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A WORLD YOU DO NOT KNOW

Settler societies, indigenous peoples and the attack on cultural diversity

COLIN SAMSON

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSORTIUM

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Cover image: Jimmie Durham, 'We Have Made Progress...', 1991, mixed media. Photograph by Philippe De Gobert.

Innu youth walkers at conclusion of 250-kilometre walk in support of continuing the Innu way of life in Northern Labrador/Quebec, Canada.

Contents

Glossary of Innu words

Akaneshau/t (*Kakeshau/t* in the Mushuau Innu dialect) – singular and plural for white person or person of European descent.
Atuatshuap – store or shop. In Sheshatshiu it also serves as the name of the store.
Innu-aimun – the Innu language.
Kamateuet – shamans and healers.
Kamestasteniunuts – spirit people who inhabit the area around Lake Kameshtashten and can be seen by the observant.
Katshimatsheshu – spirit people who inhabit the land, capable of transforming their body size and shape and able to play tricks on people, sometimes with deadly effect.
Kukumanatsheuake – a pacifier for babies containing bone marrow and other country foods.
Kushapatshakan – the shaking tent, an Innu practice used to communicate with the Animal Gods and to seek advice and guidance on how to survive on the land and where to find animals. It involves setting up a tent within a tent into which the Animal spirits enter and talk to the shaman in their different languages – all of which he can understand. The practice may also include healing the sick or giving advice on how to help those who are ill. The last performance was in the 1960s. Innu say that since then they have not had the confidence to perform it.
Minish Pemmican (*pasauan*) – dried caribou meat sometimes ground up with berries.
Mukushan – literally meaning 'eat all', is a feast made from preparing caribou bones after a kill. The bones are boiled, the fat removed and mixed with the extracted marrow. This is allowed to congeal, often overnight. It is served to the whole camp with meat and sometimes bannock to celebrate the Caribou God.
Nutshimit – the country or the land, used by Innu to be synonymous also with the hunting life they live on the land.
Teueikan – the Innu drum made of stretched caribou skin with small rattles tied to strings positioned across the face of the drum, often made from pieces of bone. Historically, the drum is only played by a person who has had three special dreams. It is used in Innu dances, music and songs to communicate with the animal spirits.
Tshash Petapen – the Innu Nation land claims agreement affecting the Innu domiciled in Sheshatshiu and Natuashish, and to which is also attached an

agreement to condone and participate in the Lower Churchill hydroelectric mega-project.

Tshenu/t – singular and plural for old person/s or old hunter/s.

Uinastakan – the dried undigested contents of caribou stomach used as a stock for soup and stews.

Utshimau – literally meaning 'first man', who in a hunting camp made a decision to go on a particular expedition. Others were free to follow him, but his authority extended only to the specific hunt. It is sometimes used teasingly to denote a person in the villages who is bossy or who attempts to influence or make decisions for others.

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I dedicate this book to the memories of Daniel Ashini, Ben Michel, Apanam Pone, Ulderic McKenzie, François Aster, Mary May Rich, Mary May Osmond and Stanley Rich, all of whom made their mark on both my narrative and the stories it contains.

Preface

'Things to teach you of a world you do not know'

I pity the poor immigrant
Who tramples through the mud
Who fills his mouth with laughing
And who builds his town with blood
Whose visions in the final end
Must shatter like the glass
I pity the poor immigrant
When his gladness comes to pass.
Bob Dylan[1]

Unsettling points

In a book written to educate white Americans, Luther Standing Bear, the early 20th-century Oglala Lakota author, remarked that Native Americans were often objects of ridicule. He told readers of *My Indian Boyhood* how Native American attire, food, feathers, religion and even language had become sources of amusement for the advancing Europeans. Contrasting this with the Lakota sensibility, he said, 'whenever the Indian sees things in the white man that he does not understand, he does not laugh. They may seem funny to him, but he begins to wonder if there is something hidden from him. He begins to think and seek an explanation for what he cannot account for. If you will take this attitude toward the Indian, *you will find that he has things to teach you of a world you do not know*.'[2] Unclouded by doubt, Standing Bear pinpointed the attitudes under which he thought European expansion was conducted.

As one of the early generations of Great Plains peoples to be abruptly forced to alter their way of life, Standing Bear was in an unsettling position; the kind that often leads people to make unsettling points. As a child, Standing Bear had been sent to the Carlisle Indian Industrial Boarding School in Pennsylvania. Under school superintendent Captain Richard Henry Pratt, its motto was

1 From the *John Wesley Harding* album. ©Dwarf Music, New York.
2 Standing Bear, *My Indian Boyhood*, pp. 77–8, my emphasis.

'from savagery to civilization'.[3] Having learned the 'white man's ways', and enduring long periods away from his family, Standing Bear returned to the Lakota shaken but also emboldened by his experiences. As he remarked in *Land of the Spotted Eagle* (1933), boarding school instruction was designed to mould him and other students in the image of the Euro-American. As an object of social engineering, Standing Bear became a sharp observer of the engineers. He rarely minced his words: 'We were never allowed to forget', he declared, 'that they were emissaries of the Government; that they were endowed with superior knowledge. Never once were they intelligent enough to admit that they might have learned something from us.'[4] The 'white man's cast of mind', he continued, was either unable or reluctant 'to seek understanding and achieve adjustment in a new and significant environment into which it had so recently come.'[5] Having deep roots in the indigenous world, but being catapulted into the boarding schools, and later in life to US Indian administration on the Eastern Seaboard, Standing Bear's perspective was fashioned from social transformation.

What is striking when we recall Standing Bear today is his perception that Euro-American settlers were so self-confident that ignorance of the 'world you do not know' was often their preference. In a supposedly enlightened, rational and scientific age this seems counter-intuitive. But what Standing Bear was exposing was a deep contradiction in the European worldview itself, and particularly its inheritances from the Enlightenment. He pointed to a kind of obsessive monism typified by the liberal ideals justifying European settlement and, by extension, the formation of the US and Canadian states which are its guarantors.[6] The nation-builders of North America construed the good life as singular and embodied in the values of the settlers and the institutions they established. Yet, from the point of view of people like Standing Bear on the pathway of colonial expansion, the condescension and indifference towards Native Americans was at variance with the declarations of universal freedom, liberty and tolerance. At a purely logical level, surely anything that is universal and guided by 'enlightenment' must consider the plurality of ideas? No stock

3 Wilson, *The Earth Shall Weep*, pp. 311–16.

4 Standing Bear, *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, p. 242.

5 Ibid., pp. 248–9. Other indigenous commentaries made at times when indigenous lands were being usurped were almost always diplomatic, but they rarely spoke of the open-mindedness of colonists. Although different in tone to Standing Bear, another example is the Santee Sioux physician and writer Charles Eastman, especially his 'Civilization as preached and practised', in Eastman, *From Deep Woods to Civilization*, pp. 136–50. See also the collection of testimonies in Nabokov, *Native American Testimony.*

6 An informative discussion of the philosophical architecture of monism in Greek, Christian and liberal thought is presented in Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, pp. 16–49.

of ideas and experiences should simply be cast aside without a dialogue. Yet, Standing Bear saw European expansion as anything but plural, bookending *Land of the Spotted Eagle* with the statements, 'white men seem to have difficulty in realizing that people who live differently from themselves still might be traveling the upward and progressive road of life' and 'being narrow in both mind and spirit they could see no good in us.'[7] Although proclaimed to be the culmination of some noble ideals, he believed that the settlement of North America was reckless and destructive. 'True, the white man brought great change', Standing Bear commented frankly, 'but the varied fruits of civilization, though highly colored and inviting, are sickening and deadening. And if it be part of civilization to maim, rob, and thwart, then what is progress?'[8]

Standing Bear had reason to be sceptical of Euro-American settlement. A few decades prior to him being at his school desk, wagon trains full of gold-seekers, Mormons and land-hungry emigrants had stormed into Lakota lands bringing cholera, smallpox and measles. But the death and disruption they caused the Lakota and other Plains societies, especially in 1848–9, was protected by the US Army at Fort Laramie.[9] Following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, Thomas Jefferson, a great exponent of Enlightenment values, had commissioned Captains Lewis and Clark and their men to explore indigenous territories about four times the size of France. Although requiring Native American assistance in the unknown lands they travelled through and claimed for 'the Great Father' in Washington, the two captains spoke to those they met and depended upon as if they were children, and were intolerant of the more open and democratic ways in which many Native Americans wished to conduct negotiations.[10] Their travels added to the knowledge Euro-Americans collected on the lands and peoples of the continent, but this was intended to service settlement, agriculture and industry.

By the 1830s, Euro-Americans had extended their reach beyond the original 13 colonies. The French diplomat and social historian, Alexis de Tocqueville, was an ambivalent witness to the early phases of westward expansion. His *Democracy in America* is perhaps our best analysis of the methods by which Europe transplanted itself upon North America. Like Standing Bear, he remarked that he detected cultural peculiarities in Euro-Americans. They were having a relatively free hand in settling the continent and, in his view, were carrying this out with great hubris. Among them, Tocqueville heard 'the perpetual utterance of self applause' and noted that 'the slightest joke that has any foundation in truth renders [the Euro-American] indignant.'[11]

7 Standing Bear, *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, pp. xv, 227.
8 Ibid., p. 249.
9 La Salle, *Emigrants on the Overland Trail*, pp. 222–3.
10 See Barth, *The Lewis and Clark Expedition*, pp. 123–31.
11 Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. 1, p. 275.

Tocqueville, a visitor from an old world, discovered brittle insecurity in people with a mission to found a new one. The settlers freely laughed at those whose lands they wanted, as Standing Bear noted, yet were vulnerable to any rebuke to the process of settlement itself. Indeed, as Tocqueville and Standing Bear both saw, Euro-American identity was closely aligned to the Great Father's goal for the foreign settlement of the whole continent.

Shadow societies

In Tocqueville's observations, American national identity was both radically separate from Europe – there was no feudalism or monarchy – *and* it was in concert with the enlightened values that made possible the liberties settlers enjoyed in new lands. Many North Americans saw themselves not just as emissaries of Enlightenment values such as the idea of progress, but as agents of its extension into unenlightened territories.

However, these pioneers and their descendants have had to bear certain ironies. While principles in the US Constitution such as the 'inalienable' rights to liberty, freedom of expression, and consent to be governed were self-justifying, they were not extended to indigenous and enslaved peoples, who in Tocqueville's eyes constituted shadow societies outside of the settler state.[12] Consequently, most colonists did not see non-Europeans as possessing qualities that would warrant identical rights or social conditions to those enjoyed by Europeans, and until the great assimilation experiments, the boarding schools, Native Americans were not treated as being integral to the settler state. During the Great Land Rush of the 19th century, 'the stunning finale to "the expansion of Europe,"'[13] Enlightenment values were forwarded as if they were unique to, or at least most developed in, people of European descent. Canada, the United States and other settler states such as Australia and New Zealand were fashioned not by immigrants who sought to join an already existing society, but by settlers[14] intent on making a new society according to ideals under which they represented themselves. Although contested, the stories, images and iconography of these societies fit a wider drama in which only the newcomers play the heroic roles as masters of the wilderness, wealth-creators, industrialisers, and trailblazers.[15]

12 For an expansion on this theme, see ibid. final chapter, entitled 'Some considerations on the present state and the probable future of the three races that inhabit the territory of the United States.'

13 I am indebted to John C. Weaver for his formulation and use of this concept. See Weaver, *The Great Land Rush*, p. 92.

14 For discussions of settler colonialism see Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism*; Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*; Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within*; and Bateman and Pilkington, *Studies in Settler Colonialism*.

15 See, for example, the discussions about 19th-century landscape photography in the US in Solnit, *Motion Studies*, pp. 86–93.

Nonetheless, in the process of settlement and nation-building, shadow societies could not be ignored. Even though the Euro-Americans were convinced of their own rectitude, the existence of indigenous and enslaved people confused their justifying ideals. More profoundly, the real and symbolic violence needed to remove indigenous peoples from the paths of settlement, and the social instability it precipitated, exposed hypocrisies and called for a change of tack. Hence, by the time Standing Bear was writing, many attempts had been made to somehow harmonise the social, economic and psychological realities of Native Americans with those of Euro-Americans. Not only had boarding schools been established across the continent, but ceremonial practices such as the Sun Dance, Pueblo religious rites and dances, and the potlatch giveaway ceremonies had come under attack from the US Courts of Indian Offences.[16] The Sun Dance practised by the Lakota among others was banned for over half a century, and not decriminalised completely until the 1950s.[17] Other Native American (including Lakota) ceremonies were held in secret until 1978 when the American Indian Religious Freedom Act was passed.[18] Similarly, the potlatch was banned in Canada under the Indian Act of 1884 and also remained in place until the 1950s.[19] The refusal to extend Enlightenment values such as the freedom of belief was just one of many ironies as successive policies sought to alter indigenous peoples' ways of life. Standing Bear, for one, worried that the intended physical and cultural changes would destroy the vitality and happiness of the Native Americans.

In this book, I humbly intend to follow Standing Bear's lead by investigating the ideas that promoted this attack on cultural diversity and how these played out in policies and the concrete realities of indigenous lives. My premise is that the singular values and attitudes that justified the new North American settler society led to an ongoing destruction of the unique ideas and practices of indigenous peoples in the US and Canada as they were forced or pressured to adopt new lifestyles in villages, reserves and reservations. The new hybrid lifestyles took shape within radically reduced land bases in which their independence was severely limited. Under the imposition of economic individualism and materialist views of nature, successfully functioning economies and sustainable relationships to land were cast aside. As indigenous peoples' lands attenuated, their diets, health and sense of unique identity all deteriorated. It is this process of diminishing cultural diversity and the reactions to it that form the subject matter of this book. In outlining it, I do not wish to consign this process, under whatever name we may wish to call it – social transformation, dispossession, assimilation, or even genocide – to the past. Today, we can witness both the

16 Martinez, *The American Indian Intellectual Tradition*, p. 101.
17 See Holler, *Black Elk's Religion*, pp. 110–38.
18 For testimony on this see White Hat Snr., *Zuya Life's Journey*, esp. p. 111.
19 Niezen, *Spirit Wars*, p. 6.

legacies of these earlier transformations and the manifestations of the same processes justified by a similar ideological singularity across North America and elsewhere.

This singularity is of the same order as that observed as a feature of colonialism, 'whiteness' and Manicheeism by figures such as Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon and Richard Wright at the height of the decolonisation movements in Africa and Asia.[20] The presumed progressive and universal nature of European culture inevitably implied binary divisions between two peoples, and at the same time largely made the different cultural attributes of indigenous peoples inferior or distorted versions of that which was universal. Examples of supposedly successful transformations of indigenous peoples in the 19th century towards the economic and social values of the colonisers then became an indicator of progress itself. In the last 50 years, similar transformations, especially as indigenous leaderships have become involved in capitalist undertakings, are not termed progress, but rather self-determination and self-reliance.[21] In some parts of academia, this shift from the language of progress to that of self-determination was paralleled by an antagonism to what was labelled as 'essentialism' and an embracing of the notion that indigenous peoples possessed 'agency' and resistance in the process of colonisation. My concern, however, is to offer the possibility that cultural differences were and remain important despite the onslaughts of colonisation, and that indigenous peoples' use of their distinct histories and experiences is one form of resistance.[22]

Tensions between significantly different ways of being, seeing and thinking are still apparent across North America. One can see and even feel these tensions in newly configured communities designed for indigenous peoples; places where visitors today can sense a kind of agitation, places where the residents are still proud to be the original inhabitants of the continent, but are living in a world designed for them by people who did not understand them. Compared to the businesslike purposefulness of most Euro-American or

20 See Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*; Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*; Wright, *White Man Listen!*

21 For example, Gabrielle Slowey contends that 'neoliberal globalization may be a remedy to First Nations dispossession, marginalization, and desperation because it opens up space for First Nations self-determination'. See her positive account of indigenous participation in resource extraction businesses in Slowey, *Navigating Neoliberalism*, p. x.

22 Significant and continuing differences in the worldviews, attitudes and sensibilities of indigenous peoples have been highlighted in the works of scholars such as N. Scott Momaday, Gerald Vizenor, Vine Deloria, Dale Turner and Taiaiake Alfred among many others including numerous novelists, poets and filmmakers. See Momaday, *The Man Made of Words*; Deloria, *Red Earth, White Lies*; Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*; Turner, 'Oral traditions', in Waters, *American Indian Thought*, pp. 229–38; Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness*.

Canadian towns and cities, there is a kind of raw enigmatic quality to what at first glance appears to be collective torpor and abandonment. As Sara Wheeler suggests of far northern indigenous villages in *The Magnetic North*, 'something mysterious and indefinable has outlived cultural collapse.'[23] The people of these places are somehow surviving without a clear cultural template. They are constantly weighing profound losses against the promissory notes of future material happiness. In today's bureaucratic currency, these notes are minted under bland bureaucratic phrases such as 'capacity building', and chivvied along by infusions of 'catch-up capital' for development projects, job creation, better schools, street lighting, new hockey rinks and the like – all in exchange for relinquished lands. The processes of change and adjustment which the late 19th-century Lakota and other Native North Americans experienced may not be that far from the conflicts, confusions and pathologies occurring in some of the most recently manufactured indigenous places. These places are now in the midst of a more recent Land Rush for oil, minerals and energy.[24]

Reservations in the US, reserves and village settlements in Canada and boarding schools in both places went a long way to refashioning indigenous societies. While questions about whether to adhere to indigenous values, traditions and practices are pitted against various understandings of modernisation in every community, they are on a knife's edge in places where distinct societies were maintained with few radical changes until very recently. It is among indigenous groups who for one reason or another escaped the full fury of the Great Land Rush that we can see the sweeping social transformation in action, the results it is producing, and how responses and resistance take form. Living examples are presented in the Arctic and subarctic regions where mobility and hunting were, and to some extent still are, necessary features of local societies. These, along with other zones of hitherto less aggressive colonial encroachment such as the deserts and forests of Africa, Asia and South America, are now what the Great Plains were to Luther Standing Bear and his parents. Again, as Sara Wheeler quips, 'if the solitary Inuit no longer stands motionless over a seal hole for twenty four hours at a stretch, his father did.'[25]

Throughout this continent-sized area of what I shall call the far north, Canada takes on greater prominence for it claims the lands of a large proportion of the world's northern peoples whose lands are increasingly earmarked for resource extraction and energy supplies and with that, migrations of the job-hungry from other parts of Canada and beyond. Significant transformations of indigenous peoples were undertaken only decades ago on the Labrador-Quebec peninsula of northeastern Canada and land claims processes there are only now

23 Wheeler, *The Magnetic North: Travels in the Arctic*, p. 8.

24 See Emmerson, *The Future History of the Arctic*, pp. 193–219; Sale and Potapov, *The Scramble for the Arctic*, pp. 158–79.

25 Wheeler, *The Magnetic North*, p. 15.

being resolved. This is a vast area of boreal forests, snaking rivers, capacious lakes and tundra. It was overlooked as a site of major colonial settlement until the mid 20th century when it became a target of extractive industries acting in tandem with politicians proclaiming solutions to North America's energy and industrial development problems. It also happens to have been home to the Innu (not to be confused with the circumpolar Inuit) peoples for thousands of years.

I first went to Labrador in 1994. Although I was already to some extent a traveller between societies, my awareness of important and profound values outside my own culture matured in the Innu villages of Sheshatshiu and Davis Inlet (often called Utshimassits) and Natuashish. My sensibilities and worldview have been reshaped by spending much of the last 20 years researching, visiting, socialising and working on films with the Innu. From the first time I went to stay in a hunting camp at Utshisk-nipi, a long lake in the forested interior of the Labrador-Quebec peninsula, I was struck by the differences between our perceptions of the world. As I scrambled to orient myself to a living subarctic hunting environment, a huge gap of knowledge, skill and intuition separated me from my hosts. But this and subsequent visits and the friendships that developed over the years did more than sensitise me to cultural differences; it provoked unsettling perceptions. The injustices inflicted upon the Innu, some of which will be illustrated in this book, reflected the contradictions I perceived in England where I now live, in the US where my family took me as an immigrant at the age of 12, and in Canada where I applied myself as a social researcher and human rights activist. One of the glaring ironies was that liberal humanism, so often claimed as *our* inheritance and an outgrowth of some of the ideals under which states like Canada represent themselves, described policies towards the Innu only in their singularity, not their benevolence. A second irony was that the Innu, far from being the 'Stone Age Arctic nomads' of a Canadian Broadcasting Company broadcast about them in 1992,[26] were more sophisticated and nuanced in their thinking, more practically skilled and all-rounded than was the norm in my own society.

There at Utshisk-nipi, a place named for the abundance of muskrats, where Innu and their ancestors have always been, three families provided for me, showed me their lands, and tried to teach me the basics of their cosmology and a little of their language. But, almost every day while we were enjoying what the Innu call *nutshimit* or 'the country', British RAF jets screeched above the spruce forests, sometimes announced by a sonic boom. As they streaked directly over our tents, we could often make out the pilots' silhouettes: men who, as I discovered in casual conversations in the Goose Bay airport departures lounge, generally knew nothing of the land or the peoples whose lives they

26 Quoted in *The Two Worlds of the Innu*, a documentary film aired on BBC2, 7 Aug. 1994.

were violating. The jets took off from Goose Bay, which was leased out by Canada for NATO low-level flight training over Innu lands. We could not do much to stop them but, in a clearing at the end of the steely blue waters of the adjoining Seal Lake, we spotted an incongruous wooden model tank, which the military authorities must have placed there to be used for target practice. Here, the hunters attacked the dummy tank, but not before trying to reason with the government. The families at Utshisk-nipi had invited Canadian officials to come to the camp to discuss the low-level flying and to witness it for themselves. The officials initially agreed, but then pulled out at the last minute citing fears of the cold and unfamiliar wild foods, fears no doubt also connected with experiencing an unfamiliar place in which Innu knowledge and language prevail. The land would have been unsettling to them. I filmed while two Innu men jumped on the tank and then smashed it into shards with axes. They were laughing; they were angry. The tank was unsettling to them.

Figure P1. Dominic Pokue and grandson Freddy at Utshisk-nipi, 1995.

Figure P2. Home video still of Dominic Pokue atop a dummy tank at Seal Lake, 1995.

The unjust dialogue

One aim of my studies is to connect the origins and ongoing shaping of settler societies with the dialogue these have with the peoples upon whose lands they are built. At the outset, we might question whether this has ever been a dialogue. Nineteenth-century observers such as Standing Bear and Tocqueville witnessed little dialogue. Following Cree intellectual and lawyer Harold Cardinal and philosopher James Tully, we might depict it as an 'unjust' dialogue, one which is articulated in the very instruments – modern laws, policies and constitutionalism – by which Canada and the US wield their own legitimacy. All the important decisions over relations with indigenous peoples are made not through meaningful and open dialogue, but by the state itself through its own culturally specific legal protocols.[27]

This does not mean that other kinds of relationships have not occurred. Indeed, exchanges and inter-cultural dialogues took place and some continue. The historian Colin Calloway has invested much of his career in documenting such exchanges in early North America. His argument that the 'mingling and

27 See Cardinal, *The Unjust Society*; Tully, *Strange Multiplicity*, p. 55.

mixing' in many different spheres was a feature of the early contact period cannot be disputed.[28] The same processes arose in the colonisation of the Labrador-Quebec peninsula in the 20th century where friendly and cooperative relationships between early European trappers and fishermen and Innu groups are fondly remembered.[29] From colonial Virginia onwards, colonists adopted foods, agriculture, hunting medicines, language, forms of shelter and other aspects of indigenous peoples' ways of life. Some of the explorers, farmers, trappers and 'mountain men' respected Native Americans, intermarried with them, and tried to adapt to their ways of life.

However, this did not turn most of the colonists into Native Americans but, as James Axtell maintains of the early settlers, 'Indian *means* were simply borrowed and adapted to English *ends*'.[30] By the 19th century, the coruscating waves of settlers, the encampments of squatters, miners and corporations, the subsequent creation of the settler state, the corralling of indigenous peoples on to bounded parcels of land, and the state-authored means by which land rights were resolved are less obviously about 'mingling and mixing'. Of course, settlers needed indigenous peoples for rudimentary instruction in how to live in unfamiliar lands. Native Americans themselves volunteered and were induced to act as scouts and soldiers against other Native Americans during periods of violent confrontation in some parts of the continent. But these acts of collaboration, along with the treaties signed with government agents, the land claims agreements in northern Canada, and the joint venture business deals today are strategic to remaking indigenous lands as modern capitalist societies, or marketised 'neo-Europes.'[31] Whatever the character of these 'exchanges', they almost always resulted (and result) in lands being transferred from indigenous peoples as collectives to states, businesses and non-indigenous populations. Whatever agency indigenous peoples can be said to possess, such agency, especially with regard to their land, can be expressed primarily within the terms and conditions dictated by a larger sovereignty that has been asserted over them. The unjust dialogue is therefore the force behind the displacement and replacement of indigenous peoples, which is itself the hallmark of settler colonialism.

28 Calloway, *New Worlds for All*, p. 178. Hans Carlson takes a similar position in *Home is the Hunter*, p. 192, arguing that the Cree engaged in a form of 'negotiated historical change'.

29 The Innu hunter Kaniuekutat, who died in 1994, 'describes the relationship between them [settlers] and the Innu as one of reciprocity and mutual respect. It appears clearly from his account that they assisted one another when in need'. See Henriksen, *I Dreamed the Animals*, p. 253. See also Plaice, *The Native Game*, pp. 75–87.

