, good hunters, dreamers, "treaty" chiefs, and community public opinion as the people's main source of leadership and social control. (p. 323)

For the Dene, it appeared things were falling apart. The prospect of having the largest, the longest, the most expensive gas pipeline in history, "Canada's project of the century," built in their backyards was the proverbial last straw.

Finally Someone to Listen

In 1968, the biggest oil and gas field in North America was discovered in Prudhoe Bay off the north coast of Alaska. Even at the depressed energy prices of that decade, the 9.6 billion barrels of oil and 26 trillion cubic feet of natural gas were worth billions of dollars, if they could be transported to southern markets (Bregha, 1979). It was this need which prompted the Canadian government to promote the application of Canadian Arctic Gas Pipeline Ltd. (Arctic Gas) to build a 48 inch natural gas pipeline from Prudhoe Bay across the northern Yukon to the Mackenzie Delta, up the Mackenzie River Valley to the Alberta oil fields, and eventually to the American Midwest. This pipeline offered the Americans an energy transportation corridor (in 1972, Prime Minister Trudeau committed the Federal Government to building a Mackenzie Valley Highway which would provide at least the transportation infrastructure for the pipeline construction) to transport their oil to their midwestern markets. It offered Canadians the opportunity to pipe future Mackenzie Delta energy and existing Alberta supplies to the large American market. Again, southerners were captured by the image of the north as some kind of frozen treasure chest brimming with jewels and riches, simply waiting to be unlocked by those with vision and fortitude.

The Arctic Gas pipeline proposal raised concerns for various public interest groups, primarily environmental groups and the Dene. The pipeline would require the construction of a huge infrastructure such as "snow roads, wharfs, camps, stockpile sites, air-strips,

gravel mining operations" (Bregha, 1979, p. 44). It was feared that the environmental impact of the pipeline would be severe. The proposed pipeline was to pass through sensitive caribou-calving grounds, over the fragile arctic tundra and the nesting grounds of migratory waterfowl. It was not clear that there existed sufficient technical expertise to build a pipeline under uncertain and intemperate Arctic conditions. For example, the potential freezing and thawing of arctic permafrost challenged the engineers to devise a pipeline which would not heave and crack or burst. Furthermore, once one pipeline was built, the dyke would burst. Exploration in the Mackenzie Delta and surrounding areas, already frenetic, would intensify. Once the Mackenzie Valley corridor was open, an oil pipeline would be a natural extension to the proposed natural gas line. Additional feeder pipelines from the Delta and the areas east of Fort Good Hope were obvious extensions to the main line. For the Dene and the environmental groups, the pipeline proposal was a virtual Pandora's Box.

The Dene were concerned about how and in what way the development of this infrastructure would encroach on their daily lives and on their future. Federal encouragement had opened millions of acres of land in the Northwest Territories and Yukon for oil and mineral exploration (Coates, 1985). During the long summer nights of the 1960s and early 1970s, helicopters and small aircraft whirled from town to oil exploration camps and back again for 16 or 18 hours a day, hauling workers, equipment, 45 gallon barrels of oil and supplies. The Dene homeland was beginning to look like a chessboard from Alice's Looking Glass as seismic lines criss-crossed the boreal forest, following some geological pattern beneath the earth's surface, far from the comprehension of the Dene still living on the land. A few Dene people found jobs in this new flurry of activity, especially in the bush where their skills were most prized. However, many hunters and trappers found their traplines plundered, muskrats drowned from the shock of the seismic blasting, dead caribou with bales of wire wrapped around their antlers, and their land littered with the refuse of temporary exploration camps. If this was their

experience of the initial exploration activity, what would full-scale pipeline construction be like? What would a highway into their community really mean? What would it be like to have a camp of 800 men three miles from their town? What would clear-cut bulldozing of square miles of land for site preparation really mean? How would the animals and fish be affected? Would forest fires worsen? Would the pipeline break? These were the questions the Dene asked themselves, each other and later Justice Thomas Berger.

The Dene had always believed the land to be a constant, changing only with time and season. They did not believe the land to be theirs; it was immemorial. The concern of the Dene was that the land, this life-giving force, was imperiled by the actions of the Others. In order to protect this wondrous and timeless environment, the Dene were forced to adopt the European's language of land as property. While "land ownership" *per se* was not a traditional concept, the Dene believed strongly in their freedom to move about on the land as they wished and to harvest and manage the resources of the land as they saw fit. As oil companies competed with the Dene for use of the land, the Dene people's notion of "ownership" expanded to include control over actions which were taken on their traditional homelands. Fearful that all their land would soon either be "staked" or destroyed by the seismic activity, the Dene formally and legally declared their interest in the land and resources which appeared to be up for grabs in the pipeline debate. The Dene Chiefs, on behalf of the Treaty Indians of the Northwest Territories, filed a land caveat (a legal device to declare interest in land which is not necessarily owned by the interested party) with the Land Titles Division of the Government of Canada for the 450,000 square miles of the Mackenzie Valley (Page, 1986).

Unlike southern Canada, the Dene had not yet taken the reserve lands available to them under Treaties 8 and 11. In fact, in filing the caveat and in giving testimony to the subsequent court case, the Dene informed the court and the public of their own long-standing belief that their signatures on these treaties constituted a pact of peace, not a cessation of aboriginal rights. In September, 1973, after hearing testimony from witnesses

to the signing of Treaties 8 and 11, Justice Morrow of the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories found in favour of the Dene. He concluded, "That notwithstanding the language of the two Treaties, there is sufficient doubt on the facts that aboriginal title should be permitted to be put forward by the caveators" (cited in Page, 1986, p. 71). The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, fearful of the implications of such a decision for the policy of northern development, successfully appealed the ruling on behalf of the federal government. Now convinced of the federal government's opposition to the notion of aboriginal rights and to the settlement of land claims, the Dene were unsure of what further actions must be taken to protect their interest in the land.

The newly-elected minority Liberal government was anxious for quick approval of a Mackenzie Valley pipeline. Landing in a particularly cold winter, the Arab oil embargo had hit North Americans hard. Canadian and American government policy actively sought the rapid development of domestic energy supplies. However, the Morrow decision and other similar court cases in Canada made it clear that northern energy policy could not be separated from aboriginal rights (Page, 1986). With mounting public concern about the environment and aboriginal rights, and with New Democratic Party (NDP) pressure to shelve the pipeline, the Trudeau government opted for "the age-old Canadian device of appointing a commission of inquiry" (Page, 1986, p. 74) to address the application for the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline.

Who was Tom Berger?

To understand the Berger Inquiry, it is important to know something about Tom Berger, for he made the inquiry very much his own. Justice Thomas Berger, then a member of the British Columbia Supreme Court, may have seemed a particularly odd choice for the reigning Liberal government. Berger was a former NDP MLA, and leader of the British Columbia NDP. However, the choice of Berger was a strategic one. In his days as a defence lawyer, Berger built a reputation as a staunch defender of the underdog: prisoners sentenced as habitual criminals, people denied full benefits under Workman's

Compensation, striking unions, and aboriginal peoples making land claims (Swayze, 1987). His latter area of work took him to the Supreme Court of Canada to fight the historic case of the Nishga's claim to aboriginal rights. As a result, Berger was well respected by the aboriginal peoples; his choice suggested the issue of Dene claims to the land of the Mackenzie River Valley was being taken seriously.

What was the process?

Berger's mandate in heading the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry was to: inquire into and report on the terms and conditions for granting a pipeline right-of-way under two specific headings: the social, environmental, and economic impact regionally of the construction, operation, and subsequent abandonment of the proposed pipeline and any proposals to meet the specific environmental and social concerns set out in the Expanded Guidelines for Northern Pipelines. (Page, 1986, p. 93)

In other words, Berger was given a broad mandate, one which enabled him to examine the potential impact of the pipeline on the hunting and trapping societies of the north, as well as on the delicate, arctic ecology which sustains them.

Berger's appointment was announced on March 22, 1974, and by April he began a series of preliminary meetings in Ottawa and the north, which concluded in September. At these initial hearings, public interest groups such as the aboriginal peoples' organizations petitioned Berger to hold informal hearings in the smaller Dene communities in addition to the formal hearings in the north. Berger went further than that. He gave the groups almost one year to review the evidence before commencement of the hearings, and he funded them to do so (Page, 1986). It was with this money that the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories, later to become the Dene Nation, was able both to prepare their formal response to the pipeline, and to send representatives into the Dene communities to assist the local people in preparing their response.

Berger's flexibility in timing (despite tremendous government and industry pressure to push the proposal through) and generosity in funding were only some of the unique

characteristics of the Berger Inquiry. Another novel feature of the inquiry was Berger's decision to hold two distinct types of hearings: formal hearings in the larger centres, and informal hearings in communities to be affected by the pipeline (eventually that included 10 major cities in southern Canada as well). Perhaps most unique about this particular inquiry was the way Justice Berger managed the press coverage. Keenly aware of the possibility that the federal government could simply ignore the inquiry and quickly shelve his recommendations, Justice Berger sought to keep the hearings in the public eye. The Commission staff contacted radio, television, newspaper and even the National Film Board of Canada to ensure their coverage of the opening of the hearings. Page (1986) remarks, "In fact, no royal commission in Canadian history received such sustained media attention in spite of its remote location" (p. 100).

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation quickly became part of the hearings as Berger ensured there was daily coverage, both formal and informal, in six Dene languages. At the time of the Berger Inquiry, many Dene communities had either no or limited television broadcasting. Thus, it was primarily through this extensive daily radio coverage in their own languages that the Dene people were kept informed, and in turn informed the world, of the issues and events surrounding the most momentous occurrence in their history since the treaties. Eventually, it would be the words of the people which would ring through to the world. The people told stories of their lives, the good times and the bad, and within the texture of each of those stories was woven their deep reverence for their land and love for their way of life.

A full year after his appointment, Justice Thomas Berger finally opened the Inquiry before the glare of television lights in the Explorer Hotel of Yellowknife. After Berger's low-key opening comments, lawyers from southern cities described what the Inquiry was to be all about: counsel for the Inquiry, counsel for the two pipeline applicants, as well as for the aboriginal people's organizations (the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories, the Committee for Original People's Entitlement, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada)

and public interest groups such as Canadian Arctic Resources Committee. The first lawyer spoke on behalf of the Inquiry saying there would no other one like it in history. "It will be long," Ian Scott warned, "it will be detailed; it will be arduous. But we pledge that it will be open." The Bay Street lawyer for Arctic Gas argued that this pipeline, the biggest proposed project in the history of free enterprise, would be a boon to the currently fragile and essentially artificial northern economy. He offered what was to be the big consortium's major counter-argument to the notion of aboriginal land use. "The hard fact is," declared Pierre Genest, "that many northerners whose forebearers [sic] lived off the land do not want to go back to the traditional means of making a livelihood." The lawyers for the aboriginal peoples spoke for the people who would have to live with a pipeline. Glen Bell, on behalf of the Dene, reminded Berger that

It is in the communities of the Mackenzie Valley, Mr. Commissioner, that you will hear most clearly the voice of the people - people who are truly of the very land on which they live. The people know that through this inquiry they will be speaking to all Canadians, and they will speak from their hearts.²⁸

One month later, Justice Berger brought his inquiry to Aklavik, to the first of a long series of community hearings which would end just outside of Yellowknife in Detah in August of 1976. In that period of time, Berger would hear over 1000 witnesses, speaking in many different aboriginal languages. Most days of the hearings were very long, beginning in the early afternoon and stretching far into the late spring and summer evenings. Tired and inexperienced Dene interpreters sat throughout the lengthy hearing days, endlessly translating the testimony, capturing to the best of their ability the people's stories. An inquiry staff member, face muffled with a large mask feeding into a tape recorder, simultaneously recorded the testimony onto tape. Transcripts of all the hearings were transcribed and bound, becoming part of the public record. It was a voluminous record, thousands upon thousands of pages, 77 volumes of community hearings alone.

Spring was dawning upon the north when the hearings first opened in Aklavik. The days were long; the continuous darkness of winter was giving way to warm, sunny days and evenings of continuous twilight. Getting out onto the land for spring hunting, the annual quest for muskrat and beaver, was on everyone's heart and mind. The hearings opened in the school gymnasium, a rather foreign place for the community people. Justice Berger opened and set the tone with his low-key, unpretentious opening remarks. He assured everyone that he was there to hear what they had to say about the pipeline and how it would affect their lives.

I am here so that you can tell me what you think, and so that you can say what you want to say. I want you, the people who live here, who make the north your home, I want you to tell me what you would say to the Government of Canada if you could tell them what was on your minds.

If you wish to speak, simply speak from the table where you are; you can be seated; you can sit in your seat or you can stand up, however you find it most comfortable. I want to hear from anyone who wishes to speak -- native people, white people, young people, old people, and I want to tell you that we have lots of time. We will stay here today and tomorrow and the day after that, and we will stay for the weekend if there are still people who haven't been heard from when the weekend arrives. So I think that we can begin now. (Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 1975, C-Vol. 1; p. 2-3)

It was Lazarus Sittichinli, a Loucheux elder then in his nineties, who rose to speak:²⁹

I know all of this land, I know all the land of the Fort McPherson area the land from way back, and how the people live on it. I know this land from a long time ago and then we move here to Aklavik and I know how to make my living from this land. I know for a long time how to make a living off of this land, and we have always lived peaceful. But now the time has changed and I can see that.

Now I will talk to you about something. We have always made a living off this land of ours, and we didn't realize that the white people were going to be coming and working on our land until now. We didn't know that they were even

making all these trails until a few years ago, and we don't even know what it is all about. But we know now all that is happening and therefore there is a lot of talking going on.

We are very pleased with our land. We make our living off of our land, and if we don't say anything to the white man about our land, it appears to me it will all spoil.

When I was young I used to trap this land of ours and I hunted, and that's how I made my living. But now, when the white man is working upon our land a lot, I can see lots of changes happening.

A few years ago, when they first started making all the trails, I had a camp at Husky River and they had one about twelve miles from my camp. When I was at my camp they were making all these trails three miles away from my camp, and nobody told me what they were doing or why they were there, and I was just not informed as to what was happening on my own trap-line. I know that they are doing that all over the delta.

I know that they are working around the coast where there is lots of fishing in the summertime, and I used to get very good fish. But this summer I found a change in the fish. The fish, the trout, are not the same as they used to be. I can see that for the future, for my grandchildren, and the future for their children, I can see that everything is spoiling, and I don't like what I see. (Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 1975, C-Vol. 1; p.3-5)

In spite of Berger's assurances, initially the people of Aklavik were somewhat reluctant to speak. Eventually it was suggested that the meetings be moved to the local community hall where folks might be more comfortable. This was one of the many accommodations Justice Berger made to ensure that northerners were heard. Also while in Aklavik, Berger moved the inquiry--staff, recording equipment and all--into Donald Greenland's home because he was too sick to appear before the commission at the school

gymnasium. Through the interpreter, this Dene man shared with Justice Berger his concerns for the future. The Commissioner thanked Donald Greenland for his contribution and reiterated his dedication to listen carefully to each witness. For the next several months, Justice Berger listened as hearings went on well into the night. In many communities he danced the drum dance, the renewal of life and community. It was through actions such as these that Thomas Berger earned the respect and trust of the aboriginal people of the north. When he and his inquiry came to their communities, the people were ready to speak and he was ready to listen.

The Inquiry comes to Fort Good Hope

It was on a rainy, windy day in August, 1975 that the Berger Inquiry arrived in Fort Good Hope. "Good Hope," as it is affectionately called, is a sleepy little community where a long cluster of log homes clings to the banks of the Great River on the one side and to Jackfish Creek on the other. Interspersed with the people's homes are the Roman Catholic mission, the school, the Hudson's Bay store, the nursing station and the two-officer R.C.M.P. detachment. About 500 hundred people live in Good Hope, and many of them were on hand to hear Justice Berger's opening remarks.

Chief Frank T'Selelie was the first Good Hope Dene to speak. One of the new breed of young bilingual chiefs, Frank had been politicized recently through his activities with the Dene Nation. He spoke eloquently of the Dene people, and their deep desire to protect their land and their way of life.

It seems to me that the whole point in living is to become as human as possible. To learn to understand the world and to live in it. To be part of it. To learn to understand the animals, for they are our brothers and they have much to teach us. We are a part of this world.

We are like the river that flows and changes, yet is always the same. The river cannot flow too fast. It is a river and it will always be a river, for that is what it was meant to be. We are like the river, but we are not the river. We are

human. That is what we were meant to be We were meant to be ourselves. To be what is our nature to be. (Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 1975, C-Vol. 18; p.1777-1778)

Suddenly, and somewhat unexpectedly, Frank attacked Bob Blair, President of Foothills Pipeline who happened to be attending the Fort Good Hope hearings.

Mr. Blair, there is a life and death struggle going on between us, between you and I. Somehow in your carpeted boardrooms, in your panelled office, you are plotting to take away from me the very center of my existence. You are stealing my soul. Deep in the glass and concrete of your world you are stealing my soul, my spirit. By scheming to torture my land you are torturing me. By plotting to invade my land you are invading me. If you ever dig a trench through my land, you are cutting through me. You are like the Pentagon, Mr. Blair, planning the slaughter of innocent Vietnamese. Don't tell me you are not responsible for the destruction of my nation. You are directly responsible. You are the twentieth century General Custer. You have come to destroy the Dene Nation. You are coming with your troops to slaughter us and steal land that is rightfully ours. (Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 1975, C-Vol. 18; p.1776-1777)

Frank's speech made national television. Perhaps for the first time in history the Canadian people saw and heard of Fort Good Hope and its people.

Over the course of three days at Fort Good Hope, over 63 people spoke: men, women, old people and young people. Some read from prepared texts, some simply told their story, all spoke from their hearts. Their lives and their land were on the line; and they had the audience of a lifetime: a sympathetic judge and national media attention. With the exception of Frank's initial address, however, it was as if the people were unaware of their "outside" audience. Their stories were true to their experiences and their feelings. People spoke of their lives in schools and on the land; their love of the land, the trees and the

animals; and their concern for the future of their children, their grandchildren, and their grandchildren's children. It is to four of those stories that we now turn.

Footnotes

²⁶ This description has more force when one realizes that both the Eskimo and Cree are traditionally the dreaded enemies of the Hare. Perhaps such experiences, combined with the residential experience of the younger Dene, aided the ability of the Dene to unite forces in later decades. The willingness of the Dene from different tribes to work collectively eventually enabled their leaders to seek a unified resolution to their outstanding claims to the land, as well as to organize effective opposition to major development projects which impeded the just resolution of such claims, such as the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline.

