

BIO

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Dr. Patterson (Metis - Irish/French/Mohawk) completed his studies in Sociology at Carleton University in 2003. His thesis focuses on the meeting of two worlds: First Nations in Cyberspace. Mike has worked with many First Nations communities and NGOs and has worked in fields as diverse as Native music, prophecies (Seventh Fire), HIV/AIDS prevention, falls prevention, and the syncretic weaving of Western and Aboriginal worldviews (Where the Forest Meets the Highway; Kahswenhtha). He has been a host of Spirit Voice Native radio, and was music editor for Aboriginal VOICES magazine.

Mike is currently a CHSRF/CIHR Postdoctoral Fellow working in Aboriginal health at the Community Health Research Unit (CHRU), University of Ottawa. He developed the first graduate seminar in Aboriginal health at the School of Nursing there. He is involved in a number of research projects involving Aboriginal communities and CHRU, including the development of Western/Indigenous wellness models; examination of the implications of telehealth for First Nations; and multiple interventions toward falls prevention at Akwesasne. Mike works primarily with qualitative and mixed methods, involving principles found in participatory action and community-based research, toward community development.

Mike's hobbies include tinkering, gardening, fishing, and walking the dog.

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Introduction

These excerpts are from my Ph.D. dissertation, which examines the implications of cyberspace, with a view to contemporary Aboriginal peoples in Canada, particularly in light of the Seventh Fire Prophecy of coexistence and cooperation.

Chapter 3 looks at colonization and its effects on Aboriginal societies; chapter 4 shows how we have always used communications to counter these forces, and to navigate two worlds; and chapter 7 looks to the future of First Nations in the new territory, cyberspace, and its possible role in decolonization. The dissertation seeks to determine what is being gained and lost in exchanges between people and computers, people communicating in new ways via IT, and in new global dialogues.

We should be aware of the contradictory (Two Worlds, Tricksters) possibilities of cyberspace. First Nations in Canada should take a proactive approach to this new territory still in the process of creation, to redefine Native and non-Native priorities with regards to cultural survival, mutual recognition and self-determination.

Chapter Three

Pre-Cyberspace Prophecies Now in Place

Light It Or Lose It. (7TH Fire)¹

¹ Message on a tombstone at the end of the 1994 video for The Cheque is in the Mail, written and performed by 7TH Fire, an Ottawa-based band of Ojibwe and other ancestries, named for the Seventh Fire Prophecy, which calls for the lighting of the Eighth Fire.

Part of the Native movement to self-determination today is contained in prophecies that call for a re-reckoning of the role of Natives in larger society. These prophecies can be seen as the philosophy or spiritual teaching behind Native self-determination. They are ancient and hard to date, but they arose with great strength in the early to mid-90s, as events such as Kahnasetake (Oka) in 1990 foreshadowed a resurgence of Native activism, and the arrival of a new generation to lead to the future, and into cyberspace.

There is a reclaiming of Native values in cyberspace, after 500 years of resistance to European views. The European (largely Christian) worldview labeled people as good or bad, and organized society into submissive and dominant (class system). “Bad” behavior (that is, not responding to authority) was to be punished. Within 30 years of first contact with the Jesuits around 1600, the Wendat (Huron) and Innu went from being a consensual, egalitarian people to a “hierarchical” and “self-policing” group that began meting punishment on its own children, women and men. “Women were especially singled out for surveillance and punishment on the grounds that they posed the greatest potential threat to the collective well-being,” as they were now instruments of the Devil (Anderson 1991: 96-98).

Missionization began with the Migmag, Innu, Wendat and Iroquois in the 1600s, and spread to Algonquin and Ojibwe through the 1700s, reaching the Cree and Dene in the West and Cree in the North some 100 years later, finally reaching the people in British Columbia. In the 1800s, the Oblate missionaries and Protestant groups such as the Wesleyan Methodist Missionaries worked with the traders on a new North American colonizing imperative that took in the whole of the

Great Lakes area as far North as James Bay (Devens 1992: 45-46), and continued into Western Canada.

. Native Men, including medicine people trying to preserve their status, would adopt trappings of the Christian religious and economic system while the women more often “declined conversion and instead stressed the importance of older rituals and practices.” Confrontations escalated as the women “scorned priests and converts alike for flouting tradition.” Some Iroquois and Ojibwe women “had little patience for Christians who threatened eternal damnation to those who clung to heathen practices” (Devens 1992: 22); I can say the same is true today. Whether men or women complied with missionaries’ efforts, however, the “evangelization of Huronia (and many other areas) was destined never to be completed. This mirrored the general picture in New France: “evangelism produced a few religious vocations among Amerindian women” (Dickason 1992: 127), and almost none among the men.²

European attitudes were shaped by social subjugation, class differences and male supremacy, and the European model of life imported by the Jesuits and other missionaries in Canada was strictly hierarchical and exclusive.³ By contrast the

² These “converts” were often acting for the Native people. “By the 1830s the category of ‘Noble Savage’ included Indian missionaries trained to act as translators and teachers. Their writings attempted to raise the awareness of the whites on both sides of the ocean to the realities of Indian life” (MacDonald 1993: 31). George Copway, an Ojibwe Methodist missionary, published *Recollections of a Forest Life* in 1851. Rev. Peter Jones, a Mississauga Ojibwe also trained as a Methodist minister, lectured in England, where he was presented to King William in 1832. He wrote: “Oh, what an awful account at the day of judgement must the unprincipled white man give, who has been an agent of Satan in the extermination of the original proprietors of the American soil !” (in 1993: 31). The first Native priest to be ordained was probably Abbé Prosper Vincent in 1870, a Wendat who was also an informant of Marius Barbeau. Date from liner notes for Francois Kiowarini and Claude Vincent’s album *Huron Ritual Songs*.

³ Hiawatha was the lawgiver who helped Dekinawida “establish the Great Peace.” Dekinawida planted the “Tree of the Great Peace” and said that “Roots have spread out of the Tree of the Great Peace, and the name of these roots is the Great White Roots of Peace. If any man of any nation

Iroquois are a consensual society, with institutions designed to integrate knowledge and customs from other peoples. The Iroquois accepted the dances, customs and ceremonies of all of their member nations. The print version of the Great Law of the Iroquois states that: "The rites and festivals of each nation shall remain undisturbed..." (Parker 1991: 56).

The Iroquois also accepted the dreams, visions and beliefs of individuals, and promoted each individual's responsibility for one's own life and relations with the natural world. On a personal and social level, differences were recognized and celebrated. Unlike the Europeans, Natives "do not see history as a meaning that humans can confer on life; for them, the sense of life is, instead, the liberty of every being" (Sioui 1992: 23). This perspective was not entertained by the monarchies of Europe at the time of contact, but was adopted later on (in principle at least) by the founding fathers of democracy in the U.S.

Missionization was a powerful tool for colonization and assimilation, yet the erosion of tradition was not complete. Although surrounded by Christian institutions and teachings, Natives still kept their own spiritual leaders and individual beliefs, hidden from white eyes. While it has been argued that "White colonizers destroyed the Natives' political, economic, kinship and, *in most cases*, religious systems" (Frideres 2000: 4) (emphasis mine), the continuance of traditional teachings and

outside the Five Nations shall show a desire to obey the laws of the Great Peace, they may trace the roots to their source and they shall be welcomed to take shelter beneath the Tree of the Long Leaves" (in Parker 1991: 8-9). The Great Law was given to the Onkwehonwe sometime around 1390 (1991: 61).

Native worldview by many elders gave Native people the strength to survive this process.⁴

Dickason notes how in the late 1600s, “the Iroquois had managed to keep their confederacy intact in the face of disasters (war losses, disease, starvation and desertion to Catholic missions)⁵ and despite the relentless pressures of European settlement.” Iroquois society was changing, and the communal traditional Longhouse dwelling was abandoned for single family units. “Nevertheless, the Iroquois identity remained strong” (1992: 155), and the Longhouse teachings survived.

Europeans brought the Bible and other books, and a way of looking at the world through books as something separate from people. They brought the idea of a world with a beginning and end (like a book) and introduced linear and segmented thinking to a people who were used to seeing the whole of things. “For native peoples, human beings are at one with the universe and do not conceive of themselves as separate from ‘nature’ as we do within our own set of beliefs” (Beaudry 1992: 72-73).⁶

⁴ This is my understanding from many of the people I have spoken with. Through the darkest times of the last 500 years, there have always been teachers and elders to remind the people of the old ways.

⁵ The Iroquois War of 1609-1701 was largely fought over trade competition (among Native nations and the English, French and Dutch) and to maintain Iroquois territory in the face of European incursions. At this time the Iroquois were surrounded by the French and their allies, which included the Wendat and Algonquin, the Attiwandaron (Neutrals), the Erie and Susquehannocks. Between 1689 and 1698, it is estimated the Iroquois lost half their fighting forces (Dickason 1992: 149-156). Around this time “the Five Nations suffered mass defections” to Jesuit missions, and during the 1690s “fully two-thirds of the Mohawk decamped for the two French missions around Montreal” (1992: 156).