30 Axtell, *The European and the Indian*, p. 285.

31 This term is used, in their studies of European expansion, by both Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, and Weaver, *The Great Land Rush*.

A different sort of dialogue

But this is not the only way in which history plays out. Important as the unjust dialogue may be to understanding settler-host relations in North America, we can also see how it might have led to a kind of blowback in which indigenous people have reevaluated their own ideas, practices and languages. Many indigenous people, not unlike many others including myself, crave something different from life.

In fact many non-indigenous people have found inspiration in native peoples precisely because they have offered profound and refreshing outlooks on the world, more sympathetic engagements with nature and forms of thought and personal relationships that are not bound by the competitiveness and sterile materialism under which much of Western society labours. Although some of their views might be regarded today as patronising or romantic, enthusiasts for indigenous peoples included various prominent Euro-Americans who themselves lived in or near the American shadowlands. A shortlist of such admirers might feature: essayist and naturalist Henry David Thoreau; painters such as George Catlin and Winslow Homer in the 19th century and Maynard Dixon in the 20th century; the photographers Edward Curtis and Eadweard Muybridge; reformer and novelist Helen Hunt Jackson; the Chicago School sociologist Nels Anderson; linguist Jaime de Angulo; and John Collier, a poet, essayist and Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the mid 20th century. These diverse individuals were not unlike some of the frontiersmen who, from the time of the 16th-century traveller Cabeza de Vaca, lived like 'white Indians' and the many captives who were not keen to be returned to Euro-American society. These adventurers preferred the more independent, leisurely and free-spirited indigenous life over the regimentation and moralism of many colonists and frontier settlers.[32] Such individuals were committed to outdoor lives, autonomy and freedom of expression. They were averse to the idea that the way we think about the world, the physical landscape and society should be the exclusive domain of one people or universal doctrine. If not always seeing Native Americans as kindred spirits, these mavericks respected indigenous peoples' unique understanding of the land and the independence of thought that made them sceptics of industrial capitalism. Today countless numbers of individual writers, artists, academics, travellers, film-makers, politicians and even royalty[33] are admirers for these same reasons, and numerous non-

32 Axtell, *The European and the Indian*, pp. 278–85.

33 In his foreword to Gall, *The Bushmen of Southern Africa*, p. xvi, Prince Charles speaks of a visit to the Kalahari (San) Bushmen in which 'I came away with a sense of wonder that the Bushmen, a so-called "primitive" people, had a wiser understanding at a deeper, mysterious level of how Nature worked, and how to cope with it, than all the batteries of scientists and experts mobilised by more "modern" civilisations'.

governmental organisations (NGOs) and United Nations agencies have been established to protect and promote the rights of indigenous peoples. Some, however, have dismissed the work of these groups as 'essentialism' or an appeal to the 'noble savage'.[34] Following Ter Ellingson, I would argue that the widespread *belief* in the existence of the 'noble savage' (as well as the concept of essentialism) can be a means of both denying enduring cultural differences and attacking the advocacy of human rights, as it was in the 19th century.[35]

In this maelstrom, we can discern a parallel spirit of independent revitalising action among indigenous peoples. This spirit is neither noble nor savage and rises from the nervous places, the reserves, reservations and villages, where the unjust dialogue deposited those whose mere presence interfered with colonial projects. There are small settlements like Sheshatshiu and Natuashish where minds have been reawakened to possibilities for the maintenance and regeneration of culture. Cultural revitalisation projects seize moments of fatigue with the nation-building, industrialism and the commodification of the world. These projects are of course contemporary, but they are built upon indigenous knowledge, practices and experiences, and as such they openly question what is meant as progress and what is universal. Cultural revitalisation may establish a different sort of dialogue, different possible futures and permit engagements with *a world you do not know*.

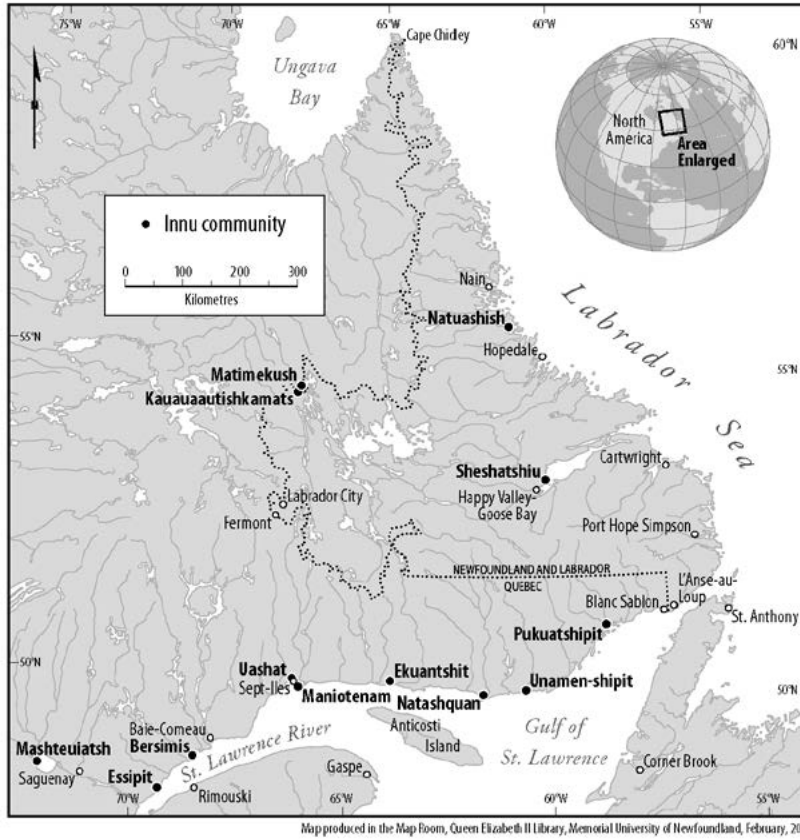
Throughout the book, the Innu will form one prominent example of the wider process of rapid social transformation and emerging revitalisation. In terms of the social processes that they are experiencing, they are more akin to the late 19th-century Lakota than most other indigenous peoples of southern Canada and the US, whose lands were taken, languages eviscerated or lost, and ways of life severely compromised long ago, and for whom revitalisation is more problematic, although not impossible. The same is the case for the many urban indigenous groups in the US and Canada, whose options for revitalisation necessarily take on a different character. Many themes of the American frontier – the formation of Indian reservations, enforced schooling, duplicitous deals to make resource extraction available, and indeed the wider concerns from writings such as those of Standing Bear – have been replayed only over the last 60 years in Labrador-Quebec and elsewhere in the far north. Many processes of dispossession such as the land claims system, covered in chapter 3, are occurring as I write. As such, revitalisation is simply one counterpoint to the massive pressures for the Innu to configure themselves differently, collaborate with the industrialisation of their lands and compromise that which is unique to them.

Unlike almost any other North American indigenous groups, the truly radical transformations of the Innu are still in living memory. The only people who have direct experience of their formerly migratory lives are the surviving

34 See Kuper, 'The return of the native'.

35 See Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage*, pp. 222, 240, 380.

older generations of Innu (known as *Tshenut* or *Tshenu* in the singular), many of whom I interviewed in the villages of Sheshatshiu, Davis Inlet (Utshimassits), Natuashish (founded in 2003 when the people of Davis Inlet moved there) and Matimekush. Consequently, much of what follows is inspired by their testimonies, and my immediate familiarity with Innu people. Additionally, I have conducted a large number of other interviews and collected observational notes in the villages, but also in the hunting camps of the Labrador-Quebec interior through participation in several projects organised by the Tshikapisk Foundation and the Walkers' Expedition over the last ten years.



Map produced in the Map Room, Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland, February, 2013

Figure P3. Map of Labrador-Quebec peninsula.

Like all studies, mine culminates in writing. While I am a sociologist and see myself studying societies, much of what I try to fathom lies in the spaces between societies. Although they are not exactly of the same order, such spaces hold immediacy for me as a person with no solid roots in any one society

or nation. Spaces between societies do not lend themselves to investigation through neatly delineated sub-fields of a specific discipline or through intricate theorisation. Rather, I have written a series of studies or essays. These do not pretend to be comprehensive or to have cited every source on the subjects under consideration. They are products of my own individual perceptions and experiences, and avoid placement within any one 'literature'. My position on the nature of these spaces between indigenous peoples and the colonising societies opens up as I navigate between diverse studies across disciplines and these necessarily intersect with my experiences in Labrador-Quebec and elsewhere. In adopting this interdisciplinary and experiential approach, I aim to find a wider range within the spectrum of possibilities than might otherwise be achieved. Mine is also not a 'case study', limited to one people in one national context. The Innu are instructive because of the contemporary nature of their transformations, but the comparable experiences of other peoples of North America, and sometimes in other parts of the world, will be considered where relevant. While there are important differences among indigenous peoples, all share the experience of being subjects of externally induced social transformation of their economies, ecologies, food and health, and it is the nature of this transformation that I am most interested in exploring.

I do not presume to speak for any indigenous person or to diminish the variations in indigenous experiences across North America. The book is a work of my own interpretation.

Outline of the book

Chapter 1 All is not lost[36] relays some of my formative experiences in Labrador, where I was struck by the juxtaposition of Innu knowledge, ingenuity and resourcefulness with the certainties of Canadian policies and attitudes made concrete by administrator Walter Rockwood's 'March of Civilization' announcement made in 1955.[37] These contrasts show that, while Standing Bear's observations are echoed on the newer frontiers of the Canadian north, unique forms of wisdom and engagement with the world have not been lost and may be the basis for the possible futures that might be imagined in the final chapter.

Chapter 2 The March of Civilisation discusses the intellectual framing of the broader colonising project in North America. I argue that the social transformation of indigenous peoples was made possible by a configuration of European principles that were applied *carte blanche* to the question of cultural difference. Enlightenment ideals carried over into North America represented some of the most dynamic, yet ethnocentric, aspects of European thought. These facilitated and legalised physical and cultural domination. Notions of

36 From John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667).

37 Rockwood, *General Policy in Respect of the Indians and Eskimos of Northern Labrador*.

cultural evolutionism, Economic Man, private property rights and the *terra nullius* or 'empty lands' doctrine all contributed to the unjust dialogue and formed a firm basis for the attack on cultural diversity.

Chapter 3 Egalitarianism to capitalism looks at the contrasts presented between these ideas and some of those held by indigenous peoples, especially their economic concepts and practices, attachments to collectivism and the sharing of resources. Their social transformation has therefore required decollectivisation and privatisation, both of which can be seen in Canadian land claims procedures, which link aboriginal rights to acceptance of resource extraction within a neoliberal economic framework. I use a close reading of the Innu Nation 2011 Tshash Petapen agreement to illustrate how the conferring of these rights functions as a neocolonial process.

In chapters 4–6, I investigate the cultural dynamics and effects of discrete social transformations on indigenous peoples. **Chapter 4 Nature and nation-building** describes the contrasts between the more conservative ideas about nature shared by many indigenous peoples, especially hunting societies, with the materialist concepts promoted in European cosmology and by settler states. Extractive industries like mining and hydroelectric power generation are easily justified by materialism. Acting upon the land as if it were simply a 'thing', has changed the lands and waters from sites for hunting, fishing, gathering, farming and the unfolding of indigenous peoples' experiences to a shell for the market economy, commodity production and industrialism.

Chapter 5 Caribou to Chubby Chicken takes this a step further by showing how nation-building and industrialism produced new diets for indigenous peoples. Here I describe the 'nutrition transition', which involves a rapid shift from diverse wild, gathered and farmed foods to a narrow spectrum of processed food products. Not only has this altered the meaning of food, but also new nutritionally inferior Western diets have imperilled the health and longevity of indigenous peoples.

Accounting for broader changes in indigenous peoples' health is the subject of **Chapter 6 Western diseases** where I examine the relationship between social changes and the upsurge in Western diseases among indigenous North Americans. The confinement of indigenous peoples to small reserves, reservations and villages has coincided with the emergence of conditions such as diabetes, obesity and hypertension and social dysfunctions manifested in high suicide rates. We know that these conditions are associated with social transformation by examining, for example, the oral and written historical record on Innu health. This shows that they lived long, were extremely physically fit, and were in excellent health before the Canadian policy of sedentarisation came into effect. The 'epidemiological transition' and 'activity transitions' experienced by a variety of indigenous people show that engineered changes to their societies have resulted in a shift from excellent to very poor overall health.

Over time, the negative effects of social transformation have galvanised efforts to maintain and reclaim indigenous values and practices. **Chapter 7 Land-based revitalisation** focuses on the maintenance and reopening of specifically indigenous practices and the values they are based upon. Although not without difficulties, in communities around the world people are trying to renew activities that they think are healthier and less destructive of well-being than the paths laid out by the all-embracing Western model of humanity and, particularly, industrial neoliberalism. In some places, however, like the far north people still do indigenous things, eat indigenous foods and speak indigenous languages and these continuities are a great asset to their efforts. Elsewhere, indigenous peoples with less continuity have embarked upon projects in wildlife reintroduction, seed regeneration and experiential education based on what they understand as their knowledge and values. My observational and other accounts aim to show that revitalisation projects offer hope to address the damages caused by imposed change, providing the indigenous past with a future.

Finally, if this book has a message it is that wise and durable decisions about the future start from understanding the spectrum of ideas and practices of many different peoples past and present. Only then can we see that humanity is plural and people could take numerous different paths rather than being forced along one 'universal' route. The experiences of indigenous peoples in North America highlight the prematurely closed possibilities that arise from presuming that one slice of humanity with a grandiose sense of its own destiny should decide all destinies.

Chapter 1

All is not lost

The Indians of Labrador are still more primitive than the Eskimos,
but this is probably not because of any inherent quality of the race
but rather unwittingly or otherwise,
because of less intimate contact with our civilization.

Walter Rockwood[1]

The Memorandum

Until 1949 the Labrador portions of Innu and Inuit territories were an annexed part of the British home rule colony of Newfoundland, which had been enlarged to Labrador in the 18th century when Governor Sir Hugh Palliser unequivocally allotted lands for settlement and fishing along the coast.[2] Britain held on to these lands before handing over to Canada after an affirmative vote by Newfoundland's predominantly English- and Irish-settler population. Under British-asserted sovereignty, the Innu or 'Indians' as they were then called in official documents, had continued to hunt, trap, fish and travel in the interior across their vast forests, lakes and tundra. Although the British had drawn a partition through these lands to separate Labrador from Quebec in 1927, established Hudson Bay Company trading posts and allowed missionaries at some of these posts, none of these actions substantially altered the migratory hunting life of the Innu. Although the colonial authorities had begun murmurings to 'centralize the Indians', the transfer of Innu from their lands coincided with more urgent warnings from Canadian administrators that they and the neighbouring Inuit (referred to as 'Eskimos' at the time) had to abandon their mobile ways of life.[3]

Walter Rockwood, a Newfoundland settler and provincial politician, was one of the architects of early Canadian policy in Labrador. 'But one fact seems

1 Rockwood, *General Policy in Respect of the Indians and Eskimos*, p. 9. All Rockwood quotes are from this document.

2 Gosling, *Labrador*, p. 252.

3 Much of the correspondence, speeches and statements leading up to the settlement of the Innu are collected in Roche, *Resettlement of the Mushuau Innu 1948 and 1967*.

clear,' he wrote in 1957 in the *Memorandum on General Policy in Respect to the Indians and Eskimos of Northern Labrador*,

> Civilization is on the northward march, and for the Eskimo and the Indian there is no escape. The last bridges of isolation were destroyed with the coming of the airplane and the radio. The only course now open, for there can be no turning back, is to fit him as soon as may be to take his full place as a citizen in our society. There is no time to lose.[4]

Rockwood's *Memorandum* was a short document with a blunt vision for the future. Named as 'Labrador Indians', the Innu were given little credit for their mobility, fortitude and continuous survival across the entire Labrador-Quebec peninsula for at least 2,000 years.[5] They were people who, according to Rockwood's report, were 'virtually untouched by white civilization', and 'are probably among the most primitive in all Canada today.' Yet despite this, he remarked that the Indians and Eskimos were 'in transition' and urged government to hasten the process through settlements, schools and wage labour.

The *Memorandum* presumed to divine the currents of history. The march of progress was unstoppable and Innu and Inuit could only have one future, and that was in 'our society.' From the outset, Rockwood conjoined 'Eskimo' and 'Indian' with 'problem' and repeatedly emphasised that the government's task was to alter them through 'complete adoption of our culture'. Quickly dismissing the viability of hunting and fishing in a non-capitalist economy, Rockwood urged assimilation through building a solid economic base for a 'better society.' Such a base was seen entirely as one involving extractive industries like logging, mining and commercial fishing. At one fanciful point, Rockwood imagined that such industries would proliferate and 'towns will spring up and ultimately the entire population of coastal Labrador will flow into a growing industrial area.' This would mean 'rehousing' the indigenous peoples to ensure that they benefited from the industrialisation of their homelands.

In mitigation, it is clear from this and other writings and statements that Rockwood was concerned about the living conditions and employment prospects of the Innu and Inuit. Rockwood's empathy, however, did not stretch to imagining what might happen to the people if they were separated from their lands and way of life. While he applauded Danish colonial policies to settle Inuit along the western Greenland coast, he never glanced back at the appalling suffering caused by US policies to shepherd Native Americans on to Indian reservations. Rockwood's thinking was plucked from a liberal industrial model of society, fired by the Allied victories of World War Two, and the rise of Canada's neighbour, the United States. Although not as colourful or famous as

4 Rockwood, *General Policy in Respect of the Indians and Eskimos*, p. 6.

5 Loring and Ashini, 'Past and present pathways', in Smith and Ward, *Indigenous Cultures*, p. 174.

Harry S. Truman's 1949 inaugural address stressing the urgent need to spread industrial and scientific progress to the underdeveloped peoples of the world, he was moved by the same messianic sentiments.

Rockwood placed the Innu outside the great march of history. Their independence from the prosperous and technology-driven world emerging out of the ashes of war would, he believed, disadvantage them permanently. If they did not change under government orders, he feared that they might be forced to change in a more violent way as civilisation marched north and caught them unprepared. Further statements Rockwood and other Newfoundland policymakers made in the 1950s mentioned the perils and rigours of hunting, the periodic bouts of starvation and the distances from clinics and schools as justifications for curtailing the mobility of the Innu. By emphasising what he saw as the poverty-stricken life of a hunter, Rockwood's intentions to change the Innu appear benign. But, in supporting change, he and other intermediaries such as the controversial Oblate priest Father Pirson,[6] who was the missionary at North West River, did not dwell much on the costs.

By the early 1960s, many Innu had been settled in the government-built village of Sheshatshiu on Lake Melville across from the North West River settler community, and in 1967 the northerly and dispersed Mushuau Innu were gathered together and housed at Davis Inlet (more often called Utshimassits, meaning 'place of the boss') on Iluikoyak island. This was a place containing Inuit gravesites where Innu had hitherto had few associations. Other Innu were registered and housed in villages on the North Shore of the St Lawrence, and in two villages in inland Quebec, when the iron ore mines opened at Schefferville in the 1950s. Looking back, we know that the shift from being mobile to sedentary people has been, and continues to be, traumatic. Several reports have documented basic human rights violations and these add to compilations the Innu have produced to give voice to their grievances.[7] All these emphasised that the unhappiness in the Innu villages in the 1990s related directly to the disconnections from the land and the establishing of institutions encouraging them to stay disconnected. Along with their permanent associations with the land, the reports argued that the Innu have lost or are losing their social organisation, gender roles, methods of raising children, the richness of their language, and even notions of what it is that makes a good person. These losses occurred because the social and economic context for their whole society had

6 See Samson, 'Sexual abuse and assimilation'.

7 See McCrae, report on 'Complaints of the Innu of Labrador'; Backhouse and McCrae report on the Canadian government's 'Treatment of the Innu of Labrador'; Samson et al., *Canada's Tibet*; Innu Nation and Mushuau Innu Band Council, *Gathering Voices*; Innu Nation, *Ntesinan Nteshiniman Nteniunan*; Innu Nation, *Ntapueu: I Am Telling the Truth*, documentary film, directed by Marjorie Beaucage; Innu Nation, *Money Doesn't Last*; Innu Nation, *Power Struggle*; Bestboy Productions, *The Mushuau Innu: Surviving Canada* documentary film directed by Ed Martin.

shifted. While this was happening, Father Pirson and subsequent priests and teachers taught children in schools that another people's way of life was better than their own.[8]

Improvement

When I first went there some 25 years after settlement, there were two grocery stores in Utshimassits. Until 1996, when it was turned over to the Band Council, the Provincial government controlled the larger store. Apart from some packaged meats such as chicken, pork and beef, and sporadic supplies of rapidly ageing yet costly fresh fruits and vegetables, most of the food it stocked was processed. Whole aisles were devoted to cheap packaged and tinned goods and snacks. Some items, such as jars of Cheez Whiz and packets of Kraft Macaroni and Cheese dinners, as well as cola drinks and candy were freighted up in vast quantities. The other store in the community, a privately owned establishment called 'Kevin's', supplied junk food almost exclusively. People in the village said that Kevin sold three-quarters of a million dollars-worth of candy in one year alone. In 1998 Kevin started a sideline in take-out fried chicken and poutine, a Québecois dish consisting of French fries smothered in brown gravy and cheese curd, and often coming as a packet of dried ingredients. Some people complained that it made them sick and they did not think the chicken was cooked properly. But the queues for this culinary novelty were long, sometimes stretching outside the store.

One autumn evening I walked up the hill to Kevin's to pass time and see the view over the inlet to the forested Labrador mainland. I remember entering the store and standing in line at the register behind a small boy, who was hugging two cans of Orange Crush to his chest. Noticing a woman eating an ice-cream bar, he quickly dashed to get the same brand from the freezer. Upon reaching the head of the queue again, he tossed his money in coins and notes on to the counter. After quickly sizing up the amount, the shopkeeper, Kevin's Innu wife, spoke to the boy in *Innu-aimun* and the boy then pointed to various potato chips and candy bars which she put on the counter. For the few remaining coins, the shopkeeper threw some additional jelly babies into his now-overflowing paper sack of refined corn syrup confectionery.

Just as Walter Rockwood had before them, many of the non-Innu (*Akaneshau/t,* or *Kakeshau/t* in the Mushuau Innu dialect) that I met in Utshimassits in those days used metaphors of evolution to explain the Innu condition. The descents into junk food, cheap alcohol and other effluvia of the capitalist market were narrated as both a necessary evil of advancement and a temporary dip in the upward movement of progress. To Sister Joan, headmistress and long-time Davis Inlet resident, the Innu, 'have to go through

8 An excellent account of the establishment of the school is provided by Ryan, *Disciplining the Innut*.

the bad things in order to get to the good things'. She admitted that the junk food diet resulted in much hyperactivity among the children, and that some were hungry and aggressive, while others were restless and could not focus on their lessons. Junk food was no longer a 'treat', but part of an Innu child's staple dietary intake. Despite the fact that this radical change in diet was brought about by circumstances beyond the control of the Innu, Sister Joan's account was tinged with a sense of destiny. It was not possible to stop the mass consumption of junk food, she mused. Once people acquired the taste, they experienced it as pleasurable and did not want to give it up.[9] The march of civilisation became incorporated into a narration of indigenous adaptation to toxicity.

'A culture cannot go back', the late Father Fred told me at around the same time, and to drive the point home, delivered the homily, 'tradition is not wearing your grandfather's hat, but having a child'. For Father Fred, a Roman Catholic priest in Labrador from 1992 to 1995, who was largely conscientious and well-liked, the ascent of the Innu was irreversible. Once the Innu 'get the taste of chips and TV, they go ahead to another way of doing things'. Social evolution became an implicit force of history driving the Innu onwards from hunting to sedentary village life. Admittedly hunters were being replaced with a generation lining up for fried chicken that made them sick, but in evolutionary terms this was merely a hiccup en route to (in Father Fred's words) 'another way of doing things'.[10]

To keep the evolution metaphor credible, the local clergy and other latter-day Rockwoods who appealed to cultural evolutionism in the years before the people were relocated to houses with running water and sanitation at Natuashish in 2003, resorted to auxiliary qualifications and downplayed the anguish. They did this partly by depicting suffering as individual and medical rather than social and political. This in turn justified social workers, bureaucrats, outside healers and the state itself in asserting control and direction over the Innu.[11] In Utshimassits and Sheshatshiu, junk food and the numerous other indignities endured and indulged became merely unpleasant staging posts on what was an admittedly disorderly progression towards ever more improvement. Cable TV and satellite dishes arrived for the people of Davis Inlet about a decade before toilets and running water. Yet, *Kakeshaut* I spoke to emphasised the benefits of advances in land claims, cash flows, more jobs, such as the temporary construction work needed for the relocation to Natuashish, government funds for this or that ameliorative project, a few graduates of an educational scheme,

9 Interview with Sister Joan Baldwin, Davis Inlet, 2 Oct. 1994.

10 Interview with Father Fred McGee, Davis Inlet, 10 July 1995.

11 A similar analysis of what she calls the 'dysfunction theodicy' with regard to indigenous peoples in the North West Territories is provided by Irlbacher-Fox, *Finding Dahshaa*, esp. pp. 90–119.

a new sobriety campaign and the like. Their accent was always on the positive but, as I was reminded during several conversations in the early 1990s with Canadian advisers, teachers, social workers and nurses, the Innu constantly needed tutelage and redirection.