²⁷ At the time of this quote, the Indian Act forbade Indians from consuming alcohol.

²⁸ These quotes are from O'Malley, M. (1976). The past and future land: An account of the Berger Inquiry into the Mackenzie Valley pipeline. Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Ltd.

²⁹ For an in-depth interpretation of this text see Chambers Erasmus (1989).

PART II
WHAT WERE THEY SAYING?

CHAPTER THREE
THE ART OF LEADERSHIP

FRED RABISCA

Day One

I am Fred Rabisca, a member of the Band Council. I was born in the bush and was raised in the bush and in town. I lived in the bush most of the time. I was taught how to snare rabbits and to set traps by my mother. I was taught to live in the bush and also to live off the land.

In January, when I was at the age of seven, my brother and I went to visit traps. -- In January when I was at the age of seven, my brother and I went to visit traps. Before we reached our destination, it got very dark and there was no road, so we had to camp out in the open as we didn't have stove or tent. We slept in a hut which we made of branches and it was about sixty below. And I appreciated and was proud.

I was forced to go to school that fall even though I didn't want to go. Finally the nurse and R.C.M.P. brought me to school. When I was in school with the rest we were forced to learn in the whiteman's system. We had to learn whatever was taught to us. We didn't learn a thing about our traditional life. We weren't given the ability or the rights to say what we wanted to learn. It was hard for us to miss school or even go out in the bush. Most of us had to stay in town, while our parents were out in the bush. To this day I can never use what I was taught in school to live in the bush. In other words, it was just waste of time.

We are happy people living off our land and proud of what we are and of our land, until the whiteman, seismic's and oil companies came and used our land. They have ruined our land. Ever since they came, the animals are very scarce. The forest fire increased every year. Animals are even dying just like that. There were dead ducks, beaver, fishes floating on lakes in this area. I don't think it's only in this area,

but all over in the North. Even dead moose floating down the Mackenzie River this summer. Animals don't just die like that for no reason. There has to be a cause. Before the whiteman, seismic and oil companies came there was hardly any forest fires, there was no dead animals floating in the lakes or in the Mackenzie River.

Ever since development came to our land, such as social development, housing associations and others, we were rather into individual groups, not living together like long ago. But we drifted further from each other and from our land.

As for my own opinion I truly feel that Government did what he wanted to do on our land. -- As for my own opinion I truly feel that Government did what he wanted to do on our land. I don't think my people were given a chance to talk, think or thought about any of the developments that were pushed into their hands by the Government. I'll say we were ignored and not considered as people but rather as children by the Government. Whereas we were supposed to be the governor of our land, we were supposed to have the ability and rights to say whatever we want and not want.

When the liquor was first opened to my people it has really ruined us. By liquor a lot of our people died. Did the Federal Government do anything good for us? No! All he did was to cause us grief and trouble. Maybe the Government thought he was doing us a great favour, but it was really the opposite.

If the pipeline is built we will be very unhappy people. We will drift farther from each other as well as our land. Our land where we have been born and raised will be ruined for us.

I will give you an example, Mr. Berger. The pipeline is going through Alaska. Think of all the problems they are having. They no longer have a next door neighbour, they don't even know their children. The service they get are very poor. The pipeline people get service first as they have the money. There is a lot of worries

and trouble which the pipeline people brought to them. It will be the same here if it comes through. Maybe even worse.

There are so many forest fires every summer, that if the pipeline comes through, it is bound to catch on fire. It will ruin a lot of our land, our hunting area and animals which we live on. There's the danger of leakage, it will leak into the water, that will kill all the fish we live on. It will also leak on the land and ruin all the vegetation and almost all of the animals which we live on are vegetarian. Even now there is all kinds of sickness brought to our land ever since the whiteman came. Where they come from there is no fresh air but rather pollution. They come to our isolated country and cause us a lot of trouble.

There is a lot of other things that the pipeline will bring to us which might kill us, our land and our people. That's why we don't want the pipeline. I'm talking for myself, my people, my land and also for the future.

So, Mr. Berger, I hope you will listen, consider and think carefully on what people say and not be forgotten. (Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 1975, Vol. C-18, pp. 1785-1789)

Day Two

Mr. Blair, Mr. Berger, Gas Arctic people, I have already made my testimony yesterday but I still have some more to say.

The government has took enough advantage of my people, my land and myself in the past years. Government tricked, cheated and stole from us. Sure, we gave, that is what he wanted but what do we Dene people got in return? Nothing but trouble. Ever since they came, they brought trouble, they did it for their own good, their own benefit and green paper, what's so-called money.

By education, I was a teacher in 1967, '68 and '69 but that was only for -- I had only two weeks training and then I got my certificate, but in those three years I taught, I was getting paid \$350.00 a month, and do you think this is enough to make a

living on? No. The education taught to the children were against the wishes of the people and still it had to be taught because it was brought there by the government. They had no say, it looked as if they had no right on their own land and what they wanted and there are a few adults here who have graduated, made it to Grade 12, and after they graduated, the government did nothing for them. Sure, he pushed them through school to learn in their ways, but after they finished graduation, I feel as if he ignored them.

Social welfare, he brought it in so he can keep the people from going out into the land and to live in town, where they will have no worries. And alcohol, where he can put my people to sleep, to get them to fight amongst each other and classify them into individual groups.

I have worked here and there among white people, and they laugh at the Dene people in front of me, because they call them drunkards. I wonder if they ever think about themselves. They are hippies, robbers, murderers, drug addicts, alcoholics and others in their south, and if you white people take over, and I can see it on this proposed pipeline and the highway, even now we Dene people in our own country and our own land, I feel that we have very little in our own community. Like some have already said.

Yesterday, one of the people from the pipeline said that it will not damage our land. He's from the south, who had never lived and experienced in the north the way we Dene people make our living. Can he come up in the north and make his living in the bush, by himself? I don't think so. Do we Dene people ever go out in the south and try to do things to your land, to destroy you, your children, your land and your future? No. We stay in our -- on our land because we cannot depart from it.

This land we are proud of it, the way we live on it, the way we make our living. I also will tell you when I went out to Winnipeg in April, it was -- the temperature was very high, and it was very hot compared to my land, where there's

fresh air, cool air, no pollution, and in this Winnipeg, there was no fresh air. And one old lady met me and she was a white lady, and then she asked me, "Are you a northern?" I said "Yes" and then she said, "I hear so many talk about the pipeline that the white people want to build on your land", and she said, "I was in the north once". She said "I loved that country because there's fresh air, no pollution, no sickness", and then she said, "Look at this city. Is there any air, any fresh air for you", and I said "No". There was not one open land, there was just straight buildings. Some very old and torn down, and then she said, "When you are here, please be careful. You can never tell what will happen to you in the city".

So I stayed there three days and I stayed in my room. The only time I went out was to have breakfast and attend meetings. I was homesick, I did not like it, I wanted to go home and I came back. Just remember, it's only three days.

Do you white people have the freedom like we Dene people? I don't think so. That is the reason there is so many white people coming into our country, and yet, what more do you white people want? Didn't we give you enough, can't you leave us alone and let us be the way we are?

Do you all know the word "respect"? It came from you. Do you know the full meaning of it? Well I'll tell you this, I don't think so. We Dene people, we have respect for our land, children, people and the future. We are not selfish or ignorant. We have respect of what we have, and this land where we were born, it is where we will die. This land is what we live by, and yet the government people, I know they are trying hard to take it from us. Why? Because there's green paper on it, which you so called money.

Do you think we live for only today? No, we live for yesterday, today and tomorrow. How about you?

Yes, Mr. Berger, I know, as a northern, as a Dene, that the pipeline will damage and destroy us, kill us, and the land itself, the future and the people

themselves. Why can't we control our own rights? Instead, decisions are made out in Ottawa by people who I think don't know a thing about the north; a thing about the way the Dene people live, the way they make their living, and about the man in Yellowknife.

Who is the governor of this land? To this day, I don't really know but I was told so many times that we Dene people are the governor of our country and of our people and yet it's not true. We are not given that chance, we are being pushed around too much on our land. Maybe you had let my people sleep by the alcohol you brought, but now they are awakened and we will fight for our land, our ways.

Money means nothing to us. Do you think we Dene people need money to live? No.

Well, Mr. Berger, there were a lot of boys who wanted to give their testimony but they are out fighting a forest fire. The only thing the government can give them for employment. I am also an employment officer at the moment. They sent Dene people from here to Fort Smith where they can be apart from their land to teach them. Fort Smith is in Northwest Territories, and still the Dene people who were sent there quit because they wanted to come back to their land, and they wonder if there is any training to be done in their home settlement, so Mr. George Barnaby and I wrote out and to this day, I think it was in November, and to this day we never got an answer back.

I phoned and they said it will be in the mail and yet it never came. We are totally ignored, we were always ignored until today.

Judge Berger, that's all I have to say but I'll tell you, my people who spoke to you are not telling you any fairy tales. They are telling you the truth, from deep down in their hearts, so I hope when you get back to Ottawa, you'll take full consideration on it.

That's all I have to say. Thank you. (Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 1975, Vol. C-18, pp. 2064-2069)

Fred's text invites us to consider the nature of leadership. Following the practices of the Dene, his text suggests a view of leadership as the ability and the willingness to envision the future in terms of the quality of life for our children. The Dene have sought to protect their culture and the Earth for the generations yet-to-be-born by living in harmony with each other and with the Earth. Yet in a land where they were once stewards for the generations to come, the Dene find themselves treated as children. Through stories of personal experiences, Fred's text challenges the invasion of the Others into all aspects of the lifeworld of the Dene, their land, their families and their way of life. This testimony points to the importance of respectfulness as a way of being with others and of leading others in right action. In so doing, it calls into question the whites' lack of respectfulness for the Dene and for the land. Telling of a world where one group of human beings seeks to dominate all that is in their presence--other humans, as well as the land--without regard for the consequences, this text discloses the deep, moral chasm which divides the world of the Dene and the world of the Others. Fred's critique of the Others leads to an elucidation of the Dene ideal of leadership. For the Dene, leadership is deliberative and reflective, mindful of the future and oriented to the other. Ironically, to be a leader is not to master others but to gain mastery over oneself.

The questions brought to the interpretation of this testimony are: What does it mean to treat others as children? What does it mean to respect others (the land, children, people, the future)? What does it mean for a people who live in close face-to-face contact with one another and their environment "to drift apart"? Finally, this interpretation addresses the question, What is the Dene art of leadership?

To Treat Others as Children

Fred's text calls into question the morality of ruling. The Others have entered the Dene world uninvited, seeking dominion over the everyday affairs of the Dene, ignoring both their individual and collective sovereignty. "I'll say [the Dene] were ignored," Fred alleges, "and not considered as people but rather as children by the Government."

What does it mean to be an adult, yet to be considered and treated as a child? To be treated as a child is to be considered to be someone incapable of governing one's own actions, as someone without the mental acuity, experience and practical wisdom prerequisite to making important decisions. To be a child is to be not only emotionally and intellectually but also physically dependent on the good will of others in one's presence. To be thought of as a child is to be treated as if one were dependent, especially economically, on others. Thus, in imposing institutional education and social welfare upon the Dene, the Others acted as if the Dene were children, incapable of inducting their young into their culture, of providing daily sustenance for their families, and of caring for their sick and aged. The Others invaded the Dene world bearing the social traditions and institutional practices of their society like gifts to an impoverished child. What this text calls into question is not only the gifts themselves, but the manner of the giving.

Fred's critique of the Others moves deeper into the realm of ethics. Fred calls into question directly the right of the Others to rule the Dene and their world when he asks his audience, "Who is the governor of this land?" His reply to his own rhetorical question discloses its point by dint of irony. "I was told so many times that we Dene people are the governor of our country and of our people and yet it's not true. We are not given that chance, we are being pushed around too much on our land." Thus while the words of the Others affirm Dene sovereignty, their actions clearly denounce it.³⁰

To impose one's will upon the other, "to push others around" or "to push" something into the hands of another, even if it appears to be for their benefit, violates the Dene ideal of right conduct. For the Dene, each person is called to be thoughtful in discourse and in action, striving in word and deed to seek harmony and to avoid offence. To interfere in or harm the lifeworld of another is to bring discord and offence. In the Dene ideal, it is immoral to interfere in the lifeworld of another unless their words or deeds are potentially injurious to themselves or to the collective.³¹ Each must walk his/her own walk, travel his/her own journey, and it is not for bystanders to direct the actions of the traveller.

Perhaps it is the violation of this ideal which gives rise to Fred's indignation at the imposition of Western institutions of colonial governance, public schooling and social programs on the Dene.

By instituting control over the everyday lives of the Dene, the Others have abrogated traditional Dene practices of consensual agreement and public involvement in decision-making, as well as their social practice of non-interference in the affairs of others. "I don't think my people were given a chance to talk, think or thought about any of the developments that were pushed into their hands by the Government," Fred laments. In the Dene ideal, decisions affecting the common good ought to rest with the *polis*. Consensus is sought through private and public discussion. The Dene ideal of seeking consensus on action through discourse is not unlike Aristotle's notion of the deliberative rhetoric of public oratory which "seeks to effect a common orientation among the hearers within a situation calling for responsible judgement and action" (Schrag, 1986, p. 183). Yet by treating the Dene as children, the Others have ignored the moral necessity of seeking a common orientation within a situation calling for responsible judgement and action. Instead, they have simply assumed dominion over the Dene and their land.

Fred's text is bitter with the powerlessness of adults who are being treated as children. Yet it is also bitter with the powerlessness of a child personally subjected to the rule of the Others. Schrag (1986) tells us that "Descriptions of the world involve the telling of a story."³² Fred expresses his bitterness by telling two short stories about his early education. While "visiting traps," Fred and his brother were stranded in the bush on a cold, dark night. This first narrative discloses the difficulty--the darkness and the cold--of life on the land. Yet his story also speaks of the deep gratitude and dignity inherent in a life lived close to the Earth, in which one is able to accommodate rather than dominate the environment. Fred's words evoke his audience to see the value in such a life, the common good in retaining, or in some way returning to, such an existence.

Fred's narrative slides into critique as he recollects his experiences in government schools. The Others presumed his education on the land to be insufficient and insisted on schooling him in their language, customs, social traditions and institutional practices. Against his own will and better judgement, the Others physically forced Fred, and many of his peers, to attend their institutions of schooling. "I was forced to go to school that fall even though I didn't want to go. Finally the nurse and R.C.M.P. brought me to school." Every moment spent inside the four walls of a classroom, every night spent inside the confines of a residential dormitory, was a moment away from his apprenticeship on the land, his induction into the culture of the People, their language and their way of life. "To this day I can never use what I was taught in school to live in the bush." Fred's story is not unlike that of many young Dene who returned from their years in school to find themselves strangers in a strange land, unable to speak their language, unable to make a living on their land, unable to live the life of their relatives and friends. Fred's reflections on his years in the schools of the Others are imbued with the bitterness of a youth condemned to a personal and social history not of his own making.

The result of this experience, as disclosed in the text, is a feeling of being trapped between two worlds. Ill-prepared for the world of the bush, Fred describes his personal struggle to survive in the world of the Others, a world which from his experience values neither his education nor his skills. Recollecting the meagre salary offered him by the same government who had forcibly educated him, Fred asks his audience, "I was getting paid \$350.00 a month, and do you think that this [\$350 a month] is enough to make a living on? No." Entering the world of the Others, he suffers their scorn. "I have worked here and there among white people, and they laugh at the Dene people in front of me . . . they call them drunkards." Yet ironically, the institution of schooling was imposed precisely to prepare the Dene for life in the world of the Other. It is this irony which discloses the deep lack of morality in the actions of the Others. They presume to know what is right for the other, and their actions, based on that presumption, bring harm to those in their presence.

The poetic juxtaposition of these two stories calls into question the morality of a people who assume control over the others in their presence and beyond. This text speaks to us of the experience of having one's world invaded by a people whose social and institutional practices seek order through domination and control of the other. Fred's words disclose the deep tension between Dene practices of non-interference in the lives of others and Western practices of ruling, controlling and changing others. This text calls into question the morality of intruding and interfering in the world of the other. "Do we Dene people ever go out into the south and try to do things to your land, to destroy you, your children, your land and your future?" With their actions, the Others have disclosed an absence of moral commitment to the Dene as sovereign citizens and have reaffirmed their amoral view of the Dene as children, powerless in their own land. They have entered the Dene world uninvited and have proceeded to interfere in the everydayness of Dene being. In Fred's words, they are ruining the land, changing the People, pushing them around, in other words, ignoring Dene sovereignty and humanity. The Others are exercising dominion over the Dene and their land, with no authority to do so, and without the sensitivity and respectfulness expected of people who are called to lead others.

To Respect Others

Fred calls into question the moral ground of the non-Dene in his presence. "Do you all know the word respect?" he asks. His text discloses the sad irony that while the word *respect* originates with the whites, their actions towards the Dene and the land are empty of its moral implications. To respect others is to refrain from offending them, and to avoid interfering in or harming their lifeworld. Yet the actions of the whites towards the Dene and the land are a parody of this ideal. The whites have "forced" and "pushed" their ways on the Dene rather than "leaving them alone" and "letting them be the way they are;" they have brought "trouble" rather than harmony; and "they have ruined the land." They have sought to rule the Dene, and for the people they have sought to rule, such actions are devoid of the respect for the other which is essential to a moral existence.

Fred challenges us to seek a deeper understanding of what it means to respect others. "Do you know the full meaning of [respect]?" he asks. Derived from the Latin *respectus* meaning "to look back, regard," respect is a call to look beyond ourselves, to behold the other in our presence and to care about what we see. Again, Fred's text evokes us to think more deeply about this word. He asks "Do you think [the Dene] live only for today?" "No," he replies, "We live for yesterday, today and tomorrow. How about you?" To be filled with respect is to care as deeply about what has gone before and about what lies ahead as it is to be respectful of those with whom one shares the present moment. These words beckon us to transcend time as a barrier to moral responsibility, ever heedful that each action taken and each word spoken must be respectful of the past, thoughtful in the present, and mindful of the future. "We have respect of what we have, and this land where we were born, it is where we will die," Fred tells us. In the Dene ideal, to have respect is to be filled with humility, to gaze away from oneself towards otherness and the wonder of Creation. To be filled with caring and thoughtfulness for the other--human and non-human, spiritual and material, past and present--is to live in a moral realm.