⁶ Frideres explains it this way: “We (Whites or Europeans) think in terms of minutes, hours or days. Implicit in this linear thinking is the view that time flows one way and cannot be made up. Linear thinking lends itself to singular thinking, (toward) values which imply ‘one answer,’ ‘one way.’” In contrast, the “cyclical” and “holistic” Native view “begins with the premise that everything is interrelated...it is a generalist perspective rather than a specialist one,” and “there is no beginning,

In her book *Countering Colonization*, Devens shows how the colonizing process also undermined Native social structure by reorganizing relationships between the sexes. The Jesuits promoted a male dominated nuclear family, which was unnatural to Natives who lived in extended family groups and who were used to women sharing in the socioeconomic and spiritual life of the group. Traditionally, women had public lives and councils - as did the men. The missionaries and traders favoured "the productive activities of native men" while often ignoring women altogether.⁷ As the men moved from "subsistence hunters to fur traders" and capitalist conditions on reserves replaced natural migratory and social patterns including "communal relations," the extended family disintegrated (Devens 1992: 4; 28).⁸

Women were not fit to rule in the European Christian framework, and so the matrilineal and matrifocal (meaning the inclusion of women in the governing process) nature of Native society was also weakened. Karen Anderson discusses how, in the *Jesuit Relations*, women are classified either as "non-converts, who are lewd, unnatural seductresses" or "chaste, innocent women and girls who had embraced Christianity and who were now compliant and fearful" (Anderson 1991:

no end," rather repetitive and cyclical phases and patterns and since "all parts are interrelated, each part is equal to all the others" (1993: 269-270).

⁷ The role of women in pre-contact societies has often been misunderstood. Devens shows how a late 19th-century "invented tradition of male supremacy" observed by Ruth Landes and A. Irving Hallowell among the Southern Ojibwe is a colonial phenomenon, and how studies by Diamond Jenness, Frank Speck, Frances Densmore and Eleanor Leacock with the more isolated Northern Ojibwe and Montagnais-Naskapi (Innu) show that women also hunted, dreamed of game, danced, drummed and sang before the white influence took over (Devens 1992: 114-121). Diamond-Cavanagh notes that "the feminist anthropological critique" argues that "the Jesuits undermined the strength of the extended family and greatly undermined the role of women" (1992: 382). Also see Cavanagh 1985, 1989.

⁸ "Integration into an economy based on production for exchange rather than for use, instead of providing for greater security, introduced new variables that had a destabilizing effect on Amerindian ways of life" (Dickason 1992: 203).

89). In either case, their traditional role as partner in the consensual governing circle was diminished. The inclusive (circular) nature of Native society was damaged.

Today, this history is well understood in Indian Country, and efforts to re-emphasize Native perspectives take up much of the time of traditional Natives. These perspectives can be seen in the following prophecies. They are helping to heal and strengthen within Native communities, and are an answer to the colonizers and the colonization process of the last 500 years □ and they are heard in cyberspace as well.

3.1 The Seventh Fire Prophecy

In the Seventh Fire prophecy of the Anishnabek, each of the seven fires represent an era in human history. We are now in the time of the Seventh Fire. The task of the people of this age, including the Anishnabek and other red people, the yellow people, the black and the white, is to come together through choosing the road of cooperation. Without this, there will be no Eighth Fire, or future for Natives and others.

The following is from the Ojibway Cultural Centre on Manitoulin Island:

THE LAW OF THE SEVEN FIRES

In a time long, long ago, seven prophecies came to the Anishnawbe.

Each prophecy or fire came from a different prophet who foretold of events that would shape the future of the Anishnawbe. Each of these fires referred to a particular period of time.

The first fire tells us that the Anishnawbe would rise and follow the ways of the sacred shell or Midewiwin. The Midewin religion, to the Anishnawbe, would be the focal point for clean living and a source of strength for all Anishnawbe.

The second fire tells that the nation would be camped by a large body of water. In this time, the direction of the sacred shell would be lost and the ways of the Midewiwin would become weak. It was prophesized that a small boy would return and point the way back to the traditional ways. The boy pointed to the sacred island of Manitoulin as the way to revitalize the ways of the Midewiwin.

The third fire tells that the Anishnawbe would find the path to the chosen land of Manitoulin. This was the place where the Anishnawbe must move their families.

The fourth fire tells of the coming of the light skinned race.

The fifth fire tells of a great struggle to come.

The sixth fire prophesized that during the time of the great struggle grandsons and granddaughters would turn against their elders and that the spiritual ways of the Midewiwin would almost disappear.

The seventh fire tells of the emergence of a new people, a people who would retrace their history to find the sacred ways that had been left behind. The waterdrum would once again sound, its voice signalling the rebirth of the Anishnawbe and a rekindling of life's fire.

During the time of the seventh fire, the light skinned race would be given a choice. If they chose the right road, then the seventh fire would light the eighth and final fire...a fire of peace, love and brotherhood.

If the light skinned race made the wrong choice, then the destruction which they brought with them to this great turtle island would come back to them, causing much suffering, death and destruction.

And that is how the story is told.

The Seventh Fire prophecy is recognized as a "...migration legend, a story which recounts the seven 'fires' or stopping places of the people in their journey from the East coast toward the West..." (Kallmann and Potvin 1992: 929). This prophecy also relates to the present-day struggle to strengthen traditional teachings and bring the Anishnabek message of cooperation and understanding to others (Deleary 1990). The Midewiwin society of the Anishnabek teaches the Seventh Fire Prophecy today and "among the Ojibwe of northwestern Ontario, the Midewiwin is a fundamental religious institution... Traditional Anishnabek in adulthood in the 1980s saw themselves as the generation of the seventh fire, and accept a role in bringing back many of their traditions..." (Kallmann and Potvin 1992: 929).

Nick Deleary, an Ojibwe and member of the Midewiwin, says the following in his 1990 Carleton MA thesis:

About one thousand years before the coming of the European, our lives were full and complete. We had known at least five hundred years of peace and prosperity. The alteration that would come with the warring European nations was known throughout our land. Long before the invaders stepped ashore we had fore-knowledge of what to expect. This fore-knowledge came to us in the form of seven prophets, or prophecies. Each foretold of a time in the future and symbols to look for. One such prophet (Fire) spoke of how the Midewiwin would be the source for our lives, we would see great health. Another spoke of a time when we would follow the sacred Megis shell, towards the West "to the place where food grows upon the water," Minnesota. The reason for this move was foretold by another prophet or fire. His words were of the coming of the light-skinned brother. We were told to beware as the stranger would come wearing two faces, one of peace and true brotherhood, the other face would be that of death and destruction. We were told to exercise great caution in accepting this stranger. As time would prove, the face the "newcomer" came with was one of destruction. We know the words of the next prophets to speak of the truth; the

face our white brother has come wearing has been the face of destruction and death.....

One prophet said you will know the words of the other prophets are true when you see the "waters turn foul and the fish turn belly up with disease." Another prophet spoke of a time when families will be broken up, children will turn their backs on their elders and grandparents. Those who know the Life ways will go silent out of fear for freedom of religion, and when that day comes, those who come looking will find emptiness and dissolution....

The last prophet had a different outlook. It is said that he spoke of a new generation who would retrace their grandfathers' and grandmothers' foot steps along the trail of the migration, reclaiming what has always been theirs. The water drum would once again sound its voice across the land... The above story is a fraction of the full story. The main ideas are nevertheless present (Deleary 1990: 57-59).

One person who talks about the Seventh Fire is Grandfather William Commanda of Maniwaki.⁹ An Algonquin elder, he holds three wampum belts, one of which is the Seventh Fire Prophecy belt which was made in the 1400s. His understanding of the prophecy was received from Ojibwe people in Minnesota, Michigan and northern Ontario, and through his own family, which has held the belts for over 100 years.

He speaks of the fact that the white race was welcomed by the Anishnabek, and it was hoped in the time of the Fourth Fire that the white race would come wearing a face of brotherhood, and that the Anishnabek and whites together would form one mighty nation. This did not happen and the white race chose the course of destruction and death.

⁹ These comments about William Commanda are derived from a talk he gave when showing the belts at the Gathering of Aboriginal People in June 1993; from his visit to the KUMIK in July 1994; from discussions we had at his home in the summer and fall of 1994; from informal meetings we have had from 1994 to 2002 at Powwows and other gatherings. and from the chapter "Seven Prophets, Seven Fires: Grandfather William Commanda" in McFadden 1991: 35-47.

Today, in the age of the Seventh Fire, the races are again faced with a choice. The two roads are the black road of technology and overdevelopment leading to environmental catastrophe, the other is the red road of spirituality and respect for the earth. Together, people of the world have to choose the right road, be of one mind, or the earth cannot survive. Cyberspace will play a big role in this movement, as will be examined in further sections.

In April 1994, William visited the United Nations with Hopi elders and elders from other nations, including the Migmag and Mohawk. The message from the Hopi was that desecration of their sacred lands must stop, or else there will be a purification of the earth which will destroy life. Their prophecies are in line with those of the Seventh Fire: "Mankind must return to Peaceful ways, and halt the destruction of Mother Earth, or we are going to destroy ourselves. All the stages of Hopi prophecy have come to pass, except for the last, the purification. The intensity of the purification will depend on how humanity collaborates with Creation."¹⁰ The Hopi gave a deadline to the industrial nations: Four years from the date of their presentation in April 1994. This corroborates the fact that we are indeed in the time of the Seventh Fire, and also at the culmination of other Native prophecies.

In Spring 1995 Six Nations hosted the Cry of the Eagle Conference, which was attended by many of the same delegates to the 1994 UN presentation, as well as other leaders and elders from Tibet, New Zealand, Malaysia, Mexico and South America. Hopi elder Thomas Banyacya stated that "the Hopi is looking for a white brother... We will create a spiritual circle where we join the material and the

¹⁰ From a statement presented to the United Nations (UN) April 21-23 1994. The Winter 1994 (2/1) issue of Aboriginal VOICES features these prophecies.

spiritual together and we will take care of the whole world in a spiritual way as well as with the fabulous inventions” (in Hill and Monture 1995: 102). William Commanda has said that “Native people must put aside their differences and speak for Mother Earth and the Great Spirit that is in all people, all races and colours” (LeBlanc 1995: 9).