The first time I stayed in Utshimassits I boarded at the Mennonite house with my friend, the historian and novelist James Wilson. The house was a rather elegant multi-storey timber frame structure on a hill. Its many windows overlooked the Innu shacks below. A Mennonite missionary couple from Ontario, who had lived there for two years, was courteous but eager to instruct us about the Innu, despite James having been the scriptwriter for the BBC documentary *The Two Worlds of the Innu*. Their narratives stressed both the canniness of the Innu – 'They are hunters. They will hunt the government to get their rights' – and their need for guidance. This was apparent in an exchange I witnessed between our practically minded Mennonite landlord and an Innu visitor, who arrived when we were at dinner. It went something like this:

> A young Innu man stands at the door asking to borrow a pump. The Mennonite does not answer the request or invite him in, but asks, 'Does your hot water work?'
>
> Innu man: 'Yeh.'
>
> Mennonite: 'Great, I hope it stays that way.'
>
> Innu man: (pause) 'Yeh.'
>
> Mennonite: 'You've got to insulate that thing now? … heh?'
>
> Innu man: (long pause) 'Yeh.'
>
> The Innu man was left at the door while a pump was retrieved and handed to him.

The northward march of civilisation triggered this kind of exchange. At a deeper level it is the trading of a life of self-reliance on the land for existence in shacks under the tutelage of people like the Mennonites. But to characterise the Innu situation as such would be psychically suicidal to *Kakeshaut*, particularly settlers who have made a life in Labrador ministering to or administering the Innu. Even when such thoughts have occurred, any suggestion of dealing with it through promoting the hunting life, as I suggested to various non-Innu intermediaries on my visits over the years, was rapidly dismissed as at best 'turning the clock back' and at worst wishing the Innu to stay static while everything around them 'moved on.' And, if the clock only moves in one direction, the direction leading to the fatherly Mennonite ministry or junk food at 'Kevin's', complacency towards the loss of Innu independence finds comfort in the belief that they must be coached to face the inevitable.

As the clock ticks, the priests, missionaries, and teachers in those days perceived the land as drifting further away from any lived culture. If migratory hunting cannot be reclaimed, then neither can the social bonds between the Innu which were fashioned from it. Fried chicken and poutine dinners

on demand become substitutes for the meanings, purpose and happiness engendered by the rich wild food feasts in the country. Yet, a people who acclaimed each other for their hunting skills in the subarctic environment are likely to find only momentary cheer in hockey tournaments, Tim Horton's doughnuts and tutelage. But for these Euro-Canadians, it is as if settlement has been a necessity, guided by an obscure force of which the beneficiaries can only be dimly aware and which has yet to be fully revealed to them.

When we first met in Sheshatshiu in 1994, Etienne Pone, a solid and diminutive Innu hunter and fisheries worker, pointed out to me that 'every programme is for our improvement'.[12] Having got to know Etienne since on hunting trips, I enjoy the thoughtful irony of many of his pronouncements. Here, and in a tone satirising the ponderous earnestness of some white Canadians he has encountered, he was referring to the fact that the social programmes entail professionals making observations as to what is wrong with Innu individuals and families and looking at practical ways to expedite ameliorative change. These evaluations, he told me, entail taking settlement life as a given and, measuring Innu to non-Innu expectations as to how people ought to behave in regard to the law, raising children, rules of hygiene, medical advice, seeking employment, attending school, drinking alcohol and the like.[13] In these terms, Innu, are continually found wanting, even though their villages bear little resemblance to other communities across Canada, except for those northern aboriginal communities that have also been subject to recent government policies of relocation and assimilation – such as Kashechewan, Sandy Bay, Pikangikum and Shamattawa – and to which Sheshatshiu and Natuashish are often compared. These are places that show up in the press and register a knot of self-doubt in the otherwise upbeat narrative of Canadian identity. Once on a roll, Etienne revelled in the ironies of policies that were said to be for the vitality and health of the Innu but only made them sicker.

When Innu people were given the opportunity to present their own stories of settlement in the numerous Innu Nation publications and short documentaries of the 1990s, they were not upbeat.[14] Each publication began with a dedication to those who had come to untimely deaths; each film listed the young who had recently taken their own lives. Virtually all of those cited in these publications spoke of maintaining the Innu worldview and fighting developers as a matter of survival. To take one of many possible examples from the community survey of reactions to the proposed Lower Churchill hydroelectric generating project on their lands, George Rich of Natuashish remarked:

12 Interview with Etienne Pone, 27 Sept. 1994.

13 See Samson, 'A colonial double bind', in Kirmayer and Valaskakis, *The Mental Health of Canadian Aboriginal Peoples*, pp. 195–243.

14 Innu Nation and Mushuau Innu Band Council, *Gathering Voices*; Innu Nation, *Ntesinan Nteshiniman Nteniunan*; Innu Nation, *Money Doesn't Last*; Innu Nation, *Power Struggle*.

> Major developments attract more outside people. It means that the Innu will be shoved aside into a more stressful environment that will spark chaos and lead to the elimination of the Innu. A new hydro project means there would be flooding of ancient burial grounds. The history of the Innu would be flooded along with their proof of ownership of the land. The identity of the Innu would be lost forever.[15]

When young Innu were funded to make a film as part of the 'consultation process' for the Voisey's Bay nickel mine, the result, *Ntapueu: I Am Telling the Truth*, was a non-linear montage of images. Narrated in *Innu-aimun* by different voices accompanying footage of community life with all the ravages of alcohol, disease and *Kakeshaut* dominance, the film's central message was that the Innu are dying, literally and figuratively. A four-wheeler hauls a coffin in a hand-built wooden trailer containing the body of a teenage suicide victim. It bumps along towards the cemetery in Utshimassits. The boy's young friends follow in the snow flurry. The soundtrack is the music of an Innu rock band. In another scene the vice-president of the mining company is caught asleep in a conference room, his mouth agape, while Innu Nation leader Daniel Ashini delivers a passionate speech on the importance of the land the company is excavating.

The cultural continuity of the Innu

Less than a generation before Walter Rockwood insisted that Labrador's indigenous people be set on a course that would ultimately and abruptly lead to suicide epidemics and encounters with yawning mining executives, American anthropologist Frank Speck remarked: 'The culture has continued largely in its original pattern – hunting and wandering … Radical change would only ensue upon change of their culture base, e.g. from hunting-nomadism to agriculture, to pastoral life, or to civilized employment.'[16] Although some of Speck's analysis – the first detailed anthropological study of the Innu, and conducted with people along the North Shore of the St Lawrence – was couched in the similar tones of cultural evolutionism, he believed that Innu activities had persisted because they were successful. Although an evolutionist, he was not an advocate of intervening in their way of life to hasten its demise.

Comparing the Jesuit narratives of Innu life in the early 17th century with his own observations in the 1930s, Finnish geographer Väino Tanner came to remarkably similar conclusions, 'one gets the impression that the Gulf Indian groups were living under conditions remarkably similar to those of the Labrador peoples of the present day – the same winter wanderings of small family groups living on the edge of subsistence and avoiding other groups

15 Innu Nation, *Power Struggle*, p. 45.
16 Speck, *Naskapi*, p. 20.

during their migrations.'[17] Julius Lips, the exiled German ethnologist, agreed. Basing his interpretation on a summer spent with the Innu, whom he referred to as 'Naskapi', in the interior regions of Lac St Jean and Mistassini. Lips pointed out that in the 1930s, the 'Naskapi have always been, and always want to remain, a people of hunters.'[18] This was so because hunting was the social, economic and political foundation of their society. Lips also imagined a fairly unbroken cultural timeline, noting that, 'today, just as at the time when the first white man appeared in their region, their form of economy has remained the same, namely the hunt for moose and caribou and the trapping of fur-bearing animals: beaver, otter, fisher, lynx, muskrat, mink and marten'.[19]

While access to trade goods from the times of the Jesuits onwards may have altered some aspects of life, the annual cycles of hunting and fishing and the variations upon them made necessary by weather, animal migration routes, conservation and the dispositions of people in the camps remained well into the 20th century. According to Tanner, the canoe, toboggan and snowshoe, caribou and birch-bark conical tent, the four-sided hunting bow, all Innu creations, remained in constant use.[20] Tanner based his claims on the reports and diaries of others spending time with the Innu in the 18th- and 19th-centuries and related these to his own observations. He concurred with Speck that, 'in spite of great changes in the equipment of the Montagnais [southerly Innu] the main characteristics of their ancient culture as a whole are still there; the changes are mostly in details and have certainly been of practical use in their hunting life.'[21]

17 Tanner, *Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador*, p. 628.
18 Lips, 'Naskapi law', p. 387.
19 Ibid.
20 Tanner, *Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador*, pp. 639–41.
21 Ibid., p. 641.

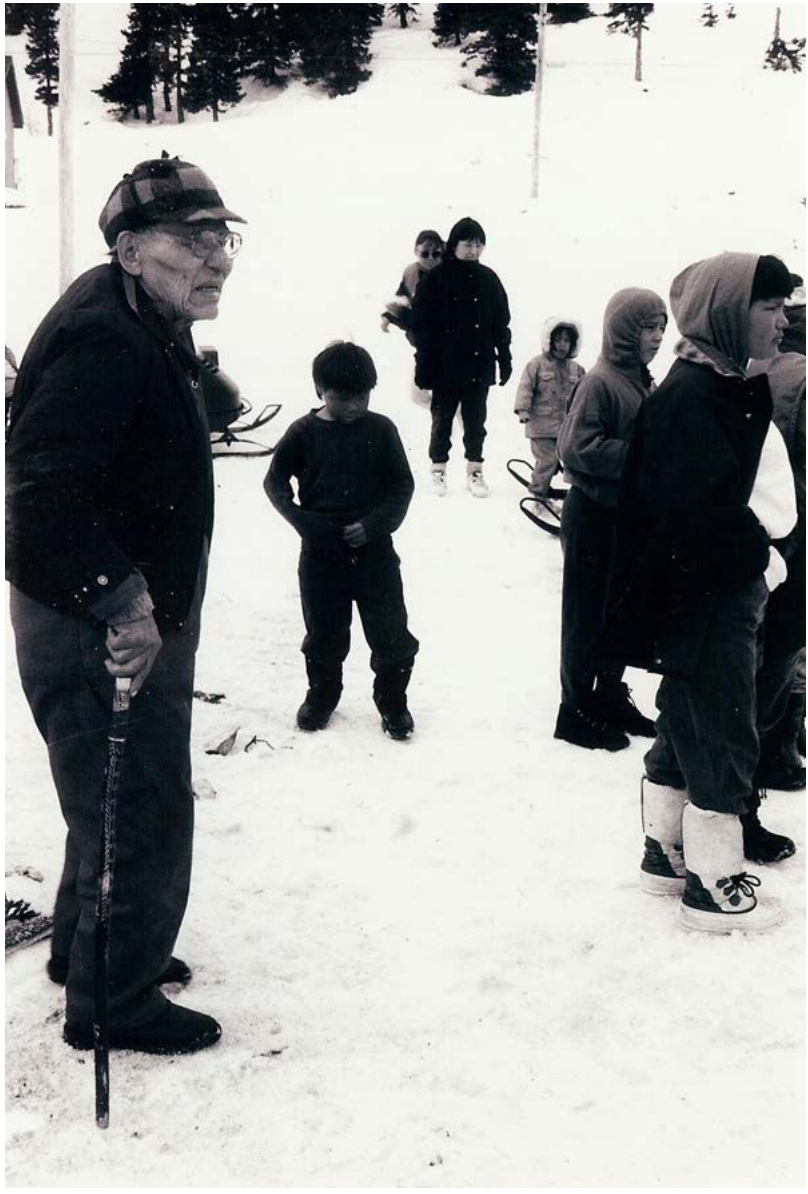


Figure 1.1. Tshenish Pasteen in Utshimassits (Davis Inlet), 1996.

Figure 1.2. François Aster (left) with Armand Mackenzie (right) in Matimekush, 2007, 'What is hardship to a free man?'

These reports make sense today. Despite sedentarisation in the 1950s and 60s, Innu hunting has not been abandoned and Innu people still hunt, fish, gather and travel across their lands. Encroachments by settlers and developers, and the policies of the Canadian state, have merely caused them to reduce the frequency and range of their mobile life. Most *Tshenut* with whom I have spoken in the two Labrador villages and in Matimekush, Quebec, believe that to live by hunting is both good and preferable. Few Innu of any age would regard settlement living as any advance over *nutshimit* life. Many would of course note the material comforts of houses, furniture, money, jobs, televisions, trucks and snowmobiles. But these would be offset by the sicknesses of communal life, the loss of identity and meaning, the constant suicide attempts of teenagers, mass alcoholism, gas sniffing and the young ages etched on the gravestones. *Nutshimit* is viewed almost universally as enhancing Innu identity, self-respect and self-esteem.

The octogenarian Tshenish Pasteen and his son-in-law George Gregoire sat talking at his table in Utshimassits. Looking towards the window, Tshenish said that if the young people went to the country more, learned the skills necessary to function there, and understood the land and how the animals live, they would not be so prone to suicide, alcohol and drugs, and divorce and conflict would not be so prevalent. If the young went to the country they

would, in his words, 'catch up' with the *Tshenut*.[22] Reversing the folk wisdom of the Euro-Canadians' notion of improvement, Tshenish said that life on the land would lead to physical and emotional betterment, where Innu could be free of the demands of the state and *Kakeshaut* society. A similar point was put to me by 94-year-old François Aster in Matimekush. Thinking back on his times as a hunter, François described the 400-kilometre migration route up the Moisie river, the 200 portages en route, the times when they would only eat fish for months on end. As his soft, watery, brown eyes regarded the white landscape through the window, he rhetorically asked, 'what is hardship to a free man?'[23] He shuddered visibly at the sight of his neighbours' identical box-shaped houses, lined up along the parallel snow-filled streets outside.

Part of the reason why freedom from change is valued lies in the nature of hunting and the relationships to nature needed to sustain it. As British anthropologist Hugh Brody argued, while many agriculturists have demanded territorial expansion because they have required ever more land that they continuously transform, either for farming or industry, to support growing populations, the opposite is the case for hunters. Even though some indigenous farmers were also expansionists, generally their semi-sedentary ways of life helped sustain land and disperse populations in a way that intensive commercial agriculture does not. Hence, hunters 'do not make intensive efforts to reshape their environment. They rely, instead, on knowing how to find, use and sustain that which is already there … the central preoccupation of hunter-gatherer economic and spiritual systems is the maintenance of the natural world as it is.'[24]

Figure 1.3. Ben Michel and Daniel Ashini near the school building, Sheshatshiu, 1969.

22 Interview with Tshenish Pasteen, Utshimassits, 12 April 1996.
23 Interview with François Aster, Matimekush, 4 April 2007.
24 Brody, *The Other Side of Eden*, pp. 89, 117.

In contrast, the process of altering the world was an explicit objective of the Europeans who started colonising the Innu territories from the early 17th century. Having designated these lands New France, early French occupation relied upon Roman Catholic missionaries who attempted to convert the Innu and other indigenous groups of the area. The English Crown gave later missionaries a charter in 1760, and they explicitly challenged Innu mobility, which was seen as an obstacle to conversion.[25] Although the missionaries were never successful in settling the Innu, French and British incursions into Innu lands gradually grew and trappers extended themselves into areas used by the Innu for fishing, hunting and trapping.[26] By the 20th century, this made hunting more perilous since the settlers trapped in a more confined area and did so from a fixed base. Depletion of animals was particularly pronounced in the Lake Melville area. On the subject of the influx of European trappers around that area in the 1930s, Tanner related that: 'The Indians of course regard this intrusion as an injustice, but they resign themselves to it as their fate, afraid of "the law", and the law, as elsewhere is dictated by the majority with the "right of the strong".'[27] 'The law' then became an instrument of dispossession, and correspondingly, as Tanner observed, 'in this way I can imagine that the old social structure of the Montagnais has been loosened and changed.'[28]

The handing over of their lands to Canada in 1949 signalled even more momentous changes to Innu life because, unlike the Innu emphasis on continuity, the state agenda was rapid change. Schooling and 'economic rehabilitation' through wage labour were priorities for Walter Rockwood, along with other administrators and missionaries, and this was seen as more reliable than wage labour as an instrument to promote cultural change.[29] American anthropologist John Honigmann appreciated this well in observing that 'the teacher represents an agent of change whose object is often to train the child with skills resembling those which are useful or appreciated in the society outside the North.'[30] Hence, from the outset, schools inculcated physical and cultural disconnection.

Complementing the culturally transformative effects of schooling is the physical alteration of Innu hunting lands by a number of large resource extraction projects. These include: the Churchill Falls hydroelectric project and flooding of lands in central Labrador; the iron ore mines in central Quebec and western Labrador; the James Bay hydroelectric projects at Caniapiscau

25 See Gosling, *Labrador*, p. 129.

26 See Tanner, *Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador,* pp. 608, 637; Zimmerly, *Cain's Land Revisited*, p. 177.

27 Tanner, *Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador*, p. 637.

28 Ibid.

29 Samson, *A Way of Life That Does Not Exist*, pp. 166,185–221.

30 Honigmann, 'Indians of Nouveau Québec', in Malaurie and Rousseau, *Le Nouveau-Quebec Contribution*, p. 356.

and elsewhere; the Voisey's Bay nickel mine, north of Natuashish; and numerous dams on the rivers flowing south into the St Lawrence. Industrial development then reinforced the social and psychological alterations thought to be achieved by sedentary living and schooling by making 'development' the presumed way of life for future generations. In his 1976 introduction to Speck's 1915 ethnological study of Innu (known then as Montagnais-Naskapi) religion, J.E. Michael Kew observed that the 1967 Churchill Falls hydro-development and the 1972 James Bay dam complex would summon the death knells of Cree and Innu cultures. Churchill Falls, 'began the destruction of the north-eastern Naskapi territory', while at the same time:

> Those few Crees of Mistassini, Rupert House, and Fort George, holding precariously to a life of hunting and trapping, struggling for a few brief months each winter to maintain the balance through hunting, dreaming and propitiating the souls of bear and beaver, will become fewer and fewer. *Soon their world, the world Speck tells us about, will be gone forever.*[31] (my emphasis)

Speck himself had predicted the disappearance of the Naskapi. At the end of his work he left his readers with the spectre of hunters that would 'disappear from their haunts'.[32]

31 J.E. Michael Kew, in Speck, *Naskapi*, p. xii.
32 Speck, ibid., p. 245.

Figure 1.4. Sebastien Benuen on swing outside school building, Sheshatshiu, 1969.

However, the Innu have not disappeared from all their haunts. Many of the efforts to transform them have not resulted in the kind of metamorphosis that was envisaged. The industrial projects and the advances of non-indigenous settlers and workers have not overwhelmed the Innu lands. Although there are future plans for the industrialisation of Labrador, as we shall see in chapter 3, much of the Labrador-Quebec peninsula remains undisturbed by roads, towns, mining and hydroelectric projects, and has an abundance of caribou,[33] porcupine, beaver, ptarmigan, geese, ducks and fish that are and can be the bases for maintaining the practice of hunting. Indeed, many Innu spend months of each year in the country, and have time for this because they have *not* been heavily recruited into the industrial workforces of mines and other projects located on their lands. Schooling has also proved not to be an insurmountable obstacle to the hunting life. The numerous problems encountered such as high drop-out rates, teacher turnover, sexual abuse and low standards of achievement, have meant that the school has not been as culturally transformative as government planners hoped for. The cultural differences between the Innu and mainstream Canadian society remain sharp. There are still Innu and other northern indigenous people alive today who remember subsisting almost entirely by hunting, with little outside aid, where money was used only sporadically, and where they rarely saw an outsider in the interior of their lands and only the occasional trader or priest at trading posts.

Utshisk-nipi 1995

One fine summer morning I am in a hunting camp at Utshisk-nipi, some 90 miles from Sheshatshiu. It is the first time I have experienced *nutshimit*. I am a guest of the young and articulate leader Daniel Ashini and his uncle Dominic Pokue, a man in his late 50s who was raised in the country until he was 28. Dominic speaks very little English, and when he does he shouts in the style of the Mushuau Innu. Daniel speaks both languages fluently. Travelling on a canoe with an outboard motor, we pull across the lake from a small island where, on account of strong winds and rain, we have been camped for several days without hunting. Today, with the skies clear, we start our journey to Seal Lake, where Dominic says there may be caribou. For the last two weeks we have eaten well on beaver, geese, ducks and trout, but no caribou. Before starting the main part of the journey, we dock beside Utshisk-nipi, where we had camped

33 In February 2013, the Newfoundland and Labrador government announced a ban on caribou hunting as a result of a precipitous, but as yet unexplained decline in their numbers. Innu in Natuashish and Sheshatshiu, however, have registered their intentions to maintain caribou hunting on a reduced basis. See www.thelabradorian.ca/News/2013-03-08/article-3195233/Innu-proceeding-with-caribou-hunt/1 (accessed 3 May 2013).

a week earlier. Pulling the boat up on the sand, we set about finding and then burning cans and other detritus that we had left behind earlier. Daniel and I sort through the unburnable plastic rubbish, and have put some of it in black garbage bags, when Dominic shouts to Daniel that the canoe has gone. Looking up, we see that it is about 30 feet out into the lake, floating further and further from the shore.

We had not tied the boat down, which I assumed was because of the heavy load of supplies and gear loaded on to it (the day before, Daniel and I had done likewise when the boat was full of cut firewood). Daniel asks if I can swim out and get it. Everything we have is on that canoe; food, clothes, tent, sleeping bags, guns, traps, a generator and a satellite phone. I start pulling off my boots, then think better of it. The boat is now even further out. The water, only free of ice for about three weeks, is extremely cold. Even though I had swum in the lake a few days earlier – and this was to the great amusement of my hosts, who I think saw it as foolish bravado – I know I will have to swim very fast to ward off the cold. On that occasion I had only managed about 20 strokes before realising I should head back to shore.

Failing swimming to it, we can only watch helplessly as the boat drifts out into the lake which is about half a mile across and four miles long. Initially, the three of us try to follow the boat from the shore, walking over and around huge boulders, then through willow thickets, and then into a spruce forest where we follow an old Innu trail, all of it hard going. The rocks are slippery and some are jagged vertical bolts; the willows are dense and the wood, although it bends as the body moves through only does so with some hard pushing, odd branches jut out at unexpected angles; there is thick growth on the closely set spruce and spiky branches zigzag the trail at all angles. Underfoot, the ground ranges from unyielding rock to soggy marsh, to spongy snow like caribou moss, then back to rock, marsh and water.

Eventually we come to a point opposite to where Dominic thinks the boat might run aground on the other side of the lake. He instructs us to find firewood and build a fire in the hope that it may be visible to the pilot of any low-flying plane passing above us. Despite the seriousness of a situation where we have no food or shelter and only minimal clothing, Dominic and Daniel are laughing and joking, and there is no attempt to blame anyone or assign fault. After a while, Dominic decides we should move up to higher ground and try to see the boat. On doing this, and without binoculars or eyeglasses, Dominic tells us he can see it and that he believes it will run aground in the rocky bay on the other side of the lake. Then we start to speculate on what will happen to all our possessions, whether the canoe will capsize, hit a rock, tip everything into the lake, or whether it might just fill with water and disappear to the bottom of the lake. Another possibility is that the current will take it to the end of the lake where it will be smashed to pieces by the rapids. Even though I think that Dominic would have been able to find a route, returning the 90 miles to

the village on foot with so little food and clothing and no ammunition was unthinkable.

Rising from our fire on the shore, we make the gruelling return trek to where we had started, back to where we lost the boat, across all those slippery rocks, ducking under sharp-pointed branches, slipping down to the knee in the marshes, with me trying to keep up. Back at the old camp, we light another fire to keep the black fly at bay, sit, smoke and talk awhile. We need to get to the other side of the lake to get the boat. We must either find a way to do this or wait for a plane that is supposed to be flying out this afternoon. But anyone who has travelled in the far north knows that schedules are never a guide. With its unpredictable climate, quickly moving weather fronts, and the possibility of low clouds, snow, rain, or hail, air travel can be impossible across the Labrador-Quebec peninsula at any time of year, sometimes for extended periods. Things may or may not happen when it is said that they will. Even the non-indigenous settlers here don't put much stock in schedules, and the Innu even less so. Dominic starts talking about making a 'canoe.'

After walking about half an hour in the opposite direction to which we had gone before, we come across an old Innu camp, possibly from the 1970s, and it is adjacent to the potential first crossing-point of a dark magenta river swirling into the lake. At the campsite there are lots of poles that were used as tent supports, and a rusty axe-head that we can use for cutting and chopping. Dominic asks us to start bringing as many large, dry poles as we can down the steep hill to the shore, where he sets about improvising a raft. Daniel can sometimes carry ten long poles on his shoulders. I can manage several fewer. In my naivety, I see this as backbreaking work, but I know that it isn't 'work' to the Innu. It is survival, and there is not a separate realm of life called 'work.' For Rockwood and his associates, wage labour was one of the main ingredients of civilisation. He and others such as the Grenfell Association doctor, Paddon, often said of the Innu that they were 'loafing' at the trading posts. Even when it was available, the Innu never took much to wage labour. But in the country people lived by doing things that were physical and sometimes hard, but did not, however, resemble waged work.