In the Dene world, the universe is like a loosely woven tapestry whose fibres--their colours variedly vibrant and subdued, their textures intermittently coarse and fine--are harmoniously intertwined to create a fluid, yet consistent pattern. In a tapestry, each thread must find its place in relation to the others. For the Dene, all living beings must find their place in relation to all the elements of the universe. "We have respect for our land, children, people, and the future," says Fred. Each human is called to be full of respect for all of Creation, to be respectful in their words and deeds. To act and speak without regard for other living beings is to threaten the harmony of the universe and is immoral. To act without regard for the Earth, "to ruin the land," is to threaten the future of human life itself. To have respect is to hold in high regard the gift of life itself, and to protect that gift for our children and their children.

Drifting Apart

Fred's text offers another ground from which to critique the morality of the rule of the Others. The subjugation of the Dene has brought disunity and separateness where once there was unity and oneness; it has brought hierarchy where once there was egalitarianism. Since the beginning of Creation, the Dene have lived as one family sharing the Earth with all other Living Beings. The People have shared a common lifeway, language and history; they have shared a common world and a common way of being in that world. But with the coming of the Others, and their ways of domination and control, the Dene have become rudderless, carried along by a current of customs, habits, and institutional practices not of their own making and out of their control. Fred declares: "We have drifted farther from each other and from our land." Oriented to the future, Fred warns that the Dene must regain stewardship of their collective destiny and must steer away from the dangerous precipice towards which they are drifting.

The People have lived close to the Earth which has brought them life. Trees have provided the People with fire, shelter and medicine, while the lakes and rivers have brought forth water to drink and fish to eat. The sky provides the rain, snow and sun, stars to guide travel, moonlight to hunt by and birds to eat. In the bush itself dwell the animals whom humans have come to know and understand. Yet Fred tells us the People have drifted away from the bush into the towns, collecting in small, fragmented and powerless cliques.

Since the time of the ancients the People have lived close to one another, thus sustaining life. Within the space of a single camp, within the circle of a single fire, the People dwell in close physical presence to one another. Traditionally the People live in small quarters--a tent, a small home--in the company of many people. People sit and lie close to one another, often touching. Babies and young children rarely touch the ground as they are always in someone's arms. Frequent "visiting," spending time in the presence of others--often without the necessity of words--continually renews relationships between

people.³³ As Fred has told us, the Dene not only visit one another but they "visit" their traps and snares, the face-to-face contact between hunter and hunted.

The continual bodily presence of one to the other raises issues of ethical engagement.³⁴ How do we best conduct ourselves in the presence of the other? What is the right thing to do? For the Dene, to care for others--other Dene, the animals and the land--becomes both a pragmatic and a moral necessity. Survival is contingent upon the interwoven dependence of human beings upon each other and the Earth. Moreover, the ethical response of caring for the other provides a safety net of respect, generosity and compassion, delivering the event of bodily presence into the moral realm.

Fred's text calls into question the passivity, the non-action of "drifting apart." To coast, roll, slide, or drift apart or even to be driven apart suggests an involuntary movement, carriage by an external and typically elemental force. The motion of drifting is almost hypnotic, and yet Fred's words sharply remind his audience of the "unhappiness" cast by such a spell. By allowing themselves to be borne along by the customs, habits, and social practices of the Others, the Dene are abandoning their ideal of close bodily presence with one another and the Earth. Yet Fred's text speaks not only to the Dene but to us all. His words beckon us to resist our slide into an existence empty of the presence of the other and to renew our responsibility to one another and to the Earth.

The Art of Leadership

Although our leaders are very important to us; they are meant to guide us and not to have power over us . . . For example, at one meeting one Dene asked, "You, the leaders, where are you going to lead us?" And one leader answered, "We won't lead you anywhere. . . . A Dene leader doesn't lead anybody anywhere. You go where you want to go."

Denendeh: A Dene celebration, 1984, p. 15

Fred's story of being carted away to school bespeaks the indignity of a person being forced into an unwanted situation by people who have no authority over his lifeworld. His text shows us and tells us that the Others have assumed the role of parents of the Dene and all that that role entails within the history of Western social tradition. The Others have

assumed the parental authority and responsibility to act on behalf of the Dene and in their best interests. Yet ironically, for the Dene little authority is invested in the role of parent, teacher, or any institutionalized role. Brody (1987) speaks well to this issue when he writes that for northern hunting societies, including the Dene, "no individual can speak on behalf of other individuals, neither parents for their children nor an elder for his family" (p. 123). In the Dene ideal, individuals earn the respect of others through their words and deeds, not by virtue of a role.

Yet such respect does not carry with it any right to direct the actions of others. For example, traditionally hunters, shamans, and elders have earned their powers to cure ills, to predict the future and to explain natural phenomena. Some may earn these extraordinary powers and expertise through their contact with the spirit world; others accumulate their knowledge through a life-long apprenticeship in the art of listening, observing and doing. Their authority to guide or direct the actions of another, to the extent that such an authority exists, arises from a mutual obligation between themselves and the other, an obligation born of a caring and respectful relationship, not of the power vested in the role of either person in that relationship.³⁵ Such people have powers, not power; they have expertise, not control (Brody, 1987).

Within family and community life, Dene elders also command respect, and yet wield virtually no power.³⁶ Life is not easy, and elders are assumed to be wise by virtue of having overcome the many and varied difficulties inherent in a long life. The young are called to show respect by anticipating the needs and requests of their elders. The respectful actions of the young remove the need for elders to exercise any outward authority. Yet in those instances when one seeks the advice of a highly respected other, such as an elder, an individual is free to reject the counsel if and when it does not accord with one's own judgement (Brody, 1987). Thus, while experience may yield wisdom, wisdom does not engender the right to direct the actions of others. Just as the young are called to respect the wisdom of the elders, so too are elders called to respect the choices of others.

Such an ideal does not leave the Dene without leadership. Rather, against the backdrop of this ideal, the Dene, both as individuals and leaders, are called to balance maximum responsibility for their own actions with minimum responsibility for directing the actions of others. For the Dene, neither individuals nor institutions ought to act without regard for the impact of their actions on the Other Living Beings which inhabit the Earth and on the Earth itself. Leaders are not called to govern others; rather they are summoned to listen and to engage in thoughtful discourse with the other. Upon entering the arena of affairs which will affect the common good, the words and actions of a good leader are preceded by thoughtful discourse which seeks consensus on appropriate action. This discourse ought to be a dialogue between the members of the community in which the leader is but one voice. Without the collective agreement of the *polis*, leaders speak and act only for themselves. Thus, when acting on behalf of their communities, Dene leaders are called to the special responsibility of both seeking and mirroring the practical wisdom and consensual judgment of the collective. Thus, for the Dene, a good leader acts and speaks from the space of tension between leading others and respecting their freedom to discern their own course of action. Mastering the balance between meeting one's responsibility to the common good and respecting the right of personal choice of the other is the Dene art of leadership.

It is the abrogation of this Dene ideal of leadership which Fred calls into question when he laments, "I truly believe the Government did what he wanted on our land." And it is from within the space of this ideal of leadership that Fred points out to Mr. Justice Berger, "My people who spoke to you are not telling you any fairy tales. They are telling you the truth, from down deep in their hearts." The occasion for Fred's talking, the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, is one which calls for thoughtful discourse, for truthful speaking and for attentive listening. Truthful speech on matters affecting the common good places an obligation on the listener, and Fred concludes his first speech by beseeching Mr.

Berger to be mindful of this social contract, "I hope you will listen, consider, and think carefully on what the people say" and that their words will "not be forgotten."

Fred's text summons us to gaze through a new lens at what it means to lead others, a lens which is not unlike that of Eastern philosophers. While Western social, institutional and philosophical practices seek transcendence, the social practices of the Dene (and Eastern philosophies such as Taoism and Zen) signify a desire for unity with all that is in the Universe. While Western rulers seek to control and change those they rule, a perfect leader (for the Dene)--or a perfect ruler (for Confucius)--accepts others as they are, accepts the *is-ness* of all things and our inability to know certain things. An artful leader trusts and respects the others to be who they are and do what they are called to do.³⁷ An artful leader is one who seeks harmony with the world as it is, rather than transcendence above or beyond the world, or control over it.

Such unity with all that is calls for unity within one's own being, mastery of self to the point of loss of self. Reminiscent of Confucius' notion of the perfect ruler as someone who has complete mastery over himself/herself (Drengson, 1983), the Dene ideal of self-mastery--like leading or caring for others--means to be full of thought in what one says and does, to avoid bringing offence or harm to the lifeworld of another. It means acting from the centre of one's moral being (Drengson, 1983).

For the Dene, self-mastery implies self-restraint in one's words and in one's deeds. In a world imbued with supernatural powers, which can be used for revenge upon the disrespectful, mastery over one's discourse and actions is essential for both pragmatic and moral reasons. An example from Dene life with children is instructive. The Dene are invariably taken aback by white parents and teachers who use anger to control children. The Dene consider allowing oneself to become angered by the actions of a child and, furthermore, to display that anger openly, as the height of immaturity, totally lacking in self-control, and not fitting in one who is called to care for the young. For an adult to try to control or change the behaviour of a child, or anyone for that matter, through anger is far

more offensive than whatever the child (or person) might have done to arouse the anger in the first place. A good parent or teacher (or leader) ought to allow children (or others) to do as they must do, to be who they are called to be.

From the Western perspective such parenting (leading) may be considered irresponsible, and yet for the Dene to allow others *to be* is a significant part of mastery of self, and an important part of the art of leadership. For a Dene leader or parent to be quiet and still, to forego acting or speaking and, thus, meddling in the lifeworld of another, requires a level of concentration, and a degree of self-control, born of mastery of self. Thus, for both the Dene and Confucius, right rule requires self-rule. The perfect ruler of the Analects--the artful leader of the Dene--cultivates mastery of self through the correct performance of word and deed, saying and doing what is fully fitting, speaking and acting from the centre of his/her moral being.

Yet this art of self-mastery, like the art of leading others, is more than a way of doing, it is a way of being. A good leader (for the Dene)--a perfect ruler (for the Analects)--is one who leads others by his/her very presence, a presence that signifies unity with all that is. The Dene live in a world where humanity, nature and the supernatural are united within a single cosmos (Nelson, 1983). Human beings are far from the dominant force within this triad. For both pragmatic and moral reasons, the Dene are called to serve nature--the Earth, the Sky, the Water and the Other Living Beings--rather than to control it. Writing of the Koyukon, an Alaskan Dene people, Nelson (1983) observes: "[They] must move *with* the forces of their surroundings, not attempting to control master, or fundamentally alter them. They do not confront nature, they yield to it" (p. 240).

So, too, it is with relationships among human beings. In the Dene ideal, one who is master of one's own self does not attempt to "control, master or fundamentally alter" other people. Rather, through "moving with others"--living in the tension between allowing others to be and seeking consensus on right action--one seeks to live in harmony with others, with all that is. Thus, paradoxically, mastery of self calls for a giving up of the

personal self for the sake of unity with one's own being, as well as with all of humanity, nature and the supernatural.

Thus, we come to see that like much else in the Dene world, in all the world for that matter, the notion of self-mastery as a way to artful leadership appears to be a paradox. The normal Western expectation of the way a leader would display "self-mastery" would be through aggressive, ego-oriented behaviour. Yet for the Dene, self-mastery is not self-control for the purposes of ego-aggrandizement, personal accomplishment, and more efficient control of others. Rather, mastery of self is being centred in one's own moral being such that it is not necessary to control the lives of others and the environment in which they live. Paradoxically, it is through the mastery of self that one is able to lose the personal self, an obstacle to the unity of self with all that is, and achieve personal freedom.

Drengson (1983) writes:

The perfect ruler of the *Analects* represents the supreme achievement of an ordinary mind that is so extraordinary that it reminds each of us of our original nature. That nature, when realized, lacks nothing, and we can be in any role which is demanded of us. Self-mastery involves being the lord of one's self in this sense, and then one is sufficiently empty of personal self that one can be either ruler or farmer, soldier or artisan. . . . Mastery of self is the ultimate realization of human freedom and was symbolized for Confucius by the perfect ruler. (p. 46)

Thus, Confucius and Fred conspire to offer us a vision of the ideal human as one who is a fully realized master of self.³⁸ Fred asks his audience "Do you white people have the freedom like we Dene people?" For the Dene, as for Confucius, mastery of self is the ideal realization of personal and collective freedom. Such mastery of self entails the respectfulness which manifests itself in thoughtfulness in word and deed. From the space of self-mastery it is not necessary to rule (to direct and control the actions of) the other. Rather, the call is to continually seek to bring one's words and actions into unity with the self and the other in one's presence.

Fred's text underscores the magnitude of what is at stake with the Berger Inquiry, the fragile interrelationship between human beings and their planet. Thoughtless actions which threaten this harmony, and the complex web of social and ecological relationships which sustain it, threaten the future of life itself. Fred exhorts, "Yes, Mr. Berger, I know, as a northern, a Dene, that the pipeline will damage and destroy us, kill us, and the land itself, the future and the people themselves." Ultimately, the message of the Dene is a message for us all. We must seek a new order, one where political action is preceded by human thoughtfulness, one where leadership is grounded in mastery of self and not mastery of others.

Fred's text and its illumination of the Dene ideal of leadership calls us to seek a new order, an order where respectfulness and thoughtfulness in word and deed are given equal weight with the practices of power and control. We are called to renew the Dene art of leadership where the right to personal autonomy, the well-being of the collective and the responsibilities for self-mastery are held in perpetual and delicate balance. We are called to a vision of leadership which remembers our past, lives in the present, and envisions the future in terms of our children. In the words of countless Dene witnesses, "I speak not for myself but for my children, and my children's children, and their children after that."

Footnotes

³⁰ Irony, Schrag (1986) reminds us, is "the discrepancy or disjunction of speech and action that escapes the vigilance of individual and institutional awareness" (p. 195). It is through such insinuations of the ironical into Fred's discourse that we become most incisively aware of the ethical moment in this text.

³¹ The notion of what constitutes potentially injurious speech or action is far broader in the Dene world. For example, it is common for young Dene children to use axes and knives, while it is not uncommon for white parents to refuse similar tools to young children. There is a scene in the Canadian movie "Loyalties" which illustrates this difference well. The English mother, who enters a scene in which the Cree baby-sitter is allowing the two children under her care to construct a playhouse with cardboard and knives, becomes very distressed and rushes over grabbing the knives out of the children's hands. The Cree baby-sitter was perplexed as to source of the mother's concern and very taken aback by what she perceived to be the

smothering protectiveness of the mother. For the Cree and the Dene, knives, axes and scissors are tools which children must learn to use with respect; to prevent children from using such objects is to impede their education.

³² "In turn this story about the world of nature and social practices implicates a community of speakers and hearers, authors and readers, actors and respondents" (Schrag 1986, p. 184).

³³ Fred critiques the consequences of the Alaskan pipeline by lamenting that the Alaskan natives "no longer have a next door neighbour, they don't even know their own children."

³⁴ Schrag (1986) credits Levinas with the notion that the proper arena for the discernment of "the bodily presence of the face-to-face is ethics rather than metaphysics or epistemology." He goes on to say that Levinas approaches the encounter of the Other "not as a problem of transcendental constitution but rather as an issue of ethical engagement" (p. 154 f).

³⁵ This is a crucial point for teachers and other educational leaders. For Dene children (and their parents), the authority of teachers does not rest in their role as teacher, but in the personal relationship they establish with the class (the Dene community) as a whole, and with each learner (parent) individually.

The importance of sensitivity to personal relationships and specific situations is not unique to the Dene ideal of leadership. Being a good leader--or a perfect lord, ruler or king, in Drengson's (1983) words--always involves being in a personal relationship with those one is leading. Using the example of the relationship between a horse and rider, Drengson remarks: "Being lord, as with being a master rider, is more than just technique. It requires being sensitive to the nuances of the situation. Being in a personal relationship to members of the realm, or to a horse, goes beyond mere mastery of technique and involves dimensions of art and individual sensitivity. Both are present in the master of realm or horse." (p. 39)

³⁶ "Respect for the old people is another law, since all the laws come from teaching by our elders, from stories that give us pride in our culture, from training since we are young; we learn what is expected of us. Without this learning from the elders our culture would be destroyed." George Barnaby, Fort Good Hope, (Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, Vol. C-18, pp. 1779-1782)

³⁷ Comparing ruling a kingdom to living in harmony with one's own body, Drengson (1983) writes: "The subjects should not control the kingdom; instead they should be trusted to play their parts. One must, to use the example of a person, trust the body to take care of itself, that is, to heal itself, without trying consciously to manage each process from breathing to digestion. The body has its own wisdom. It knows how to heal itself. One should know enough *when to let be*. This is clearly part of mastery, as Lao Tzu observed. There is a proper time to intervene, but for the most part the body takes care of itself. One must not over-rule, or attempt to over-control. In the state likewise, the generals, ministers, farmers, and so forth, all know their roles, and they can be relied upon to do them properly as long as the lord sets a proper

example and does not meddle, allows them to work out problems and intervenes only when absolutely necessary, and then primarily to facilitate their work. This is the perfect ruler of the *Analects*" (p. 38).

That the Dene have a similar view is illuminated in the comments of George Barnaby in an extensive piece on Fort Good Hope in Saturday Night. "A leader is not a politician. He reminds people of their responsibilities. . . . A leader shouldn't do the people's work for them." (see Goddard, 1985, April, pp. 43-49)

³⁸For Confucius "the perfect ruler of the state is also the perfect master of self (as a community of elements)" (Drengson, 1983, p. 42). Drengson suggests that mastering the art of ruling, or the art of self-mastery, requires cultivating a union between all the levels of being human; union with oneself as a social self (leader, lord, etc.), as a moral self (the interpersonal self as a moral agent related to others), as a human self (the ego, human fears, etc.), and finally as a universal Self (the original, conscious being which is pure subject unified with all of existence).

CHAPTER FOUR
THE TWO SOLITUDES

GEORGINA TOBAC

I won't take too much time, I'll just say a few words, especially to the white people that are present, and you too, Mr. Berger.³⁹

I am not going to dwell on telling you how I was brought up, whether I was brought up in poverty or rich, it will just be a waste of time because nobody will do anything about it anyway, so I am not going to say how I was brought up, poor or rich.