William teaches that now is the time for Native people to forgive colonizers for their ignorant and destructive actions. Without this forgiveness, Native people will not be able to think clearly □ and they need to be strong and healthy in order to be able to teach the road of cooperation and spiritual understanding to the industrial nations before it is too late. This is part of a movement toward decolonization □ a time when Native concerns and identity are finding a voice.

The Seventh Fire is not just a time of reclaiming spiritual teachings; it is the time to use those teachings to help correct the imbalance felt in the circle that is the world.¹¹ It is more than a revitalization movement, it is more like an arrival. Many Natives today are listening to teachings like the Seventh Fire prophecy, the Seven Generations teachings of the Iroquois and the prophecies of nations like the Hopi, and they are making these concerns felt on the Web.

3.2 The Seven Generations Prophecy

¹¹ One last word from William on this imbalance: "Traditional people of Indian nations have interpreted the two roads that face the light-skinned race as the road to technology and the road to spirituality. We feel that the road to technology.... has led modern society to a damaged and seared earth. Could it be that the road to technology represents a rush to destruction, and that the road to spirituality represents the slower path that the traditional native people have traveled and are now seeking again? The earth is not scorched on this trail. The grass is still growing there." William Commanda, Mamiwinini, Canada, 1991, at <http://ishgooda.nativeweb.org/>.

Mohawk chief Oren Lyons speaks of how we must look seven generations hence in all our actions as “when we walk upon Mother Earth we plant our feet carefully because we know the faces of our future generations are looking up at us from beneath the ground” (in Wall and Arden 1990: 68). This prophecy says that “the world will eventually come to Indigenous Peoples to learn or relearn how to live in harmony with the Earth. Today, we call this sustainable development” (Brascoupé 1993: 3).

The Seventh Generation prophecy also says that seven generations after contact with the Europeans, the Onkwehonwe would witness catastrophes: The elm trees would die, the birds would fall from the sky, the rivers and air would burn, deformed animals would be born, and the weather would change, creating “winter without snow and a season without growth” The prophecy says that seven generations after contact, the Onkwehonwe will rise to demand restoration of their stewardship of the earth, and people will turn to the Onkwehonwe (“and particularly to the eastern door of the great Iroquois Confederacy”) for guidance (Blanchard 1980: 478-482).

Anishnabe/Mohawk elder Simon Brascoupé writes that “The West will have to learn from Aboriginal Peoples about respecting and living in harmony with Mother Earth... Society must learn, not only to respect the Earth, but to love Mother Earth, as a loving parent loves their children. We have accepted a second rate system based on cynicism and mistrust for people.” But “caring for each other is our highest calling” and a “short-cut to spirituality,” and “spirituality is about our personal and direct relationship with the environment and the community”

(Brascoupé 1993: 5).

The message of the Seventh Fire and Seven Generations relates to the land. Concerns of the land and environment are on peoples' minds. The industrialization of North America has meant that most Native lands have been lost to development, which makes it nearly impossible for Natives to raise their children with traditional cultural values □ as those values are tied to the land.

The future of the planet itself is in question. We are affected by disasters in the Amazonian rainforests, by carbon dioxide emissions in all the industrialized countries, by damage to the ocean and depletion of fish stocks. The turtle, sacred animal to the Iroquois and others, and symbolic of our life on North America, has "assumed the new role of harbinger of death by pollution" at Akwesasne, where turtles are found to have record amounts of mercury in their bodies, and where, by 1990, "the state was warning residents not to eat any fish at all" (Johansen 1993: 12-14). This is the result of pollution, foretold in the Seven Generations prophecy; destruction of the land is also central to events of protest and violence that occurred in Akwesasne and Oka from 1988 to 1991 (Johansen 1993: xxxi), and will be central to incidents to come.

Natives here have taken responsibility for trying to control this environmental damage. One example is the Protectors of Mother Earth Day, observed by Natives across Canada with prayers, protests to governments, and gatherings. POME was celebrated on Feb. 19, 1992, and this declaration, from Andrew Big Smoke of Canoe Lake, Saskatchewan, was published in the Odawa Native Friendship Centre

newsletter, and is typical of dozens of other gatherings that have occurred over the last ten years:

I have discussed the matter of Protectors of Mother Earth Day with the elders of POME. We are now into seven months of the blockade at Wiggins Bay to protest the clear cutting of the trees. The effect it has on Mother Earth is an outright crime, not only to the people of the territory but to the world as a whole. For the trees are one of the protectors of the people who are on Mother Earth. For this reason, it not only concerns the people but the world also.

We the Red Nation of the Four Colours were given the instruction of caretakers of the Earth. We would be given knowledge of plants, grass, medicine, trees and the power that is in this plant life. We would be in harmony with the earth and all life that is from our source of life Mother Earth.

We the Red Nation are in the sacred time of the 7th Generation Fire. We will go back to our teachings of all life and harmony. We will be a people that will become as an all powerful people, unity prayers and knowledge our responsibility as caretakers of Mother Earth. This is the reason why now in the short pass that people have come to say: "No more of this destroying our way of life and our beautiful Turtle Island, the Earth." Blockades have been set up throughout Canada, from the west coast peoples to the east coast peoples of the Red Peoples. This is why we must come to acknowledge the duty we are doing. For there will be a day of prayer, knowledge, feast, dancing, sharing and caring that will make up this day. And we will call it Protectors of Mother Earth Day.

World leaders, such as those at the United Nations and at the Earth Summit in Rio De Janiero in 1992, are asking for Native input.¹² The West is finally beginning to realize that traditional Native teachings about sharing and respect for

¹² "Throughout the years, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) has found common cause with indigenous peoples from the Arctic to the Amazon, from Australia to Argentina." It has "responded to a specific appeal made by the Haudenosaunee Six Nations Confederacy to assist in the exploration of environmental hazards in their territories with the intent of forming a strategy for the restoration of native lands" Johnson, Brown and Stephens 1995: 68).

the land¹³ are valuable and that Natives must be heeded if global disintegration is to stop.¹⁴

Canada's Maurice Strong was Chairman of the Rio summit. He acknowledged the need for the West to listen to all Aboriginal peoples, and stated that the first world must transfer power to the third (and fourth) and must start on a new track.¹⁵ Former Supreme Court judge Bertha Wilson has said that Canada must be part of the world wide movement to bring respect to Native people and their teachings, and that it must come up with a national policy of reconciliation¹⁶ and regeneration.

Mordecai Richler points out that the "wasting tribal quarrel between the English and the French" will eventually be laid to rest, but perhaps not by the parties involved. Within 20 or 30 years, the majority of Canadians will be of neither

¹³ One way of teaching respect comes from Albert Snow from Kahnawake who promotes the study of "Ethno-Science," rooted in Navajo culture and tradition, as a way of promoting traditional stories and songs (about plants, for instance) to foster that direct relationship while showing new ways of looking at the teaching of subjects like science and agriculture in the classroom, among Native and non-Native students. See 1972, 1977.

¹⁴ "The West will have to learn from Aboriginal Peoples about respecting and living in harmony with Mother Earth... Society must learn, not only to respect the Earth, but to love Mother Earth, as a loving parent love their children. We have accepted a second rate system based on cynicism and mistrust for people." But "caring for each other is our highest calling" and a "short-cut to spirituality," and "spirituality is about our personal and direct relationship with the environment and the community" (Brascoupé 1993: 5).

¹⁵ "It is now generally acknowledged by the international development community that Western development models have collapsed because they were not sustainable," and "consumption mentality results in increased consumption of resources, and further exploitation and pollution of the environment." Indigenous peoples around the world are calling for sustainable economy and development in keeping with traditional values. When elders from the Yukon were asked to define economic development, they called it 'spirituality,' when asked again they said 'respect' ("a development model based on exploitation has little use for respect"), asked again they mentioned 'sharing,' but "many believe that sharing has been rendered meaningless by industrialization (and mass production)" (Brascoupé 1992: 8).

¹⁶ "Western science and Indigenous knowledge are, in reality, complimentary. By sharing and cooperatively making informed choices and usage (Natives and non-Natives may be able to realize) worldwide sustainable development. Indigenous knowledge can, through its spirituality, fulfill the ever-enlarging spiritual void created by Western rationalism and alienation with the natural world... In order to understand Indigenous knowledge and spirituality, the West must enter into a partnership with Indigenous peoples based on respect" (Brascoupé 1992: 12).

extraction (Richler 1992: 101). The majority of new Canadians will represent the world; many have come here as a last island of escape. The Native people who continue to meet them will try to remind them of their link to the earth and to each other:

Think about where you are. See yourself for a moment from the perspective of outer space looking back at the Earth. Slowly, slowly, slowly approach closer and closer to the surface of the atmosphere, through the sky and way below you see yourself. You are part of a large biosphere of interlocking, interdependent life-forms sharing the air, the water, the Earth and many living resources of the web of life. When we take things for granted part of our consciousness is split off. Through acknowledgement and Thanksgiving, one recognizes the importance of everything, thus creating a larger consciousness, a continuous memory of what we have on the planet. Thoughts precede action. Unfortunately the systems of life are not in most people's thoughts. Thus the consequences of their actions on the rest of Creation are not perceived and seemingly the (environmental) problems do not exist (Callen 1995: 91).

This reminding is part of the new Native presence in cyberspace; hopefully this will help to correct the indifference that still exists towards Natives, and their knowledge about our responsibilities to the land, found in these prophecies.

3.3 Missing the Mainstream

These teachings and sentiments were heard far and wide in the early to mid-90s, and are still fundamental to Native views. But we are finished with the UN's International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, and these messages are no more mainstream in 2005 than they were in 1994, at the beginning of the UN's Decade of the World's Indigenous People:

On Thursday, December 8 I sat in the vast and eerily empty press balcony at the United Nations' General Assembly Hall in New York and observed the opening ceremonies for the UN's "Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004)" There were two other reporters on hand: one from Sami Radio in Norway, and a print guy from Kenya. Rumor has it that a Newsweek ace was roaming the halls. Over the course of the morning we heard predictable -- and perhaps promising -- speeches from Official representatives of the UN, and some of its member states.