As I tire, I start to despair for the first time. I wonder whether this climbing up and back with huge loads of wood is Sisyphean. I recall that today is 15 June, a date that has recurred with significance in my life. I think of my good and bad deeds. I start having some near-perfect visions of my grandmother's house where I lived as a child. I turn quiet. Dominic has set up a kind of pontoon from numerous crosshatched and tied poles. The half-built raft is tethered to a paddle dug into the sand, and Dominic is floating on the poles while lashing them together, when the paddle comes loose and he starts drifting out towards the strong current of the river. Sitting up on the hill smoking, Daniel tells me to rescue the paddle and to do it quickly. I run into the waist-deep water as fast as I can and grab it. In my enthusiasm, the tug on the paddle is too great and

my momentum cannot avert it rising straight up out of the water and smacking me in the mouth. I pull Dominic ashore and take off my boots and socks to dry in the wind. I lick my split lip.

By late afternoon, Dominic says we should return through the dense spruce forest to the original camp where we were burning the trash. It is an ordeal for me trying to keep up with the others and I only manage it with a great deal of effort. If we wait there for a couple of hours, Dominic says, perhaps the plane will come, and if it does not, we shall return to the construction site. Again, we light a fire to stave off the black fly. We nap, and there is some joviality, but I remain quiet. Through Daniel as translator, Dominic asks if I am nervous. I say, 'a little'. Daniel says, 'Don't worry. Even though our things may be lost, we are still alive. Nervousness doesn't help when you are in the country.' Somehow, I cannot stop being quiet. Maybe it's nerves, and maybe it's the wish to hear the sound of propellers. By 7.30 pm there is no plane, and no hope of one because any plane coming from Goose Bay has to be back before nightfall. This means another trip back to the construction site, where the three of us now make many more forays from the shore, through willows and up the steep hill to the old camp where longer poles are now required to finish the raft. Although much of this is a blur, at one point I glimpse the diminutive 59-year-old Dominic carrying about ten 30-foot poles down the escarpment. Daniel brings down an old oil drum, which Dominic patiently lashes to the odd-sized poles.

The time comes when construction has got as far as it can. Looking at the end product, I am apprehensive that it will float in deep water with all three of us clinging to it, as night draws in and the cold winds start to bite. We punt out tentatively, staying in shallow water as much as possible, but eventually we have to go across the deep water to reach the other side of the river. Here, punting is extremely difficult because the craft is very heavy and the poles get stuck easily in the sandy river bottom. Shakily, we reach land. For the first time, Dominic looks puffed out. Daniel walks along the shore to the point where another river also joins Utshisk-nipi, and from where we can see the small island where we set out earlier that morning. After hauling the raft to the point, we see the current in this river is also swift and, if we are not to get washed out into the middle of the lake, we will have to start crossing much further back along it. This means hauling the raft tight along the shore before starting the same procedure again, punting through the shallow water before making our way across the deep water to the island. I imagine this to be a dash, but it is very slow and Dominic and Daniel navigate the craft with deliberate and tentative movements in the swirling currents. After about 15 minutes, we reach the island and locate the old camp, but first Daniel hauls the heavy raft through the sticky sand to a place where it can be tied up without fear of it drifting out into the lake. He ties it up really tight. By this time, I am cold, wet and cannot stop shivering. It's about 10.30 pm and the light is faint. Cold

water swirls around in my boots, but I hardly have the strength to take them off and empty it out. As I shiver, Daniel and Dominic quickly put up the old canvas tent that we had discarded on the island. We pick up firewood, but my shivering compromises all I do. Scouring the ground in the darkness, we find our old teabags and throw them in an old tin bucket with lake water and there is also some old raisin bread from Daniel's pocket. This is the only food we have eaten since the lake trout we had for breakfast that morning.

Only now, as we lie down in the tent on the hastily arranged spruce boughs to sleep close together in our clothes, do I notice that Daniel has only a t-shirt and thin jacket, while I have three layers including a fleece jacket. We take turns to keep the fire going in the stove since the tent has no door flap to keep out the cold breeze that buffets our heads, which are perched on a plywood plank tilted as a pillow. I doze by fits and starts. At about one o'clock, I am looking out through the hole above the gaping flap where the stovepipe exits the tent. I think I see the moon. The last few nights it has been getting fuller and bigger, the way it does here in the north. It's a big orange ball, but I am straining my eyes to focus close rather than at a distance, or what I think is at a distance. Belatedly, I see that the orange ball is really flames engulfing the tent. The hot stovepipe must have touched the canvas. I shout 'shit' and run out grabbing an empty bucket with which I beat the flames. Dominic arrives next and tells me to fetch some water from the lake. With this and cold, leftover tea we extinguish the fire fairly quickly, but only after it has consumed a large segment of the canvas. We partially cover the hole with a plastic garbage bag that the wind rattles the rest of the night.

Back leaning against our plywood pillow, Daniel says that we seem to be having nothing but bad luck. As the night progresses, we get very cold, and I hear the sound of Daniel working the old, blunt axe-head against the small poles supporting the tent. These are converted to firewood as the tent starts to hang loosely around our heads. Seeing me stir, Daniel asks again if I am nervous, and this time I repeat, 'a little'. He translates for Dominic, who tells him that he would only be nervous if one or both of us were to die.

At first light, around five, we dismantle the charred tent. Despite the lack of food, I am not hungry. With Dominic alone on the pontoon, we haul it along the shallow shoreline. Dominic is punting with great gusto, but visibly flagging. Eventually, Daniel and I clamber aboard and help punt out across the river on the far side of the island and to the part of the lake we need to be on if the canoe has run aground. We cheer at making it this far, tie up the pontoon and set off along the mostly marshy, willow-dense waters edge. After about an hour, we find the canoe. It has run aground in the rocky bay, as Dominic said it might, and there is already a lot of water in it. Daniel's rifle is floating in its case. We empty the water out and assess the damage. The generator is soaked, but the satellite phone is OK. Dominic's radio is full of water, and so is my camera and cassette recorder. As we sit on the sunny rocks eating tins of

salmon and wet raisins and waiting for things to dry, I think of how Daniel and Dominic have saved my life and how I would have been useless left to myself.

The outboard motor eventually ignites after we take several turns strenuously pulling the starter cord and we set off for Seal Lake where Dominic thought we would find caribou. As we pull out along the shore, the weather quickly turns again and it starts to cloud over and rain hard. Sitting at the bow Daniel spots a young caribou and shoots it once in the belly with his rifle. Instead of running into the woods, the animal licks its wound and continues grazing by the shore. Daniel's second shot downs it instantly. When we get to it, we are all happy about how our luck has changed. After butchering the caribou, Dominic takes up the net he had previously left on this side of the lake and finds five lake trout in it. The journey to Seal Lake takes about three more hours and has to be negotiated from Utshisk-nipi via the rapids. We do some unsuccessful duck hunting en route. At Seal Lake, we put up the tent, eat some fresh caribou and bannock and sleep in warmth thanks to a huge pile of firewood left by Enam Abraham, an elderly Innu hunter who frequents this area. The next morning we would find the dummy tank used by NATO forces for target practice (see Preface) and our joys and frustrations would be exercised in demolishing it.

All is not lost

We found the canoe and survived with no food because Daniel and Dominic had not lost the skills they need to live in the country. Despite schooling, assimilation policies, wage labour schemes, continual confiscation of their land and strings of personal tragedies, Daniel and Dominic had not lost the capacity to think as Innu. In places like Utshisk-nipi, life can be compromised by bad judgments, inappropriate temperaments and arrogance. A lack of humility to the forces of nature can itself be a cause of accidents, sickness and death. Simply acknowledging that one is dependent on nature and cannot overcome it is an act of humility to the animals, the land, the elements, the fish and all the natural things that surround us. This 'respect' is for the Innu what guarantees a good life and makes a good person. During my times at the camp, Dominic had shared many stories about the *kushapatshakan*, the shaking tent, events he had witnessed of seemingly miraculous healing by *kamateuet* (shamans) and of ghosts and phantom figures like *katshimatsheshu* that inhabit the country. He said that, although he went to the Roman Catholic church in Sheshatshiu, he found it hard to believe in Christianity because it did not relate to survival, whereas Innu spirituality was directly relevant not only to survival, but to living and being in the world. It is real and tangible. He had in fact been saying these things the night before we lost the boat.

When we appeared to be stranded, we were not stuck, but simply living with the exigencies of sentient nature. For Dominic, nature meant more than the physical properties of the woods, the waters, animals and the elements,

it was a living relationship of trust and respect. People were not separate from nature, and certainly not above it. The animals are hunted, it is true, but they are not considered prey. Animal and Innu lives are seen as part of the same order of the world, one with extraordinarily close attachments between all living things. Animals do not speak in our languages, but they are not 'dumb'. They are as wise as we are, and all Innu legends and stories testify to this. If hunters kill only what they need, share the meat and respect the bones of the animals – by *mukushan* [feast] if it is a caribou – then by hanging the bones of smaller animals in trees, and throwing fish, beaver and muskrat bones back into the water, more animals and fish will be made available for food. The relationship is not adversarial.

These dramas are still played out in country life. When we lost the boat, I was curious to know why such a heavily laden craft, moored in sand on a lake with no tides, could so easily have come loose. Dominic gave several possible reasons, but would not be drawn on the absolute veracity of any single explanation, since he didn't really know and could not be absolutely certain why the canoe drifted into Utshisk-nipi. One idea he mentioned was that it could have been *katshimatsheshu*, trickster figures who configured themselves into tiny men, pushing the boat out into the water. 'Why would they do that?', I ask. 'To make sure we realise that we are dependent on the water, the elements and the animals and not the other way around. To make sure we remain humble', came the answer via Daniel's translation. If these values remain with the Innu, all is not lost. It may be impossible for them to recapture permanent migratory hunting, but some of them may be able to live a good life on their lands, at least some of the time.

Alternatively, the tensions between cultural continuity and assimilation sometimes give rise to thoughts of giving up on it, but this anxiety may also invigorate the wish to continue to be Innu. Going back to that first meeting with Etienne Pone, one marked in my memory for the way in which Etienne gently mocked the pretensions of Euro-Canadian society, I was taken by the links he made between cultural assimilation and confusion. If things went along a course mapped out by the government, Etienne observed, 'kids won't know who they are'. He did not pretend to have an answer, but he knew he wanted something other than what assimilation had led to. 'I don't want to teach my children who the Premier of Newfoundland is or how many provinces there are', he said, continuing, 'I would like to teach them Innu things, where the lakes are, like No Name Lake, and where Churchill Falls flooded all our graveyards. Never mind who is Prime Minister of Canada.'[34]

As I hope to show, other indigenous peoples may also be in a similar position to reassert their own values and realise them in practice. But first we must understand the march of civilisation, to which indigenous cultural continuity and cultural diversity in general have been sacrificed.

34 Interview with Etienne Pone, 27 Sept. 1994.

Chapter 2

The march of civilisation

The violence consists in conflating time and history so that the two become indivisible.
So that people can no longer read their experience of either of them separately.
John Berger[1]

It was all prices to them: they never looked at it:
why should they look at the land? They were Empire Builders:
It was all in the bid and the ask and the ink on their books…
Archibald MacLeish[2]

The concept of change and non-Europeans

Walter Rockwood's 'March of Civilization' memorandum from 1955 captured a common image of the dénouement of Western society bestowing its blessings on forgotten hinterlands. The phrase 'the march of civilization' conjures up a world unalterably striding towards some sort of good life. Time itself is merely the container for the inevitable changes that mark the development of humanity. Like civilisation, time marches in a line. Constant change, here and in the annals of Western thought, is depicted as vital for individuals and societies. To keep still, stay the same or be content as we are, or with what we have, is to risk stagnation and decay. If a society fails to change, it falls. In today's competitive world, individuals who choose a path of constancy or cultural continuity risk being considered unenlightened, apathetic, ignorant or (in some cases) deluded. The goals of our lives are widely held to be linked to advancement, especially economic. If such goals are considered universal, then it can only follow that everyone should aspire to them, or that those who do not are anomalous and would benefit from correction – or more drastically, elimination. In order to understand how these ideas inserted themselves into the encounters between indigenous peoples and colonising societies, and show how much they inform state policy and practice, I will review the wider architecture of European thought as it applied itself to non-Europeans.

1 Berger and Mohr, *Another Way of Telling*, p. 105.
2 MacLeish, *Collected Poems 1917–1952*, p. 70, from the poem 'Wildwest'.

The will to transform was inherent in 18th-century Enlightenment philosophy. Specifically, a concept of change outlining a definable, inevitable and desirable unfolding of history in one direction was articulated by several key thinkers. The concept took form through extending the image of growth as observed in the natural world to human cultures. The world of nature provided daily observations about the cycles of plants, animals and the physical matter of the earth, and these movements appeared to be incremental, making 'progress' an apt metaphor for the parallel unfolding history of humans. If the organic world shifts between different forms, it was assumed that historical processes might also take on similar sequences. Like growth in a biological organism, progress in society, culture or civilisation was meant to have a direction and to be largely irreversible. The key to the metaphor, however, was the identification of specific indices of progressive change and the linking of them to *particular* human experiences that were thought to succeed one another and to stand for progress. By making a semantic switch from biological to social processes, ideas and practices created by people were constituted as of the same order as what was construed to occur in nature.[3] By the 19th century, influential thinkers, scientists and politicians began to extend the metaphor yet further by arguing not only that history had a particular direction, but that human nature made people behave in specific and patterned ways consistent with that direction. For example, many thinkers argued that humans were constitutionally driven to seek individual achievement and economic improvement, and this made society move towards better and greater ends.

It was no accident that the proliferation of this imagery and the subjective experience of a greater destiny coincided with the Great Land Rush and the establishment of the North American settler states, which were arguably among the most fertile and enduring applications of the belief in a predictable progressive movement of history. In practical situations of encounter between settlers and government agents and indigenous peoples, the articulations of these ideas were often less nuanced, sometimes modified and made flexible, but they often contained little regard for the ideas and practices of those whose lands would be sites for settler societies. At its starkest, the concept of change could be made to explain how the dispossession of indigenous peoples was consistent with the natural order of things.

The idea of progress is common to Europe's two major forms of exported knowledge, Christianity and science. Underlying both is a conception of truth as absolute, incremental and universal. Both hold that an immutable truth explaining the natural world and wider cosmos which can be revealed through applying prescribed methods of perception. In order to discover truth and hence become more Godly, Europeans devised moral codes that were in keeping with what they believed God had ordained, and to do this progressive improvement

3 See Nisbet, *Social Change and History*, pp. 3–4.

from the Biblical Fall of Man became vital. Enlightenment philosophers and scientists were Christians, believing that God created the physical world that they were helping to reveal in empirical terms.[4] The Enlightenment provided the logical and technical tools to find truth, mitigate sin and at the same time discover new lands.[5] These tools were incorporated into Reformation Christian thought, the greatest exponents of which, as Max Weber argued, were the English Puritan colonists in New England.[6] Outside 17th-century New England, some of the most assiduous purveyors of the scientific worldview were Roman Catholic missionaries such as the Jesuits who travelled the world and used their knowledge of physics, mathematics, geography, natural history and scientific scholarship as tools of persuasion and conversion of indigenous peoples believed to be living in darkness and falsity.[7] Indeed, science and religion were joined by the foundational idea that it was human responsibility and destiny to hold dominion over nature. This was as clear in *Genesis* as it was in the scientific method, including later the supposedly antagonistic views of Charles Darwin, whose biological notions of natural selection embedded a hierarchical relationship between humans and nature. Dominion over nature, combined with a notion of absolute truth, implied that change ought to be effected to enhance human control of the natural world, and that this was a matter of little debate.

Contact with non-Europeans raised theological and scientific questions, stoking predictable comparisons between indigenous peoples and Europeans. A vast field for the enhancement, testing and application of the idea of ubiquitous change opened up as missionaries, scientists, doctors, administrators, settlers and soldiers from Europe extended their dominion over lands and peoples in Africa, Asia and the Americas. In the course of these enterprises, most monarchs, statesmen and philosophers were in agreement that the expansion of Europe was an undertaking which had a higher purpose.

However, there had been some prominent sceptics whose observations questioned the means by which change was being put into effect in colonial undertakings. Sixteenth-century writers, such as the Dominican friar and Spanish colonist Bartolome de Las Casas and the wealthy French statesman Michel de Montaigne, defended the New World natives against the pejorative judgements levelled at them by their contemporaries. Las Casas' chronicles of the Spanish colonisation of the Indies makes for gruesome reading; soldiers

4 See Burrt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*.

5 This is broadly the thesis of Peter Harrison, *The Fall of Man and the Foundations of Science*.

6 Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

7 See Feingold, *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters*; and Harris, 'Confession-building', *Jesuits and the Knowledge of Nature*, pp. 287–318. See also my comments on Father Paul Le Jeune's missionary activities with the Innu in the early 17th century, in *A Way of Life That Does Not Exist*, pp. 156–63.

split men in two with swords, spit roast babies with their mothers and burn Indians alive.[8] Montaigne likewise refused to make indigenous peoples lesser than Europeans. In his famous essay, 'On cannibals', he criticised European violence, but also confronted the violent aspects of Amerindian society. Drawing on travellers' accounts, he described cruelty in battle, including instances of cannibalism among the indigenous peoples of the Americas. But he pulled back from pronouncing such actions barbarous, especially when judged alongside the atrocities committed by European invaders.[9] Rather, he claimed that all peoples might be capable of good and bad, and European vanity and small-mindedness accounted for the depictions of New World peoples as savages.

Within European thought more regard was granted for what were deemed developed 'civilisations', such as China, India, Persia and parts of the Arab world. Among the dominant figures of the Enlightenment, the 17th-century German philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Leibniz was rare in having any serious intercultural interests. He speculated on the various possibilities of cultural exchange and mutual understanding with large-scale civilisations, but his appreciation of non-European cultures was limited almost exclusively to China.[10] Later thinkers sometimes used indigenous peoples as exemplars to better highlight some of the deficiencies in Western society and to adjust their notions of history and society. Canadian sociologist Fuyuki Kurusawa argued perceptively that several key philosophers from the 18th to the 20th centuries such as Rousseau, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Levi-Strauss and Foucault employed an 'ethnological imagination' to situate their social theories, and that Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau and Kant all entertained 'representations of non-Western peoples … for the major debates of the day.'[11] The same could be said of the philosophies of the American Transcendentalists such as Thoreau, Emerson and Whitman, who all venerated the more direct engagements they perceived Native Americans to maintain with nature.

8 Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*.

9 Montaigne, 'On cannibals', pp. 228–41.

10 Others, such as Locke and Spinoza, espoused a toleration of diverse views and practices, but stopped well short of displaying any serious interest in the knowledge or virtues that non-European societies might possess. Even Leibniz cast aspersions on various barbarians which served to sharpen his conception of China as 'a fully developed culture' with 'an exceptionally long history, relatively unbroken and well recorded'. See Perkins et al., esp. pp. 42, 118. Furthermore, Leibniz speculated on the importance of an accessible travel route from Europe to China, but paused because Russia controlled, 'the deep barbarian lands of the North by the shore of the frozen ocean', ibid., p. 132.

11 Kurusawa, *The Ethnological Imagination*, esp. p. 14.

As colonisation proceeded, some Native American worldviews even came to influence European practices.[12] For example, Alfred Goldsworthy Bailey emphasised how much the French imported from eastern Algonkian peoples. Besides food, materials, shelters and tools, explorers such as Champlain and writers such as Rabelais, Rousseau, Voltaire and Diderot gained insights from Native Americans that surfaced in their writings. This led Bailey to proclaim that, 'contact with American Indians ... was a remote precursor of the French Revolution.'[13] Others maintained that the form of government and decision-making of the League of the Iroquois was studied by the US Founding Fathers and much of what is found in the US Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and especially the doctrine of the 'separation of powers', derives from them. Some also contend that the idea of popular participation was borrowed from the Haudenosaunee constitution or 'Great Law of Peace'.[14]

Nonetheless, the consideration of non-European societies, even among those thinkers with 'ethnological imagination', was principally fodder for a more parochial European reflection upon the character of the universal unfolding of history and the means by which deviations from it could be understood. Much of Enlightenment thought was too removed from the actual centres of power and too abstract to make a difference to how indigenous peoples were actually treated in the colonial territories. The *philosophes*, romantics and transcendentalists, while making an imprint in their own cultures in France or the US, were impotent to alter the steady imposition of a less subtle view of the world, a view that guaranteed the continuous usurpation of indigenous lands by colonists who believed firmly in their own rectitude. At the height of the Great Land Rush, these more speculative engagements with non-Europeans were secondary to the serious and practical business of applying European ideas and achievements in the New World. The actual agents of colonisation carried forward a narrower focus on progress, which itself was defined in singular terms. The actual methods that were used to transform North America into a neo-Europe were largely oblivious to what was vital for a just dialogue – indigenous concepts of land and conflict resolution. Rather, the principles and laws of colonisers were made to service the goal of colonisation itself. Ultimately, as John Berger remarked, 'the principle of historical progress insisted that the elimination of all other views of history save its own was part of that progress'.[15] In the remainder of this chapter, I will outline the ideas around which the scaffolding of imposed change was built – race, cultural evolution, civilisation, economic man, private property ownership and *terra nullius*.

12 For a review of such contributions, see Calloway, *New Worlds for All*, pp. 188–91.
13 Bailey, *The Conflict of European and Eastern Algonkian Cultures 1504–1700*, p. 25.
14 Johansen, *Forgotten Founders*, p. xiv.
15 Berger and Mohr, *Another Way of Telling*, p. 107.

Race and cultural evolution

If there is a universal pattern to social change and a mandate to achieve various kinds of goals defined as progress, it follows that there ought to be a suitable political and legal framework which will enable a particular unfolding of history. Many of the laws and concepts of rights that have been implemented in colonial contexts are fashioned to this unfolding. For the most part, colonisers accorded native peoples some rights, but these were derived almost entirely from their own legal concepts and situated under their own self-asserted sovereignty, a condition that obtains to this day, and which James Tully especially identified as the unjust dialogue.[16] Consequently, the rights to which indigenous peoples have been (and are) entitled are not the outcome of any kind of dialogue or intercultural understanding, but conferred by states who claim a preexisting sovereignty. Decisions over *how* rights between different groups of people are to be apportioned have never been subject to equal or meaningful negotiation, and few have made any headway in formulating what such a dialogue would look like.[17]

In the absence of much understanding of what Standing Bear called 'the world you do not know', racial ideas seeped into the vacuum during the Great Land Rush. The assumption by members of the colonising society that indigenous peoples had little of significant worth to contribute accounted for the absence of open discussions over the crucial legal and political relationships between the two peoples. As in Thomas McCarthy's summary, the 'general pattern' of European thought towards non-Europeans from the Enlightenment to the 19th century, was 'as barbarous or uncivilized, as not possessed of fully developed rational capacities and incapable of fully rational agency, and hence were declared to be in need of tutelage, not only for the good of those who commanded them but also for their own good, for the full development of their capacities.'[18]

These characterisations were necessary sources of legitimation during high points of colonial appropriation. Law operated in concert with racial thought and even incorporated it into its codes. The colonisation of Australia and Africa proceeded, with land rights defined almost entirely as accruing only to those deemed civilised or possessing an 'organised society'. Civilisation became a prerequisite for the recognition of land rights, affirmed by the British Privy Council in the 1919 *In re Southern Rhodesia* decision, which was used as 'the leading precedent with respect to tests for Aboriginal title' in Canada until

16 Tully, *Strange Multiplicity*, p. 55. See also, for example, Pagden, *Lords of all the World*; and Keal, *European Conquest and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

17 The 2007 United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples might have helped in this direction, but it remains aspirational and non-binding on states.

18 McCarthy, *Race, Empire and the Idea of Human Development*, p. 27.

the 1990s.[19] Similarly, after the 1885 Berlin conference and the subsequent 'scramble for Africa', European governments 'regarded sub-Saharan Africa as an immense *terra nullius* available for the first occupier', as Judge Amoun put it during the 1975 Western Sahara decolonisation case in the International Court of Justice.[20]

When the Land Rush was at its height during the carving up of Africa and the North American westward expansion, European and North American intellectuals and politicians advanced the concept of a universal historical pattern conforming to the actions already undertaken by the colonial states. This brought together seemingly conflicting schools of thought including Utilitarian Liberalism, Marxism and Social Darwinism, which all focused on the problem of social change. The various societal features identified with the Enlightenment, including organised religion, science, law, representative government, mechanised farming, industry, engineered technologies and capitalism were brought forth as evidence of *universal* human progress. The equation of European thought and history with human progress itself permeated discussions of the problems arising from colonial expansion and settlement, including the dilemmas of slavery and the disposal of indigenous peoples occupying coveted lands. While both slavery and the killing of indigenous people were often seen as inconsistent with Enlightenment values, such as those inscribed in the American constitution, they did not call a halt to either, and this was in large part because of firm beliefs about inherent racial differences.

In this 19th-century climate, part of the task of the emerging social sciences was to relate the non-European societies to the ongoing movement or, as it came to be conceived, 'evolution' of human societies. As Robert Nisbet argued, 'it is a short step from the eighteenth-century idea of progress and theory of natural history to nineteenth-century perspectives of social evolution.'[21] Distinctions between barbarism and civilisation suffused the writings of a number of thinkers producing tracts during these times. Fundamental and long-term changes in the organisation of societies, such as the shift from hunter-gathering to agriculture and then in the 18th century from agriculture to industry, became generalised measures of universal progress. Even though this sequence had not occurred throughout humanity, and when it did was often the result of violence and compulsion, prominent 19th-century thinkers, such as Friedrich

19 See Bell and Asch, 'Challenging assumptions', in Asch, *Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada*, pp. 38–75, 59.

20 Quoted by B.O. Okere, 'The Western Sahara case', pp. 296–312, p. 306. This case struck out the use of *terra nullius* in international law and put the legitimacy of other processes into question, by which indigenous peoples lands were simply confiscated or handed over from one coloniser to another. In this case, the Sahrawi lands passed from Spain to Morocco at the time of decolonisation.