When you are a child and you are growing up, your parents try to tell you everything. They taught us how to be true and how to love one another. All the white people that are present, I wonder if they've all got ears, and I wonder if they have hearts too. That is what our parents taught to us about when we were growing up. All the native people that are sitting in here are talking to you, more or less pleading with you to save their land. Some of them sound so pitiful, more or less pleading, have you got hearts in you? Sometimes I wonder if anybody that comes to the North, the white people, if they have hearts or they got ears. It seems to me that the ones that are sent to the North here are the ones that are, they know they have no hearts in them.

Maybe at least, at least one amongst, sitting here will think just for awhile, even just for a little while, maybe these people sound pitiful, maybe we should just let them alone for awhile.

Who made this world and think that he has the right to say what should be done with it? The mud that are around here, who brought it, that is, around here, to say that or to think that they have the rights to say what should be done with the land around here.

There is two worlds, one is the white world and the other one is this one. So the white world told the other one we should name one another. So the North, this world, I guess is two different worlds, the whiteman's world and the Indian's world. The Indian world told the whiteman's world that, well, since I am dark in complexion, my hair is black and your complexion is white and you hair is light, we'll call you the whiteman. So the other one, the white world, told the other one, since you are dark in complexion and your hair is black, you will be called Dene land.

All of you white people sitting here, I see you all sitting there, I wonder what's going through your minds about us. So why some of you are sort of hiding behind one another, peeking behind one another's back. You could sit out in the open facing us, if you want to talk to us. We didn't gather here, we didn't come here to fight with one another. I thought we came here to talk to one another, not to be shy and hide from one another. We didn't come here to fight either.

I think the whiteman is well off from a lot of resources from the North. If a person, a person should remember what's done, what's given to him or what's done for him. A lot of people always remember what's been given to him and how they have been treated. I guess the white people make a lot of use of the things that comes from the North like the gas, because there was a lot of gas taken from the Norman Wells, and they make use of our river and a lot of other things. What more do they want? Why do they keep bothering us? --And try to move us aside from our own land?

The site that they're talking about down there at the mouth of the Hare Indian, the one that gave the orders to do the testing and all that there, did he walk around along the shore and check everything with his own eyes before he gave the orders to say, okay, you can do this and do that around on our land there, did he really walked along the shore himself and saw everything before he gave the order.

Instead of that they gave the orders without consulting with the people that are living around here. He should have come and talked it over with the people, the natives that are living around here and asked them. That's what they, the white people are intending to do, they want to do some work around there, what do you think about it? Will it be okay? No, they didn't. They went about it behind our backs.

All us natives in this settlement here, we are all Catholics, we belong to one religion and we believe in our religion. The only thing we really fear is God himself. So I really think that the people that want to treat us like that, I don't think their hearts and their ears are in the right places. Maybe it's in their behind.

We keep saying this land belongs to us because we live off this land, we live off the animals that live on the land. The vegetation that grows on this, on the land every summer, that keeps our animals for us. And if they spoil all the vegetation and everything that the animals feed on--

So, when I said these two worlds met together, the white and the black, that's Canada. When Canada said my name is going to be mud because I am black, well, it meant for us, for all us Natives, because that's what we are, we are all dark.

So, I wonder if anybody ever thinks of why it was put that way, these two worlds, one white and one black. So, to me everytime the white people come to the North or come to our land and start tearing up the land, I feel as if they are cutting our own flesh, because, that is the way we feel about our land. It is our flesh.

The white people that came, I don't see you mixed with the Native people now, so I don't think anybody will change in the future if more white people come to the North.

So, if they go ahead and put the pipeline through and a highway through, there'll be a lot of blood on the highway, but nobody mentioned that. I don't

think there'll be anybody that will be watching day and night to make sure that no accidents happen on that highway.

I have got a feeling that once you people go back to your south, some of you will be making jokes out of us because I feel even now some of them are laughing at us behind our backs.

I don't want to take too much time, there's some old people that might want to say something, so that's all I'll say now. (Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 1975, Vol. C-18; 1948-1953)

As Fred's text spawns an interpretation of the art of leadership after ascending the tensions between the Dene's experience of being governed by white bureaucrats, Georgina's text continues the disclosure of tension between the white and the Dene world. Georgina's text speaks to us of the experience of living in a solitude, a world separated from the world of the Others by a deeply moral chasm.

As does each of the testimonies, this text asks and answers many questions. The orienting question throughout the reading of these texts has been, what is it that is going on in the saying of this person's testimony? Georgina's text yields new insight into this question by addressing a number of further questions. Her text calls us to ask, what does it mean to live in separate worlds? What does it mean to name a world? What does it mean to be compassionate and to thoughtfully attend to others? What is the ideal relationship between people and the land? What is authentic discourse?

The Naming of the Worlds

When only in the presence of other Dene, it was not necessary to name their world as distinct from another world, for they were living, being in the world. The invasion of the Others into the Dene world created a distinction; and Georgina tells us, the Others, "the white world told the other one we should name one another." It was at that point the north was transfigured from a single world, one where the Dene and the Other Creatures lived together in a single world to "two different worlds, the whiteman's world and the Indian's world." By means of a parable of sorts, Georgina calls into question the importance of the naming of the two worlds.

The Indian world told the whiteman's world that, well, since I am dark in complexion, my hair is black and your complexion is white and your hair is light, we'll call you the whiteman. So the other one, the white world, told the other one, since you are dark in complexion and your hair is black, you will be called Dene land.

...

So, when I said these two worlds met together, the white and the black, that's Canada. When Canada said my name is going to be mud because I am black, well, it meant, for us, for all us Natives, because that's what we are, we are dark.

What does it mean to be named? To name a world? To name is to specify an individual person, animal, place or thing (or groups of the same), and this specification points to a difference. That which is the same is named the same; that which is different is named differently. While before there was only the People, now there are two kinds of People: the Dene and the Others.

Dene names carry much significance. Traditionally people may be named after an event, a personality trait, or a physical characteristic. With the adoption of Catholicism, traditional Dene naming practices have merged with Christian notions of spiritual guardianship; to name a child for a saint is to be guided and guarded by the spirit of that saint. For example, many Dene women are named Mary, or Mary in combination with another name, in an effort to inculcate the personal attributes and powers of the Virgin Mary. Nicknames are very important to the Dene, and often point to or reflect a distinctive, and sometimes not particularly flattering, aspect of one's makeup or personal history. It is not uncommon for people to be referred to solely by nicknames such as Monkey, Cotton, Jumbo, Pesto, Slippery or Sugar. Traditionally, neither nicknames nor Christian names are used when speaking directly to or about a person. For purposes of teasing, nicknames are used when speaking directly to a person.

Particularly in the Dene language, and especially for older people, the importance lies not in your name but in your relationship to others in the group. Thus someone is not called Peter, but Fred's son, or Marie's son, or Johnny's father, or Mabel's husband, or someone's older or younger sibling. This social practice of naming in relation to others keeps alive the genealogy of each community. The community keeps close track of members, even those who have moved away, as well as their relationships and their

children. Dene adults visiting other communities may ask unfamiliar Dene children "Who is your mother, who is your father?" It is important for people to know and for children to be able to state their relationships to others. Thus, ideally a balance is achieved between the boundaries of difference situated in a specific name, and the knowledge and memory of interrelatedness situated in one's kinship designation.

Thus, how we name ourselves and how others name us is of great significance. Genesis tells us God made Adam from clay (*adama* in Hebrew); Adam is a Hebrew word for "of the clay." The word *Dene* has similar roots. The noun stem *-né* means "mud, earth, land," while the prefix *de-* means "what is like." Thus, *Dene*, which literally translates as "the people, or person," in a more originitive sense means "what is like the earth."⁴⁰ Georgina tells us "my name is going to be mud." Her text reminds us that the Dene world is both a spiritual and geographical space.

The Dene people who inhabit this land are of the earth itself, and, furthermore that is how it is meant to be; what human has the right to question the work of the Creator, she asks. Do the Others truly believe that they own the earth?

To Have a Heart; To Have Ears

Georgina's critique of the conduct of the Others moves into the arena of compassion. Unlike other witnesses who have grounded the authoritativeness of their testimony in their personal experiences, in stories of their lives, their growing and learning on the land and in the residential schools, Georgina sees no point in such a testimonial. There is no point in dwelling upon the past because it is unalterable, she tells us. However, in the Dene ideal, a person's story of suffering ought to evoke the pity and compassion of the audience, regardless of whether that audience is stranger or friend. For the Dene, such compassion is a mandatory quality of those who are called to action on behalf of others, of those invested with power to affect both the spiritual and physical world of those with whom they share this planet--other humans, animals, and the land itself. It is to such people that Georgina appeals; Justice Berger and his inquiry staff, as well as the representatives of the two

pipelines, have the power to make decisions which would ultimately affect the world of the Dene and their land.

Georgina calls into question the moral ground of white people, and in particular, those whites in her presence, when she asks, "Have you got hearts in you?" Through this query, Georgina summons us to question the humanity of the Others, the whites. Her deep cynicism is disclosed when she declares her belief that uncompassionate people are sent north (presumably to deal with the Dene) precisely because they have no hearts. It is Georgina's past experience, arising from the collective experiences of the Dene, that whites are lacking compassion. In Western institutions, bureaucrats and "captains of industry" are not called to be compassionate, but to follow the letter of the law, implement policy, and make decisions on the basis of such laws and policy, or on the principle of profit. And it is primarily white people such as these who have had the greatest control over the lives of the Dene and subsequently with whom the Dene have had their most extensive contact.⁴¹

What does it mean "to have a heart?" To have a heart in one's body is to have life. In our social world, to have *heart* is to live in the experiential and ontological, rather than in the epistemological. This semantic realm of *heart* is the "emotional or moral as distinguished from the intellectual nature."⁴² To have *heart* is to have a generous disposition, or in other words to be filled with compassion. The etymological root of passion, the noun stem of compassion, is the Latin *passio*, which means suffering or being acted upon. Thus "suffering" is a synonym, albeit a somewhat obscure one, of passion, as seen in the naming of the suffering of Christ between the Last Supper and his death as the Passion. In this sense, compassion refers to a "sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it."⁴³ It is this realm of compassion of which Georgina speaks.

In the Dene world, people are always at the mercy of the forces of the universe, what is often translated into English as "luck." Only rarely do the Dene speak of another as lazy, irresponsible, careless or in some other way responsible for their own misfortune; rather

they speak of such a person as the victim of "bad luck."⁴⁴ This increases the responsibility of those more fortunate to have compassion for those less fortunate. Compassion ought to be more than pity when the audience has the power to relieve suffering in the life of another.⁴⁵

Juxtaposed with compassion is the Dene ethic of sharing and generosity. Georgina says, "All the native people sitting here more or less pleading with you to save their land. Some of them sound so pitiful, more or less pleading, have you got hearts in you?" These rich oil barons, who have everything they need in life, are refusing to heed the pleas of those less fortunate than they. For the Dene, this is an act unworthy of someone with the power to help others. This would be like a Dene refusing a hungry person food. In a land where a meal can make the difference between life and death, it is hard to imagine a crime more reprehensible. While for the Others frugality is akin to virtue, for the Dene to be "stingy" is a most distasteful and almost unforgivable defect of character. For the Dene to share, especially food and drink, is like an act of communion, a celebration of a shared humanness and a mutual need for life and fellowship.

Through a series of extended familial and social relationships, each Dene person is involved in a complex network of reciprocity and mutual obligations, favours which are given and shared. It is the aboriginal version of the Hebraic call to "Love thy neighbour as thyself." The collective consciousness of the Dene people retains the memory of starvation and suffering; this memory provides a moral necessity. One must always attempt to alleviate the hunger and suffering of others less fortunate. If it is 40 degrees below zero and someone does not have firewood, or is perhaps incapable of getting firewood for himself or herself, then someone is obliged to help that person. It may be a relative, a close friend, or a community leader. In Fort Good Hope, pallbearers at a funeral enter into a special, lifelong relationship with the bereaved family, a relationship which includes generosity in times of need. Often favours do not need to be returned. However, it is proper for recipients to remember the generosity of others and to indicate their gratitude. In

Georgina's words, "A person should remember what's done, what's given to him or what's done for him."

Compassion, generosity, and mutual obligation weave an intricate web of human interconnectedness. These themes are important strands in the texture of communicative praxis; they simultaneously guide and are revealed in both discourse and action. Dene children are raised "to be true and to love one another," says Georgina. To be true is to be steadfast, loyal, honest, or truthful.⁴⁶ In the Dene languages, to speak truthfully or correctly is literally to speak straight, while lying is to speak crookedly (Gardner & Christian, 1977). To have a heart is to manifest one's love for fellow humans in one's words and in one's deeds. So the Others stand before the Dene as fellow humans but people of a different solitude, a world where someone with everything can ignore the pleadings of those with nothing. To the Dene, the lack of humanity of the Other appears deep.

The Dene and the whites have entered into a relationship of mutual obligations. Georgina reminds her audience that the Others should be grateful for the generosity and compassion her people have shown them through the years. And yet the Others are not grateful, nor compassionate; rather they are insatiable. They have used the People's river, their land and taken the gas from the land and now Georgina asks incredulously, "What more do they want? Why do they keep bothering us?--And try[ing] to move us aside from our own land?"

It is stories and metaphor which allow us to leap into the world of the other, to achieve an access into being which philosophizing and intellectualizing will not bring. Ozick (1986) argues that while compassion for others is the law of the Old Testament, it has no place in the Hellenic philosophical and intellectual traditions of the Western world. It is ironic indeed that we have eulogized and poetized the Greeks, naming them as universalists when in fact they despised strangers. Ozick offers an explanation for this seeming lack of empathy:

The Greeks were not only not universalists; they scorned the idea. They were firm in despising the stranger. They had no pity for the stranger. As a society they never undertook to imagine what it was to be the Other; the alien; the slave; the oppressed; the sufferer; the outcast; the opponent; the barbarian who owns feelings and deserves rights. And that is because they did not, as a society, cultivate memory, or search out any historical metaphor to contain memory. (p. 66)

By way of contrast, Ozick claims the Jews have a rich tradition of history retained in the powerful metaphors and stories of the Old Testament, a history of suffering and oppression and a call to treat others better than they were treated themselves. While the intellectual tradition of the Western world is often thought to be grounded in the Judeo-Christian ethic, it seems as if the technical and bureaucratic rationality underlying the institutions and bureaucracies of the West is grounded more firmly in what Ozick claims to be the Hellenic lack of empathy for the other.

Georgina tells us that not only do the Others not have hearts, they have no ears. While ears enable us to perceive sound, metaphorically to have ears also refers to "sympathetic attention;" a definition which is synonymous with attention, awareness.⁴⁷ Thus, "to have ears" is transformed from the physical ability to hear sound to a capacity to attend through listening. To listen is to "hear something with thoughtful attention." While listening can be simply paying attention to sound, it also may imply that the audience is giving consideration to that which is being heard. Moreover to listen is "to be alert to catch unexpected sound."

In the Dene ideal, to have ears is to have the ability or inclination to take heed of the words of others. To seek, to listen, to hear, is to be teachable. Being willing to listen is a highly valued quality and is a characteristic of both good leaders and learners. The young are expected to listen when their elders are speaking. A common complaint about an errant child is that "he/she doesn't listen." Dene parents believe that the only power they have over their children is the power of words. "You must keep talking to your children, never give up talking to them--even if it seems as if they do not listen," people say.⁴⁸ Thus, in

the Dene ideal, the teacher's responsibility is to speak and to show while the learner's responsibility is to watch and to listen.⁴⁹

However, being able to listen is not the sole prerogative of learners. Leaders are also called to listen, to attend to the words and the nuances of meanings indirectly offered by the people of the community. In the world of the Others, leaders are obliged to listen and only then to take action, based on their own best judgment.⁵⁰ In the world of the Dene, leaders must listen because their role is not to govern, but to carry out the expressed wishes of the people. In Dene communities, many decisions (some of which might be thought trivial, such as choosing a delegate to the next conference or the new janitor for the Band office) are arrived at through various forms of consensus. Conversations about the issue at hand will be thoroughly discussed around the kitchen table of individual homes until a consensus on appropriate action begins to gel. Leaders must listen and participate in this decision-making process, which offers the opportunity for consensual agreement to be reached through a process of full discussion. Georgina, and the other Dene present, are confounded by the actions of the Others, for they seek to govern, but they do not listen to those they rule.

For Georgina, the world of the Others must be a world of utter solitude, one where people have neither hearts nor ears, and thus, cannot feel nor hear the voices of other worlds.

One World Shared by All

The Dene, the *de-né* are of the land: named of the land, coloured as the land, living on the land, Georgina reminds her audience. By extension of the metaphor, land becomes flesh. By their industrial actions, the Others are "tearing up the land" which feels "as if they are cutting our flesh."

Georgina calls into question the rights of humans--individuals or groups--to change the Earth. "Who made this world and thinks that he has the right to say what should be done on it?" she asks rhetorically. For the Dene, as well as for other indigenous North

Americans, humanity has no claim to the Earth. But our life on the Earth, as well as that which sustains our life, is a gift, a gift which we share with all other living things.

Georgina's question brings to the fore that it is only the Creator, by virtue of the act of making the Earth--of "bringing the mud here and there"--who has "the right to say what should be done" on the land.

Ultimately, human beings do not own the Earth; rather, they are called to share it with each other, the animals and the plants. "The Creator in granting land did not give the land to human beings only, but gave it to all living things," Leroy Little Bear reminded Berger (O'Malley, 1976, p. 240). The People are custodians of the Earth for the generations past and for the yet-to-be-born.

The Call to Authentic Discourse

Authentic discourse is characterized by both parties listening, hearing what the other is saying. It was this necessity to listen thoughtfully to what the other is saying that Georgina calls into question when she asks of the Others, "Do you have ears?" In Dene communicative praxis more responsibility is placed upon the listener to make sense of what is being said, than obligation upon the speaker to be direct about what he/she means. Rather, for the Dene to speak artfully is to be indirect, to offer metaphors and personal experience as expressions of meaning. Thoughtful speakers avoid offending the listener, both in their words and in the manner of their speaking.