The Officials said they got it -- that they now realized indigenous people have a close relation with the Earth, and that their ecological knowledge, democratic traditions, and agricultural systems could play an important role in sustainable development, especially when partnered with some of the latest technological tools. They said they got it that indigenous peoples have been dispossessed and subjected to genocide as a consequence of "modernization's thirst for energy, minerals, timber, farmland and living space..."

But talk is talk. "Deeds," the native people responded. "We've had words for centuries. We are asking for deeds." This theme of 'deeds not words' arose in the late afternoon through six "unofficial" presentations by speakers representing not just various indigenous communities around the world, but networks of indigenous communities...

It struck me as predictable... that the indigenous speakers at the UN from North and Central America received in the aftermath not a column inch of news anywhere I could find...

The thrust of the indigenous talk at the UN on Thursday, and in general among many traditional peoples, concerned basic stuff that can seem, to some, tiresome: human rights, respect for the environment, freedom of religion, respect for differences. They talked not of ethnic exclusivity, or of a desire to break up the world's nation states -- as is happening worldwide -- but of their desire for meaningful and respectful inclusion into the benefits of the Nation States that have arisen on the lands where they live. They say they have something important to contribute, as well as to gain.

The traditional native voices said that they have learned something about living close to the earth in this Hemisphere -- and around the globe -- over the last 30,000 years or so, and that if finally we would just listen, we might learn something that would help us all out.

- Pax Vobiscum,
Steven McFadden for The Wisdom Conservancy
(McFadden 1994).

3.4 Conclusions

There is a pan-Indian call for a return to traditional values and teachings, and the Seventh Fire prophecy is now known across Canada. It is part of the movement toward self-determination, and part of the philosophical underpinning of young Native sentiment today. It forms a basis for Native action, on the ground and in cyberspace. As further sections will show, these traditional Native teachings are very much alive in cyberspace today.

Chapter Four

Moccasin Telegraph Telecom

The moccasin telegraph is the way that things travel, by word of mouth in Native country □ the Native way is to visit, and exchange gifts, stories and information. This slow but sure network is augmented by radio, television, print and now cyberspace. This section examines some things that are being gained and lost in historic and modern cultural exchanges through technology among Natives and others in Canada.

These show cultural exchanges, losses, and survivals at the same time. The current opportunity for cultural exchange in cyberspace is perhaps a last chance for exchange of perspectives, or a knell for assimilation.

In *Cyberspace Smoke Signals*, Larry Zimmerman writes that trade activities and communication crossed the continent long before contact:

Such activities required mechanisms for cross-cultural communication, and indeed, these mechanisms existed. On the Great Plains in the center of North America, there was a sign language effective for trade as well as giving locations of bison herds and positions of mutual enemies. In the Northwest, Chinook “jargon” became a *lingua franca* in the substantial trade systems along the coast, even incorporating white words after contact. Smoke signals from smudge fires allowed some groups on the Plains and in the Southwest to exchange information over great distances and across cultures.

Where synthetic forms of communication developed, they actually worked to preserve identity rather than break it down. At the same time, they aided in formation of some level of pan-Indian identity, a process nearly institutionalized with the coming of the Euroamericans. Both processes remain visible today, and new technologies have become the prevalent synthetic communication types (2002: 70).

Life on Turtle Island before the European invasion was very much an aural, and oral, experience. Native life is oral and kinetic; it is vested in sound and movement of the natural world rather than the written word which tries to describe and control nature. The voices of the indigenous people here carried legends, stories (history) and songs. Little was written. Native culture and knowledge lived through a constant communication, a circle including people and the earth, spirits and the natural environment.

Wireless crystal radio sets, accordions and fiddles were early forms of communications technology, precursors to the phenomenon of cyberspace, and Natives used them to continue these traditions. Adopting and adapting technologies are central to the cultural changes among Natives in Canada. Radio reached remote settlements and reserves long before TV and stereos (in many places, there was no electricity to run these devices until the 1960s).¹⁷ This was a profound introduction to white culture and music. Much of that music was country and western, and it determined the sound of the new Inuit music for generations.¹⁸

¹⁷ Like the Net today, radio in the 1930s emerged (at least in the South) “with hopes of initiating utopian democracy” but was “conceived by its creators not as a public service but a consumer product;” the rhetoric of the promise of the Internet like radio before it “obfuscates any real understanding of the material place of the emergent medium in society and ultimately nullifies any potential for social change the emergent medium might have had.” The “feeling of fulfillment offered by the surrogate space of radio was an essential element in the rhetoric of democracy and equality (and revived sense of community) that evolved around its promotion,” but rather than ameliorating constraints of geography and economic status, radio was rather a means of merely “effacing real class differences” (Spinelli 2000: 268-69, 270).

¹⁸ “Radio continues to influence (remote Northern) places as the Southern urban culture switches its attention to TV, MuchMusic and MTV, and CDs. Long before Anik brought television to the North in 1974, the Inuit could pick up WWVA, West Virginia’s country heartland station, and most Inuit in Eastern Canada grew up with that sound.

Country and western is the most popular genre of music in the North and in other rural Canadian areas. A representative sample of some 20 Inuit albums in the School for Studies in Arts and Culture: Music at Carleton University are almost all country oriented, displaying genres

The Inuit are a prime example of Indigenous people taking up technologies as they arrive, mastering communication and technical devices, from accordions and fiddles to the computer, adopting from the first whaling boats in the 1600s, wireless crystal radio sets in the 1930s to GPS today.

Jon Pierce tells a story from the Keewatin, of the white men (kuallinuk) who were camped in a raging snowstorm, a whiteout, in the middle of the tundra. “You couldn’t see two feet in front of your face. Then out of nowhere, these Inuit pulled into camp on their skidoos. They just wanted to check to see the visitors were OK. “How did you find us in this storm,” they asked, marveling at their Inuit abilities on the land. One guy grinned and pulled a GPS from inside his parka.”

Adopting and adapting technologies are central to the cultural changes among Natives in Canada. Radio reached remote settlements and reserves long before TV and stereos (in many places, there was no electricity to run these devices until the 1960s). (via

The reality is that technological and other adaptations have had profound effects on Native cultures and norms, advantages and costs. From the beginning, though, resistance has been strong, in the sense that Native have always striven to make use of the new tools on their own terms.

as diverse as bluegrass, rockabilly, country rock and the slick Nashville sound” (Patterson 1995: 73).

4.1 *The Fiddle and the Drum*

Among the Iroquois in the 1600s,¹⁹ the Jesuits had trouble trying to enforce a wholesale acceptance of their religion²⁰ and music, because the Iroquois wanted to use the white religion on their own terms. "In the same way that the Jesuits initially responded to Huron customs from their own European cultural perspective, the Huron seem to have interpreted European (French) beliefs and practices according to their own concepts and signifying systems" (Grabell 1990: 96). So while the Jesuits viewed Native healing songs as satanic howling, the Wendat (and Iroquois) viewed Jesuit singing as a powerful intonation of a new type of spirit society. The Jesuits were often asked to pray at Native healing ceremonies, and Natives would use traditional invocations during Christian services (1990: 96-97).

A further example of cultural borrowing is the early Native adoption of the violin (or fiddle), an instrument which represents European musical culture, and was at the zenith of its popularity in the 1700s and 1800s. During the era of the fur trade in Canada, French and Scottish traders and settlers socialized at fiddle dances. Natives in contact with white settlements were drawn to the dances, and the fiddle.

¹⁹ Most of the Jesuits' early work was done with the Wendat, also the Innu. The Wendat are related linguistically, culturally and familiarly to members of the Iroquois Confederacy, although they never joined. Their early contact and alliance with the French is thought to be one source of their later decimation through disease and warfare. Their worldview and traditions, and their experiences with the church, are linked to those of the Iroquois, so I examine these groups together here. For more on this relationship, see Sioui 1992: 39-60.

²⁰ There is no word for "religion" or "spirituality" among Anishnabek and Iroquois languages, as these elements are part of everything in everyday existence. The division of life into areas of "religion," "economy," "politics" and "culture" reflect the segmented thinking of Europeans. An "old Cree Indian from Northern Québec" once said to Wilf Peltier: "What is culture anyway ? We are a way of life" (Peltier na: 4).

The fiddle was portable and loud enough to stimulate gatherings. *Rolling Stone* magazine described the fiddle as “the electric guitar of the 19th century: loud, portable and flashy” (in Pinto 1994: 70). From the beginning, fiddle music and accompanying dances and gatherings interfered with traditional Native ways. Handsome Lake of the Iroquois forbade the use of the fiddle, and Ojibwe Midewiwin teachers around the Great Lakes found their lodge attendance dwindling as Saturday night fiddle dances took over.

Much as Native traditionalists (and the clergy) would protest, the fiddle gained popularity. Basil Johnston describes the early days of dances and fiddling on the reserve in his story “What is Sin ?” Priests and the police were working to eliminate drinking and dancing parties on the reserves, while “the dancers continued to meet secretly... the square dance loving Indians scheduled the Saturday night November dances in a remote part of the reserve, “ and in order to distract authorities, “Kagige was for assaulting the priest and even raising a small party of men to howl outside his residence for several hours every night for several nights” (1978: 76-78).

The fiddle was the instrument most adopted by Natives during early colonization, and this resulted in some new hybrid music styles and in survivals of both Native and European styles and tunes. Musically, the fiddle allowed for a syncretism of European and Native musics, wherein both traditions are distinct within a new music. Anne Lederman works with Metis fiddlers, in Saulteaux communities in western Manitoba, composed largely of descendants of Ojibwe who migrated from Sault Ste. Marie in the late 1700s, in pursuit of the fur trade.