21 Robert Nisbet, *Social Change and History*, p. 160.

Hegel, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Lewis Henry Morgan, Sir Henry Maine and E.B. Tylor, all made these changing modes of economic organisation central to sweeping conceptions of society in which history was made to have a specific goal and direction. Others such as John Stuart Mill and his friend Auguste Comte elaborated particular qualities of civilisation that were extracted from their own societies, and these served as contrasts to other societies that were placed either outside civilisation or on a lower gradient of it.[22] The more mundane expressions of these narratives were part of what indigenous peoples like Luther Standing Bear found themselves in contention with.

'Civilisation' came to be invested with manifold refinements, covering as many facets of society as possible. The early social scientists, for example, considered socio-economic systems to have more and less differentiated forms of social organisation; the less differentiated were said to characterise 'simple' societies with 'rudimentary' social divisions. The more 'complex' social structure was seen as largely unique to European and other 'advanced' societies. The progress of all societies from 'barbarous tribes' to 'civilised nations' was shown in 'the change from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous', as Herbert Spencer put it.[23] The more narrow Social Darwinist theory that emerged from these patterns of thought 'was the wellspring of a continual supply of metaphors used to represent certain social relations and processes either as "natural" – and thus beyond our power to change – or as "unnatural" – and thus to be avoided or eliminated.'[24]

In 1871, Darwin provided scientific authority for such beliefs in *The Descent of Man*, a book that reduced human societies to natural phenomena by speculating on the innate bases of human cultures and social relations. It drew freely on social scientists such as Maine, Tylor, Morgan and 'our great philosopher', the civil engineer turned sociologist, Herbert Spencer. By the time of its publication, many aboriginal peoples in the Americas had either succumbed to extinction or, like the Fuegians at the tip of South America, seen by Darwin when on the *Beagle* expedition, were rapidly dying due to settler diseases and violent displacement. Even though Darwin himself was appalled by the violence of the South American ranchers and soldiers against the Fuegians, his warnings about extinction conveyed a sense of inevitability. Supported by an extrapolation of the theory of natural selection to his own and others' observations of 'savage races', he argued:

> At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world. At the same time the

22 Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*, pp. 139–41.
23 Spencer, *Essays on Education Etc.*, p. 161.
24 McCarthy, *Race, Empire and the Idea of Human Development*, p. 76.

> anthropomorphous apes, as Professor Schaaffhausen [a 19th-century German craniologist] has remarked, will no doubt be exterminated. The break between man and his nearest allies will then be wider, for it will intervene between man in a more civilised state, as we may hope, even than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as now between the negro or Australian and the gorilla.[25]

The evolutionary hypothesis was borrowed from Charles Lyell's 1837 work, *Principles of Geology*, which according to Ernst Mayr was a 'Bible' for Darwin's understanding of evolution. Lyell had postulated that species can become extinct not simply due to environmental changes, but through competition from better-adapted species.[26] This idea easily extended itself into a conception of colonial relations as a struggle between better- and less-adapted peoples, with extinction as a distinct and natural outcome. Hence, imperial ventures were made out to be expressions of the natural workings of history by many of Darwin's followers. As such, Social Darwinists further supported a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby indigenous peoples diminished, assimilated or disappeared altogether.[27] As colonisers consciously transformed indigenous peoples, the various changes to them were taken to be proof of the evolutionary model itself, and this included both physical extinction and alterations so drastic as to make the indigenous group cease to be distinct peoples.[28]

Darwin's ideas from *Descent* underpinned a firm body of intellectual and political opinion that galvanised support for the extension of European empires and nation-building. The naturalisation of certain social and political conditions was expressed vividly in Spencer's words, 'the law of organic progress is the law of all progress',[29] but gained adherents through imputing a hierarchical human nature to 'survival of the fittest'. Taken as a slogan, it suggested that any sufferings experienced by indigenous or other dominated populations in encounters with Europeans were natural. However, literal 'survival of the fittest' was not Spencer's exact view, for he believed that too much of English colonialism had been achieved by the sword and was marred by 'atrocities that disgrace civilization'.[30] The reason for this was the intervention of the state. Conducting colonial affairs through armies and force of weaponry had frequently become

25 Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, p. 521.

26 Mayer, *The Growth of Biological Thought*, p. 406.

27 See, for example, Barta, 'Mr Darwin's shooters', pp. 116–37.

28 It is important to remember that cultural evolutionism was not just a theory, but a call to action. Right up to the end, it dignified the civilising mission by which British occupation of large swathes of the globe was united and appears in the rhetoric of manifest destiny under which generations of European settlers swept across North America. See Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*, p. 5; Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*; Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings*.

29 Quoted in Nisbet, *Social Change and History*, p. 124.

30 Spencer, *Social Statics*, p. 369.

a bloodbath. If the lone settler or magnate – Spencer provided the example of the Quaker William Penn, who he maintained conducted business with Native North Americans in good faith – acting in pure economic self-interest had been the colonising force, colonialism would have been more peacably affected and civilisation would have triumphed. Here, Spencer anticipated the spread of neoliberal transformations of indigenous peoples and their lands.

Of course, many of the early social scientists did not generally endorse business crusades or Social Darwinism, and indeed many were critics of the dehumanising and destabilising aspects of colonial society. While some questioned the means employed in European expansion, none seriously disputed the idea of a universal historical path. In comparison, some of Darwin's followers were clearer about why global homogenisation was desirable. By applying the principles of natural selection, Social Darwinists argued that the weeding out of the physically and mentally 'unfit' was an inevitable historical process. Spencer, for example, made comparisons between civilised and uncivilised peoples a basis for illustrating 'social progress' in his *The Principles of Sociology*. In it, he charted the 'social metamorphoses', using examples of different human groups from one stage of development to the next. Consequently, the movement from nomadic to sedentary life was one such transition, but this shift could be impeded. Among certain 'uncivilised tribes' there was 'little tendency to change their social activities and structures under changed circumstances, but [they] die out rather than adapt'.[31] These beliefs easily became a comfort to powerful and wealthy people looking for an explanation of inequality within and across societies. Taking advantage of American sponsorship and lecture tours, Spencer was a great influence, structuring the thought of two generations of American social scientists, and numbering among his admirers the magnate Andrew Carnegie.[32]

Having taken over from travel writing, explorers' reports and tales of conquerors, anthropology gave more texture and depth to these ideas. Anthropologists produced what were seen as perhaps the most realistic representations of non-European peoples. In ethnography, anthropology purported to employ a professional and scientific method, through which it established a certain intellectual authority. By showing Europeans what they were not, some anthropology during the Great Land Rush served as a mirror for Western humanity. The early anthropologists were cultural evolutionists and argued in a similar vein to Spencer, conceptualising human culture as evolving through various stages culminating in what they perceived in their own 'modern' societies. Importantly, unlike Darwin's theory of biological evolution, which permitted multifarious variations in a population's evolution

31 Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*, p. 577.

32 Stocking, *Race, Culture and Evolution*, p. 117; and White, 'Andrew Carnegie and Herbert Spencer', pp. 57–71.

including fortuitous mutations, cultural evolutionist theory conceived of uniform cultural change towards one end.[33] Such ideas were formulated through undertaking research on non-European peoples while the research subjects were under colonial control.[34] By the early 20th century, a consistent line of reasoning had formed. The idea of progress was fortified by emerging social science and both helped shape a message already playing itself out on the frontiers – many of the world's indigenous peoples were on a knife-edge between civilisation and extinction. The settler state politicians and decision-makers were going to have to confront this reality.

Civilisation and extinction

While being articulate patriots, numerous men in politics and intellectual life in the early years of the American Republic, including Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln, held firm convictions about the inferiority of non-Europeans. Thomas Jefferson, often classified as an Enlightenment thinker, was a rational and scientific analyst of the American landscape. In his only book, *Notes on the State of Virginia* published in 1787, he included detailed comments on flora, fauna, geology, zoology, topography and people, including an extensive discussion of native peoples, and Africans, scores of the latter being in his possession as slaves. Jefferson noted that although Native Americans had only very loose structures of government and no written laws, they constituted a well-ordered society and 'crimes are very rare among them.'[35] He added that contact with Europeans had had a devastating effect on their ways of life, especially due to Euro-American settlement. Among the effects Jefferson mentioned were epidemics of infectious disease such as smallpox, and alcohol abuse. In his chronicles, the gradual disintegration of indigenous societies had regrettably coincided with the rise of the American nation, a process hastened by the loss of languages,

33 Nisbet, *Social Change and History*, pp. 161–5.

34 An extreme example was A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, whose refinement of the 'genealogical method' in the early 20th century was employed while his Aborigine subjects were under brutal police detention on islands hundreds of miles from their homelands. Detained in Lock Hospitals, they were forcibly quarantined and separated from their people for no apparent reason other than settlers considered them to be 'unhygienic'. Radcliffe-Brown's published books and reports never mentioned the conditions on the islands or how he obtained his data and he was honoured as Australia's first professor of anthropology. See Lindqvist, *Terra Nullius*, pp. 112–16. Aborigines were hunted down and taken in chains to the Bernier and Dorre islands, where many died; so many, in fact, that in 1910 a bone crusher was ordered to 'utilize all available organic matter for the object of improving the nutritive value of the soil'. Quoted in Saggers and Gray, *Aboriginal Health and Society*, p. 84.

35 Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, p. 134.

and for some groups the physical extinction of all their members whom settlers had moved from their lands.

These observations did not prevent Jefferson's defence of settlers in claiming that the land was taken fairly and arguing that many settlers had 'proofs of purchase' from several 'voluntary sales'.[36] To support these justifications, Jefferson compared the Virginia natives' level of civilisation to that of Europeans, disparaging indigenous arts and crafts, and emphasising that they had no great buildings or monuments.[37] Meanwhile, he did nothing to impede the destructive activities of the settlers and his Louisiana Purchase and subsequent commissioning of the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1804 vastly extended Euro-American settlement. In fact, Jefferson's messianic vision of an agricultural civilisation required ever more land for the hardy farmers he believed would comprise the backbone of democratic citizenry. Civilisation or extinction was the stark description given to this in 1816 by one of the foremost advocates of Western expansion and Jefferson devotee, Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton. These were the only choices for Native Americans as the frontier beckoned hungry and ambitious settlers.[38]

In the heady days of North America's Great Land Rush, others predicted the kind of inevitable physical extinction that would later have made sense to Charles Darwin. Observing the westward movements of Euro-Americans in the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville warned, 'the Indian nations of North America are doomed to perish, and that whenever the Europeans shall be established on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, that race of man shall have ceased to exist.'[39] Under the banner of Manifest Destiny, North America was to become the inheritance of Europeans. Until the end of the 19th century, there was little calculation as to whether civilisation or extinction would be the preferred means of achieving this because Native Americans were not a meaningful part of the plans for the new society to be created on their lands. Hence, in the initial phases of westward migration, US authorities were often reluctant to intervene to prevent settlers' killing Native Americans, assuming that in the short term most indigenous peoples would simply move out of the way.

The complex dialogue between civilisation and extinction that Senator Benton articulated in the Jacksonian era grew louder as the 19th century proceeded. Tocqueville traced its trajectory in the 1830s, as he ventured further west into Michigan. Meeting with Chippewa people, he viewed the beginnings of the dispossession of these groups with some horror. His notes

36 Ibid., pp. 135–6.

37 Ibid., p. 138.

38 See Rogin, *Fathers and Children*, p. 210. On Senator Benton, see also Smith, *Virgin Land*, pp. 22–33.

39 Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, p. 345. However, close reading of Tocqueville indicates that he also believed that Indians could become 'civilized' as some Euro-Americans urged, but this would only lead to a different kind of extinction.

were full of praise for the perceptiveness, agility and physical characteristics of Native Americans. He commented on their 'natural intelligence', with quotes from their oratory, and observed that they had 'as much natural genius as the peoples of Europe.'[40] Tocqueville continually referred to the 'pride' of the indigenes and their resistance to European civilisation. Native Americans, he observed, were never convinced of the superiority of the settler. In fact, the closer they came to settlers, he noted, the more downgraded, destitute and pathetic they became, arguing that 'European tyranny made them less orderly and civilized than they were before'.[41] Tocqueville thought that the Anglo-American methods of establishing a democratic society, at least in regard to the Native Americans, were crude and sometimes counter-productive. Despite the heavy-handed approach, Tocqueville saw nothing that would slow the ascendancy of what he called American democracy or indeed pose any significant contradiction to it. Native Americans, along with African-American slaves, as I noted in the preface, were placed outside the modern society that settlers were founding – they were 'American' without being part of the democracy.[42]

While travelling through 'the place the Europeans call Memphis', Tocqueville was a melancholy witness to the literal removal of Native Americans from American democracy when he saw the military winter removal of southeastern peoples across the Mississippi in the infamous 'Trail of Tears'.[43] Tocqueville saw unhappy denizens of a parallel America being goaded across the icy river to make room for farmers, miners and fortune seekers. 'An absolute and immense democracy', he told readers, 'is not all we find in America'.[44] African slaves and Native Americans were connected to democracy without forming part of it; they were American without being democratic. This is as close as Tocqueville came to an admission of something horribly inconsistent between the self-perceptions that form the basis of the narrative of progress and the treatment of non-Europeans. The leading American role within the march of civilisation remained intact only by introducing an auxiliary society in which the morality of slavery, mass killings and dispossession are separated from the idea of the US as the preeminent exponent of progress. In this view, the imposition of 'civilisation' is imagined to have such a momentum and to be so overwhelmingly beneficial that the dispossession and even physical destruction of indigenous peoples is likewise imagined as inevitable and unstoppable.

40 Ibid., p. 363.
41 Ibid., p. 346.
42 This is articulated in the final chapter of *Democracy in America* vol. 1, entitled 'Some considerations on the present state and the probable future of the three races that inhabit the territory of the United States'.
43 Ibid., pp. 351–2.
44 Ibid., p. 344.

By the end of the 19th century, and after wars, massacres and long marches of relocation – the Trail of Tears was but one – policy shifted from pushing indigenous peoples out into Tocqueville's shadow society to assimilating them via boarding schools and confinement to reservations.[45] Schools, reservations and later wage labour schemes were represented as humanitarian attempts to deal with some of the effects of displacement. Textbooks in US boarding schools stressed the values of liberty, freedom and Godliness which were said to typify the founding of the US. They also justified the project of schooling to themselves and to their Native American students as one necessary for expedited cultural evolution. Indeed, these institutions were crucial to the social transformations Euro-Americans thought crucial for bringing progress to indigenous peoples.[46] As well as teaching Euro-American values, the English language, trades, science and Christianity, one of the most important pedagogies was the teaching of rational and individualistic economic values. This endeavour was rooted in assumptions about human nature shared by 19th- and 20th-century European thinkers.

Economic Man

One of the most important creeds of the Great Land Rush, and echoed in Walter Rockwood's sentiments almost a century later, was that economic wellbeing could only be achieved in one way and that the colonial powers and settlers were harbingers of it. Indeed, measurable increases in material wellbeing were construed to be a major determinant of progress, and this remains the case today with neoliberalism.[47] Like many other dimensions of the idea of progress, the economic is generally regarded as being singular, quantifiable and capable of development and evolution. The model of the liberal market economy, with the associated conception of Economic Man or *homo oeconomicus* as the normal, rational person, has come to dominate how all quests for human sustenance and wealth are understood, measured, and importantly, imposed. Again, it is important to outline the architecture of this idea, since it contains the determinism needed to justify the transformation of indigenous peoples in settler societies.

45 Much of this was achieved in a similar fashion to Federal treaties, that is, by articulating the policy in the English language and US conceptual frameworks only, ensuring that Native Americans were not fully aware of what they were committing to or of the terms by which they were bound. The task of explaining often fell to the Indian Agent; for example, some years after their return from being forcibly relocated in 1864 to Bosque Redondo, 450 miles from their lands, Navajos complained that the Indian Agent used 'threats and coercion to make us sign numerous papers of which we have no knowledge whatsoever'. Quoted in Bailey and Bailey, *A History of the Navajos*, p. 32.

46 Adams, *Education for Extinction*, pp. 146–8.

47 See Gagnier, 'Neoliberalism and the political theory of the market'.

The economic transformation of North America can be traced to the Puritanism of the 17th-century English colonists of North America. The Puritans saw the new lands as the foundation for Christian communities, based upon agricultural production and wealth creation, and in order to achieve this, they believed that hard, dedicated labour was required. In Reformation Protestantism, hard work was associated with individual virtue, prosperity and other-worldly rewards. According to Max Weber's well-known thesis on the 'Protestant work ethic', the development of capitalism required the emergence of a very specific spirit of enterprise associated with prudent and thrifty personal behaviour. [48] The cultivation of these traits derived from Reformation Christian beliefs the Puritans carried with them to North America. Puritans embraced the Calvinist doctrine of predestination based on a heavenly covenant between humans and God. Predestination held that God, being omniscient, had chosen which individuals among the Christian flock would be among 'The Elect' with passage guaranteed to heaven. A person could never know whether they were among 'The Elect', but certain outward signs such as self-assurance, lack of doubt or stoic refusal of sinful temptation, including frivolity, might indicate a heavenward path. This would be a 'calling' in the theology of Martin Luther.

While there are ongoing disputes about the interpretation of Weber's thesis,[49] its broad contours help explain how the Puritans created a social and economic system in North America almost entirely separate from that of their indigenous hosts.[50] Being insulated from rival doctrines and distant from the English Crown, the Puritans were relatively free to build a theocracy based on their values. According to Weber, Puritan ideals of sobriety, rationality and labour were conducive to the emergence of capitalism, which is based on the production of commercial goods, profits and reinvestment. The Puritan ideals were a direct outgrowth of the worldly focus given to Christianity by John Calvin in particular, who, on the basis of the Old Testament scriptures, urged Christians to make civil government an extension of God's will. Hence, 'all laws are preposterous which neglect the claims of God and merely provide for the interests of man'.[51] The imposition of God's will through wars and violence were as legitimate for Christians in Calvin's day as for Moses, 'when he punished the idolatry of the people by the slaughter of three thousand men in one day'.[52] While legitimating political violence to enforce Old Testament principles of righteousness, this theology also provided criteria to distinguish the Puritans from the indigenous peoples of New England, who many regarded as improvidently wasting God's abundant nature. While there were strictures

48 Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.
49 See for example, Zaret, 'Calvin, covenant theology, and the Weber thesis'.
50 Simmons, 'Cultural bias in the New England Puritans' perception of Indians'.
51 Calvin, *On God and Political Duty*, p. 54.
52 Ibid., p. 58.

against what Puritans called 'covetousness', if 'God helps he who helps himself', then people who were able to accumulate surpluses through labour, trade and fruitful usages of the land were model parishioners, possibly ending up with celestial rewards.

As capitalism developed in the 19th century and spread during the Great Land Rush, the cultivation of desires for acquisition and possession became rewarded with economic surpluses. Surplus then became a basis for wealth when converted into money, the universal medium of exchange. In contrast to previous economic systems in Europe and indigenous economies, capitalism required wealth to be defined entirely in material terms, rendered into standardised and measurable amounts through money, but also, as Pierre Bourdieu has identified, in the form of social and cultural capital which can be converted into economic wealth.[53] As it moved further from its Puritan origins, capitalism encouraged the storing, collecting and display of possessions, money and social and cultural capital as markers of prestige and status. It is no accident that the values associated with these practices are almost identical to those that brought settlers to North America, and which became associated with the American Dream and, by extension, with the continual search for new sources of enrichment.

Once the explicitly Christian rationale to behave in this way was removed, the path was clear for a more scientific sanctification of self-interested behaviour. Indeed, Adam Smith would attribute the rapid accumulation of wealth in the American colonies to agriculture in 'virgin territory',[54] making economic wellbeing a secular matter of individual enterprise, rather than a religious calling. While it was one thing to assert self-interest as an important factor in economic growth, it would be quite another step to proclaim enterprise (or 'egoism') universal, and to make this the basis for all social and economic progress. But this is precisely what the Utilitarian thinkers argued, thus providing the theoretical scaffolding for British political economy and the expansion of capitalism. Although the American colonies were eventually lost, these influential thinkers wrote their treatises as British sea power was enabling profit-seeking swashbuckling in India and Africa. Their views have formed the basis of the ideology of global capitalism which has aimed to convert everyone – even former colonial subjects – to a version of Economic Man.

Self-interest expressed itself in various ways in the works of Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Malthus and later 19th-century thinkers such as Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer. Utilitarians saw social harmony emerging out of the qualities with which they invested human nature. Although people have kind and empathic traits, they believed (following Thomas Hobbes) that humans were universally egoistic. If allowed unencumbered

53 See Bourdieu, 'The forms of capital', p. 98.

54 Caton, 'The preindustrial economics of Adam Smith', pp. 833–53.

expression, they argued, self-interest would lead in the majority of cases to a 'natural identity of interests'. Intervention by government should only occur when a natural identity of interests was not apparent. Jeremy Bentham, following the Newtonian method, even believed that a moral arithmetic could be devised to calculate degrees of social harmony. His felicific calculus or 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number' advanced the idea that all private interests could be added up to discern the public interest. This became an important and long-standing principle of social regulation.[55] Adam Smith also developed a natural harmony thesis of the economy. If left unfettered by the state, wages would become proportional to labour and supply to demand as long as there was a differentiated division of labour. This was all guaranteed by investing human nature with a specific character. Smith and other Utilitarians believed that people would normally act according to their own best economic interests to maximise material benefit and reduce loss. Although some will not benefit by this conduct, most will.

Here we see the birth of *homo oeconomicus* as a model of normal human psychology, upon which liberal and later neoliberal economic policy would constantly depend. As a theory, its appeal lay in a simple tautology. The personal traits necessary for people to embrace capitalism were placed in the deeper realms of human nature, meaning that capitalism thrives because people are at root capitalists. The attribution of capitalist traits to capitalist people, of course, explains nothing. However, the tautology has a deeper ideological function. By invoking underlying primordial forces of human nature, thinkers and later politicians make particular social arrangements natural rather than part of the complex array of human exertions of power. Critically, in order to support this particular tautology, human history had to be reframed as a gradual development of the capacities and expressions of individual economic self-interest. This, of course, ignored the numerous societies, indigenous North Americans prominent among them, which organised themselves along more cooperative lines. As Karl Polanyi said of Economic Man, 'no misreading of the past ever proved so prophetic of the future'.[56] *Homo oeconomicus* in effect meant that those who did not conform to the criteria construed to be normal by, for example, being unable to meet their own basic needs in the market, were either in need of help or deviants. By becoming burdens on others, they were holding back the rest of society and unbalancing the natural identity of interests. In 19th-century Britain and the US, such deviants were thought to have flaws requiring correction, punishment or in some cases banishment, as was the case for British and Irish criminals and vagrants who were transported to plantations in Australia and the Caribbean.

55 Halévy, *The Growth of Philosophical Radicalism*, p. 29.
56 Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 43.

Inspired by the likes of Thomas Malthus and Charles Darwin in England, the sociologist, William Graham Sumner, and magnates such as Andrew Carnegie in the US and Herbert Spencer in both countries, numerous reformers would situate human inequalities more firmly within nature, urging restraint from any centralised social assistance. It was thought that intervention would upset the natural balance in society, established by the workings of human nature itself within the market system. Summarising Malthus, Halévy said, 'the methods nature uses to reduce the race of plants and the race of animals to the desired proportions are lack of seed, illness and premature death. To restrict the human race it uses poverty and vice'.[57] This reading of society was as influential in the US as in Britain, providing a scientific justification for the belief that poverty was simply the punishment of the improvident and unscrupulous for their lack of industry and morality.[58] Carried further, it implied that early death, disease and malnutrition arise because natural inequalities between people dictate unequal access to food and other basic necessities. Such necessities, as Polanyi pointed out, become scarce because access to them is guaranteed only by capital or money. To attempt to rebalance what was seen as the natural state of affairs was tantamount to encouraging vice, frailty and weakness, thus helping the wealthy and powerful downplay the human suffering that occurred in the course of industrial expansion in Britain, imperial adventures abroad and the wholesale transformation of North America into settler societies.

At a basic level, the capitalist market economy works by transforming objects that might be – and indeed were throughout most of human history – used for sharing, exchange or barter into objects for gain through buying, selling and the accumulation of capital from the profits of sales. Things that people make or do for others become monetarily quantifiable commodities, and as Marx famously argued, capitalism also transforms 'free labour' in the person of the worker into an object to be bought and sold. Employers have few responsibilities to labourers beyond the wage itself, and have every interest in enlarging their profit by keeping wages to a minimum and finding means to continuously prod workers to produce as much as possible. This often did not take a great deal of effort, especially in places such as the US where the Protestant work ethic flourished. The pursuit of profit as an end in itself became a powerful source of motivation for those who own capital, leading to both the use of compulsion on domestic workers, and the extension of the market across the globe through networks of political and economic institutions. 'Such an institutional pattern', Polanyi argued, 'could not function unless society was somehow subordinated to its requirements. A market economy can only exist in a market society'.[59] Under this logic, coexistence between more communal

57 Halévy, *The Growth of Philosophical Radicalism*, p. 237.
58 Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, p. 88.
59 Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 71.

non-capitalist indigenous societies and the market society of settlers became almost impossible.