Georgina's castigation of the actions of white people addresses the tension between the Dene ideal of right action and their experience of action by whites towards the Earth and all living creatures. Right action in the Dene ideal, that is, thoughtful, morally correct action, is preceded by open honest discourse in which both hearer and listener are sincere in their efforts to orient themselves to the common good.⁵¹ Georgina chides her audience for abdicating this principle of frank and open discussion, especially on such an important issue as the future of her people and their land.⁵²

For Georgina, actions, such as those of government and industry, which have been carried on "behind the people's backs" lack legitimacy. In the Dene ideal, thoughtful dialogue which seeks consensus ought to precede any action which potentially may affect the common good. The dialogue preceding consensual agreement is ideally conducted first in the private realm between individual members of the community, and then in a public forum where people put aside their individual differences and address the issue at hand for the good of all the people (Gallagher, 1988). Regardless of the forum, authentic discourse preceding right action is a form of public discussion which allows for a free flow of ideas and arguments and for participants to be free from any threat of domination, manipulation or control (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

From Georgina's perspective, then, the whites associated with this pipeline have no ears. The whites are not consulting the Dene people about issues which are central to their survival and way of life, and therefore do not hear their concerns. And for the Dene, this deafness signifies both an unwillingness to learn and an inability to provide morally defensible leadership.

What does it mean to be in different worlds when those two worlds come into each other's presence? What does it mean to be in the presence of the other? The Dene no longer live alone in their world. While at one time the Dene lived in the northern forests with only each other, the animals and the plants, for several decades they have lived their lives in the presence of the white people. The Berger Inquiry became an occasion for giving voice to the Dene critique of the actions of the Others, and perhaps discourse and actions which the Dene simply accepted in the past are now called into question. For the Dene, each action of the Others is experienced through the lens of the Dene ideal of proper social conduct, of morally correct action. It is in this way that Georgina lays before us the metaphor of the two solitudes and their inherent differences. She critiques the world of the Others as it is seen by the Dene through the veil of their own ideal of proper conduct.

The Dene world and the world of the Others are two solitudes, two societies which are in each other's presence and yet are alone and remote from each other. The two worlds are named differently, look differently, speak differently and live in the world differently. And yet both solitudes live in the same world, sharing the same earth, living in mutual obligation to one another, to the Earth and its Creator. Georgina offers a solution: each action on behalf of the *polis* and the earth, what Gough (1989) has called the *ecopolis*, must be preceded by authentic discourse. It is only through authentic discourse that the two solitudes can move into a single sphere of communicative praxis. Each action on behalf of the *ecopolis* must be mindful of the moral necessity of compassion and thoughtfulness, not only for ourselves, but for the others in our presence and for those yet to be in our presence, the yet-to-be-born.

Footnotes

³⁹Georgina delivered her testimony in her Dene language and the speech was interpreted by Mary Wilson. For easier reading, I have removed phrases such as "she says" and changed verb agreement where the interpreter chose to speak in the third rather than first person.

⁴⁰I would like to thank Fr. Rene Fumoleau (personal communication, Dec. 17, 1988) for offering his interpretation of the significance of "mud" and "naming" in this testimony.

⁴¹Two exceptions to this come to mind immediately: the missionaries and the early factors of the Hudson's Bay Company. The historical record shows that these folks went to great lengths to alleviate the periodic suffering of the Dene, especially due to starvation, although they may have had mixed motives in doing so. Georgina's remarks refer to the Dene's more recent experiences with whites: teachers, nurses, R.C.M.P., game officers, Indian Agents, and various other civil servants charged with managing the lives of the Dene.

⁴²We speak of winning another's *heart*, that is winning their love and affection. To have *heart* is to have courage, ardour. Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary, p. 559.

⁴³Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary, p. 268

⁴⁴It is particularly inappropriate to infer and speak of the motives or intentions of others (Gardner & Christian, 1977). Yet people are not entirely blameless for the state of their luck. Bad luck is typically brought about through careless actions and discourse which have brought offence to the spirit world. For an extensive discussion of the role of luck in the Dene world, see Nelson (1983).

⁴⁵Compassion begets responsibility when the less fortunate one is a relative, someone with whom you have an obligatory social relationship, or when you yourself are in a position of leadership or wealth and thus have both the obligation and resources to assist others. Anyone in poor clothes, who has recently suffered a loss or misfortune is "pitiful." It is to the pitiful that people more fortunate must reach out. This is especially true of one's own children or grandchildren.

⁴⁶Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1267

⁴⁷Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary, p. 697

⁴⁸Bopp (1985) interviewed many Dene elders about their pedagogical practices, and they consistently referred to the need to talk to one's children.

⁴⁹This type of teaching does not refer to training in technical skills, but to matters of the heart and mind: topics which academics might categorize as morality, politics, and history.

⁵⁰This notion of allocation of power and responsibility to individuals to make decisions on behalf of the collective runs counter to the delicate Dene balance between personal autonomy and consensual decision-making. That does not mean that the Dene do not allocate power and responsibility to individuals. What it means is that those individuals operate within very strict guidelines as to the scope and nature of action they can take on behalf of the collective. And typically it means that the plan of action has been previously agreed upon by the collective. The individual is only given the power and the responsibility to carry out the already agreed upon action. Of course, in reality things decisions are not always made in this manner. I am speaking of the ideal, and it is to this ideal that Georgina is speaking.

⁵¹We turn to Habermas to define an ideal speech situation, one in which the participants engage in a "cooperative search for the truth" (cited in Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 141). Habermas offered that an ideal speech situation is one in which it is accepted that "what is stated is *true*; secondly, that the utterance is *comprehensible*; thirdly, that the speaker is *sincere*; and finally that it is *right* for the speaker to be performing the speech act" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 141).

⁵²In pondering about what is going on in the white people's minds, Georgina implies that the whites are not being honest about their true feelings or intentions. They are not speaking what is on their minds, which is an important feature of consensual decision-making. Ironically, Berger set the process of the community hearings to be just like that--to have the representatives of the pipeline, the lawyers and commission staff off to one side--with his chair and table front and centre. The representatives of the hearings were there only to answer questions raised by the community, and they spoke only when Berger requested them to do so. At the Aklavik hearings, one of the participants asked Berger to have the pipeline representatives sit right out in front where everybody could see them. Berger refused; given his renowned sense of justice, perhaps he did not want the pipeline representatives to feel as if they were on trial.

However, from the perspective of Georgina and others, this format reinforced the notion of a plot--white people were in collusion with one another to rob the Dene of their land, and they were doing this "behind our back."

CHAPTER FIVE

THE WORLD OF IN-BETWEEN

FLORENCE BARNABY

My name is Florence Barnaby.

I was born and raised in Good Hope. I went to school in Inuvik for a year, then to Yellowknife for a couple of years. After I quit school I worked in Inuvik for a few years, came back here and got married.

I lived in Colville Lake for two years, after two years in Colville Lake I came back here to live. Today I see a lot of changes in such a short time. Now, after I see all these changes, I planned to bring up my children in the bush and teach them ourselves so they can learn the ways of our people. By this I mean teach them to make a living off the land.

Life was good here in Good Hope when there was very few white people, and mostly because people make their living off the land. They lived in the bush most of the time. Some people came in at Christmas and New Year's for celebrations and supplies to go back in the bush. Some people also came in at Easter and back for spring hunt til the middle of June, and back to the fish camp for summer.

I can remember back when there was more people in the fish camp than in town. When the people gather at Christmas, Easter and June, and August 15th, they used to have dances, drum dances, fiddle dances and sometimes stick gambling. There was no liquor involved in these occasions.

For winter recreations or sports we used to slide down. They were young and old people, there was no generation gap like today. Some evenings we used to listen to some old people tell us legend stories, and for summer we used to play ball, which we call boys and girls. We played ball just about every day or evening, and the men for recreation or sports used to play a game called Le-sal. Today it's called soccer. And that time there was no sport committee involved like today.

Children and adults used to help their parents with wood for fire, water or ice. The girls help with the housework and in the bush the girls help for wood and branches for floor in the tent, what needs to be done the work, the girls always helped. Also preparing of moose hide to be tanned.

Lately children are brought up in the hostel and in town we depend on the older woman to fix our moose hide for us. Boys, as soon as old enough, also help the father, hunting and trapping and working. This kind of life, the children are prepared for their future. This way the children had some respect for their parents. Like I said before, today I see a big change in such a short time. Too many developments, like opening of schools, hostels, liquor store. The moving in of the Territorial Government, who thought they were doing something good, brought in rental houses and welfare. Since all this started it's just destroying our way of life.

The hostels and schools taught only the white man's way of life, no Dene culture. Sending children away from home brought up the children only the white man's way, which turned the children to a mixed up and confused way of life. Can they make a living off the land? Can they make a living the white man's way? No. To me we are stuck between two ways of life and today we have school advisory board, the Territorial Government's budget, at least one third of it goes to education, and still that advisory board gets only \$1,800.00 for the whole fiscal year for Dene cultural. I don't think this is enough and it's not fair, because the majority here, the native children that go to school are native people, children.

The opening of alcohol to the Dene people, were the people consulted enough? No. It brought nothing but trouble, it did the people no good. When alcohol first opened, people used to drink but not like today. They used to drink, they knew they had to sober up because they had to get wood for fire, water or ice and hunt for food to eat, but since the moving in of the Territorial Government, they brought in rental houses and welfare. It made us depend on the government.

In rental houses, for those of us that drink, we can drink as long as we want to, maybe weeks, months. We don't have to worry about wood or water or ice. If we are hungry, welfare is there to help us. Long ago, there was welfare, which we called ration, which was given to widows and old people and T.B. patients. It was given to T.B. patients only after they came back from the hospital.

The education, the way it was introduced and taught, the opening of alcohol, the rental houses, welfare, seismic company, is enough to destroy our way of life. What will the pipeline do? Destroy our way of life and our land and open up the north for white people. They will take over and run everything, just like in Smith, Yellowknife and Simpson and Hay River. We will be pushed aside and be forgotten.

Today in the N.W.T., the majority is native people. Still today we don't have control over what goes on. I'll give you one example: The Dene people this summer in Simpson had general assembly for Indian Brotherhood and Metis Association. They wanted the liquor store and bar closed. It was over-ruled by the white people, to serve the owners of bars. To me, the white people are here only to make money. If they are here to help us, especially the Territorial Government, they should listen to us, give us control over what goes in our land and our life, and support us for our land claims.

As a Dene, our ways are different than that of a white man, I say very different. To me their only goal is wealth. They are not free and happy like us. If the white man is happy in their way of life, why are some of them turn to being hippies, drug addicts and alcoholics? We the Dene people are free and happy.

Many times I hear people, old people talking of the good times. They always refer back to the time long ago, before all these development came. Sure they were tough times but we were happy people. Today we live an easier life and people are not happy because all this development is disturbing our way of life.

That's all I have to say for now. Thank you. (Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts, 1975, Vol. C-18, pp. 2016-2020)

Florence's text calls into question "What is it to live in the world of in-between?"

While the entire text addresses this question, Florence points us directly to the issue when she asks rhetorically of her own people, "Can they make a living off the land? Can they make a living the white man's way?" And she answers "No. To me we are stuck between two ways of life . . ."

Florence's text discloses the many-faceted world of in-between which finds the Dene lodged in the time, space and interval separating two time periods, two worlds and two ways of life. First, through her exploration of the ways of the Dene in their recent past, Florence discloses that modern Dene are no longer of the past. The world of the Dene past has been changed by the intrusion of the Others. The Dene cannot return to a primeval past untouched by the social and institutional practices of the Others. And this is where the tension dwells, for as Florence's text illustrates, the Dene are not of the present either. Powerless in their own land, dwelling in dependency and intoxication, they exist in the absence of the present moment.

This world in between the past and the present is interwoven with their world in between the presence and the absence of the Others. Their entire way of life has been inextricably altered, if not skewed, by the presence of the Others in the Dene past and present. Any future the Dene may wish to carve for themselves must now be negotiated with the Others, and will undoubtedly carry the brand of Western social, political and institutional practices. Yet the presence of the Others in the lives of the Dene is elusive. Rarely living in the presence of the Dene, whites are primarily an invisible force; these countless, faceless, nameless people living in far away places are taking actions with which the Dene must live.

Thus, the Dene live in between many worlds, and Florence's text points us both towards the intertwining worlds of their life in between the presence and absence of their own past and lifeways, as well as their life in between the presence and absence of the Others. From her text we begin to see that it is from this variegated space of in-between

that the Dene and the Others must sculpture a way-of-being with each other which is authentic.

The Significance of the Past

Florence's text calls us to see how the Dene people live in the presence and yet in the absence of their own past: in the presence and the absence of the history and social practices which inform their actions and their discourse. A deep tension dwells here, for to live in the absence of the past, often unconscious of its sway of influence in our present being, is also to live in the presence of the past. The history of our language, institutions and social practices is the backdrop to our performance of discourse and action. Florence's discourse holds out her conscious reflection on the past, that which is recollected and brought to the fore with language. Yet lurking behind her words are meanings which are perhaps concealed to her, yet signify her history as woman, wife, mother, and more within the Dene world.⁵³ In this way Florence, like all of us, lives in the absence of her own past.

Thus, Florence's text calls us to question, what is the significance of the past? What meaning does it hold? Florence begins with an unfolding of a single recollection of a past way of life far more desirable than the present. She recalls the ideal of the past, a recalling which must not be judged as empirical fact but be understood as a model, an ideal to guide the Dene as they live their lives in the presence and absence of the Others. Florence critiques the present dwelling place of the Dene, and of the young people in particular, grounding her critique in the significance of the past. Her recollection of the past points to the place which is in between the presence and absence of the past.

Florence recalls that the past offered a time when the Dene lived in the bush more than they lived in town. What does it mean to live in the bush? What does this phrase signify? Is *in the bush* a geographical location, or a metaphor for a way of life? Historically, there was no place but the bush. All the Dene homeland, all the world was the bush. It is in the bush, on the land, where the Dene are still in control of their lives. They are at home in the

bush. It has been the one aspect of their lives where they have retained a great deal of control. The People say, "There's no boss in the bush." However, with the coming of the Others and the building of the forts⁵⁴ and settlements,⁵⁵ the People have come to live primarily in sedentary communities, travelling only occasionally to the bush rather than living in it permanently. In the communities, the towns and the forts, the Dene have lost control over their lives. Their children are now raised in hostels (or raised by parents who themselves grew up in residential schools) and are indoctrinated by the values of the Others in the schools. Many no longer own their homes; some barely feed their families.

Florence tells the story of the past within her memory, a time when the People followed the seasonal round, their movement on the land in harmony with the symphony of the seasons. She recollects that during these times "coming into town" was a time of special significance. These assemblies of the People had become a unique salmagundi combining the holy events of the Roman Catholic calendar, modern Dene practices of communion "dances, drum dances, fiddle dances and sometimes stick gambling," and the annual re-commitment to the covenants of the treaties. These were times of celebration of oneness and bonding as a community.⁵⁶

Play, too, is a celebration of life.⁵⁷ Through Florence's recollections, we can imagine children, women and men, young and old alike, sliding down snow-covered hills and riverbanks; opposing teams of men and women eagerly pursuing a moss-filled ball through summer grasses grown tall in the perpetual daylight. The People, old and young, female and male, were unified through their play and their laughter. Florence's words beckons us to recall the significance of playfulness in our lives, and the origins of the word *play* in the Middle Dutch *pleyen*, to leap for joy. We are called to leap beyond the hardships and the struggle of life, to seek joy through playfulness.

Hara (1980) observed almost three decades ago, the Dene make a distinction between work, *?eghálayedai* and play, *rágots'eyie*.⁵⁸ While much of what needs to be done to "make a living," things such as hunting, trapping, fishing, sewing, tanning hides,

collecting and chopping wood is clearly considered work, activities like cooking, picking berries and attending school are more like play than work. Real play, however, is "fun," and has included playing games, story telling, dancing, making music, visiting, picnicking, and feasting. Traditional play also included more organized, competitive and skill-testing activities such as gambling, wrestling, axe throwing, and archery. Yet Florence recalls activities, like ball throwing and tobogganing, which were for the most part unorganized and non-competitive.

Hara's (1980) description of the ball game of which Florence speaks offers a sense of the spontaneity and joyousness captured in the moments of a game such as this:

Unmarried boys and girls often play together catching ball during the summer evenings in town or fish camps. Any number of people may join this game. In town the crowd sometimes numbers 40 or more. One softball made of stuffed leather or cloth is thrown from one person to another, according to the thrower's whim. The crowd is neither divided into teams nor is there any bordered ground within which the players have to remain. This is not a competitive game; there is no winning or losing, and no goals through which the players try to throw the ball. Rather, each person who has the ball for a moment derives pleasure from the exhibition of his [sic] skill in making clever passes to deceive those who also hope to catch the ball, or he [sic] may use the chance to throw it to a sweetheart or partner. Any person may leave or join the game at any time. Married people and small children often watch the game with joy, making satirical or humorous comments. (pp. 197-198)

Florence's text warns of the creeping bureaucratization of play in the life of the modern Dene. Modern play of the people has become different, segregated, and organized. The new "sports" activities assume shades of organization and offer less opportunity for playfulness. The playfulness between the sexes and the generations lived out in the non-competitive games of the past are being replaced by competitive teams and individual sports which are organized by a "sports committee" or by a paid worker from Band Office. Hand games (traditional game of gambling which combines psychology, luck, power, and Dene drumming) is replaced by Bingo and large poker games. Ball games and "sliding" seem

overshadowed by organized "sports days" and team sports. As bureaucratization creeps into the Dene world, play slides into "recreation," becoming another arena of conflict seeking consensus.

A sense of community is also regenerated by a deep sense of the caring for the other, a caring demonstrated in the actions of one to others. Florence recalls the deep caring for the other which has been so much a part of Dene social and pedagogical practices. "Children and adults used to help their parents with wood for fire, water or ice," Florence recalls. Her words invite us to reflect on what it means *to help* others in our presence. Florence's remembrances of the People helping one another is oriented towards children.

Traditionally, Dene children learned early in their lives a deep moral responsibility to others. The well-being of individuals, as well as families and the entire collective, hinged on individuals learning and meeting their responsibilities to the others in their presence. Dene children of all ages were called upon to aid and assist their parents in the variety of tasks of daily living: housework, preparing moosehide, collecting spruce branches for tent floors, collecting firewood and drinking water, hunting and trapping. Thus, *to help* is to be directed to the others in our presence.

For Florence, helping is more than a selfless act. Through helping others, children "are prepared for the future." They learn "respect for their parents" as well as skills which will ensure their own well-being. Thus, the action of helping embodies doing what is fitting for the other in our presence. Teaching becomes showing others what is fitting; what is fitting can only be taught by showing.