Marriages or alliances “in the manner of the country” with French and Scottish traders created the Metis communities there today.²¹

It is in the musical traditions of the Saulteaux communities that we can perhaps most easily see the mixed legacy of the past 200 years... even though it is their mother tongue, no one seems to sing Ojibwa songs anymore. Fred McKay, born in 1908, says he never heard any “powwow music” at Pine Creek in his lifetime, only violin. In spite of that, however, and even though the older style of fiddling is close to Québécois playing in many ways, the fiddle music of these communities bears the unmistakable stamp of traditional Native music...

This Native character is evident largely in the form of the tunes. The length of the phrases changes drastically from one line to the next: the overall structures have any number of these different-length phrases and are very asymmetric. Each player has his own versions of tunes and the players vary the tunes in certain ways from one time through the tune to the next. These renditions frequently vary in length as well as melody. This is playing in “the old-time way” (Lederman 1987: 9).

She goes on to point out that these characteristics are common to old Ojibwe songs. She speculates further that some of these musical characteristics, such as the unusual use of five-beats, may be due not only to musical tradition but also linguistic flow and structure (1987: 13).

Saulteaux fiddle music is imbued with a heritage from Scots fiddlers. The complicated foot tapping patterns, thought to have originated in the British Isles as a way for solo fiddlers to accompany themselves, are part of the style that traveled from Cape Breton and other Maritime areas to the Plains and beyond (Lederman 1991: 42; MacGillivray 1982: 6).

²¹ In most cases, these marriages were in “la facon du pays,” partly because the clergy did not approve or were not available. See Sylvia Van Kirk’s *Many Tender Ties*.

There is still a busy sociomusical syncretism in the North, where musicians with Native, Inuit, Irish, French, and Scottish influences are getting together in places such as Yellowknife and Whitehorse to create a lively country and bluegrass scene. Multi-cultural music festivals, such as *Northern Lights*, help bring threads of many traditions together in music.

4.2 Menace and Promise in the Media

Television (which Jerry Mander calls “freedom of speech for the wealthy” (1991:78)) has had a bad effect on family relations, language and social structure in remote communities. Cindy Gilday points out that the effect of TV of the Dene has been “to glamorize behaviours and values that are poisonous to life up here... People are sitting in their log houses, alongside frozen lakes with dog teams tied up outside, watching a bunch of white people in *Dallas* standing around their swimming pools, drinking martinis and plotting to destroy each other or steal from each other, or to get their friends’ wives into bed... I heard of one old woman who prays every night for the people in the soap operas. She thinks they’re *real*” (in Mander 1991: 104-105).

Six Nations actor, musician and Native activist Gary Farmer points out that TV is “the modern assimilator, replacing the old methods of residential schools, churches, and governments... Television has infiltrated practically every native household from the farthest reaches of the Northwest Territories through the tip of South America, and indigenous communities are bombarded by information that does not reflect their reality or their needs, their language or their culture... This cycle of alienation must be broken and Indian media are the only hope in sight for

this task” (1994: 63).

Helping to counter this, there are now over two hundred Native radio stations on reserves across Canada, many of them tied into networks such as the Wawatay Native Communications Society in Sioux Lookout Ontario. There are dozens of small television and cable producers as well, creating shows in Native languages that are broadcast on Inuit, Dene and other TV networks across Northern Canada. These are augmented by many Native radio stations now online (mostly in the U.S.), such as Native Radio at <http://www.nativeradio.com>. Gary Farmer has long championed Native arts and media, particularly radio, and has now established beginnings of a national network with radio stations in several cities, notably Toronto (<http://aboriginalradio.com>), similar to US counterpart AIROS (<http://www.airos.org>). Of course, we now also have the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, reaching people across the country (http://www.aptn.ca:8080/corporate/about/history_html). The latest addition points to the power of cyberspace to expand the range of our media: Metis FM radio, launched by the Metis Nation of Ontario in April 2005, is being heard around the world on the Net (try the Pemmican mix at <http://www.metisnation.org/radio/new2/home.html>).

“For the past twenty years, indigenous communities around the world have begun to take control of the media most related to them. This is not an easy task” as the communities face governments and regulatory boards that favour private broadcasters, but communities are mastering the technology and the “positive change a publicly owned radio station can make in an Indian community is astounding,” and “one day, all the indigenous broadcasters around the world will come together □ one day soon” (Farmer 1994: 64).²²

²² To this end, a number of Native communities are offering courses in broadcast and other media. At Tyendinaga, “the Aboriginal Media Program was created in the spirit of telling our own stories.” The three-year post-secondary program leads to either a diploma in print or broadcast journalism. At <http://www.tyendinaga.net/fnti/media/media.htm>.

4.3 Questions □ Adoptions, Survivals

The question remains as to what the effects of the adoption of the new technology, the new arena of cyberspace, will be. Adoption of the fiddle showed cultural losses, and survivals at the same time. As the following section explores, the current opportunity for cultural exchange in cyberspace can be seen by as perhaps a last chance for exchange of perspectives, or a knell for assimilation □ in light of the Seventh Fire Prophecy.

Natives, particularly on reserve, missed the early forays into cyberspace, and regarded it with suspicion from the start. In 1998 I was at South Bay Mouth at the tip of Manitoulin waiting for the ferry to Tobermory and the Bruce Peninsula. I stopped at a diner that advertised whitefish and chips, and there was an Anishnawbe woman there just getting started for the afternoon. I asked if I could plug my laptop into her phone line; her younger son (about 12) thought it was a neat idea but said “ask my dad.” The older son (15) sat smoking cigarettes looking out the window at the cars headed for the ferry □ it was powwow weekend and there was a lot going on.

I asked their dad if it would be OK for me to tap into his phone line and get to my office in Ottawa. He said alright, come back in the morning. I got takeout whitefish and relaxed at my camp. The next morning, the younger son looked upset and the older had gone off to the powwow; after breakfast Dad told me that he had laid awake all night in thought, and now feared that I might use my computer and the Internet to get into his bank account or take the money from

his Interac machine; he asked if I could prove otherwise. Not being able to, I nodded to his wife and youngest son and left.

I headed to the popular Esso fishing stop down the road. The owner there, a non-Native running a busy corner shop, let me plug in. When I told him about my trouble up the road, he said: "If you can get to my bank account, please put some money in."

The people at the whitefish shop were right to be suspicious. If Barlow is right, and cyberspace is "where your money lives," then the mainstream shopkeepers are there already, waiting for the Natives to come and 'trade.'

Chapter Seven

Conclusions and Implications for First Nations

Ethnography has constructed an object of knowledge (“culture”) that has remained relatively constant across changes in theoretical positions and interpretive methods. This object, and the means by which it is constructed, is situated within networks of power and what Michel Foucault refers to as “regimes of truth.” The ethnographic text is thus made possible only by certain historical, political, and epistemological contexts. The study of indigenous media, with its often uncritical appropriation of ethnographic discourse, must be located in reference to the historical specificity of this discourse and to the “practical politics” of colonization and domination.

The historical experience of culture contact and conflict between colonizing Europeans and the aboriginal population of North America shape the ways in which First Nations communities today have appropriated and developed the forms of mass media. This history has also shaped the way cultural differences are experienced, imagined, and represented within and between these two groups. The current struggle for access to media and the discursive frames within which this struggle is analyzed have common roots in modes of domination. (Bredin 1993)

We as a society cannot afford further divisions between the information haves and have-nots. A gap in the availability of Internet access will have a multiplier effect and create an even more significant divide in critical areas such as education, job training, literacy, public health and economic prosperity. (Tim Koogle, Chairman and CEO of Yahoo!, at the G-8 Kyushu–Okinawa Summit 2000)

Today in Canada an era of limited political autonomy has occurred and there is strong movement toward self-determination, healing, and expression of Native perspectives. The colonial policies carried out against Natives of North America for the last 500 years have not worked. In particular, Natives in Canada and elsewhere are surviving and thriving, and a strong movement toward self-

determination is in process (Frideres 2001, RCAP 1995, Mercredi 1993, Fleras and Elliott 1992).

The data in this dissertation demonstrate that cyberspace is empowering to First Nations, at this time. Pockets of communications, such as Frosty's, alt.native, thousands of websites, are establishing territory in cyberspace.

First Nations in Canada need to take a proactive approach to the use of cyberspace; this new territory-in-process is a chance to refine and redefine Native and non-Native priorities. One of the strongest of the new tools is Information Technology (IT). It enables communications from the margins to the centre, it can help with preservation of oral culture and language: "With a multimedia computer the Internet becomes a multimedia system, featuring sound and graphics and video..." Cyberspace allows remote communities to communicate and access the latest information, it can support culture, and "our Nations will be able to speak more quickly and directly than ever before" on the Internet (Morrisson 1995).

The year 2003 marks the end of the UN's Decade of Indigenous Peoples. But it is just a beginning in cyberspace, and this thought from a decade ago still applies:

I agree with Gerald McMaster that 1992 (Columbus' Quincentenary) was a year for reflection on ourselves, on who we are, and how we are all represented in the discourse of history and art and literature, feminism and resistance, land rights, treaty rights, sovereignty, and self-determination. In 1993, the International Year of Indigenous Peoples, we must recognize -- and act upon -- the intertwined past and present of our two worlds, our parallel voices. (Valaskakis 1993)

How can Natives find unique ways to use the technology based on Native values and worldviews, to reflect those voices? There is need for a national technology discussion for First Nations, because cyberspace has increasing power over the future of Native groups, and it is not yet tied to the institutions and agencies of government. Information Technology and cyberspace of themselves are the agents of change, and they are changing us.