Just as the market creates the social arrangements necessary for its perpetuation, it also transforms the physical landscape. The commodities are generated from raw materials extracted from nature. These are often sold 'raw', such as 'timber' from felled trees which is then fashioned into manufactured goods and sold on further, accumulating profits at each stage. In order for this accumulation of capital to maintain itself, the market requires nature to be readily available and for society to be oriented around production and consumption. These practices were necessary for capitalism to expand and incorporated into the more materialistic social values that capitalism fostered. But, they were also made possible by scientific conceptions of nature as a material entity and the parallel demise of transcendent meanings of nature in Christianity.[60] As Peter Harrison explained:

> The evacuation of meaning from the world of nature opened it up not merely to scientific explanation but to material exploitation. When, on account of new interpretive practices, nature ceased to act as a mirror of transcendental truths and a book of moral lessons, its value was reduced to its material utility. That the book of nature is no longer so much read as exploited is thus an indirect consequence of the changed reading practices of the modern age. The apparent indifference of science to the fortunes of the natural world should come as no great surprise. What is sometimes perceived as the moral neutrality, or more pejoratively, the moral bankruptcy of the sciences, is one of the consequences of the fact that nature can no longer be read in tandem with scripture, and that the manifold meanings of the creatures have now become obscure. The silence of nature is thus the precondition for its exploitation.[61]

Indeed, the philosophy of the liberal market economy made nature silent and cleared the path for its continuous plunder. Lax regulations by governments and collusive alliances between state and business personnel have guaranteed that exploitation has not been framed as plunder, but as benign activity that supports human wellbeing. But ultimately, as Polanyi suggested, all this is crucially dependent upon machinery and industrial technology which, 'disjoints man's relationships and threatens his natural habitat with annihilation'.[62]

Improvement of the soil

A factor contributing both to this disjointed relationship with nature and the success of colonists in the Great Land Rush and beyond was the entitlement to

60 See also Bill McKibben's excellent discussion of how the Bible can be read as urging Christians to understand that all nature is not ours to subdue, and to live as stewards of nature in *The End of Nature*, pp. 69–75.

61 Harrison, 'Fixing the meaning of scripture: the Renaissance Bible and the origins of modernity'.

62 Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 42.

hold absolute and exclusive land ownership. The advent of legal individualised ownership of land spurred the constant movements of Europeans in search of new opportunities. Colonising powers invalidated common lands wherever they appeared and started to duplicate the effects of the enclosure movement occurring in parts of England between 1760 and 1820, and later in Wales and Scotland. The parallel clearances of indigenous peoples took many forms, varied from place to place and often relied on purely convenient justifications. Nonetheless, the principles invoked for land ownership shared the same determinism and obliviousness to indigenous knowledge as the ideas of social evolution, race, Economic Man and progress itself.

The philosophical and legal bases of possession relied on certain semantic connections between the rightful or Christian use of the land and its private (or in some cases, state) ownership. Backed by the Crown, the Virginia colonists under Sir Walter Raleigh and the New England Puritan flock saw indigenous peoples' land as *vacuum domicilium* or unused and wasted land.[63] According to John Winthrop, the first Governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, indigenous peoples only had a 'natural right' to, but not ownership of, such lands. This was because 'they enclose no Land, neither do they have any settled habytation, nor any tame Cattle to improve the land by and soe have noe other than a Naturall Right to those Countries.'[64] The English, on the other hand did, in their own estimation, improve the soil by farming it. Consequently, they believed that they had the right to cordon it off as private property because farming was a way of fulfilling God's mandates to use the land wisely in support of Christian populations. By comparison, the 'savages' merely wasted the land and this was itself a gross violation of God's instructions. By wasting the land, the Indians could claim no rights to it. This point was made succinctly in John Cotton's sermon of 1630, 'God's promise to His plantations'. Quoting from the scriptures, and never once mentioning the local native peoples in the entire sermon, Cotton told his congregation:

> in a vacant soil, he that taketh possession of it, and bestoweth culture and husbandry upon it, his right it is. And the ground of this is, from the grand charter given to Adam and his posterity in Paradise, Gen. 1:28: 'multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it'.[65]

By dint of assertions like this from the 'foremost scholar and official apologist for the New England way',[66] English farmers were perfectly within their rights to simply take over territories used by indigenous peoples, who were deemed to be merely hunting on a 'void' or 'vacant soil'. While hunting was for the English an elevated pursuit of the aristocracy, attaching itself to immense preserves for

63 Seed, *American Pentimento*, p. 38.
64 Quoted by William Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, p. 56.
65 Cotton, 'God's promise to His plantations', p. 66.
66 Miller, *The New England Mind*, p. 3.

the monarch and other elites, Cotton saw it as something different in New England. Native Americans hunted for subsistence and not out of nobility, and therefore did not need land ownership, which was reserved for Puritan leaders.[67] While they had to be mindful of 'covetousness', 17th-century English colonists believed that there were few moral or legal obstacles to taking absolute possession of indigenous lands.

This perception of the New World as consisting of 'waste' or 'wasted' land has earlier origins in, for example, Roman Law and Thomas More's *Utopia*,[68] but this view gained more immediate and secular support from the 17th-century English philosopher John Locke. Some of Locke's statements in 'On Property' in the *Second Treatise on Government* (1689) are similar in tone and assumptions to the Puritan sermons some half a century earlier. Like his Puritan predecessors, Locke declared 'improvement of the soil' with labour the basis for a right to private property. The English colonists, he believed, were entitled to possess land as long as they built fences and cultivated the soil. Crucially, the prior occupancy of indigenous peoples was no guarantee of any rights to land, an assumption that became embedded in the assertions of state sovereignty, the treaty system, and, as we shall see in chapter 3, in the contemporary practice of extinguishment in Canadian land claims.

Even though he did not visit the American colonies and was unaware of the wide variations in indigenous relationships to the land, Locke conceived of all Native Americans as hunters who therefore had rights only to the animals they killed.[69] As Bhikhu Parekh noted, 'Locke never asked if the Indian way of life might not represent a different view of human flourishing and contain elements missing in his own and from which he might learn'.[70] Locke was simply extrapolating from customary English rules for extra-legal use of lands as practised for rights of way and perambulations, and saw Native Americans as possessing something similar to the *Vulgaris Consuetudines* of the English poor.[71] In the North American context, Locke legitimated English claims to ownership of land, relegating the indigenous inhabitants to possession of usufruct rights only. In practice, however, even when the native peoples were farmers, adopted English methods of cultivation and husbandry and converted to Christianity, they were not granted ownership rights. The sacred principles and philosophical rationale were little more than pretexts for according property

67 Seed, *American Pentimento*, pp. 52–3.

68 See Pagden, *Lords of All The World*, p. 76; Seed, *American Pentimento*, pp. 31–40.

69 Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. Arriving at the same outcome through slightly different reasoning, but emphasising the civilising effects of agriculture, the Japanese colonists of the Ainu island of Hokkaido would also stipulate that indigenous peoples had use rather than ownership of the land. See Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan*, p. 66.

70 Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, p. 39.

71 Thompson, *Customs in Common*, p. 97.

rights only to those of European (especially English) descent. By the time of the American westward expansion, Thomas Jefferson would vigorously defend Sir Walter Raleigh's original colonisation of the lands of Virginia by citing the Lockean principle of 'improvement of the land' for English settlement.[72] To this, Jefferson echoed the Puritans' divine justification, 'Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God'.[73] The squatter's charter Locke articulated in his famous 'On Property' or variants on it, were taken literally and applied as justifications for land confiscation across North America and in other English colonies, regardless of what kind of relationship native peoples had with their lands.[74]

However, in the emerging market societies of Europe, as in the colonies, a sovereign was needed to enforce these convenient rules for ascertaining private property. If the land upon which a native hunting or semi-sedentary agricultural society was to be appropriated legitimately, rather than stolen, the indigenous peoples themselves needed to be bound by the same sovereign enforcing the same principles of law. There 'is an especially pressing need, requiring a strong sovereign power', C.B. MacPherson wrote, 'when a possessive market society is replacing a customary society, for then customary rights have to be extinguished in favour of contractual rights'.[75] In turn, contractual rights guarantee the sanctity of private property, which much of English Common Law has as its primary purpose of protecting.[76] This meant that somehow the rule of the sovereign had to be asserted, but at the same time hidden from indigenous peoples to prevent them thinking that the early negotiations with colonists were mere preludes to robbery. As a result, the English conceived the agreements they struck up with New England natives as a polite confirmation that land could be taken in perpetuity; 'what the Indians perceived as a political negotiation between two sovereign groups the English perceived as an economic transaction wholly within an English jurisdiction.'[77]

Freed from *noblesse oblige* and other customs that may have made them more circumspect about taking land at home, Euro-American settlers had few hesitations about doing so in the New World. Many had migrated to North America to escape particular religious and moral constraints and to search for personal betterment. Fired by mass European migration beyond the New England townships, a more uninhibited spirit of individualism came to prevail after the American Revolution and throughout the Great Land Rush of the 19th century. After the initial experiences in New England, where the

72 Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, p. 184.
73 Ibid., p. 217.
74 See Arneil, *John Locke and America*; Weaver, *The Great Land Rush*, pp. 62, 81.
75 MacPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, p. 96.
76 For expansion of some of these ideas see Samson, 'The rule of *terra nullius*', pp. 1, 5, 69–82.
77 Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, p. 68.

English were bound to each other by their congregational devotion and the enterprise of farming, later migrants often had little in common beyond their transplantation to the New World.

The westward expansion, initially encouraged by Jefferson and fuelled by Senator Benton's forthright rhetoric, was given more fervent expression at the end of the Civil War when the rejection of slavery was replaced by calls for 'free soil' in the West for whites.[78] Abraham Lincoln, the Republican Party, and the National Reform movement promoted the 1862 Homestead Act, legalising ownership of tracts of land to settlers who staked claims on the Great Plains. It 'relied heavily on the idea that the only valid title to land was that of the man who applied his own physical labor to its cultivation.'[79] As we know from the annals of the American frontier, external regulation was tenuous and many settlers took advantage of the Homestead laws, US military backing and the Lockean squatter's charter. The 'improvement of the soil' rationale was also invoked to take indigenous lands in Canada. The simple observation that uncultivated lands existed was enough to justify influxes of hungry settlers on to indigenous lands, which, in British Columbia, for example, was the case as late as the 1860s.[80]

The ideas and laws that acted as levers of indigenous dispossession were shaped by the colonial circumstances of settlement itself. In the US, the sense of physical and mental space facilitated the rise of the acquisitive and free individual who could make the most of the bounties of nature. In Tocqueville's famous formulation, these social conditions created individualism, which emerged as a signature ethos of Euro-Americans. He defined individualism as:

> a mature and calm feeling which disposes each member of the community to sever himself from the mass of his fellows and to draw apart with his family and friends, so that after he has formed a little circle of his own, he willingly leaves society at large to itself.[81]

In the fervour created by the new society lacking the feudal constraints of Europe, judgments lodged with oneself and one's immediate thoughts, not with custom, tradition or ancient knowledge. The social and political order of the settler was based on the common belief in a society in which individuals had equal opportunity to achieve *as individuals* in a competitive world. This was both exhilarating and tragic:

> Democracy makes every man forget his ancestors and his descendants and separates his contemporaries from him; it throws him back forever

78 Smith, *Virgin Land*, p. 166.
79 Ibid., p. 169.
80 Turner, *The Earth's Blanket*, pp. 150–1.
81 Tocqueville, vol. 2, p. 104.

> upon himself alone and threatens in the end to confine him entirely within the solitude of his own heart.[82]

As Tocqueville saw it, Euro-Americans departed from Europeans in that the measure of achievement had become more narrowly materialistic. He wrote of Anglo-Americans being 'restless in the midst of abundance', and being 'disposed to act as if they were to exist but for a single day'.[83] Freed from social, economic and other restraints, these qualities of Euro-Americans contributed to the speed with which the continent was turned over to them under a market economy.

Acting as people who believed that enrichment and happiness were the same thing and could be pursued with little in the way of tradition or social cohesion, settlers often stood or fell by their own ingenuity. Because many frontier farmers did not act in the cooperative spirit needed in the arid and unfamiliar lands west of the Mississippi, they often had to make superhuman efforts to earn their subsistence, while at the same time defending themselves both against Native Americans, whose land they were encamped upon, and rival settlers. Consequently, state aid was needed, not only to defend settlers militarily, but to assist through reclamation, irrigation, farm subsidies and other schemes to make commercial agriculture viable.[84] The agrarian dream did not last long, however, as it came to be replaced by the dreams of land speculators, railroad monopolists and big businesses investing in resource extraction, industry and what came to be called agribusiness.[85] The sanctification of land as private property enabled its transferability so that industrialists could dispossess farmers just as it had enabled Jefferson's yeoman farmers to dispossess indigenous peoples.

Terra nullius

With settlers and the American government acting in tandem there was little practical restriction to the occupation of indigenous lands. Settlers could either obtain land through homestead laws or they could simply become squatters on the land and receive protections from the military and other squatters. Even when legal limitations were enacted such as in the Trade and Intercourse Acts from 1790 to the 1830s, they were rarely enforced.[86]

82 Ibid,, p. 106.
83 Ibid., p. 159.
84 This story is told in great detail by Reisner in *Cadillac Desert*.
85 Smith, *Virgin Land*, p. 191.
86 These affirmed the clauses of the Articles of Confederation (1781), which vested the continental Congress with the 'sole and exclusive right and power' of regulating the trade and managing all affairs with 'Indians not members of the states' and of the Commerce Clause of the Constitution, which stipulated that the federal government would be responsible for regulating trade with Indian

When a federal treaty system was introduced, US authorities and settlers manipulated it so that principles were invoked or ignored according to the interests of Euro-Americans. Treaties were often convenient expedients and, as one author argues, they did not merit the name that one should give 'to agreements so frequently reeking with alcohol and bribery'.[87]

There is little evidence that the use of treaties elsewhere, such as in the settler states of Canada and New Zealand had any other goal than to formalise land appropriation. In these places, treaties operated under the prior assumption that the state or the Crown was already sovereign over indigenous lands. The Canadian numbered treaties that cover a huge swathe of the country were marked by manipulation and took place after native peoples had already been weakened by disease and European encroachments upon their lands.[88] Although the Treaty of Waitangi, negotiated between Captain William Hobson and Maori chiefs in 1840, put into effect an agreement exchanging a massive land cession for Maori rights in New Zealand, the process was striking for its expediency and lack of consent from many chiefs. It took place when settlers had already occupied lands and many Maori were stricken with imported diseases. Britain had already made claims to Maori land under the presumed right of discovery.[89] Broadly, this configuration of ideas and forces explains how most settler states were settled and obtained their sovereignty through a mixture of imposed laws, one-sided agreements and squatting. Even though some laws and treaties were enacted to protect indigenous peoples, they were nonetheless largely the creations of one side of a conflict and represented the interests of that side.

Although one finds hints of it in the writings of John Locke, Emmerich de Vattel, Sir William Blackstone and others, *terra nullius* was never a formal legal principle, but a default position. It held that native peoples were devoid of any meaningful rights to the land, a position colonists easily derived from the assumptions they already made about civilisation. The most prominent example of *terra nullius* was Australia where there were no treaties between colonists and Aborigines.[90] But if *terra nullius* is simply an assumption, it is also one that underlies the US and Canadian treaty and land claims processes,

tribes. See Prucha, *American Indian Policy in the Formative Years*.

87 Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny*, p. 72.

88 See Fumoleau, *As Long As This Land Shall Last* on Treaties 8 and 11; Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council with Hildebrandt et al., (1996) *The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7*, pp. 297–303; Bussidor and Bilgen-Reinart, *Night Spirits: The Story of the Relocation of the Sayisi Dene*, pp. 25–8.

89 See Weaver, *The Great Land Rush*, pp. 169–71.

90 See ibid., pp. 171–6, where Weaver shows that *terra nullius* was used in many areas of European colonial occupation.

which all operate under non-indigenous laws, principles of ownership and authority structures.[91]

Terra nullius was also a default position across the Arctic and subarctic territories as states gradually and increasingly loudly asserted their demands for indigenous peoples' lands. This often occurred through simple occupation of lands or coastal areas by agents of the state, as happened in the case of Russian merchants in Alaska in the 19th century. The parameters of the indigenous lands that were considered owned by Russia were delineated in negotiations with Americans and the British, who controlled what became Canada. Indigenous Alaskans and Aleutian islanders were considered subjects of the Russian tsar until their lands were sold to the US under the Alaska Purchase Agreement in 1867. The Gold Rush at Klondike in the Yukon had already resulted in the mass trespassing of wealth-hungry miners, and this was exacerbated by the Nome Gold Rush at the turn of the 20th century and, in 1968, oil at Prudhoe Bay.[92]

To secure its sovereignty over much of the far north, the Canadian state simply claimed authority and moved in before any treaties had been concluded. In the Ungava peninsula in northern Quebec in the early mid-20th century, 'government representatives had sailed only around the coasts, but the Royal Canadian Mounted Police established some posts for reasons of Canadian sovereignty and took over nominal control of criminal and legal matters in the region'.[93] Possession was a simple matter of Canada taking 'nominal control' through police detachments, military bases, fur trading posts and missionary stations. Over time, these were aided by administrative measures such as aerial and geological surveys, and censuses to keep track of the indigenous populations and link them to specific settlements.

The collection of universalised and deterministic ideas about change, human nature and human conduct outlined in this chapter, establish a context for the form and character of social transformation I will describe in the following chapters. Given these ideas, an unjust dialogue was almost the only kind of dialogue possible. However, in order to see how the transformation of indigenous peoples is put into effect, we need to examine how the ideas and practices held by indigenous peoples were brought into the encounter with settler states and societies, and further how these diverse and valuable ideas and practices were often ignored and dismissed by colonists and their successors. The next chapter will look at various indigenous practices and worldviews, especially those coalescing around egalitarianism, and move the

91 For Canada, see Asch, 'Errors in Delgamuukw: an anthropological perspective', pp. 221–43.

92 My remarks on the assertion of ownership of Alaska are derived from Sale and Potapov, *The Scramble for the Arctic*, pp. 68–80.

93 Graburn, *Eskimos Without Igloos*, p. 119.

focus more to northern Canada, where one can see how the process has worked in more recent times and in relation to the Innu.

Chapter 3

Egalitarianism to capitalism

For even if civilization meant for the Birri a meaner, shallower life, how could any man hope to fight against it when it came with the whole drive of the world behind it, bringing every kind of gaudy toy and easy satisfaction?
Joyce Cary[1]

The most radical and only secure form of possession is destruction, for only what we have destroyed is safely and forever ours.
Hannah Arendt[2]

'There is no selfishness...'

One reason why colonial authorities and settler state politicians felt that it was so important to change indigenous societies was their belief that indigenous peoples' ways of life appeared so markedly different to those they thought consistent with what was natural and universal. They could, however, only maintain this position by excluding indigenous beliefs, practices and values from the panoply of what could be considered truthful and useful knowledge, and the basis for a good life. In this introduction, I will use a few examples from various historical and geographical locations to show both how stark some of these cultural differences were, and how indigenous culture itself became an object of transformation.

As indigenous lands were being turned over to North American migrants during the Great Land Rush, policymakers made contrasts between two broad sets of values as the basis for policies towards indigenous people. Senator Henry Dawes, sponsor of the US Indian Reservation policy, got to the crux of the issue when he complained that in Native Americans, 'there is no selfishness, which is at the bottom of civilization'.[3] Dawes's version of civilisation was hardly that which might have been identified by the French *philosophes*, but it is virtually identical to the Hobbesian qualities with which the English Utilitarians and

1 Cary, *An American Visitor*, p. 223.
2 Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 145.
3 Quoted in Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, p. 22.

architects of market capitalism invested human nature. At root, Dawes drew a contrast between the meanings of different concepts of the individual and relationships to land, expressing, albeit crudely, the values that Europeans and Native North Americans respectively attached to acquisitiveness.

What Dawes and many frontier settlers observed was that instead of appropriating tracts of land as private property, most indigenous groups recognised collective, fluid and negotiable tenure of land. They emphasised (and many still do), collective distribution of food and other necessities to enhance the well-being of the whole group. Nature for them was of course inhabited, but it was not silent. That it speaks in the many voices of ancestors, spirits and Gods, and these voices encourage humility was incomprehensible to many settlers.

While there were indigenous groups who enlarged their territories, raided and waged violent wars on other groups, and others that had more formal systems of property and land tenure such as the clan-based Haudenosaunee and northwest coast peoples,[4] enlargement of their domains was not driven by the same ideological and economic forces and never remotely approached the same scale as European expansion.[5] When indigenous peoples migrated, as they did prior to European colonisation, the cultural encounters were far more mutually intelligible than those with Europeans. This is partly because indigenous societies nurture a very different type of person to the Puritan farmer, *homo oeconomicus*, or the rugged individualist imbued with the 'spirit of capitalism' on the American frontier, or the bureaucrat, entrepreneur or company employee in today's society. While the liberal market economy encourages people to acquire possessions and money, and to see their worth as measured by them, many indigenous economies were structured in such a way that individual acquisitive behaviour would be counterproductive.

Although hunting, say, requires mobility, movement is nearly always linked to a fixed geographical territory where needs can be met with a minimum of carrying, storing and hoarding. This means that people primarily cultivate attachment only to necessary objects and tools. Things are used as they are needed and then remade or produced wherever hunting occurs. If a surplus of food is available, this leads to periods of feasting and leisure when movement is unnecessary. To store food or objects or carry them with the group can be an impediment to survival when it is imperative to be able to search for fresh food, but at other times storing and carrying can also protect against future periods of need. This is especially so because in the deserts, tundra, plains and forests,

4 See for example, Hurt, p. 67; Oberg, *The Social Economy of the Tlingit Indians*.

5 Alfred Crosby has argued that the expansion of Europe is the most significant in history relevant to current global ecological conditions. He argued that the massive populations of Europeans living in 'neo-Europes' such as the Americas and Australasia, is unrivalled by any parallel expansion. See *Ecological Imperialism*, pp. 2–4.

food supplies can vary enormously from place to place and seasonally. On the whole, however, there must always be a willingness to move, be flexible and vary plans according to the changing circumstances.

In some cases the lack of possessiveness among Native North Americans extended to mass give-aways, such as the potlatch of northwest coast peoples and similar practices on the Great Plains. These were formalised occasions when people gave away many of their most important and prized possessions. Speaking of the time before her people were placed on reservations, Ella Deloria quotes a Lakota 'patriarch' urging people to 'never skimp. Give adequately in a manner worthy of yourselves, or not at all. Give abundantly and with glorious abandon. Better not to honor someone than dishonor him by doing it haltingly and calculatingly. Pity the coward who gives, half holding back, timid for his own private security because he does not put faith in men but in mere chattel'.[6] Here the patriarch appears to draw a comparison with the idea, possibly garnered from observing settlers, that people and objects are 'mere chattel'.

Since the goal of many indigenous groups is to survive as a group and under variable conditions, hunters in particular are averse to prediction and absolutes. This is in contrast to the constant calculation needed for individual survival and economic growth in capitalist societies in general and settler societies in particular, which necessarily depend on determined acquisition. While hunting requires calculation, this must be done flexibly. Social order, indeed survival, in a hunting economy would be impossible with anything resembling the institutional arrangements that developed in capitalist societies to aid acquisition – fixed rules, hierarchies of impersonal authority, and the vast discrepancies in power and wealth. Hugh Brody calls 'egalitarian individualism' the 'greatest contribution of hunters'.[7] This is characterised by equality of position, an avoidance of any form of permanent leadership, and toleration of a large degree of personal freedom and individual decision-making as long as it does not imperil the lives of the group as a whole. Egalitarian individualism never extends to unbridled self-promotion, self-interest and avarice.[8] Similar conclusions can be drawn from indigenous farming communities such as

6 Deloria, *Speaking of Indians*, p. 69.

7 Brody, *The Other Side of Eden*, p. 297. Commentaries on hunter-gatherers are virtually unanimous in stressing the egalitarianism of such societies. See for example, Turnbull, *The Mountain People*; Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*.

8 Hunters in Africa are similar to northern peoples in the humility they show. As Richard Lee says of !Kung Bushmen in the Kalahari, 'The !Kung … have evolved elaborate devices for puncturing the bubble of conceit and enforcing humility. These levelling devices are in constant daily use, minimizing the size of others' kills, downplaying the value of others' gifts, and treating one's own efforts in a self-deprecating way'. See Lee, 'Politics, sexual and non-sexual in an egalitarian society', p. 898.

the Pueblos, who were more hierarchical, but even those individuals with elite religious, ceremonial or hunting roles were not set apart from the larger community.[9] The unity of the Pueblo, so vital in the preservation of their lands and way of life during the expansion of Spain and the US, depended on egalitarian consensus, and this is something still evident in Pueblos today.

Egalitarianism extends to the socialisation of succeeding generations, including a reluctance to scold children, who are expected to develop in their own ways, rather than be subject to a conscious pedagogy. As Brody noted of northern hunters, manipulation of children through detailed instructions is thought to lead to distortions of character. People should learn skills when they are ready.[10] Men and women have distinct social and economic roles, but Brody observed constant role reversals, flexibility, and no sense of gender hierarchy among the Inuit. This was also so among the Innu prior to sedentarisation, where decisions were made by the family group rather than a male head acting with patriarchal authority.[11] By contrast, in industrial capitalist societies marriage became an ownership arrangement with formal legal duties, roles and obligations for each party, guaranteed by both state and church. Indigenous societies, especially hunters, thrived by making people generalists and giving both men and women a wider span of economic functions. While men and women often did not do the same things, there was considerable overlap, depending on the society in question. In hunting societies, men's work is not regarded as more important than women's, and men are not accorded superior rights within and outside of marriage.[12]

This is not to say that women could not be treated extremely harshly in some indigenous societies. Ernest Burch, for example, noted that early contact histories reveal that Iñupiat men often physically disciplined their wives, and that sometimes this extended to gang-rape of allegedly promiscuous women. However, he added that 'a woman wielded control over many of the raw materials, particularly food, that were produced by the members of her family, and this was not a trivial matter'.[13] Similar generalisations could be made of the eastern North American agricultural societies. Seneca women, for example, cleared, planted and laboured in the fields and had limited ownership over non-communal agricultural production and its economic functions, including control over the distribution of surplus food.[14]

9 See Stuart, *Anasazi America*, pp. 163–4.

10 Brody, *The Other Side of Eden*, p. 297.

11 See Leacock, 'Matrilocality in a simple hunting economy (Montagnais-Naskapi)', pp. 31–47.

12 These generalisations extend to other hunting societies around the world, for example, the !Kung Bushmen of Namibia. See Shostak, *Nisa*, p. 13.