As we have discussed previously, to be respectful is an important ideal for the Dene way. Each person is summoned to be respectful of many others. To be respectful of the privacy and autonomy of individual action is held in the highest regard, as is appreciation for the Earth and all living beings. To be respectful in one's discourse and actions avoids offence and thus seeks harmony, while to offend others, intentionally or not, is to court retribution from both the human and spiritual forces permeating the universe. In both

words and deeds, the People must take care not to offend the other. Homage is paid to each new body of water on which one must travel; small bits of tobacco or pennies are offerings of reverence for nature and its power over human mortality. Hunters offer prayers to slain animals, prayers of thanks, as well as assurances that the death was necessary and thoughtful (Hughes, 1983).⁵⁹ Thus, in the Dene ideal humans must act respectfully to all living beings with whom they share the Earth, as well as to the Earth itself.

To Depend on (the) Others

The [Dene] children's . . . experience seem to develop in them a feeling towards Whites of dependency without love.

Hiroko Sue, 1965, p. 49

Through Florence's recollection of the past, we have begun to discern the special significance of personal histories, of the lives of the generations which have gone before, both for the communicative practices of the Dene and for us all. However, Florence's response to the past holds a critical moment. As we have seen, she holds up the Dene's traditional way of play and critiques its modern lapse into forms of organized "recreation." Next, Florence offers a more extended critique of the Dene slide into dependence on the government.

Florence's text discloses some of what the Dene have lost living in the presence of the Others. The deep moral obligation to the well-being of the collective, which children learned by helping others, is being replaced by dependency on the Others. Florence laments the seduction of the Dene into increasing dependency on alcohol and government social programs: public housing, public schooling and welfare. Residential schooling, as well as public day schooling, has vainly attempted to prepare Dene children for another life: not the life of the bush, not the Dene way, but the way of the Others. Those valuable years, when children would have apprenticed with capable adults gaining the experiences necessary to live the Dene way, have been spent in "hostels" and classrooms. Young Dene returning from school, unskilled in the traditional ways of the People, become dependent

on the elders to do for them what they cannot do for themselves. Florence regretfully discloses, "Lately children are brought up in the hostel and in town we depend on the older woman to fix our moose hide for us."⁶⁰ The irony is that in the Dene ideal, the elders should be able to depend on the young.

Florence's critique of the present beckons us to explore what it means to *depend* on others. *Depend* comes from the Latin *dependere*, "to hang from, hang down; be dependent on," which is formed from *de-* and *pendere*, "to hang, be suspended, float, hover, depend on." While in previous times, *depend* retained the notion of being literally suspended, in its more modern usage it is defined as "to rest entirely *on, upon* for maintenance, support, supply, or what is needed; to have to rely *upon*; to be a burden *upon*, to be sustained by; to be dependent *on*."⁶¹ Thus, an image is formed: we see the Dene becoming inextricably ensnarled in the lifeworld of the Others, suspended by invisible, sticky fibres which bind the People to the government, towns, schools, rental houses and monthly cheques. The Dene have found themselves entangled in an infinite web of helping, smothering in a cocoon of dependency.

This text points to another sphere of their lifeworld where the Dene dwell in tension: technology. Technology is "the totality of means employed to provide objects necessary for human sustenance and comfort."⁶² Throughout the history of their presence with the Others, the Dene have adapted Western technology to their lifeways. They have sought out and relished those devices which enhanced their nomadic life on the land. For example, with the advent of dog sleds, snowmobiles, and later airplanes, the People have travelled and roamed over greater and greater expanses of the land. Thus, technology has enhanced mobility, a lustrous thread in the texture of the Dene ideal of personal freedom.

Yet a new role for technology emerges: that of easing people's comfort. Florence's recollection illustrates how certain technological advancements, available through government programs, have eased the People's urgency to be industrious. She points out for her audience, "In rental houses, for those of us who drink, we can drink as long as we

want to, maybe weeks, months. We don't have to worry about wood, or water or ice." For people living in the boreal forest without running water and central heating, "going for wood, water or ice" were unrelenting chores frequently requiring daily attention.⁶³ Such necessities left little time for continuous drunkenness.

Florence reminds us that while government housing and municipal services (at highly subsidized rates) have eased these hardships, the people are becoming dependent upon the comforts technology provides. The above definition of *technology* implies that once invented and put in use, technology becomes a necessity; we come to depend upon it. The comforts and ease of virtually free central heating and water delivery are lulling the Dene into dependency on the Others.

Thus, we see that the People live their lives in the presence of the Others, of their ways of helping and of their technology. The Dene find themselves in the present, in a field of tension between dependency on the Others and the freedom on the land. Florence reminds us that when Dene elders speak of the "good times," they are speaking of a world and a time when they were free of dependence on the Others. "Sure they were tough times," Florence admits, "but we were happy people. Today we live in an easier life and people are not happy . . ." Ironically, the convenience of technology and security of government programs has not brought happiness. The freedom of their life in the bush has been forsaken for a more sedentary and yet secure way of life. The People are freed from the law of the land and are imprisoned in government homes by government programs.

The Dene live in a "field of tension and a play of opposition" (Schrag, 1986, p. 207-208) between helping and dependency, a tension arising from the opposition between right and wrong, between good and bad dependence. While in the Dene ideal, collective life requires dependence upon the other in our presence, this dependence is one which arises from mutual obligation and caring. In the world of the past, Dene children learned to help and care for others, out of respect and obligation to the others in their presence and for the survival of the People and the Earth upon which they lived. In this way, dependence upon

the other in one's presence is ultimately good; it is the fitting response in the space where we share our life with others.

Yet their sharing of their space with the Others has led the Dene into a different kind of dependence, one in which there is no reciprocity. In the beginning, when the two worlds first encountered one another, there was simultaneously a magnetic attraction and repulsion which kept the two worlds in pseudo-equilibrium, equidistant and interdependent. The Others depended on the Dene for their labour (for the fur trade), as well as for their knowledge of the land and how to survive on it. In return, the Others came bearing an ever-increasingly sophisticated technology, and eventually their institutionalized forms of caring, which the Dene adapted into their lifeways.

Over time the axes of the two worlds have shifted; the magnetic fields have gone awry. No longer in mutual interdependence, the Dene have come to depend upon the Others, their technology, their institutions and their social practices. If the Others gain control over the land, any fragment of mutual dependence remaining between the two worlds will dissipate. Such dependency lacks mutual obligation and reciprocity, and leads to abuses of power and to the insertion of hierarchical relations into social and institutional life.

Florence's text calls into question what it means to be dependent, and in what ways dependence can be good. Dependence upon the other in our presence is fitting when actions towards the other are reciprocated through words and deeds born of mutual obligation and caring. It is this elemental caring for the other (in our presence) which is so markedly absent from communicative practices between the Dene and the Others. It is the elemental caring for the other (in our presence) which ought to guide our journey through the variegated world in between helping and dependency.

The Ideal of Proper Action

Interspersed through Florence's recollections of the past life of the People, and their present dwelling in dependency, is a critique of the actions of the Others. She reminds us that with neither sufficient thought nor discourse (with the Dene), the government brought

liquor into the lifeworld of the People. Often thinking "they were doing something good," the Others imposed their way of educating the young and caring for the less fortunate. Now, the Others threaten to invade the Dene world more deeply by injuring the land with massive industrial development. Florence prophesies that such actions threaten to "Destroy our way of life and our land and open up the north for the white people. They will take over and run everything. . . . We will be pushed aside and forgotten."

Florence's prediction reflects the collective experience of the Dene. White people, by their very nature, wish to control others in their presence. The Others have entered the world of the Dene; they have assumed possession of the land, and have assumed responsibility for the lives of the People living on that land. When the Dene have protested these actions, the Others have pushed them aside. Florence's text offers numerous examples of how Dene concerns have been over-ruled by the interests, primarily economic, of the Others.

Florence's critique of the actions of the Others is grounded in the Dene ideal of right action, and her text entices us to explore what might be this ideal of right action, especially when such actions affect the common good of the People. Florence asks her audience, "The opening of alcohol, were the people consulted enough?"⁶⁴ Her words echo the resounding cry for consultation heard throughout the Berger texts, and in discourse between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples from the time of the first treaties through to the present. What does it mean to *consult* others? The English word *consult* originates from the past participle of the Latin verb *consulere* which mean "to deliberate, counsel, consult."⁶⁵ Thus, Florence's critique of the actions of the Others returns us to the originative idea of consultation, to an ideal of action where people are called upon to deliberate together seeking "a common orientation among the hearers within a situation calling for responsible judgement and action" (Schrag, 1986, p. 183).

Near its conclusion, Florence's text slides from critique into instruction. She offers an illustration of what right action, preceded by authentic discourse, might look like in this

particular context. "If they are here to help us, especially the Territorial Government, they should listen to us, give us control over what goes on in our land and our life, and support us for our land claims."⁶⁶ Georgina Tobac's text illuminated the significance of "listening" in the Dene ideal of authentic discourse and action. To listen is to pay attention to and to heed the other; right action must be preceded by thoughtful listening. Yet Florence's instruction moves beyond deliberation, which might be born of conflict, to support and acceptance, which is born of consensus. She calls for the government to support the Dene in their land claims. Inherent in this call for support, we see a return to the Dene ideal of leadership. For the Dene, to provide leadership is to offer one's personal wisdom, but not at the expense of the wishes and wisdom of others. To provide leadership means to find and follow a course of action which reflects the consensus of the collective, which is oriented towards the common good, and which balances respect for the personal autonomy of individuals with the needs of the collective. As with everyone else, leaders are called to listen to others; they should not attempt to control people, but rather should allow people to be responsible for their own lives. Thus, to achieve political consensus before engaging in action is the Dene ideal. However, once deliberation has concluded and a course of action agreed upon, right action is called for again. Each is called to "support" the other in their efforts to do what is right for the *ecopolis*.

Florence's text beckons each of us to reflect on our actions with the other in our presence. We are called to support others in their efforts to do what is right, to ground our actions in authentic discourse, and to ensure our actions in the presence of the other are morally correct.

To Be Free

Recollections of the past help us discern a fitting response to the present and to sculpt creative responses to the future. Florence begins her speech with a recollection of the past: her remembrance of the People's former freedom. In the circularity of Dene rhetoric, Florence draws her speech to a close by returning us to the beginning: a call to freedom.

Florence reaffirms the essential difference between the Dene and the Others: "As a Dene, our ways are different than that of a white man, I say very different. To me their only goal is wealth. They are not free and happy like us. . . We the Dene people are free and happy."

Florence's declaration calls us to question, what does it mean to be free? The word *free*, an old Anglo-Saxon word appearing in the English language before the 12th Century, has accumulated variegated meanings with time. To be free is to enjoy "personal freedom: not subject to the control or domination of another." This is the ultimate of the Dene ideal: "no boss." Ideally, individuals are free to follow the dictates of their own will, without interference from fellow citizens. In the Dene ideal, leaders, parents, and grandparents point others towards right action: perhaps through illustration, perhaps through example. Yet upon hearing the story or observing the model action, each is free to decide his/her own course of action, abiding by the consequences. Thus, the Dene ideal intersects with a second but related meaning of *free*: "not determined by anything beyond its own nature or being: choosing or capable of choosing for itself; determined by the choice of the actor or performer."⁶⁷

However, the ideal of Dene freedom precludes license. Interrelationships to one another and the Earth through intricate webs of affiliation and mutual obligation, as well as a dedication to the survival of the collective and of the planet, limit the extent of anyone's personal freedom. Florence's text addresses the question of collective rather than personal freedom.

Florence proclaims the Dene to be free and their ways different from the white man all in a single breath. The poetic juxtaposition of these two ideas casts a slightly different illumination on the meaning of freedom. To be *free* is also to be "exempt, relieved or released from something unpleasant or burdensome,"⁶⁸ and for the Dene that release comes from being free of the ways of the Others. Thus, to be free is to be spared from the lifeways of the Others, their social practices and institutional practices, their traditions, habits and customs.⁶⁹

Yet further ruminations disclose that to be *free* is not only freedom from (others), it is freedom to be (Dene). Thus, Florence's text beckons us to see the boundless differences between the Dene and the Others as a cause for celebration and hope. From the world of in-between in which these differences dwell, we are called to a new vision of what it means to be free. To be free is to live on this Earth and with each other in a symbiotic, rather than an exploitative way. To be free is to educate one's young and to care for one's sick and destitute in a respectful and thoughtful manner. To be free is to speak and act authentically with the other in our presence.

Footnotes

⁵³As Schrag (1986) notes, "communicative praxis is infected with forgotten speech acts and forgotten social practices. There are meanings that lurk behind that which is delivered up through the manifest memory of our linguistic and social practices" (p. 174). A deep interpretation of discourse and action "requires a radical reflection that is able to track the place of forgotten memories and distorted motivations in the life of the decentred subject and to discern the opaqueness and concealment that remains embedded in the conversation of mankind" (p. 175).

⁵⁴Perhaps "fortress" would be a more fitting word; a fortress which buttressed the way of life of the Others from the bush and the Dene who lived there, and which became a bastion to a way of life that was to claim victory in the end.

⁵⁵That the people lived on the land is an historical fact retained in the northern use (primarily by whites) of the word "settlements" to refer to the small northern communities. Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary defines a settlement as "a place or region newly settled; a small village." Most Dene refer to their home "settlements" as "communities."

⁵⁶John Goddard (1985, April) writes, "Once an alien intruder among the Hareskins, the church had come to be regarded as a reminder of simpler times, when Easter meant a time to gather at the fort, cash in one's furs, and celebrate the promise of spring" (p. 52).

⁵⁷"Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do. . . . Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do" (Mark Twain, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer).

⁵⁸Spellings taken from Rice (1978). However, I assume responsibility for any orthographic errors.

⁵⁹We must be mindful that for the Dene, adherence to such practices are individualistic rather than ritualistic.

⁶⁰See Chapter 1 for a brief description of the significance of the moose in the life of the Dene.

⁶¹ From QED, 207-208.

⁶² Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1211

⁶³ "Going for wood" is a continuous chore of going to the bush and locating, chopping and hauling dry wood back to town. The community ethic of sharing, and disinclination to accumulation of goods, militates against individuals squirreling away a year's worth of firewood at a time. Thus for those people who have remained in their own homes, and are unable to afford the exorbitant price of heating fuel, gathering wood remains an unrelenting chore. The same used to be true for water. In the winter, the people hauled ice from the creek to melt for water, while in recent years, water is delivered to homes with a water truck.

⁶⁴ Prior to an amendment to the Indian Act in 1961, it was illegal for registered Indians to consume alcohol. Florence's phrase the "opening of alcohol" refers to the lifting of this ban. Shortly after the Berger Inquiry, Fort Good Hope as well as several other communities attempted to control local alcohol consumption by introducing local prohibition. Many people used to speak of the 1970s as a time when liquor consumption was completely out of control, with several chartered planes a day arriving with caseloads of liquor, keeping much of the community intoxicated for days at a time. Moreover, liquor is distributed at government outlets throughout the N.W.T. at a single fixed price, heavily subsidized by the territorial government. This issue was addressed more than once during the Berger Inquiry. "How can we tolerate a government which subsidizes liquor but not milk?" was the question asked.

⁶⁵ Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary, p. 282

⁶⁶ From her phrase "give us control," we might discern that right action is a process of one party giving the other control over their lives. This has shades of "empowerment," a particularly popular word in current educational discourse. Florence's admonition, as well as the term "empowerment," assume that one has control over the other in the first place. In authentic action and discourse, ideally each stands equal before the other, making the notion of "returning control" contradictory. However, when power relations within a communicative situation have become unbalanced, perhaps the first step in adjusting the scales is for those most heavily laden with power to shift control and responsibility for the other back to themselves.

⁶⁷ Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary, p. 490

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ An imaginary Greek chorus to Florence's text might rejoin:

We are free of your history;

free of your lifestyle;

free of your alienation from the spirit world and the land;

free of your slavery to possessions and personal wealth,

*your slavery to time,
your slavery to rigidity in personal relationships,
your slavery to personal appearances,
to perfectionism and to ceaseless working.*

Most of all,

We are free of your seriousness about life and all that it brings.

CHAPTER SIX
FOR OUR CHILDREN

EDDIE COOK⁷⁰

Mr. Berger, I haven't got a brief, but I am going to be as brief as I could.

My name is Eddie Cook, and I'm 60 years old. I was born and brought up in Good Hope. I was brought up partly in the old ancient ways, where you have got to struggle and find ways to make your own living off the land, such as -- the system we used, like a young boy growing up, not allowed, not supposed to eat certain foods because it affect his physical condition. Certain foods, parts of animals, certain berries, and you can't even lay down on the branches and boughs you have in your tent. You have got to sit on your toes; if you are going to lay down, you lay down and go to bed, that's it.

I remember how I was only 6 years old when I first had my dog teams, two dogs, and I was taught to make a living off the country, the land and just to start with, I set the rabbit snares. I went and set my rabbit snares, say maybe about half a mile, about four or five snares, and the next morning, I got up and my dad yells at me, we were living in the tent, it could have been 40 below for all we know, it's cold, he said get up and go see the snares, get something to eat for breakfast, and we had all kinds of meat in the tent at home, but that was the way of living, you know, that is the way we were brought up. I wasn't the only one, there were many others besides me. I went over, I got up, set the fire -- lit the fire, the stove and set off in the dark to see my snares, and I was pretty -- it was kind of creepy, dark you know and a child is afraid to go in the dark and I was glad when I reached my last snares, and when I opened the snares I happened to catch two rabbits and I really made a B-line for the tent on the way back. And so forth, and my dad showed me how to set things like snares and such -- ways of catching fur-bearing animals, and that's what I was taught,

and right now I can truly say I can go out and trap -- I'm going to go and catch fur-bearing animals without a steel trap. I can go and catch fish without fish nets.

Well afterwards, I was sent down to Aklavik, that was in 1926. And I was brought in -- I was forced to learn a foreign language and learn the foreign culture. That was the English language, and I was forbidden to speak my own tongue, of which I am always proud of.

Well eventually after I finished my -- after spending five years at the R.C. Mission School, there was no holiday leave, you stay right there. You go in there and you come out when you finish. Then after 1933 I went out to Edmonton to go to what you call high school and I completed my grade 12 and graduated in 1939, and then after I wanted to further my studies and I completed my studies to study my theological studies, but due to my poor health, I had to relinquish my ideas, my ideals.