I believe that the upcoming generation, the Native N-Geners from 15-25, and the ones that follow, will be more influential in the course of First Nations' future than any young generation before them. We will be leaving the Residential School intergenerational traumas behind as youth embrace the Net, and make it their own. Increasingly, adults can only sit by and watch. In the future, what will the youth of cyberspace, who grew up there, be like? In Native communities, how much more divorced from traditions (and the community) might they become?

7.1 Two Worlds and Tricksters

Within cyberspace, not only are the spatial and temporal barriers collapsing, so too are the inter-personal ones. Meanwhile, however, new social barriers emerge with unique issues relating to access, understanding, and meaning (Miah 2000: 223).

As has been shown, cyberspace can help and hurt Natives □ it can be a Trickster. At the same time, it is the meeting of Two Worlds, Native and non-Native, and in this virtual space a dialogue is emerging.

Natives have a substantial presence in cyberspace, beyond their numbers. This is partly due to early adoption of the technology by Natives, also to the mǎyǎ surrounding Native presence, visited by Windegos and Wannabes, scholars and mystics, people of all types drawn to things Native. This is nothing new, but the sheer volume of exchanges, and the ability to create personas (avatars) in cyberspace, make it hard to tell what is 'real.' Could it be that in cyberspace, 'Native' is coming to mean something more (or less) than it does on the ground? How will that filter back to the 'real' communities?

There is a fragmentation of knowledge in the Native cybercommunity, as there are in the real communities, and as it is cyberspace as a whole. The 20-30,000 subscribers to almost 700 Native American newsgroups at Yahoo are at a type of virtual powwow; but unlike a real gathering, they cannot see the whole grounds, the territory, or the forest for the trees. Like Baudrillard's "fascination" at the "disappearing" of information through sheer volume ("a black hole"), there is a glut of information, misinformation, repetition and outright illusion.

A visitor could well come away with bits and pieces that don't add up □ and pass them off as knowledge. Again, this is nothing new, but the stakes are higher: Never before has so much information about and from Natives, good and bad, been available to so many people.

This super-newsgroup is unmoderated, there is no guide. That is the difference that most breaks with tradition, where teachers, elders and other guides pass on the knowledge through time. In cyberspace, we see a veneer of that knowledge, all jumbled together, again we are in Borges' *Library of Babel* – a

library where an infinite number of books are arranged, but no one knows how, or in what particular order.

7.2 The New Communities

I believe there is a general issue here with worldwide loss of unequivocal clan/tribal affiliations. That which replaces it asserts individualism to the exclusion of other values, and pushes for the widest denominator (English on the Web; US\$ in the pocket, massive retaliation as an international norm of state behaviour). Has not the nation state, hand in hand with industrial capitalism, destroyed tribe and the web of family obligation and duties? Only the wealthiest make clan compatible with modern life, for instance the ruling Saudi circles, the English elite... (the state is) offering organized religion as a substitute reintegration factor... the content of which they can control (C. McKie personal correspondence, summer 2002).

...Nous vivions, à cette fin de siècle, une vague d'agrégations tribales spontanées et nomades où la technologie numérique interactive a un rôle fondamental...La cyberculture... fournit une renaissance d'interactions sociales tribales (Lemos 2000: 89).

...Cyberspace represents a more ominous phase of Western colonialism, the homogenization of knowledge and, in tandem, the elimination of local knowledge systems (Lal 1999: 140).

Cyberspace is a strange place, real yet disembodied, a place that brings space and time whirling together in new ways, and Western and Native and other cultures and worldviews into sharp perspective and contrast (more than Two Worlds). It is now a largely North American middle class construction and phenomenon, but holds the promise of enabling universal access. But just as we have reproduced many mainstream values on the Net (patriarchy, capitalism), we are reproducing social problems (exclusion, monopolism, new power elite).

Like the stock markets that society once created, cyberspace is an artificial system that holds increasing power over its creators, as we head further

into the digital age and the Knowledge Economy. More than the market, it also has the power to change the way we think, and think about ourselves, while offering the techno-elite more say in how we run our lives. It is a personal and social transformative tool, one which is changing exponentially.

Cyberspace today can be seen as a “kaleidoscopic jumbling together of partial and fragmented visions of reality, where each one is hegemonic in its own domain” (Sardar and Ravetz 1997: 10); but each also visit the other as the global touches the local, and the technology changes the discourse (McLuhan et. al.).

Can cyberspace be a place on Turtle Island, or, more to the point, how will it affect what happens here? In “Earthing the Ether,” Nigel Clark explores associations between cyberspace and the ecological movement, not the least of which being the fact that early hardware developers and counter-culture minded programmers, working out of their California garages in the mid-70s, had visions of “electronic villages cradled in a natural environment,” sort of Whole Earth Catalogue meets cyberspace (still a white middle class vision), a process that continues with the “greening of cyberspace” as ecological dialogues become mediated by the technology. “Ecology is not immured from the prevailing techno-cultural condition In the current climate, it is no longer enough that natural beings are seen or encountered, henceforth contact must be extended into an ongoing dialogue” in cyberspace (1997: 92), this is not unlike Latour’s calling for a “parliament of things,” urging us when “half of our politics is constructed by science and technology, the other half is constructed in societies” to “patch the two together, and the political task can begin again” (1993: 144)

To make a further analogy, the plight of Peary caribou and polar bears in the Arctic is attributable to climate warming, caused largely by greenhouse gasses. Hudson Bay-area bears are dying like “canaries in a coal mine” because ice floes melt too soon and they can’t get food (seal pups); scientists are predicting extinction for the bears within 40 years if trends continue (Boswell 2000: A10). Cyberspace puts us in the coal mine, or Gibson’s “infinite cage:” we are as much subject to it as to the real physical environment, the fear that helps us survive in the forest, in many ways, exists there too, but can we find it and use it?

In Native teachings bears are the go-between, between the bush and the village, always circling and crossing over where the forest meets the highway. They take messages back and forth between two worlds such as person/spirit (or human/machine?). If cyberspace is the infohighway we are on, but we actually physically live in the forest, then these bears, like sociological “indicators” of this coexistence, reflect the human hope and frailty that is vested in cyberspace.

In summer 1998 I was at Rabbit Blanket Lake by the top of Lake Superior, travelling through. I had my laptop with me, an innovation at the time, but couldn’t get through to cyberspace because there were no cell phones, no phones, just radio phones in the area. This is the ‘lack of infrastructure’ stretching across our country, particularly in the north.²³

²³ I had been on the road across the country for two weeks. I was using a laptop powered through electrical inversion from the cigarette lighter from all through southern Saskatchewan and before that over the Great Lakes north of Superior. I was constantly looking for ranger stations, parks, campgrounds, gas stations, anyplace to plug in and do my work in cyberspace (Webmaster), but encountered lots of resistance to my machine, and the Net. I was two days west of Ottawa, north of Lake Superior, when I managed to get through to the Net. In the long stretch past Wawa and Marathon, I found a campground at Upsala that would let me plug in my laptop. “But it won’t

I finally found a camp ranger who would let me try to get through to the Net on his radio phone, miles to the local transmitter, to a satellite station. People had said it wasn't possible; you had to dial and then pop the knobs on the phone, and the system was analog, not digital, but we made it work, between the digital codes and the hammering on the knobs.

His father had been a developer at Northern Telecom, he told me, but he had been taken up by the woods as a youth and followed the road of forestry, forest management, the forest. He liked my Toshiba, and the woods, and the place we were at. He had no problem making them work together. This was an early meeting of Two Worlds.

The forest and the highway form a reflexive circle just as do cyberspace and real place, but we are the indicators, not just the designers, of this place called cyberspace. The effects are as real as a truck on the highway.

We are witnessing a fragmentation in modernity and modernization, and witnessing a “sense of disconuity of time, the break with tradition” in which modern man (and each Native in Canada) “constantly tries to invent himself” in the face of “industrialization, the growth of science and technology, the modern nation state, the capitalist world market, urbanization and other infrastructural elements” (such as cyberspace) (Featherstone 1988: 199, 201).

There are further breaks with Native ways as kinship is replaced by personal relationships and interests, local community gives way to “abstract systems as a means of stabilizing relations across indefinite spans of time-

work,” the lady in the store said, “because we ain't got no Internet here.” The farmers coming into the café looked at me like some new kind of threatening animal. “The school is talking about getting the Internet for the kids,” she later told me, “but a lot of people don't like it.”

space,” and Native spirituality or worldview and traditions meet the “future-oriented, counterfactual thought” of modernity (through cyberspace) (Giddens 1990: 102). The Native awareness (‘fear’) of nature, of bears, of the land, is transformed in cyberspace to “threats and dangers emanating from the reflexivity of modernity” (ibid.).

This points to the need to be aware of the contradictory possibilities of cyberspace, its Trickster nature, such as its promotion of the English language while promising Native language retention through telelearning, or its fostering new cybercommunities based on affiliation, at the expense of locale and community. John Sherry’s 1995 study with the Navajo showed their preference for face-to-face talk was further marginalizing them in face of the “modernist predilection for discursive redemption through precise, written logic” of computers (Hakken 1999: 139).

Zimmerman argues that:

There can be little doubt that new technologies play a role in the establishment and maintenance of American Indian ethnic boundaries, but their role is not entirely clear. At some level they may simply be extensions of already extant traits and processes of boundaries maintenance. Certainly, the rapidity of their acceptance by Indian people is remarkable, but even that may be an extension of (pre)historic processes that required the development and use of synthetic communication devices. (2000: 85)

What he calls “Tribal pages” are now allowing Nations to demonstrate their “sovereignty and unique characters,” while “some pages that deal with pan-Indian issues may simply reinforce already existing boundaries (among

Nations),” and there is “an even broader issue of a further lumping of Indian people with other indigenous groups worldwide as a category of ‘indigenous,’ ‘tribal’ or ‘traditional.’” (ibid.).