13 Burch, *Social Life in Northwest Alaska*, p. 330.

14 Jensen, 'Native American women and agriculture', pp. 423–41.

In fact, as indigenous peoples came into closer contact with Europeans, they were often shocked when they witnessed how settler men treated women. Luther Standing Bear observed that male settlers, supremely unsuited to making a living in their new environment, treated women disrespectfully and as slaves, and speculated that this was because of their own frustrations and incompetence.[15] Writing in the famous captivity narratives, many Euro-American women asserted that they preferred living with Native Americans.[16] In the indigenous societies, the captive women watched how their indigenous counterparts had important and defined roles and generally exercised greater autonomy than women in their own society. As a result, when US authorities transformed native peoples, they curtailed the freedom of women and ensured that their tasks were restricted and replaced by those done by men. For example, among indigenous farming peoples, both men and women had important roles but, despite the fact that women often had the most important ones, the US government efforts to make Native Americans into market farmers required that men and boys be farmers with women staying in the nuclear familial home. This meant that in the 19th century indigenous women – who, as Hurt pointed out, often knew more about farming than the instructors who were sent to their communities – were deprived of any direct role in the reservation agricultural economy.[17]

The egalitarianism of many indigenous peoples, especially hunters, also encompasses relations between humans and the natural world. After a successful hunt it is important not to boast about animals that have been killed, or display any of the triumphalism associated with achievements in Western society. Indigenous hunting language conveys nothing equivalent to 'quarry', 'trophy' or even 'game', all of which imply a hierarchical relationship between people and animals. To brag of a good hunt is to place oneself above the animals, and therefore not show humility to forces upon which hunters depend. Indigenous hunters were frequently shocked by Europeans assuming themselves to be superior to the fish, mammals and land animals, and stories on this theme fill the folklore of the far north. After a successful walrus hunt in *White Dawn*, James Houston's fictionalisation of a 19th-century New England whaling crew's experiences with Inuit on Baffin Island, the young Inuit narrator tells us that:

> The three *kallunait* [whites or non-Inuit] roared, and Portagee slapped his own buttocks loudly. I was shocked to hear such laughing and shouting from a boat with a newly dead sea beast attached, and surprised that our young boys were so quick to call out and laugh in shameless imitation of the foreigners. Sarkak sat alone, an old man,

15 Standing Bear, *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, p. 172.

16 Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, p. 74. See also the account of the captivity of Olive Oatman in Miflin, *The Blue Tattoo*, p. 121.

17 Hurt, *Indian Agriculture in America*, pp. 110–11.

> gaunt and silent in the stern, for he the great hunter and planner for us all, had acted only like a servant to these strange men.[18]

These strange men were commercial whalers who had become separated from the mother ship while harpooning a whale. They wandered on to the land and were nurtured back to health in Sarkak's camp. Instead of learning from their hosts, the *kallunait* openly expressed the fulsome emotions of individual achievement and equated hunting success with conquest, values appropriate only in their own society.

Sarkak's disapproval was not idle moralism. Many Inuit believe that sanctions attach to any act of disrespect towards animals, and this basic belief structure, as Nancy Turner has shown, is common among other indigenous peoples today.[19] It extends to strictures against the destruction of land that is harmful to the plants and animals that live in an area, and 'reinforces the idea that humans do have a kinship with all other elements of their world.' Turner continued, 'ceremonies, customs and stories recognize and validate this connection, as do the ways in which people relate to their lands and resources'.[20]

Similarly, Brody noted that in times of both hardship and fortune Inuit emotions rarely changed. Anger, for example, was perceived by the Inuit as understandable in children, but unacceptable in adults. Humility towards one's own achievements and towards the land, sea and animals is a constant of hunting societies. Equanimity in the face of adversity was the norm, as was a refusal to blame others for things that went wrong.[21] All of these personal qualities are consistent with maintaining both the group and the ecology in such a way as to foster continued survival. The same qualities of stoicism and strength and avoidance of demonstrativeness are found in very different indigenous hunter-gatherer groups such as the Apache of the American southwest.[22]

Egalitarianism and the aversion to material acquisition is to some extent a factor in the success of indigenous economies. Contrary to the stereotypes about the poverty of hunter-gatherers, Marshall Sahlins famously argued that hunters were the 'original affluent society'. According to Sahlins's analysis, hunters' needs were satisfied quicker and easier without money or industrial mass production, and they led lives of relative abundance.[23] Part of the reason why

18 Houston, *The White Dawn*, p. 130.

19 See Turner, *The Earth's Blanket*, p. 20. Indeed, it has been suggested that taboos towards the cruel treatment of animals and the eating of certain animals' flesh characterised many societies, and this was because a cavalier attitude to food supplies and food distribution could imperil survival. See, for example, Evans, *The Pattern Under the Plough*, pp. 187–90. Evans studied these attitudes in rural East Anglia in the mid 20th century.

20 Turner, p. 73.

21 Brody, *The Other Side of Eden*, p. 60.

22 See Opler, *An Apache Life-Way*, p. 74.

23 Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, cited observations of hunter-gatherer life in the

hunters are able to lead such lives is undoubtedly their knowledge of animals and the natural environment and their finely honed skills with weaponry. The first European travellers in Labrador, for example, detected the extraordinary abilities of the Innu to provide for themselves and therefore to live relatively independently of other groups. The 18th-century English settler Captain John Cartwright wrote in his diary that the Innu, or 'Mountaineers' as he called them, were 'so dexterous in imitating the call of every bird and beast', that 'one man will maintain himself a wife and five or six children in greater plenty and more regular supply than any European could support himself singly though he were a better shot.'[24]

While hard, physical work and endurance are constants, hunting peoples have had much discretion over how they allocate their time. This is in part because the functions of production and consumption are not strictly separated. People in domestic units build the shelters, tools and equipment needed to 'produce' the animals that are then consumed by the same unit and often shared out beyond the individual family grouping. The introduction of money and trade complicated this picture somewhat, but while hunters have been able to maintain a mobile life, this economic order prevailed.[25] On the other hand, capitalism requires constant expansion of production and investment and, as a result, workers at all levels must be sufficiently disciplined to put in the hours to meet production targets so that goods can be sold and profits accrued. Because money is the means by which consumers procure goods to satisfy needs, people are bound to continuous labour in ways that they are not in a society where products are secured for more immediate use without buying and selling.

Consequently, hunters spend proportionately less time on procuring food and subsistence than agriculturalists (or people in Western industrial societies) and these activities produce more than adequate amounts of calories and general nutrition. According to scholars who have studied the time use of contemporary African hunters, the hunter-gathering lifestyle permits greater amounts of sleep and leisure time than is common in Western industrial societies.[26] By pooling resources and sharing them as a matter of course, all can

Kalahari, North America and Australia. They were drawn from studies, made by anthropologists, missionaries, travellers and others, of peoples mostly experiencing minimal changes to their way of life brought about by colonialism.

24 Townsend, *Captain Cartwright and his Labrador Journal*, p. 351.

25 See, for example, the remarks of Lips, 'Notes on Montagnais-Naskapi economy', pp. 40–1.

26 Richard Lee, working with the Dobe San in the 1960s, commented: 'the overall estimate of hours per week [of work] … with an overall average of 42.3 hours of work per person … is still far below that level of work expected for people in our society'. North American wage-earners often did a further 40 hours of chores such as shopping and cleaning in addition to their normal 40 hours, he stated. See Lee, *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi*, pp. 58–9.

live much better than would be the case if they insisted on returns accruing only to the most successful hunters. In locations where food can be scarce, or obtained only by travelling far afield, redistribution of food is a lifeline ensuring group survival. Sharing aids collective survival, but it also diminishes animosities, jealousies and other rivalries between people. This does not mean that in the past there were not instances when indigenous hunters were not so 'affluent' as Sahlins suggests. Failure to find animals could occasion shortages, over-hunting and inter-group conflict. [27] Selfishness within hunting camps, especially during times of hardship and hunger, was also not unknown.[28] But even if hunters were not as 'affluent' as Sahlins suggested, these facts do not diminish the necessity of the norm of sharing as a means of achieving social and economic survival.

Indigenous sharing, however, was not always seen as an adversary of progress. Before the time of Henry Dawes, when Euro-Americans were establishing settler dominion, indigenous collectivism was sometimes depicted as positive because it accorded with the Christian virtue of charity. This was especially true under French and Spanish colonialism where a prime object was not always agricultural settlement but religious conversion. Even in colonial New England, the famous dissenter and founder of Rhode Island, Roger Williams proclaimed his admiration for Native American intelligence, civility and endurance. While English Puritanism emphasised labour and commerce as the measures of Christian virtue, Williams praised indigenous practices not immediately in the service of making more bounteous surpluses. He depicted New England natives as more virtuous than the English and made it plain he often preferred their company to that of his countrymen. Unlike many other prominent New England colonists, Williams spoke from experience of living and travelling with indigenous peoples. His book on their languages, *Key into the Language of America*, is a series of detailed expositions of language mixed with his own observations. In it, he remarked, 'It is a *f* trange *truth* that a man

27 The speculation that indigenous hunters overkilled is based primarily on travellers' reports and some archaeological evidence. See for example, Brightman, *Grateful Prey*; and for the Innu, Fitzhugh, *Environmental Archaeology*, pp. 182–3. Fitzhugh writes of 'massacres' and 'slaughters' that would seem to be at extreme odds with what we know of the morality of Innu and other hunters.

28 For example, one Inuit recalled that in pre-sedentarisation times, 'before there were many white people the Inuit were very bad people in times of hardship. Every now and then a man would catch a seal and he would usually drag it home whole where it would be cut up and shared among the people in the village. But some of these bad Inuit … would sneak it home without sharing it with the people … Fortunately, the Inuit survived in spite of these bad people'. Berthe and Grey (eds.), *Voices and Images of Nunavimmiut*, vol. 1, p. 208.

*f*hall generally finde more free entertainment and refre*f*hing among*f*t the*f*e *Barbarians*, than among*f*t thou*f*ands that call them*f*elves *Chri*f*tians*.'[29]

From the 19th century onwards anthropologists noted how sharing was an integral part of indigenous societies. According to Baldwin Spencer, the Arrente of Australia 'had a complicated system based on avoiding conflicts over food by extending family solidarity to an ever-growing circle of more and more distant relatives'.[30] Similarly, among the Alaskan Iñupiat the small number of children in each family was supplemented by a potentially vast number of people who were regarded as kin.[31] Chronicling the period of social and economic transition in the 1950s and 1960s in the Ungava region of Quebec, Nelson Graburn recorded that, 'the Eskimos held in highest esteem a generous man who was always ready to give of what he had. Such men were thought of as rich because, presumably, they always had plenty to give, whereas those who did not share but hoarded for themselves were seen as poor and of low prestige … the ideal in most matters was to share or exchange so that no one was left without'.[32] While Inuit peoples' sharing had many different permutations, the generalised reciprocity largely existed without any accountancy of the quantities and values of items that were shared. Indeed, as Barbara Bodenhorn argued on the basis of her study of Iñupiat households, the items are themselves incommensurable.[33]

Hence, one of the important factors in the economic success of hunters is that they do not view nature as a bundle of commodities that can be reduced to specified values and from which individuals or groups can singularly profit. Although most indigenous peoples had notions that particular groups were attached to specific territories and there were conflicts over some of them, no indigenous peoples had any equivalent of private commercial ownership of land: 'A man's country is the home of his pre-existent spirit', A.P. Elkin remarked of Australian Aborigines during the early contact period, 'and no other "country" is the same to him. To acquire land is meaningless to him, and he finds it hard to understand the European's motive in wanting another's land'.[34] Similarly, as Ulderic McKenzie, a *Tshenu* from Matimekush, Quebec, remarked, 'it never entered our minds to disturb another people's way of life'.[35] This is partly because the Innu traversed the whole territory where animals

29 Williams, *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams,* vol. 1, p. 46. See also Gaustad, *Roger Williams*, pp. 24–47.

30 Cited in Lindqvist, *Terra Nullius*, p. 47.

31 Burch, *Social Life in Northwest Alaska*, p. 125.

32 Graburn, *Eskimos Without Igloos*, pp. 70–1.

33 Bodenhorn, 'It's good to know who your relatives are, but we were taught to share with everyone', pp. 27–60.

34 Elkin, 'Reaction and interaction: a food gathering people and European settlement in Australia', p. 44.

35 Interview with Ulderic McKenzie, Matemekush, Quebec, 5 April 2007.

were to be found and food security depended on sharing it. Wealth in this case is bound up not with individual possession of scarce resources, but with groups being able to share what they have secured within a defined territory in which long-term experience has made them extremely knowledgeable. When sharing is a basic principle, wealth then takes on a wider meaning than is commonly conveyed in English, in which it is frequently reducible to the possession of money or material possessions.[36]

Even where indigenous peoples were farmers or acquired agriculture from Europeans, they did not operate under the same competitive and commercial logic. In a study of three Native American groups – Utes, Hupa and Tohono O'odham (formerly known as Papago) – Lewis concluded that these groups, 'utilized a diverse range of resources rather than concentrating on any single commodity or mode of production. This safety net approach insured against the periodic failure or scarcity of resources due to biological cycles or environmental phenomena beyond immediate human control'.[37] Similarly, Pueblo societies in the US southwest divided themselves up into summer and winter moieties, which in part coincided with farming and hunting functions respectively. As Stuart maintains, 'communities made a near fetish of planting more diverse crops in diverse locations and using diverse techniques'.[38] The egalitarian character of indigenous farmers assisted them, like hunters, in achieving higher amounts of food energy from greater plant diversity with less labour and fuel than the Euro-Americans who settled their lands.[39]

By contrast, although frontier farming was originally subsistence based, with swarms of settlers populating indigenous lands and the advent of mechanised production, it rapidly transformed into a market-focused enterprise. It came to depend almost exclusively on the ability of the individual farmer and his family to produce a small number of crops for selling. Believing in what became the US national ethos of self-reliance, settlers had no safety net and little of the collectivism that helped indigenous people survive in mountainous and arid areas without predictable food supplies. Early Anglo-American farmers relied on a relatively limited diversity of crops and techniques of planting and maintaining them. Settlers could stand or fall from adverse weather patterns, crop failures or changes in demand. As far back as the colonial era, 'single-crop cultivation removed the nutrients that Indians had retained, and it hastened

36 For more on this subject in regard to the Lakota, see the commentary in White Hat Snr., *Zuya Life's Journey*, p. 45.

37 Lewis, *Neither Wolf Nor Dog*, p. 168. Colleen O'Neill has argued in a similar vein, maintaining that the Navajo experience in the 20th century is 'a tale of dynamic cultural innovation where ideas arising from a pastoralist mixed subsistence lifestyle shaped the development of an industry that was clearly linked to the broader US market economy'. See O'Neill, *Working the Navajo Way*, p. 31.

38 Stuart, *Anasazi America*, p. 164.

39 Nabhan, *The Desert Smells Like Rain*, pp. 8, 42–8.

soil exhaustion'.[40] Unsustainable practises such as this were facilitated by the commercial tenant and subsistence farming system, leading eventually to extensive topsoil erosion, witnessed during the Dust Bowl in the 1930s. The bison ecology of the Plains and Midwest areas was opened up to homesteaders and land speculators, who uprooted the prairie grasses and attempted to make a vast, semi-arid region come under the plough. These practises continued in the US southwest and the California Central Valley as agribusiness displaced all other forms of farming. Occupying vast expanses of dry lands in the western United States, agribusiness today relies on mega doses of pesticides, the pumping of groundwater and river waters, and genetically modified seeds for maximum yield.

These diverse examples of the contrasts between indigenous and Euro-American orientations to acquisition and possession can now be supplemented by a focus on how the social transformation from egalitarianism to capitalism was achieved in the northern areas of North America.

The transformation of northern indigenous societies

Some of the main differences in the contemporary circumstances of indigenous peoples in North America today are associated with the time when their lands were appropriated. The process of social and economic transformation during westward expansion was relatively rapid, matching the pace of Euro-American settlement itself. By contrast in some areas of the far north where Euro-Canadian settlement until recently was sparse, the process of transformation has been more recent with abrupt changes occurring only in the last few decades.

In many parts of northern Canada, indigenous peoples' early contacts with colonists, missionaries and company agents directed them into commercial fur trapping. Although the fur trade enabled the continuation of hunting via trapping fur-bearing mammals, the purpose of hunting was changed by making it commercial. In order to acquire furs, traps and guns were needed and the only way of obtaining these tools was by entering into a quasi-market exchange or debt peonage relationship with traders.[41] Hunters quickly saw that this equipment, and later snowmobiles, outboard motors and even planes were useful to them. The desire to use such technologies then bound northern hunters into the market economy and to debt. These technologies, combined with the advent of individual traplines that accompanied fur trading in many places, facilitated the decollectivisation of trapping and encouraged more individual or small group-based hunting activities that potentially made hunters as reliant on the trader as upon each other.[42]

40 Calloway, *New Worlds for All*, p. 21.

41 See for example, Samson, *A Way of Life That Does Not Exist*, pp. 145–6.

42 On technologies see Graburn, *Eskimos Without Igloos*, p. 140. On traplines see Leacock, 'The Montagnais hunting territory and the fur trade'.

By the mid 19th century, in Northern Labrador and Quebec, certain animals had begun to diminish as a result of the Innu and Inuit hunting for trade and shifting from spears to firearms procured from traders.[43] The explorer and geologist, Henry Youle Hind, quoted sources suggesting that game animals had been reported as scarce as early as 1645,[44] indicating that the tundra areas in particular required a sensitive approach to hunting. In his review of accounts of the Innu – scientific, exploratory and anthropological – Harper quotes numerous visitors, such as the anthropologists Diamond Jenness and Frank Speck and the naturalist John Audubon, who had observed the destructive effects of the fur trade and firearms on the Innu and the neighbouring Inuit.[45] Hind reported that in the forests around Mingan, 'widespreading fires and the fur trade have converted the area into a desert'.[46] He also noted the 'depletion of salmon in the rivers flowing into the St. Lawrence'.[47] Audubon, who met the Innu in 1833, asserted that as a result of the use of firearms, 'Labrador will be abandoned and deserted like a worn out field'.[48] Nonetheless, it is evident that guns alone were not sufficient to create such imagined devastation. The fur trade, the establishment of French and British fishing villages, and general European encroachment into the Innu and Inuit territories provided the context for increasing demands on their environment.

The fur trade was a preliminary step towards the displacement of hunting as the full-time occupation and source of many northern peoples' economic security. After fur supplies had been exhausted, trading was gradually supplanted by welfare and wage labour, with northern peoples being sedentarised or in some cases relocated. Speaking of the time when formerly independent Inuit families were transferred across Baffin island to the settlement of Pangnirtung in the early 1960s, Janet Billson remarked:

> The move to Pangnirtung created welfare dependency overnight. As the population of the tiny settlement on Pangnirtung Fjord increased so did dependency on government programs. The independence of a hunting and gathering, fishing and trading economy dissipated with the end of nomadic decentralized life. For Inuit clustered in the settlement, traditional skills, which were less relevant for the few wage-earning jobs

43 Hind, *Explorations in the Interior of the Labrador Peninsula*, p. 84; William Fitzhugh, however, in *Environmental Archaeology*, noted that the Innu hunting of caribou while fording rivers and lakes was more efficient with spears, a technique that lasted well into the 20th century, p. 181.

44 Ibid., p. 19.

45 Harper, *The Friendly Montagnais*; Jenness, *Eskimo Administration*, p. 28.

46 Hind, *Explorations in the Interior of the Labrador Peninsula*, vol. 1, p. 15.

47 Ibid., p. 122.

48 Quoted in Harper, *The Friendly Montagnais*, p. 45.

that were available, began to disappear. Survival was guaranteed by the government.[49]

In the mid 1960s, after a long career as an anthropologist working with the Inuit in northern Canada, Alaska and Greenland, Diamond Jenness reflected on these changes. Having witnessed the transitions from independent, though strenuous, lives as hunter-gatherers to settlement dwellers, even he believed that the *promise* of wage labour would be fulfilled and would mark a successful transition for the Inuit. From the north, 'comes a cry for the steady wage-employment which alone can provide security, the necessities of life and a few of its comforts'. Underpinning labour was the 'education and the training' that was necessary for 'secure employment'.[50] Seeing great courage, tolerance and other virtues in the Inuit character and ways of life, Jenness, of course, regretted these intrusions. Yet, he presumed that 'the dawning age of automation' had widened the chasm between the Inuit and Canadian society. Once absorbed into such a society, they could only adapt to it through the tools that were prescribed for individual success. Much in the same tenor as Claude Levi-Strauss's *Tristes Tropiques*, Jenness reflected that 'the old Eskimo way of life is no more. It has gone forever',[51] He went on to indict 'our ruthless civilization' which has brought about a 'law of the jungle',[52] as opposed to the tolerance and cooperation of the Inuit ways.

Instead of the stability that Jenness perhaps rashly predicted, market capitalism operating under a 'law of the jungle' produced poverty, inequalities and welfare dependence in the Canadian far north.[53] The market depends on *homo oeconomicus* being in a position to sell his or her labour and use the proceeds to achieve a standard of living, and perhaps even capital for future security. However, the northern economies have clearly not included indigenous peoples as the prime beneficiaries of such enrichment. The settlements in which they were situated were often not able to attract capital investment for anything other than basic infrastructure. Although schools have been established in every aboriginal settlement, graduation from high school promises few avenues

49 Billson, 'Opportunity or tragedy: the impact of Canadian resettlement policy on Inuit families', p. 205.

50 Jenness, 'The administration of northern peoples', p. 123.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid., p. 125.

53 Indeed, this was predicted for Salluit in northern Quebec by Graburn, *Eskimos Without Igloos*, p. 198. He noted that wage labour could only be envisioned at the lowest employment levels, and even this could not keep up with the growing population occasioned by settlement. The levels of material deprivation and poverty in northern aboriginal communities in 21st-century Canada are often likened to conditions in much poorer countries in Africa and elsewhere. See, for example, Silversides, 'The north "like Darfur"', pp. 1,013–14.

of success within the market economy unless graduates move to other more populous areas of Canada.

Although envisaged by Walter Rockwood and other architects of sedentarisation to be bases for wage labour, the contemporary Innu villages in Labrador are unable to employ most of the adult age working population. There are jobs in the various governmental bodies and the numerous healing centres and clinics, but these are largely obtained via a patronage system based on extended families. Many other families have been outside the state-funded power structures of the villages and their members have at best only been able to procure short-term employment. Several adults have never had any paid work. Some people obtain supplements to the chronically low Newfoundland welfare scales through bootlegging alcohol and selling drugs to the dry community of Natuashish. The official unemployment rate in Natuashish in 2006 was 26.8 per cent,[54] although the real rate was probably much higher, since many Innu are only able to obtain sporadic employment. A major employer would be needed to soak up the employable adults of the village. Even large projects such as the nearby Voisey's Bay mine, and the building of the new village itself, provided only short-term employment in construction, security and labouring. Most of the ongoing work for both the community and the mine is left to large contractors whose principal workers are not Innu.

With the end of the fur trade and the embarrassment of mass aboriginal unemployment and welfare dependency, a hiatus was reached in the far north in the continuing efforts of the Canadian government to represent relations with aboriginal peoples in positive tones. Up to this point, a social evolutionist model of progress had prevailed, and when applied in concrete situations of colonial settlement and state building fell back on binary divisions between Europeans and indigenous peoples. The stirrings of a more assimilationist approach coincided with (indeed, was required by) the push for wage labour. This assumed that indigenous peoples shared the *same* values of progress as their Canadian administrators, but had been denied the opportunities to avail themselves of its many benefits. As a result, they were depicted as in peril of being overwhelmed by social and economic forces beyond their control. This underpinned Walter Rockwood's 'march of civilization' slogan but half a century later it is apparent that the Innu have not benefited from the economic prosperity that Canadian politicians believed constituted the good life.

Similar dynamics are now apparent across Canada where countless communities are mired in material poverty with associated high incidences of unemployment, crime, substance abuse and ill health. After years of assimilation, the deficits that the state authorities originally noted as points of contrast between indigenous peoples and the larger settler society became reconfigured away from constitutional differences, and matters of schooling

54 Statistics Canada, *Community Profiles: Natuashish*.

and wage labour. Instead, they were reduced almost entirely to *economic* differences. Today's policies are articulated as being about 'capacity building', 'catch-up capital', and 'good governance' of the institutions implanted in the village settlements. These goals are supported by a focus on resource extraction, which aboriginal peoples are encouraged to embrace as a means of alleviating economic difficulties and 'closing the gap' with the rest of Canada. One means by which the Canadian government has attempted to fuse its cultural and economic values with those of the Innu today is through making land rights dependent upon participation in such projects. Indeed, this is the intention of the Innu Nation Tshash Petapen ('New Dawn') land claims agreement. This agreement contains a subsidiary agreement providing monetary incentives to Innu individuals and businesses to exchange collective use and occupancy of a vast land for individual commercial franchises on small portions of it. In its designs to promote acquisitiveness among an emergent class of Innu entrepreneurs, vastly diminish the extent of Innu lands and extinguish collective ownership of land, the agreement represents the most significant effort to transform the Innu since sedentarisation.