Then I came back and worked for various companies like Anderson Oil, then for the Hudson Bay Transport and then with Imperial Oil. I was working with the Canol project, and then I came back here and managed a store for the -- one of the local -- Gabriel Kakfwi who had a trading post then, I managed it for three years. Afterwards I went trapping but while trapping I had an offer to work for the Indian Agency in Northern Alberta and I accepted that, and I worked 13 years with them. But that call of the wild, the urge to go back to the country, to the land, my land. Why did I go back to my land? Because I love and respect my land, and my land was my supplier of food, it was my teacher, my land taught me. It taught me education which I could not learn in the white man's books.

Regarding the pipeline, well actually we all know there will be a great influx of strangers for the construction of this pipeline, and the consequences that would take place after, not after, even during the construction. Like meeting those strangers with different ideas, will be a bad influence on the local people. The way they say, the way they act, I know it would be great danger to our children.

There is a possibility there could be a break in the pipeline, you or anybody could say, "Oh it may happen once in a hundred years". Well, after you complete your construction it could happen in a hundred hours, but what I have -- why I agree with the people, the Dene people of the Territories, say they don't want any pipeline until the land claim is settled, and that's my wish too and I want, because we have been the inhabitants of this land for hundreds, maybe thousands of years, before any white man set foot on our land. And furthermore, we have never given our land. You may chop a tree, tree number 11, we never seeded the land.⁷¹ We never give up our land.

My Grandfather, he was the one -- a lot of the local residents told me, my grandfather when the Indian Commissioner put the money across the table, he said "This is your money for your land". He says "Is that for my land?" He said "No, we want to be good friends". Well okay, that's good friends. "What will I do", he says, "Protect yourself, protect your land". "Well what would I do if I see a white man coming on my land?" "Well you just go and shoot him", that's what he said.

Therefore, bearing this in mind, I fully agree and always up to I die that I do not want any pipeline until a land settlement has been completed. And regarding the influx of strangers, I know what consequences that occurred, took place when the U.S. Army came to the Northwest Territories, especially at Fort Smith. Many homes were broken, married husbands -- wives leaving their husbands and so forth, and it so happens now at Fort Smith, you have not only browner people but even black people at Fort Smith.

Like I said, I love and respect my land. I recall the ways I was brought up and could make a living out of this country, so I tell and teach my children how to make a living out of the land by saying "This is how your grandfather said and taught me", and I'm wishing and I'm hoping that in the years to come, that one day my

children will say to their children, "This is how your grandfather taught me to make a living off the land".

I thank you. (Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, 1975, Vol. C-20, pp. 2035-2039)

From the threads of Eddie's story, we are able to discern a moral: the importance of envisioning the future in terms of our children and the quality of their dwelling on this Earth. Such a future bespeaks the moral necessity of teaching our children how to dwell on the Earth so that the human race will survive. Eddie's text calls into question the present alienation of humankind from the very Earth which gives life itself, an alienation which is threatening the existence of humankind. By virtue of its own circularity, this text points towards the circularity of life and bids us to recognize that the renewal of that circle is dependent upon human commitment to dwelling in a respectful relationship with each other and with the Earth.

The orienting question brought to the reading of these texts has been, "What is it that is going on in this person's testimony?" In other words, what is this person's experience of being human and being Dene, and in what way is that experience disclosed in these texts? Eddie's text yields new insight into this question by addressing a number of further questions. His text calls us to ask, "What does it mean to grow up in the ancient way?" or "What was the ancient way of teaching and learning?" "What does it mean to be respectful of those in one's presence?" and "What is the ideal relationship between humans and the Earth they live on?" Finally, he beckons us to consider "What is the fitting response, the right orientation to the future?"

The Ancient Way

Our Dene Nation is like this great river. It has been flowing before any of us can remember. We take our strength and our wisdom and our ways from the flow and direction that has been established for us by ancestors we never knew, ancestors of a thousand years ago.

Frank T'Seleie, Fort Good Hope (Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, 1975, Vol.C-18, p. 1778).

Long before the arrival of the whites and their educational institutions, the Dene nurtured and educated their young. Teachers and caregivers were people from within the matrix of the extended family, while the classroom was the entire expanse of the boreal forest. Eddie's text makes no attempt to romanticize his early education, nor to downplay

the urgency with which difficult lessons had to be learned. Life and death hung in the interstices between lessons learned and those lessons forgotten, or never learned at all.⁷² Eddie's story of his early upbringing in the "old ancient ways" invites us to return to this epoch of the Dene past in search of the ideals in which such an upbringing was grounded and the ways in which the past might inform the present.

Eddie's early experiences beckon us to gaze thoughtfully upon the pedagogy of the "ancients." Dene youth, Eddie's text reminds us, were deprived of certain foods, rest and relaxation. At an early age, they learned to overcome fear; to perform demanding, life-sustaining tasks; to endure cold and hunger without complaint. In wisdom wrought from experience and preserved through tradition, the ancients understood that life in accord with the laws of the land exacts discipline and strength. Discipline over their own bodies attuned them to their own physical being, as well as to the physical being of others in their presence. Thus, hardiness, endurance, and strength were the goals of the early training and were part of children's everyday life.⁷³

The Dene ideal of discipline also embraces the larger social realm of being the subject in the presence of the other. In the traditional pedagogical practices to which Eddie's text points, discipline merges with an underlying ethic of hard work and industriousness. In the Dene ideal, each citizen of the *polis* ought to contribute, as they are able, to the common good. To be lazy is one of the greatest character defects in the Dene ideal, as individual well-being is contingent upon the complementary interdependency of all members of the *ecopolis* in the holistic space of dwelling. Inaction, when action is the fitting response, suggests a disrespect for the others in one's presence.

A deep desire for harmonious dwelling with others--in the isolation of small family camps and now in small isolated communities--invokes thoughtfulness in one's discourse and action. Thoughtless deeds may bring offence to the others in one's immediate presence and beyond. Staring provokes a challenge (Guédon, 1974).⁷⁴ Neglecting to visit another suggests deliberate avoidance and anger (Hara, 1980). Careless actions of menstruating

females offend animals and their spirits, bringing "bad luck" to hunters (Guédon, 1974). In "the ancient way," one's actions ought to be oriented to the common good, seeking harmony through respectfulness.

In the ideal of Dene tradition, one ought to be disciplined in discourse, as well as in actions. Words slung carelessly about offer an opening for misunderstanding and insult. Part of being brought up in the ancient way is to be shown the power of speech: of words, both spoken and not spoken, and the variegated meanings which lie behind them; and of tone, variations in pitch resting on single syllables shifting meaning to and fro. Ideally speakers seek to master the art of speaking indirectly, of alluding to one's intention, rather than stating it directly. Boon's observations of Japanese communicative practices resonate with my experiences of the apparent Dene dedication to lack of clarity in speech: the art of speaking indirectly points to "the value very generally of allowing things to remain implicit rather than making oneself clear and taking responsibility for whatever consequences were incurred" (Morley, 1985, p. 69). In the art of indirect speaking, both the speaker and listener are called upon to pay as much attention to the manner in which words are offered as to the words themselves, because much of the significance of what is said is apprehended in how it has been said. As an example, jokes and stories often carry messages which are intentionally oblique so that the listeners do not presume the teller to be directing their actions. The listeners, for their part, must be thoughtfully attuned to the speakers' intent which may be carefully cloaked in words of variegated meanings and veiled by humour of various textures.

Part of the discipline of artful speaking is the discernment of the moment for silence. Silence, especially for the young, is the fertile soil for cultivating the keen perceptiveness, the vast areas of knowledge, the sense of judgement and the discipline necessary for successful living.⁷⁵ On the land, when travelling and hunting, people ought to be silent and watchful, carefully attuned to the lifeworld of the bush rather than to the people in their

presence (Christian & Gardner, 1977). One must listen to learn, for only in silence can we attend thoughtfully to the actions and words of others in our presence.

Yet silence is as much a moment of teaching as it is a moment of learning. In the unlearned, silence bespeaks a willingness to learn; in the learned, silence bespeaks the power of words and knowledge, and the care with which one ought to advance either. To speak carelessly and too frequently may lead one into many improper modes of being--inattentiveness, boasting, gossiping, directing the actions of others, predicting the future with certainty--words and deeds which may bring misfortune to one's own existence or court the offence of others. Deliberate silence, on the other hand, may indicate courteousness and respect for others, or it may reflect modesty and an appropriate shyness with strangers and elders, or it also may signify anger or disapproval (Christian & Gardner, 1977). Discerning the moment for silence at once reflects a deep respect for the others in our presence, as well as a call for others to respect our presence and our need for silence.

In the Dene ideal, teaching is a moment of showing. Eddie tells us, "My dad showed me how to set things like snares and such." Children are shown the respectfulness of silence through words not spoken and deeds not done. To teach is to enable others to see or experience, to point others toward that which must be done at this particular moment in this particular context under these particular circumstances. Parenting, or teaching, is showing a child what is the fitting response--the right word, the right action--for this moment in this space.⁷⁶

In the ancient way, young Dene children learned that they must be disciplined in mind, body and spirit, not for some narcissistic purpose, but out of respect and obligation to the continuation of life--the survival of the People and the Earth upon which they live. The "ancient way," Eddie tells us, is a mode of being where each must "struggle and find ways to make [their] own living off the land." The struggle is for each child, each person, to overcome the challenges offered by a life enmeshed in the mutual dependence of humans

on each other, and their interdependence with a bountiful, but indifferent, land. To be brought up in "the ancient way" is to learn the ethic of right action, to avoid offence and ensure harmony with the other in one's presence, and to be thoughtful as well as disciplined in one's words and actions. To be brought up in the ancient way is to be shown--by the words and deeds of others--what was fitting. In the Dene ideal,

Success . . . for the individual and for communities as a whole, relies on a set of harmonies: between one another, between oneself and the natural world, and between oneself and the spiritual forces that can either bring success or disaster. These harmonies all entail an openness, a preparedness to listen and respond, a peaceable engagement with one's own destiny. Interrupting a person who is speaking, looking for authority to avoid personal responsibility, seeking to establish oneself as a dominant individual, failing to share openly and according to others' assessment of their own needs in the world and ideology of northern hunters, these are all disruptive, self-defeating and wrong. (Brody, 1987, p. 125)

Strangers in a Strange Land

"I have been a stranger in a strange land."
Exodus, 1:8

Eddie's text weaves the particular events and experiences of his life into the fabric of a story about his life as a "stranger" in the strange land of the whites and their world. Interwoven within that story is his critique of the whites as "strangers" to the Dene and their land, and to the very Earth itself. In this way, Eddie's testimony calls into question the actions of the whites, and in turn calls for living with respect for the other in one's presence.

For the Dene, there was no division between the physical and spiritual world, and their orientation to respectfulness of others is part of a whole array of social practices and traditions which are grounded in respect for the forces of nature and for human ability to harness these forces for spiritual purposes. Long before the arrival of the whites into the Dene world, humans possessed varying degrees of "medicine," the power to harness the

spiritual forces of the universe for the purposes of good, such as physical and spiritual healing, or for evil, such as revenge and murder. The identity of those who possessed such powers and their degree of strength was not always public knowledge, making suspect the motives of others, especially those of strangers. Thus, for the Dene, the stranger in one's presence is to be deeply respected, and this reverence is disclosed in such traditional social practices as being thoughtful in one's words and deeds; avoiding harsh words with anyone, but especially strangers; and ensuring children are quiet in the presence of elders and strangers. As George Blondin (January 27, 1989), renowned Dene elder, recently summarized, "all people should be very careful of what they say and do in front of any person, be very polite to everybody and love each other as much as possible."

Eddie's story tells of his experiences as a stranger in a strange land; a life in the presence of "strangers." Interwoven throughout Eddie's odyssey into this strange world are the fibres of his experiences, experiences which engender a critique of the Strangers and their way of being. He fears that "The way they say, the way they act" will bring "great danger to our children." To call into question *the way they say, the way they act* is to critique the entire arena of discourse and action, the totality of their space of communicative praxis. Yet we are left to discern the essence of this critique.

Discourse and actions are intertwined in moments of *accomplishment, intention* and *expression*. When we speak and act, we are saying *something*. Our words and deeds display self-reflection, a consciousness or lack of consciousness, about this particular moment and this particular situation. In addition, discourse and actions signify a whole array of social meanings, which may or may not be conscious, but which are sedimented into the linguistic system, as well as social and institutional practices. Thus, individual actions and individual speech acts carry both a linguistic and a social history (Schrag, 1986). Similarly, corporate actions, as much as individual actions, carry such a history.

An institution such as a university, a corporation, or a nation-state, is said to act by carrying out a certain policy, procedure, or program. The United States acted in its annexation of the Philippines in

1898 and in its declaration of war against Japan in 1941. Admittedly these "acts" of annexation and war are general designators of a composite and concatenation of acts in the plural, yet these general designators do point us to an interweaving of national interests that come to expression in the actions undertaken and executed. A curious mixture of an imperialistic stance and a national vocational consciousness is expressed in the annexation of the Philippines. The threat of a foreign power coupled with a distinctive political slant on the world is expressed in the taking up of arms.

Commonly referenced corporate actions, no less than individual action within a more restricted social space, are fibers of expression within the texture of communicative praxis (Schrag, 1986, p. 38; emphasis added).

What were the actions and deeds of the individual Strangers and their institutions expressing? What sedimented social meanings were expressed in the actions of taking young children from their families and incarcerating them in mission schools? What history of social and linguistic practices forbade a people the currency of their mother tongue? What textures of communicative praxis are disclosed in the actions of a government which deliberately misrepresented its intentions when entreating with a nation such as the Dene Nation? To the Dene, the actions and words of the Strangers, both as individuals and institutions, appeared to express a deep desire to force their will, their world and their ways upon others, a commitment to what Carnoy (1974) has called cultural imperialism. For the Dene, the Strangers and their institutions are imbued with a profound lack of respect for others and their way of being. The texture of their communicative practices abrade the Dene ideal, an ideal dedicated to respectfulness for the other in one's presence.

Dene communicative praxis is infused with the ethical ideal of respect for the other. As Eddie's story unfolds we are drawn to several revisitations of the notion of respectfulness. Though still very much strangers, now the whites and the Dene dwell in a single land. The challenge for us all is to be respectful of the discourse and actions, of the linguistic and social practices, of the other, the stranger, in our midst.

The Land as the Teacher

*Oh Great Spirit,
Whose voice I hear in the winds,
and whose breath gives life to all the world,
hear me! I am small and weak, I need your
strength and wisdom.*

*Let Me walk in Beauty, and make my eyes
ever to behold the red and purple sunset.*

*Make My Hands respect the things you have
made and my ears sharp to hear your voice.*

*Make Me Wise so that I may understand the
things you have taught my people.*

*Let Me Learn the lessons you have hidden
in every leaf and rock. . .*

American Indian Prayer
Origin Unknown

Eddie's text discloses a deep reverence for the land and all that can be learned from a life lived close to the Earth. "I love and respect my land. . . it was my teacher," he recalls. "It taught me education which I could not learn in the white man's books." This statement calls us to ask: what does it mean to learn from the land? What is the ideal relationship between humans and the Earth they live upon?

To refer to *the land* is to speak metaphorically of the entire surface of the Earth, all of its inhabitants and natural resources, as well as the specific "realm or domain" of the Dene people.⁷⁷ For the Dene, the land is the space in which one lives, in which one must struggle to, as Eddie says, "find ways to make your own living." *To make your own living* is to provide sustenance for yourself, and the others for whom you are responsible, by means of the skills and knowledge acquired through experience. As we have seen, good fortune plays a critical role in successful living on the land, but the gratuitous benevolence of spiritual forces must be aided by concrete, human actions. To make a living from the land--to be a hunter--demands hard work, endurance, discipline, and an expansive knowledge and wisdom of the land and the animals, as well as keen perceptiveness and concentration matched by a discerning sense of judgement and a deep

respect for all that is known and unknown, fathomable and unfathomable. Within the moments of teaching and learning in this curriculum, teachers demonstrate for others--through their own words and deeds--what is a fitting response to each situation, and learners experience directly that which must be learned.

Thus, existence in direct relationship with others and with the land exacts respectfulness in thought and action, humbleness before a world infused with forces far greater than the power of human will alone. Life on the land teaches people a more humble and respectful way of being in the world. Derived from the Latin *humilis* "low, humble" which comes from *humus* meaning "earth," to be *humble* is to be close to the Earth. Thus, to be humble is to be teachable, to dwell near the Earth with a willingness to learn from all that presents itself, including the Earth itself.

Lopez (1988) reflecting on his experiences in another aloof and far flung land, Antarctica, writes:

And yet this land informs, some say teaches, for all its indifference. . . .

Over the years one comes to measure a place, too, not just for the beauty it may give, the balminess of its breezes, the insouciance and relaxation it encourages, the sublime pleasures it offers, but for what it teaches. The way in which it alters our perception of the human. (p. 68)

The Hope for the Future

Finally, Eddie offers his audience his hope for the future. "I'm wishing and I'm hoping that in the years to come, that one day my children will say to their children, 'This is how your grandfather taught me to make a living off the land.'" As we have seen, *to make a living on the land* is to dwell close to the Earth and to learn its ways; it is to be disciplined, teachable, thoughtful in word and deed, and filled with respect for others in your presence and beyond.

Eddie's hope underscores the way in which the Dene ideal of respectfulness reaches beyond respect for one another to embrace a humbleness for the Earth upon which we dwell. "I love and respect my land," Eddie reiterates, and this is what he wants to "tell and

teach" his children. Perhaps we all need to learn the lessons Eddie wishes to tell and to teach. Many people of the Western world are not only strangers to the Dene, but strangers to the Earth itself. Life in an industrial technological world is life estranged from the land, and from the humbleness and respectfulness learned in dwelling close to the Earth. Brody (1981) claims that the industrial nations have sentenced the hunting societies of the world to death. Perhaps the actions of the industrialized world--towards our Earth and each other--are condemning us all to death.

In a Harper's Magazine editorial written prior to an impending presidential election, Lapham (1988) calls into question the current nature of leadership in the Western world. His text returns us to a salient point: our survival as a species presses for an alternative to the vision of leadership offered by the Western world. His words are uncannily familiar, carrying a message which has reverberated throughout the testimony to the Berger Inquiry:

The task that confronts the men [sic] who would be leaders is a task of the imagination. It has less to do with politics than it does with metaphor, less to do with the making of laws than with the making of words that allow men [sic] to see their immortality, not in their monuments or their weapons, but in their children. (p. 13)

Eddie's hope for the future is not unlike Lapham's, that as human beings we can begin to envision the future in terms of our children. Eddie's wish, like Lapham's critique, beckons us to gaze far beyond the present moment, to envision how future generations might experience this world. Each action taken, every decision made, ought to be mindful of our moral obligation to the yet-to-be-born. Eddie's dream is that his children and his children's children will be able to touch this Earth. In this way, Eddie's hope for the future is a hope for us all. For the sake of our children, we must gaze beyond the present to the future, while we lean a little closer and touch the Earth.