Many Native websites, especially the portals, are linking Native sites and issues from offshore, such as Australian (Aborigine), New Zealand (Maori), South American or Finland (Sami).²⁴ This type of site “would simply reinforce existing categories, but at an even broader level” says Zimmerman (2000: 85), but I believe it goes beyond that. In the strong movement toward North-South indigenous dialogue, and circumpolar dialogues, and also global solidarity, cyberspace and the mega-sites will prove to be central in sharing information and agendas. For although cyberspace is growing rapidly, with its promotion of mainstream values, it is growing against a long history of resistance:

Global change is scouring the face of the planet, but we have lived with it long enough to know that it is not going to scrub away the 5,000 languages on the globe. The particular is just as tenacious and resourceful as the global. We seem to be retribalizing: the more globalism makes our consumption patterns converge, the more insistently we defend the particularities of national differences which remain. And sometimes we defend our differences and our identity with global tools on the Internet, using software provided by such avatars of globalism as Bill Gates (Ignatieff 1998: D10).

Cyberspace “is changing so rapidly that it is difficult to predict its future impacts on ethnic boundaries. Certainly some computer companies and web sites are pushing a notion of ‘one world, one culture’ (cyberculture, we suppose!).

²⁴ Bill Henderson, a non-Native lawyer from Toronto who has represented Native groups for 25 years, maintains such a pan-cultural and cross-border (Canada-U.S.) site at <http://www.bloorstreet.com/300block/aborl.htm>.

That idea, however, lacks an understanding that synthetic communication has a push-pull effect that works to push groups apart at the same time it works to pull them together” (2000: 86).

I don't believe that access to information on Aboriginal groups of all types will serve to “push groups apart,” the more information Native people can share, the better. Pan-Indianism may be a threat to individual Native identities (i.e. the adoption of the Plains powwow in the East, use of Dream Catcher traditions by non-Ojibwe, use of the Plains drum everywhere), but I believe it has been far more powerful in bringing different Native people together in a sharing of traditions, and issues and concerns. Mohawks did not lose the water drum when they adopted the Plains drum for powwows and other events, Natives do not necessarily lose their traditions by adopting others. Pan-Indianism may appear to be a ‘generic’ Indian style at powwows and gatherings, supplanting local customs, but Natives themselves know the differences between their own (Mohawk, Ojibwe, Hopi etc.) traditions and those that have spread and evolved over the Powwow Trail in the last 20-30 years.

This powwow is continuing today in cyberspace. Individuals, Nations and organizations all have their own websites, reflecting their individual culture. At the same time, they have the opportunity to visit other people, and Nations, and learn about theirs.

As the economy moves ever more clearly toward being information-based, Native communities are striving to ensure they are not once again marginalized. Information economies transcend specific regions and can help Native peoples overcome the economic

deprivation that has inflicted many communities since the inception of the reservation system... Do new forms of communication offer a way to overcome the distances associated with regional and economic isolation? New media may allow the development of shared visions without sacrificing specific ties to place, the sense of rootedness that comes not only in living in a particular location over time, but through sharing a common understanding of humans' relationship to nature and cosmological place in the universe with other community members.

Through media (video, film, computing, telecommunications), indigenous peoples can develop a sense of community in imagiNative new ways while still maintaining continuity with traditional communication forms and the values that these forms embody... Ultimately, issues related to the self-governance of Native communities □ power, control, authority over one's own destiny □ are seated in the authority to represent one's self that forms the essence of indigenous media (and communications) (Leuthold 1997: 192).

We need an MC, and a powwow committee, to help bring this powwow together. The people get lost at mega-sites such as Yahoo; there needs to be a better map to the territory. But just as it took thousands of years to develop the trade routes, territories and alliances among Natives across Turtle Island, it will take time to do so in cyberspace as well.

7.3 Native N-Geners

Native youth could be following examples set by mainstream kids today: They resisted control of the Net with shared music distributions systems (MP3s and Kazaa, a new peer-to-peer music application which has replaced Napster and Gnutella), and will work to keep cyberspace free in the future. Donald Tapscott says that "for the first time in history, children are more comfortable,

knowledgeable, and literate than their parents about an innovation central to society” (1998: 1).

N-Geners developed their own, non-exclusive approaches, such as Gnutella, where “members of a network using Gnutella software in essence form a search engine of their own that expands its search exponentially.” The system has been shut down by major corporations holding copyright, through actions in the U.S. courts, as has Napster. Nonetheless, the way the system works is typical of distributive software, and its democratic intent: “When a Gnutella user has a query, the software sends it to 10 computers on the network. If the first 10 computers don’t have the file, each computer sends it to 10 other computers and so on until, designers say, an estimated million computers would be looking for it in just five to 10 seconds. The program could theoretically check every site on the Web.” (Cha 2000). This is networking, working together, for the good of the group. Kazaa continues in this tradition.

The very existence of these free-distributed networks is a statement about the wild nature of the Web and how impossible it seems to be for any dominant group to claim it. It is also a dramatic display of how easily the Net (and society) can be transformed or at least shaken by smart computer programmers who are in their teens.

Communities are changing as well. Children are born into cyberspace and thus assimilate it; adults can only hope to accommodate. Since the kids are the authority, family members must begin to “respect each other for what their

authorities actually are. This creates more of a peer dynamic within families” (Tapscott 1998: 37).

Innovations such as the printing press, radio and TV are “unidirectional and controlled by adults” whereas the “new media is interactive, malleable, and distributed in control... (and) children are taking control of critical elements of a communications revolution” (1998: 26). The youth-elder power relation is shifting.

This must be even more so in Native communities, and those communities built on family and extended family, where the computer has already begun to show its downside in terms of family and socialization.

There is idealism in this youthful propensity for sharing, more akin to traditional Native ways: “N-Geners... find power on the Internet because it depends on a distributed, or shared, delivery system” (unlike the media), and “this distributed, or shared power is at the heart of the culture of interaction” (Tapscott 1998: 79). Cyberspace is a place for youth to interact.

This sharing can also be individually empowering. Foucault presciently talked about the “Web of power,” stemming from the “incitement to discourse” about a subject, leading to “increased knowledge on that subject, which leads to power. Power comes from any person who starts a discussion, the discussion forms a web outward to the discussion group, weaves its way out from there to other conversations, and sometimes even returns along the same or new paths to where it started” (1998: 79). Usenet email groups, websites, and chat groups all have these qualities.

The decentralization of power through “open” and “distributed network” programs such as Freenet, Linux and Gnutella has revived the romantic dreams of many a cyberspace pioneer; a free realm where no information gatekeeper exists and where all property is commonly owned. The developers of Gnutella ranged in age from 26 to 16; they were motivated by a love of “invention, freedom and transformation.” Gnutella reached over 10,000 machines, storing perhaps two million song files. It is said that “none of the 400-plus people who subscribed to the various Gnutella developers’ email lists dared to bring up business proposals.” (Cha 2000).

This may have been true of young developers from the mainstream, but I suspect that youth in the communities are doing just that today □ trying to find ways to use the Net to generate interest, and income. In remote communities, the Net may serve to provide an essential link to the mainstream, one that could help keep youth in the community. At this time, it is a long shot, given low access rates and lack of training, but it may be a way to the future that can further bridge the Two Worlds.

7.4 Freedom for the People?

What about the claim for individual freedom in cyberspace? “Of all the computer enthusiasts’ political ideas, there is none more poignant than the faith that the computer is destined to become a potent equalizer in modern society... Presumably, ordinary citizens equipped with microcomputers will be able to

counter the influence of large, computer-based organizations... (but) using a personal computer makes one no more powerful vis-à-vis, say, the National Security Agency than flying a hang glider establishes a person as a match for the U.S. Air Force” (Winner 1998: 236-37). But many computers, working together? That is the distributive nature of cyberspace as it expands.

In many ways “the online world is the freest community in American life. Its members can do things unacceptable elsewhere in our culture. They can curse freely, challenge the existence of god, explore their sexuality nearly at will, talk to radical thinkers from all over the world. They can even commit verbal treason... The hackers and geeks who founded the Internet believed that there should be no obstacles between people and information... The single dominant ethic in this community is that information wants to be free” (Katz 1998: 220). At the same time, “some network enthusiasts assert that ‘information wants to be free,’ but an equally vociferous band of digital pioneers contend that the real future of the global Internet lies in metering every drop of knowledge and charging for every sip” (Okerson 1998: 343).

There are arguments for restrictions in cyberspace, which will ultimately test its ability as a facilitator for groups in the margins. Currently in Canada and the U.S., regulators and cyberlibertarians are skirmishing over new laws and regulations to monitor and police cyberspace.

Calling for “selective government regulation of cyberspace,” a U.S. law professor argues that “an untrammelled cyberspace would ultimately prove inimical to the ideals of liberal democracy. It would free majorities to trample

upon minorities and serve as a breeding ground for invidious status discrimination, narrowcasting and mainstreaming content selection, systematic invasions of privacy, and gross inequalities in the distribution of basic requisites for citizenship in the information age” (Netanel 2000: 395).

But cyberspace is still free territory, for those who can afford to be there. It can still be used in the interests of the margins against the mainstream. Sensitive to the issue of government censorship of Chinese media overseas, by local and home governments, Zhang and Xiaoming conclude that “as the new technology straddles the border between a mass medium and an interpersonal medium with a convergence of mail, information retrieval, message posting and broadcasting functions, an interpersonal exchange of information could easily result in a mass broadcast. The blending of personal communication and mass communication makes it hard for censors to decide where and when to strike.” It is hard to “identify and terminate the source of origin” on the Net as well: The authors point to The Tunnel, an underground e-journal published by dissidents in China, who e-mail issues to subscribers overseas, who then post them on foreign websites (1999: 25-26).

I believe that security in cyberspace cannot be achieved by individuals or marginal groups, as long as the superstructure is in the hands of the cyberelite. But this is nothing new for First Nations. Anyone can read smoke signals or trail markers; even when coded or encrypted, they are a locator, as are emails.

The freedom in cyberspace now is more the ability to promote a message, an identity, sharing, and a dialogue □ in keeping with the Seventh Fire Prophecy.

7.5 First Nations in Cyberspace

Demographic pressures underscore the need of Aboriginal communities to develop skilled workers in order to meet Canada's labour market needs and to improve their employment prospects. The emergence of an economy that values technological skills and competencies has significant positive and negative implications for Aboriginal peoples. Technologically skilled Aboriginal workers will be required to meet the needs of land claim settlements and self-government arrangements. Technology provides Aboriginal teachers and students with a tool to broaden their learning experience. (Greenall 2002: 9)

The Moccasin Telegraph today is a continuation of communication and creative expression on the part of Natives. In cyberspace, Native perspectives can become louder and clearer. As mainstream society learns to understand and respect Natives for who they are, they are acting in accordance with the Seventh Fire and Seven Generations Prophecies.

First Nations people are travelling in cyberspace along with the mainstream, but again as in the Iroquoian Two-Row Wampum belt of the 1600s, picturing two canoes going parallel down the river, together but not interfering with the other, Natives have to find unique ways to use the technology based on Native values and worldviews.

Use of cyberspace should benefit the community by promoting awareness of Native values, helping to gain mainstream respect for spiritual practices and prophecies, and through assisting in the cultural, spiritual and political process of self-determination. Throughout this country on reserves and in the cities the people still feel the extreme urgency and concern for cultural survival, for the preservation of languages and teachings and the restoration of health to the people. As much as this is happening in Akwesasne, it is happening in cyberspace.

“The broad, pan-Indian community varies widely, and the existence of multiple non-Native communities, often in conflictual relationships with one another, adds layers of complexity to the relationship between Native media and its varied audiences.” The challenge for Native producers in cyberspace is “to define their goals relative to the needs of divergent communities: their home communities, Native tribes across North America, indigenous people worldwide, and the broader non-Native population of North America and the world” (Leuthold 1997: 170).

Aboriginal communities find themselves in an interesting situation. With respect to the digital era, they are...at the starting gate with all sectors of Canadian society. (Aboriginal peoples) also perhaps stand to benefit the most from the digital era. (Shirley Serafini, Deputy Minister, Indian and Northern Affairs, 2000)

As Canada’s economy becomes more knowledge based, there is “significant danger” that underskilled Natives, and First Nations, will be excluded from new economic opportunities and will be pushed further toward the margins of society. They could be left behind and disenfranchised as the pace of technology

adoption and integration in the economy increases. First Nations “face many of the same issues and challenges discussed in debates surrounding information ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ in the developing world” (Greenall 2001: 11).

Most Native communities lack the money, technical infrastructure and human and technical resources needed to get to cyberspace, the new global territory. Getting there won’t solve the serious social and economic challenges that many Aboriginal communities face; but it is a piece of the puzzle in solving complex problems which require holistic and coordinated approaches on the part of all in the communities. Natives must prioritize the adoption IT to avoid falling deeper into the digital divide in Canada, and in cyberspace.

This new territory is just as real as space itself. Just as real as the space we inhabit, and travel through. There was a lot of pride, but also there were a lot of jokes at Akwesasne about the first American Indian astronaut (“smuggling in space!”);²⁵ there is also the warning in the “Funny Moon Message,” found on a Native listserv:

Sent: Thursday, January 09, 2003 2:48 AM
Subject: funny moon message

When NASA was preparing for the Apollo Project, it took the astronauts to the Navajo Nation in Arizona for training.

One day, a Navajo elder and his son came across the space crew walking among the rocks. The elder, who spoke only Navajo, asked a question. His son translated for the NASA people: “What are these guys in the big suits doing?”

One of the astronauts said that they were practicing for a trip to the moon. When his son relayed this comment the Navajo elder, he got all excited and asked if it would be possible to give to the astronauts a message to deliver to the moon?

²⁵ The first Native astronaut is John Herrington, he flew on the STS-113 mission in November and December 2002.

Recognizing a promotional opportunity when he saw one, a NASA official accompanying the astronauts said, "Why certainly!" and told an underling to get a tape recorder. The Navajo elder's comments into the microphone were brief. The NASA official asked the son if he would translate what his father had said.

The son listened to the recording and laughed uproariously. But he refused to translate. So the NASA people took the tape to a nearby Navajo village and played it for other members of the nation. They too laughed long and loudly but also refused to translate the elder's message to the moon.

Finally, an official government translator was summoned. After he finally stopped laughing the translator relayed the message: "Watch out for these pricks. They have come to steal your land."

Are we doomed to revisit the colonial experience in cyberspace? Yes, if access is denied to most of the Native community. No, if First Nations can make a leap forward into the digital world.

What appears to be emerging is a highly educated, mobile, internationally networked cohort of knowledge workers on the one hand and a relatively unskilled, immobile class of workers who bear most of the costs of the new global order on the other. This is not the Canadian way. (Thomas J. Courchene, *A State of Minds: Canadians in the Information Era*, working paper 10, 2000)

The challenge for Canada is to develop strategies that build its overall level of technological development and competitiveness, while creating an equitable distribution of resources and benefits among all communities.

Natives are increasingly participating in the global economy, and the knowledge economy. Building technological skills and is key to education, employment and self-sustainability. Communities need help and support to make it to cyberspace in time, before the IT revolution sweeps by. Today, many

Natives in Canada would agree with Iroquois artist William Powless: “The information highway is criss-crossing the earth, and I am roadkill by the ditch” (in Marple 1998).

A coordinated effort is needed to facilitate the process of matching needs with options and solutions by bringing government, business and Aboriginal leaders together. Doing so will help First Nations to develop the capacity to meet the skill and labour needs of the knowledge economy and continue towards economic self-sufficiency.

If cyberspace is “where your money lives,” First Nations are not rushing to the bank. *The Dual Digital Divide—The Information Highway in Canada* published by the Public Interest Advocacy Centre in 2000 suggests that it is highly unlikely that the digital divide will be overcome in the near future. It points out that in lower social classes connectivity remains low and, comparatively, the digital divide has widened since 1996.¹ Particularly in northern communities, infrastructure is almost nonexistent.²⁶

But the Net is essential, particularly in the North. Like the Inuit in the Keewatin with their GPS, remote communities will find the Internet to be a place of life or death, culturally and physically.

On January 31, high-speed Internet saved the day in Salluit, Québec, as a blizzard knocked out phone lines in the community, but not cable modems. The three-day snowstorm began Jan. 29 and raged across both coasts of Hudson Bay with winds measuring up to 120 km/h before subsiding on February 1. But

²⁶ In contrast, a similar report in the U.S. by the Department of Commerce called *Falling Through the Net, Toward Digital Inclusion*, 2000, suggests that groups that were traditionally digital have-nots are now making dramatic gains. At <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/digitaldivide>

though it affected many communities, tearing shacks from their foundations in Kangiqsujuaq and delaying the search for a missing hunter in Nunavut, its impact on Salluit was particularly hard felt. The storm eliminated almost all communication for 15 hours between the village of roughly 1,200 and the outside world.

The Internet allowed the village to contact the government in Kuujuaq and let it know long distance lines were not working. It provided a ready backup for the phone system. Salluit's mayor, Qalingo Angutigirk, said "This is the worst storm to hit us this winter... because of Internet access... we had nothing to worry about. We have used it in the past where phone lines failed. It's a great tool that we didn't have before and it's very beneficial" (Nelson 2003).²⁷

Cyberspace is rapidly becoming the central communication medium for Natives in remote communities, on the res, and in the cities. It remains to be seen how the people will fare in this new territory, but it is essential to find ways of providing access to IT, and the education to use it. As with the horse, Native peoples have to adopt this new technology, and move into this new space. It is another case of needing to adopt the White man's ways, while maintaining Native traditions □ Two Worlds, and the Two-Row Wampum. As with the Seven Generations and Seventh Fire prophecies, pointing to the urgency of forging new relationships and understandings, these teachings are not new, they are finding a new home in cyberspace. William Redhawk writes on his website (which I found while researching the Ghost Dance):

²⁷ The Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec has offered high-speed Internet in Salluit and Puvirnituq since May 2002 and in Inukjuak since August. Internet access was not disturbed because it relies on the FCNQ cable lines and not Bell Canada phone lines.

Many Horses was an Oglala Sioux medicine man, a friend of Sitting Bull, and a promoter of the Ghost Dance as the last protection against the white man's incursions. He organized the final Ghost Dance at Standing Rock Reservation in the Spring of 1890, to dance away the white soldiers camped at the foot of the hills. At dawn the white tipis of the U.S. Army were still visible, and Many Horses, with a heart full of grief, knew that the magic had failed. But the Great Spirit spoke to him. Turning his back on the rising sun, he addressed the assembled warriors:

“I will follow the white man's trail. I will make him my friend, but I will not bend my back to his burdens. I will be cunning as a coyote. I will ask him to help me understand his ways, then I will prepare the way for my children, and their children. The Great Spirit has shown me □ a day will come when they will outrun the white man in his own shoes.”

All other recorded prophecies of Many Horses have come to pass. The nations of the People see the beginnings of this final prophecy today. We have the white man's shoes. ⁱⁱ

ⁱ <http://olt-bta.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/publicat>

ⁱⁱ <http://siouxme.com/manyhors.html>