Footnotes

⁷⁰Eddy Cook died a few years prior to my moving to Fort Good Hope. In my work with an oral history project in that community, I had occasion to work with his wife Mary. My sons and their sons were peers and good friends.

⁷¹I am convinced this is a transcription error. I believe he meant to say "treaty number 11, we never ceded the land" although I am not sure what the phrase "you may chop a tree" means or how it is related to the rest of the sentence. Alternatively, Eddie may have been making a play on words between tree and treaty. He makes a similar pun in his opening statement: "Mr. Berger, I haven't got a brief, but I am going to be as brief as I could." In my experience that type of punning is very common in Good Hope, and in Dene communities in general.

⁷²John Testo (1970), a Dene trapper, wrote, "Life in the bush is not easy, but nothing in life is easy. Many times I have gone to bed without supper in weather thirty below, not because I was bad, but I made mistakes" (p. 13).

⁷³A Dene story-teller made this point when narrating the Saga of ?chts'ontsia, a traditional folktale of a nine-year old boy who becomes a hero through his feats as a warrior. The story-teller told the person recording his stories, Robert Williamson (1956), "You have to understand in the olden days it was necessary to become very clever while you were quite small. You had to be light on your feet and never eat too much, and always be watchful and obedient" (p. 84).

Though a Spartan-like, rigorous training was the traditional ideal, Dene parents and relatives are deeply fond of their children and their presence brings great joy into the homes. Dene children are showered with a great deal of physical affection and special attention (Sue Hara, 1980). In keeping with the Dene ethic of respect for the other, their democratic ideal, young Dene children are treated very much like grown-ups, eating and sleeping as they wish.

⁷⁴For the Dene, white people's habit of gazing intently at others is thought to be rude and provocative.

⁷⁵Christian and Gardner (1977) found Dene elders to be fearful of, and perhaps disillusioned by, the talkativeness of modern youth, a way of speaking they believe is learned, or at least reinforced, by the institution of schooling. To encourage talking, in the manner schools do, is to deny children a vital part of their education: the development of "perceptiveness, knowledge, judgement, and willpower" (p. 80).

⁷⁶Eddie's story of learning to snare rabbits fits with these pedagogical practices and the beliefs in which they are grounded. Snaring rabbits is a critical skill for sustaining human life in the bush, even though it requires less strength, knowledge, and ability than hunting larger game. Thus, within the protective radius of the family camp and with a small number of snares, Eddie learned a critical survival skill, experienced success and made a contribution to the collective.

⁷⁷ Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary, p. 672.

EPILOGUE

It has been several years since Fred Rabisca, Georgina Tobac, Florence Barnaby and Eddy Cook spoke and Justice Thomas Berger listened. The National Energy Board of Canada is currently hearing an application from a consortium of oil companies (Shell Canada Ltd., Esso Resources Canada Ltd., and Gulf Canada Resources Ltd.) to export 9.2 trillion cubic feet and 11 billion dollars in natural gas to American markets. Approval of this application will be followed by an application to build a natural gas pipeline, following a route similar to the one proposed during the Berger Inquiry, to transport the gas (MacLean's, May 1, 1989).

Today, the Dene people appear to be divided in their position on such development. In a special report on Sunday Morning Magazine on CBC radio (April 9th, 1989), broadcast from Fort Good Hope, a local Dene resident, Joe "Lolly" Grandjambe, reflected on the joint agreement between his community and Chevron Resources for hydrocarbon exploration on lands traditionally used by the Fort Good Hope Dene. For Lolly Grandjambe, the joint venture was made in the interests of the future of the younger generation.

After your eyes have been opened to certain things I don't think you can turn the years back and say no to everything that comes along and try to live that traditional lifestyle. At times our own young people are confused because they can't cope in the economic world or the traditional lifestyle. There are very few people that could live in both worlds so a lot of them are in limbo. Now they are also waking up and trying to learn how to cope with today's world. (Sunday Morning Magazine, April 9, 1989)

Behind these words are the realities of an active anti-fur lobby, exorbitant northern living costs and rising expectations (promoted primarily from television) which have turned the young people away from trapping and a life on the land towards wage employment.

The Dene Nation, while recognizing the realities of which Lolly Grandjambe speaks, insist that a just settlement of aboriginal claims to the land and resources must precede the

construction of a pipeline. Bill Erasmus, president of the Dene Nation, told the National Energy Board hearing the export application, "From long and bitter experience, we know that the only way we will be able to take part in the decisions that affect us is through our aboriginal rights claim" (Lesniak, 1989, p. 3).

For others--like Charlie Barnaby, the present chief of Fort Good Hope--the fear of the potential environmental harm of a pipeline overrides the fear of further political invisibility and lost economic opportunity. Again it is the chord of deep personal and collective commitment to the land which Charlie Barnaby's words strike, ringing true to the tone of the testimony to the Berger Inquiry.

So far everything is going good [in the joint venture] because you know someone is keeping their eye on [the oil companies]. The feeling is still there since Berger came around: nothing didn't change in a feeling way, you know. 'Cause we got no place to go. This is the place where we were born and we're gonna die here. We depend on the land so much that's what we are speaking of. (Sunday Morning Magazine, April 9, 1989)

Charlie's words are haunting. "The feeling is still there since Berger came. . . . nothing didn't change in a feeling way." I know of what he speaks. It is the depth of feeling which resonates throughout the Dene testimony to the Berger Inquiry which still can make claims for truth and relevance more than a decade later, and far into the future.

The dilemma which faces the Dene is the dilemma which faces all human beings living a praxis-oriented existence, a life engaged in moral, authentic and appropriate action: how do we best fulfil our obligation to meet immediate community needs, while at the same time fulfilling our obligation to our children and our children's children and to the Earth itself? How can we speak and act in an ethical, morally responsible way? How can we make a fitting response? It is at this juncture that I am called to reflect on the significance of my journey through the Dene texts, an exploratory voyage mapping out the historical tradition and forms of everyday life simultaneously signified and referenced by the speakers of the texts, an excursion tracing the forms of communicative praxis in an unknown land.

I have been both teacher and student as I have travelled through the strange land of these texts. The landscape was familiar in that I knew the speakers, directly or indirectly. I possessed some knowledge and fluency in their language, their history and some of their cultural traditions. Yet these texts led me down paths and trails I had not yet encountered; they brought me from the spaces of cultural and historical facts to the lived worlds and idealizations which inform those worlds. The land which I traversed with Florence, Georgina, Eddie and Fred was strange in that it was new. The places were not always new, but my understanding of them was. The awe inspired in me by these texts forced me into the silence necessary for me to hear them speak. This silence eventually grew into a conversation, and I was obliged to write my reply to the questions posed by these texts.

When I began this study, I wanted to explore the communicative praxis of the Dene, as if there were such a unitary phenomenon. I envisioned interpreting these texts as ferreting out the meanings which imbued the lived world of the speakers. The rationale for such a project was that I would offer to the educational world both a knowledge and an understanding of the discursive and non-discursive practices of the Dene, which would inform teachers working with Dene students and thus improve Dene children's experience of the curriculum and schooling. The assumption was that in undertaking this study, I would inform others, not necessarily that I would become informed myself. On this journey I have learned humility, and a yet deeper respect for what others have to teach me.

Travelling the trails marked by each of these witnesses with their testimony brought me face-to-face with a critique of the forms of social life and institutional practices of the Western world. The texts became like liquid pools interconnected by the essence of their being: similar in nature and yet unique in their exterior configurations. As I gazed into each pool, the words of the witnesses reflected back to me disturbing images of myself as a parent, as a pedagogue, as a social and spiritual being. The Dene critiques never offered sharply focussed images, but rather shimmering reflections which rippled in and out of focus, ever eluding my grasping for a concrete, revelatory picture. As amorphous as these

images may have been, they called into question many of the social and institutional forms of life in which my personal pedagogical practices, as well as my way-of-being-in-the-world, were in some way grounded. Each word of my interpretations of the texts, offered in response to their critique, was cast like a stone into the pool, rippling the original images, reconfiguring my understanding, carrying the critique farther and farther away from me to the shores of my past, leaving me with a clearer recognition of who I am to become, of the imaginings I am called to pursue. I left each text exhausted, with a deeper, yet still amorphous, recognition of the kind of person, parent and pedagogue I had been and was becoming, and a deeper understanding of the kind of person, parent and pedagogue I wanted to be.

Such is the task of communicative praxis. Communicative praxis is not simply description and explanation; rather it seeks to insert the rhetorical and ethical moment, the directedness towards the other, into our elucidation of the everyday world we seek to understand. It is precisely this rhetorical moment, this directedness to the other, which was for me so clearly illuminated by the four Dene texts and which I now seek to insert into my own being-in-the-world. It was as if each speaker called me to imagine the possibilities for a new way of being-in-the-world, as a parent, as a pedagogue and simply as a human being. To understand teaching as communicative praxis is to call into question much of what I have thought teaching to be.

Sometimes I take out my photo album and glance through the photographs I took during 1978-79, when I was a kindergarten teacher at Sturgeon Lake Indian reserve in Saskatchewan. The photos offer images of the learning centres I created: the sand table; the water table; the science table with its microscope and slides; the carpentry centre with its hammer and screwdriver, nails and screws, and pieces of wood. There were more conventional centres with learning activities which focused on developing cognitive abilities such as classification and sequencing. All in all I thought I had created quite a wonderful

space for learning, especially considering that I was a first year teacher trained to teach junior high school.

Actually the classroom activities and how they were organized were incidental to these photographs when they were being taken. The photos are of the children who filled these spaces. Beautiful brown children, with wide, white smiles. Over a decade has passed and yet I can still visualize many of their faces and recall many of their names, as well as particularly poignant incidents that made my year with them special.

The photo album often jogs my memory, taking me back over aspects of that year I would just as soon let slip from my consciousness. My eyes and then my hands pass slowly over the small wallet-size school picture of Carson Turner, and I get that uncomfortable feeling of every teacher when they recall their first year in the classroom and a particular incident, a particular practice, that they wish they could erase. My mind reaches backward and I can visualize Carson sitting at the outside edge of the "circle,"-- really a semi-circle of children facing me, the teacher--his face intently watching as I began the ritual of reading the class a story to bring closure to that part of their day spent in the classroom. As my reading of the story would proceed, Carson's attention would soon drift to some unknown land. Soon Carson and the boys sitting closest to him would be creating a world of their own, while I tried desperately to draw them into mine. Many times, I put Carson in the "Time Out Centre," trying to instil in him the desire and the fortitude to sit still for at least fifteen minutes a day and listen to a teacher.

At the time when Carson and I were put together in the same space, I had already spent five years working in the area of teaching and designing curriculum for teaching aboriginal languages; I had completed a four-year Bachelor of Education degree in which I had taken numerous courses in anthropology, linguistics, and "Indian education." In spite of all of this, I was unable to attend to the fact that Carson was a monolingual Cree speaker, who neither spoke nor understood English sufficiently well to hear a story read to him in that language. I am filled with humility when I think of Carson and his effort to make sense of

the stories I would read to him. Today as I write, I cannot erase Carson's image from my mind. Nor do I want to. I can only imagine that today my words and deeds would be different, that they would provide a more fitting response to Carson, and to the others in my presence.

Pedagogy is defined by the OED as "the art or science of teaching." That is what we might call lexicographic diplomacy. No right-minded Oxford scholar wants to be the one to close the debate on whether teaching is an art or a science, or what the difference might be. When Carson and I shared the same space, I thought teaching to be a science, one I had mastered by virtue of my teacher education. I did not understand the value of my experience--as parent, as former student, as northerner, as friend, and as one in a host of other social and personal roles--to my teaching. For me, teaching was providing the correct activities and ensuring my students were acting in the right way. Theoretically, I was providing developmentally appropriate learning activities, which were informed by my extensive knowledge about native people, curriculum development and education generally. Yet for all of that, my practice was empty of the caring, the directedness to the other, which, in speaking with these texts and in writing this piece, I have learned is integral to *being* a pedagogue.

Looking away from the past towards the future, my voyage as a student of these four Dene texts has disclosed visions of teaching and what my life as a teacher might be. I imagine teaching and writing and parenting as forms of communicative praxis: as forms of discourse and action directed towards the other in the holistic space of communicative praxis. These things that I do--teaching, parenting, writing--are not simply technical arts, a set of techniques empty of spirit. If by art we mean, as Drengson (1983) does, "the direct feel for the vagaries of the uniqueness of situation and object" (p. 39), then these forms of everyday life are more like moral arts, imbued with directedness towards the other, with the moral necessity to do and say what is fitting for this child, for this story, in this time and in this place.

Drengson (1983) tells us that by practicing our chosen art(s) with mastery of self, we cultivate integration among the various aspects of our humanness. His illustration is of the art of ruling; yet it speaks to pedagogy, parenting and scholarship. The arts of teaching, parenting, and writing are spaces within which I have the opportunity to unify, to integrate all aspects of my humanness. By coming to understand writing, teaching and parenting as forms of everyday life, as forms of communicative praxis, I am no longer able to divorce writing, teaching, and parenting from who I am outside of those activities. The journey through the world of these texts has called me to seek situations in which I might integrate my belonging in the world, integrate my belonging to the Earth and the community of living beings with whom I share this Earth, to the academic world and the community of scholars, to the world of pedagogy and the community of teachers, to the world of children and the community of parents, and to my family.

Last night my dreams were crowded with visions of black spruce trees, emaciated, lop-sided, overladen with freshly fallen snow. In the disjointed vision of the dream I could see the Ramparts, the towering, sandstone cliffs which guard the Big River's approach to Fort Good Hope. The black spruce, the Big River called to me and I awoke with a brilliant recollection, and an indescribable, and not unfamiliar, pain of longing. "You learn to say goodbye to places: to keep them in your heart and go on," writes Le Guin (1989). And for Westerners, for many North Americans, I suppose that is true. Yet Charlie Barnaby cannot say goodbye to his land, for he has no place to go. We cannot say goodbye to the Earth, for we have no place to go.

In a way, this journey through these texts has been my way of saying goodbye to the place I know as the north, at least to the way I used to understand it. Yet the north and its people will be ever present in my life; they are part of my past, my present, and my future. I do not fancy myself as one of those dreaded "northern experts," but rather I imagine myself a "northerner," as someone with deep emotional, intellectual, and spiritual ties to the land and its people. I was raised, educated, married and started my family in the north;

much of my life has been lived, much of my work done, in the north with northern people. My children are descendants of the Dene and the Métis, and as such are ever present reminders of what has gone before, what is and what can be.

The journey of writing this book has been a kind of modern day vision quest, although I did not understand it as such when it began. This quest, and surely that is what it has been, has given me a vision of how I ought to live, how I ought to conduct myself in the presence of the other, whether I be teacher, parent, colleague, or author. My vision of the other with whom I share the space of communicative praxis has been broadened. With Herculean force my imagination has pushed against the walls of my anthropocentric world, breaking down a lifetime of barriers, allowing images of the Other Living Beings and the home we share, the Earth, to flow in. As I now see, I imagine myself in harmony and unity with all that is, rather than transcending beyond it.

There is a moment in praxis-oriented existence when we are called to gaze beyond critique to imagine what might be, to infuse our discourse with creative imaginings and concrete realizations of what the future ought to hold. It is at this point that our critique of what is gives way to our thoughtful reflections on what ought to be and the hopeful possibilities of what can be. It is at this moment that I balk, that my courage flags. That I cannot yet clearly visualize this world, this place, this life, these moments in the future is not a weakness in the fabric of this text, of my pedagogy or of my writing. Rather, it is that I have come to understand that it is possible for me to imagine, that--as a parent, as a pedagogue, and as a caring human being--it is my task to do so. This has been the true gift of these texts and this journey.

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Degrees, Diplomas, Etc. Awarded, with Dates and Names of Institutions:

B. Ed. (Great Distinction)	1978	University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon
M. A.	1985	University of Victoria, B. C.

Honours and Awards:

Social Science and Humanities Research Council Doctoral Fellowship, 1989/88, 1988/87, 1987/86, 1986/85

British Columbia Post-Secondary Scholarship, 1988/87, 1987/86

Government of N.W.T. Graduate Scholarship, 1987, 1986, 1984

University of Saskatchewan College of Education Scholarship, 1976

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Scholarship, 1975

Publications

Publications in Refereed Journals

In press Review of Language, structure and reproduction: An introduction to the sociology of Basil Bernstein by P. Atkinson. Canadian Journal of Education.

1989 Ways with stories: Listening to the stories aboriginal people tell. Language Arts, 66(3), 67-75.

1988 Review of Children and ESL: Integrating perspectives edited by P. Rigg & S. Enright. Language Problems and Language Planning, 12(2), 185-187.

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- 1978 Dene land settlement and rights. The Northian: Journal of the Society for Indian and Northern Education, 13(3), 27-33.

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- 1988 On the fringe: Indigenous student participation during reading instruction. In P. Evans, N. Mickelson, & A. Olson (Eds.), The emergence of literacy (pp. 174-204). Submitted for publication.
- 1986 with A. Oberg and R. Field. Discovering the ground of professional practice. In J. Lowyck (Ed.), Teacher thinking and professional action: Proceedings of the third annual International Study Association on Teacher Thinking (pp. 84-155). Leuven, Belgium.
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- 1983 Media and methods of teaching heritage languages in rural and isolated communities. In J. Cummins (Ed.), Heritage language education: Issues and directions (pp. 46-50). Ottawa: Minister of Supply Services Canada.

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- 1975 Some aspects of cross-cultural education. The Northian Newsletter: Society of Indian and Northern Education, (43), 2-13.
- 1977 with A. McBeath, A. Dyer, T. Hall, L. Trew, E. Cooper, J. Dorion, and J. McLeod. Evaluation of the Northern Teacher Aide Training Program: July 1976-June 1977. Prepared for the Northern School Board and Canada Manpower, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

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Title of Dissertation

For our children's children: An educator's interpretation of Dene testimony to the Berger Inquiry.

Author



(Signature)

CYNTHIA MAUDE CHAMBERS
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1989-07-27
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