Tshash Petapen

Like a small number of other indigenous peoples in British Columbia and northern Canada, until recently the Innu of Labrador were never part of the Canadian treaty process and had not formally ceded their land. Under state policy, they were in the contradictory situation of holding collective 'aboriginal title', but could not exercise such title in any meaningful way until they proved their 'claim' to their lands to the satisfaction of Canadian officials. Proof of Innu rights to their land can only be shown through designated government protocol, which culminates in a land claims agreement negotiated in large part by non-indigenous lawyers, experts and functionaries who are paid by the state. In effect, the land claims negotiations are not between two sovereign entities or even Canada and a 'First Nation'. The terms of the negotiations, the parameters of what can be 'claimed' and even the status, political formation and funding of the indigenous political body doing the negotiating are internal to the state itself. Under the land claims process, however, the proving of a claim can only occur in tandem with indigenous ownership of land being extinguished. Hence, in this rather Kafkaesque process, the land claim agreement makes the proving of an aboriginal land claim the eligibility criterion for extinguishing rights to that claim in favour of Canada.[55]

All previous land claims agreements elsewhere in Canada radically reduced aboriginal land bases and, either directly or indirectly, extinguished aboriginal title. Significantly, as a consequence of negotiations, areas of Innu land have

55 On extinguishment, see Epstein, 'The role of extinguishment in the cosmology of dispossession', pp. 45–56.

simply been withdrawn from the claims areas, and recorded as 'Crown lands'.[56] While the Tshash Petapen agreement has been under negotiation, land under aboriginal title, was removed for development projects and non-aboriginal settlement under the assumption that Innu lands are state jurisdictions thereby making 'aboriginal title' meaningless. The 1997 *Delgamuukw* Supreme Court decision made this form of unilateral extinguishment less tenable, but it has not changed the final aim of the land claims policy – the cancelling out of underlying aboriginal title in exchange for limited rights to self-government, hunting and fishing in defined territories and cash compensation.

In response to numerous criticisms of this policy by indigenous leaders and representatives, an international outcry over it, and the UN Human Rights Committee recommending its abandonment as incompatible with Article I of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the extinguishment provision was recently amended. However, the most recent government policy has actually strengthened the practice. New land claims agreements have replaced explicit references to extinguishment with 'certainty'. Instead of having aboriginal title cancelled outright ('extinguishment'), the aboriginal signatories must now agree never to exercise it ('certainty').[57] This has also been termed the non-assertion/fall-back release policy.[58] In the new land claims treaties the words 'surrender' and 'extinguishment' are deleted, but in return the aboriginal party must agree that the Treaty itself defines the totality of their rights, and that they never assert rights granted from any previous treaties or seek redress for any violations of aboriginal title that may have occurred in the past. Under this arrangement, the Canadian government is indemnified against all violations of aboriginal or treaty rights in perpetuity.

The certainty and indemnity clauses impose even more restrictions than the old and much discredited policy – most bizarrely in binding indigenous peoples' actions and court authority in the future. In its meetings on Canada

56 Indigenous peoples in other states face obstacles to maintaining their lands as a result of similar policies. In Brazil, where 'ideas for land allocation and national development typically flowed from British commentators and American legislators', (Weaver, *The Great Land Rush*, p. 14), indigenous peoples have rights to lands within demarcated areas decided by the state. However, their lands also happen to be areas that have been targeted for agriculture (after deforestation), mining, hydroelectric power generation and other forms of development. These facts explain why the Brazilian state under successive regimes, including the left-wing Ignacio Lula da Silva have been very slow to demarcate lands and have condoned squatters and others invading Amerindian lands. In June 2009, Lula authorised the legalisation of land title to one million non-indigenous squatters 'occupying a Texas-sized chunk of the Amazon rainforest'. Sibaja, 'Brazil approves controversial land tenure law'.

57 See Alcantara, 'Old wine in new bottles?', pp. 325–4.

58 Orkin, 'When the law breaks down', p. 452.

held in 2005 (published in 2006), the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) commented specifically on this, and specifically as it related to the Innu:

> The Committee, while noting with interest Canada's undertakings towards the establishment of alternative policies to extinguishment of inherent aboriginal rights in modern treaties, remains concerned that these alternatives may in practice amount to extinguishment of aboriginal rights. (articles 1 and 27)
>
> The State party should re-examine its policy and practices to ensure they do not result in extinguishment of inherent aboriginal rights. The Committee would like to receive more detailed information on the comprehensive land claims agreement that Canada is currently negotiating with the Innu people of Quebec and Labrador, in particular regarding its compliance with the Covenant.[59]

Two 21st-century land claim agreements, involving the Tlicho Dene of the Northwest Territories and the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA), illustrate the HRC's complaints. The Tlicho were required to 'cede, release and surrender', all land rights not set out in the agreement, while the Inuit 'cede and release to Canada and the Province all the aboriginal rights which Inuit ever had, now have or may in future claim to have within Canada.' Both agreements are notable for their insistence that the rights set out in the agreements comprise *the totality* of aboriginal rights that can *ever* be asserted. If any claims arising from aboriginal rights disputes happen to surface in the future, the government is protected through an indemnity clause. Hence, in the Tlicho Agreement, 'the Tlicho Government will indemnify and forever save harmless government from any claim … that was brought on or after the effective date against government'.[60] In the LIA agreement:

> 2.12.1 The Nunatsiavut Government will indemnify and forever save harmless Canada or the Province, as the case may be, from all damages, costs, losses, or liabilities that Canada or the Province, respectively, may suffer or incur in connection with or as a result of any suits, actions, causes of action, claims, proceedings, or demands initiated or made after the Effective Date by Inuit against Canada or the Province relating to or arising from:
>
> (a) the aboriginal rights ceded and released under section 2.11.2;
>
> (b) any act or omission by Canada or the Province before the Effective Date that may have affected or infringed any aboriginal right that has not been ceded and released by virtue of section 2.11.3; and

59 United Nations Human Rights Committee, 'Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee: Canada'.

60 Land Claims and Self Government Agreement among the Tlicho and the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada, available at: www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ/STAGING/texte-text/ccl_fagr_nwts_tliagr_tliagr_1302089608774_eng.pdf (accessed 3 June 2013).

(c) the existence of an aboriginal right that is determined to be other than or different in attribute or geographical extent from the rights of Inuit as set out in the Agreement.[61]

As resource extraction has become the only major market sector in the Canadian north, the nullification of collective land rights are paramount. Aboriginal leaders, developers and government officials all realise that vast sums of money can be made from extracting and selling the natural resources that have been discovered and remain to be discovered in the north. This is why land claims agreements are being linked to aboriginal participation in resource extraction projects. The Tshash Petapen agreement[62] is an example of the fusion of land rights and land privatisation.[63] To the Canadian government negotiators, the Innu Nation is not a sovereign body representing sovereign people but, 'a body corporate under the laws of Canada'. It is negotiating the agreement with 'Her Majesty the Queen in right of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador', and the 'Energy Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador' (known as Nalcor). Tshash Petapen combines a land claim with an agreement for hydroelectric generation on the Lower Churchill River. Even though the location of this project is on Mista-Shipu, literally 'big river', at the heart of unextinguished Innu territory, the state acts as though the 'aboriginal title' land is meaningless by inserting a provision that aboriginal rights *not* be asserted in the 'Project Area'. But since the Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro Company (called Nalcor) registered the project in 2006 before any agreement had been signed, the non-assertion of these rights was assumed before any agreement not to assert them had been undertaken. The project is to include: a dam 99 metres in height; a reservoir 225 kilometres long, flooding an area of 85 square kilometers; a power house with six turbines at Gull Island; a generating station; a concrete dam in two sections, one 32 metres, the other 29

61 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Labrador and Inuit Land Claims Agreement, available at: www.nonstatusindian.com/docs/selfgovern/LIA_Land_Claim_Agreement.pdf (accessed 3 June 2013).

62 The following comments on Tshash Petapen are based on the text of the agreement as at January 2010 and from a PowerPoint presentation to Innu Nation leaders made in October 2010. The documents presented to Innu voters on 30 June 2011 were simplified versions of these. The far lengthier official Agreement in Principle, which was published online in 2012, does not depart in any significant details from what is outlined here. It is available at www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1331657507074 (accessed 16 Jan. 2013).

63 As three business administration academics cheerily proclaim, 'the approach to indigenous claims has shifted from contention to negotiation and enterprise. No longer does the state contest the existence of indigenous rights to land, resources and some form of "self-government". Instead it seeks to negotiate agreements based on these rights that will form the foundation for prosperous indigenous "nations" within Canada'. See Anderson et al., 'Indigenous land rights, entrepreneurship, and economic development in Canada', p. 54.

metres high; and an additional flooded area of 36 square kilometres at Muskrat Falls. The transmission lines are projected to be over 300 kilometres long. The corporation that will build and operate this massive dam and electricity-generating plant is 'for greater certainty … not subject to the requirement of an Impact Benefit Agreement [with the Innu]'.

Further, 'Innu Nation shall provide a comprehensive release to [Nalcor] related to any adverse effects of the [Lower Churchill] project'. Although there are well-known environmental damages to fish, animals and the local ecosystem caused by hydroelectric plants, the agreement mandates that 'Innu Nation shall provide indemnity' to the power company 'related to any adverse effects of the project upon the rights and interests of the Innu of Labrador'. Hence, the Innu must partake of the hydroelectric project, but they alone are responsible for any environmental damage caused by it. The Innu Nation reward for collaboration is a financial stake of 'payments' that include a $5 million 'implementation payment' prior to construction to be paid in instalments over ten years. The Innu will also receive $2 million per year until 2041 in 'full and final compensation' for a previous hydro project on their land (the Upper Churchill dam) about which they were never consulted.[64] Innu people are targeted as a percentage of the employees at the project, and some training programmes will be offered to them. However, given that hardly any Innu in Labrador has university education in the areas of applied science and business, the employment is likely to be confined to manual labour. Perhaps more important is the fact that this project is placed in an area also used by a large number of Innu living in villages in Quebec, but they receive no consideration because Tshash Petapen operates only within the 1927 British demarcated borders of Labrador.

The costs of being cut into the deal are considerable. Firstly, the compensation monies are finite and there is no guarantee that they will be equitably distributed to residents of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish, the two villages that comprise the constituency of Innu Nation, but disproportionately to 'Innu businesses' listed on the agreement. There is therefore a special monetary incentive for particular Innu individuals with business interests in joint ventures to approve the agreement. Such individuals are also encouraged by the fact that aboriginal lands subject to land claims agreements in Labrador and elsewhere have already been staked for developments that powerful companies are determined to complete[65] and the 'certainty' in the agreement applies especially to the ability of businesses to take hold of land without impediment from indigenous peoples.

64 See Samson, *A Way of Life That Does Not Exist*, pp. 102–6.

65 See Alfred's analysis of this general process, *Peace, Power, Righteousness,* pp. 120–7, esp. p. 127.

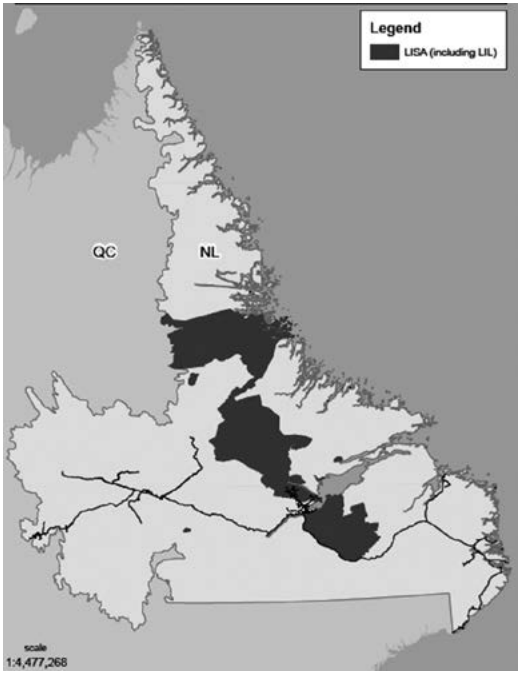


Figure 3.1. Labrador Innu Settlement Area comprising 14,000 square miles. Most of the area is exempted from Impact and Benefit agreements, and includes the Lower Churchill hydroelectric development. Non-marked areas are either claimed in the Labrador Inuit Association land claim or are 'Crown land'.

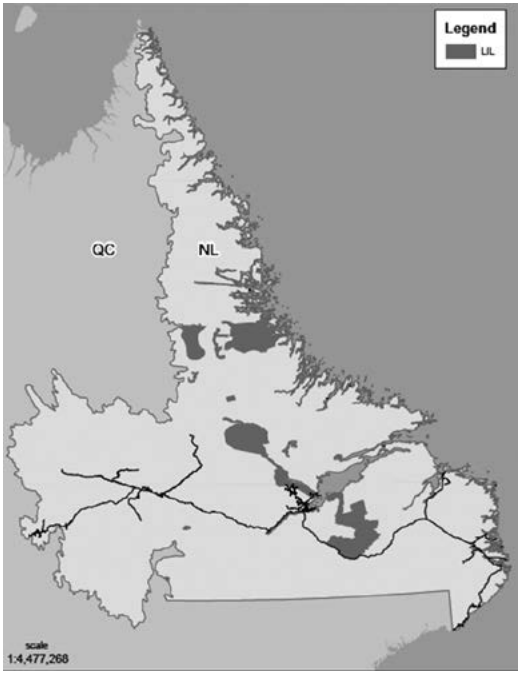


Figure 3.2. Labrador Innu Lands. This is the land base over which Innu Nation will have limited jurisdiction with most of the exemptions of the Labrador Innu Settlement Area still intact. It is approximately 5,000 square miles.

Secondly, much of the stated compensation benefits of the agreement are based on financial speculation. Because it projects *future* profits, the agreement hedged bets, targeting $400 million-worth of business for the Innu, but specifying that if the target is not reached these Innu businesses will receive five per cent of the difference between the amount earned and the target. This benefit for Innu business builds on decades of land claims negotiations in which particular Innu leaders and entrepreneurs have been constituted as 'stakeholders' with material interests in the furtherance of the process itself. Encouragement to sign the agreement is also provided by the non-Innu technical advisers who likewise have economic stakes. The longer the negotiations continue, the more they benefit financially from the lucrative contracts for legal, administrative and environmental assessment work that virtually no Innu person is formally qualified to undertake. While advisers have vested interests in promoting the land claims agreement, unlike the Innu they face few consequences if it fails or proves divisive, since it is not their families and communities that will be affected.[66]

Thirdly, Tshash Petapen is irreversible, and constitutes 'full and final consent' to the terms of the agreement, the linked hydroelectric project and most importantly Innu aboriginal title to the land. The non-Innu commercial interests in the Lower Churchill area are doubly protected by a clause specifying 'non-assertion of aboriginal rights in the Lower Churchill project areas against any person'. Fourthly, the Labrador Innu Lands, identified on the map attached to the agreement, amounts to a massive diminution of the traditional land base (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2) and includes various 'access corridors' for resource extraction activities (such as the Pants Lake area the Mushuau Innu favour for caribou hunting). Other lands historically used by the Innu on the map are marked to be 'Crown land', although no prior occupation of such lands can be traced to the Canadian state or its non-Innu citizens.

Fifth, the Innu Nation signatories to Tshash Petapen are comprised only of those who have been configured under the jurisdiction of a Canadian-funded administrative organisation called Innu Nation. This organisation represents people who happen to have ended up in villages that are inside Labrador. The related Innu settled in villages in Quebec have always used the lands in question, including Mista-Shipu. The late Ulderic MacKenzie of Matemekush, whom I interviewed in 2007, is one among many 'Quebec Innu' born on the banks of Mista-Shipu.[67] The signing of the agreement therefore makes the Innu

66 A similar point about the position of external advisers is made by Cornell and Kalt, 'Two approaches to economic development on American Indian reservations', p. 14.

67 Interview with Ulderic MacKenzie, 5 April 2007.

Nation party to a unilateral extinguishment of the land rights of Innu in such villages as Uashat, Maliotenam, Matimekush, Kawawachikamach, Unamenshipu, Pukuat-shipu, Natashquan and Ekuantshit.

Even within the Labrador villages, the agreement is subject to ambivalence, conflict and complaints of a lack of information. A proposed vote in January 2009 over the agreement was shelved at the last minute for fear that it would not get the required majority.[68] Since this time Innu registered in the Quebec villages have continued to hunt caribou in Labrador and have protested by blockading a mine on land close to Matimekush, but on the Labrador side of the border.[69] Their protests underline the fact that Tshash Petapen threatens to destroy the last vestiges of pan-Innu identity, further segmenting them into separate competing factions in distinct Canadian jurisdictions.

Land claims agreements do not actually recognise aboriginal rights to self-determination but, in a climate of stress and duress, make aboriginal signatories parties to the extinguishment of their pre-existing ownership rights. Like the allotment procedures that created Indian reservations over a century ago in the US, land claims are justified by appealing to a discourse of indigenous betterment. In the same spirit of the US allotment policy, spearheaded by Henry Dawes, the land claims process transfers indigenous lands to the state and resource extraction companies. Land claims agreements are designed to eliminate the last 'burdens on the Crown' and legitimise Canadian ownership of indigenous lands. This process is a preliminary to opening the land for economic and industrial development. As Canadian delegate John Sinclair said in a statement to the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples in Geneva in 2004 at which I was present, 'Certainty will help attract investment and economic growth'.[70] That is, the elimination of collective indigenous interests on the land will remove obstacles to companies wanting to capitalise on natural resources. In effect, 'certainty' removes any perceived 'uncertainty' for investors.[71]

The land claims process, purported to be a solution to the Innu's social and economic problems, instead has become a source of further destabilisation. Over the last two decades there have been several spontaneous protests, especially at the Sheshatshiu Innu Band Council and the Innu Nation, during which protesters have occupied and closed down the buildings.[72] Corruption and nepotism in the distribution of funds are mostly cited as reasons for

68 See McCarthy, 'Land claims vote delayed' and 'Innu Nation's "New Dawn" deal not well received'.

69 Canadian Business, 'One hundred and fifty Innu exercise their rights to ancestral caribou hunting'; CBC News, 'Quebec Innu block N.L. mine site'.

70 Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (John Sinclair's review of UN working group on indigenous populations developments, 19–23 July 2004).

71 See Blackburn, 'Searching for guarantees in the midst of uncertainty: negotiating Aboriginal rights and title in British Columbia', pp. 586–96.

72 See for example, CBC News, 'Protesters shut down more Innu offices'.

protesting. As Naisa Penashue told me, 'Now we only shout about money. That's all that people talk about. Money wasn't talked about back then' [when she was travelling on the land before settlement].[73] Ulderic McKenzie made similar observations: 'The government thinks the Innu are stupid. They think we are like pigeons. When you throw bread the pigeons go after it. They throw money at us in this manner. They think all we do is peck on the money'.[74]

At a deeper level, the type of entrepreneurship fostered by the Canadian land claims policy is seen by many hunters as antithetical to the Innu idea of *nutshimit*, since it only assists with the removal of lands from Innu use and the disturbance of local ecologies that are necessary for country-based activities. Indeed, conflicts over using lands for resource extraction and personal enrichment have divided Innu families, as for example when Peter Penashue, the Innu Nation Vice President at the time of the negotiations, who is a joint venture entrepreneur and briefly became a Conservative MP, promoted the Lower Churchill hydroelectric project to the public dismay of his mother Elizabeth Penashue. Elizabeth is a long-time advocate of maintaining Innu hunting culture and an initiator of a 150-mile annual walk from Sheshatshiu to Minipi.[75]

Tshash Petapen fits the legally sanctioned pattern of dispossession across the far north as minerals and other resources have been discovered on indigenous lands. For example, only after the Prudhoe Bay oil find did the US government pass the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), which 'rejected all claims to original ownership of land by the indigenous population in exchange for a sum of $926.5 million … and packages of land that amounted to 44 million acres'.[76] Indigenous peoples in these lands – ten per cent of Alaska's land mass – are allowed a measure of self-government but are under US sovereignty and only have surface rights. The remaining 90 per cent of Alaska that they relinquished was opened up to oil, mineral and other forms of industrialisation. The funds were distributed via 13 native corporations, but about half of the compensation monies accrued through revenue sharing with oil companies already embarked upon their operations. The Act is a kind of prototype for Tshash Petapen. Both are based on the legal principles of extinguishment and certainty, which are prerequisites for more fluid appropriations of indigenous lands, and both transform indigenous peoples into capitalists, while at the same time opening the door to the use of their lands for resource extraction. With a few word substitutions, Sara Wheeler's summation of ANCSA could equally apply to Tshash Petapen, 'the Act was designed to bring indigenous people into

73 Interview with Naisa Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 20 April 2006.
74 Interview with Ulderic McKenzie, Matimekush, Quebec, 5 April 2007.
75 McCarthy, 'Innu Nation's "New Dawn" deal not well received'.
76 Sale and Potapov, *The Scramble for the Arctic*, p. 78.

a business economy like all good Americans … It was also designed to clear the way for large scale non-Native mineral extraction. Which it did.'[77]

These radical changes have stretched indigenous peoples' communitarian values to breaking point.[78] Indeed, there is evidence that the Canadian government is investigating ways of stretching them further by transforming many reserves with successful businesses to complete private or fee simple ownership and abolishing what some right-wing commentators regard as the 'socialism' of common land ownership.[79] As Michael Asch pointed out, in respect of the early years of the Dene's transformation through resource extraction businesses in the Northwest Territories, 'it is concentrating wealth in the hands of those who are least capable or willing to use it in socially useful ways, while at the same time helping to undermine the respect for others who perform socially more valuable labour'.[80]

While some commercialisation and decollectivisation came about as a result of the fur trade, and sedentarisation reinforced these, both changes permitted the continuation of hunting. Tshash Petapen will still permit Innu people to hunt, but it will diminish the hunting territories, and the hydroelectric project at the heart of it will remove other areas crucial to the larger ecosystem. While this diminution of Innu cultural practices occurs, there will be a corresponding shift incurred by the injection of compensation monies and Innu business opportunities in resource extraction. It is difficult to predict what this will bring about, and some indigenous groups are now actively moving in this direction, but the erosion of egalitarianism and, as I shall discuss in the next chapter, the creation of marked social inequalities are predictable consequences of the imposition of a capitalist economy based on very short-term exploitation of natural resources.

From decolonisation to neocolonialism

Luther Standing Bear would have recognised Tshash Petapen, for it recognises little in indigenous peoples beyond its name. The agreement does, however, recognise enough of the transformative potential of the Innu who, through voting for the agreement in 2011, assented to a course of events designed to remove them as obstacles to further privatisation of their lands.[81] It wilfully

77 Wheeler, *The Magnetic North*, p. 73.

78 In British Columbia, the Nisga'a transformed collective to private property ownership rights following their 1998 land claims deal. See Hunter, 'Land ownership changes mark new chapter in Nisga'a history'.

79 Curry, 'Natives fear Ottawa aiming to convert reserves to private land ownership'; Rowinski, 'Why privatization of reserve land risks Aboriginal ruin'.

80 Asch, 'The Dene economy', p. 57.

81 For a commentary on the voting arrangements and implications for informed consent to this, see Samson and Cassell, 'The long reach of frontier justice'.

ignores their older and more democratic political traditions, imposing its own system of electoral representation in which the vote replaces meaningful consensual deliberation;[82] it fails to see how they may see the land as a lived, shared and embodied space; it ignores their history as one mobile people, but instead treats the village structures created by Canada, and boundaries demarcated by the British, as meaningful divisions of the Innu people.

As the Tshash Petapen agreement suggests, the achievement of indigenous self-government and land rights is neither the end of colonisation, nor the start of decolonisation. Rather, it is another twist on the unjust dialogue, imposing the state's own pan-Canadian approach to resolving conflict over lands and rights, doing so almost entirely in the English language, and failing to undertake any consultation with indigenous parties over how they think conflicts should be resolved.[83] The disconnect between the realities of Innu life and state policy is narrowed by the inclusion of selected 'stakeholders', drawn from a small number of Innu who became officials in the political bodies in the settlements. The agreement gives these individuals material investments in damming, flooding and making electricity on ancestral lands. In this sense, Tshash Petapen is a means of assimilation, emphasising *private* accumulation of capital.

One of the primary ways in which this transformation is secured is by making the private appropriation of collective land a factor acting against Innu cultural continuity. Hunting relies on sharing the land and its resources and removes people from some market relationships by providing subsistence. Although it is never an either/or situation, the encampment of hydroelectric generating plants and mining on areas used for hunting and fishing situate people differentially within a global market. While hunting ensured the wellbeing or at least the survival of the group, resource extraction under neoliberal economics generates incentives for well-positioned individuals to make money, travel and buy possessions that were outside their imagination a generation ago. Their makeover as signatories to joint venture projects, and as corporate stakeholders in 'energy production', represents a radical shift in both the ethics of individuals and the meanings the indigenous group ascribes to nature.

The orientation of indigenous peoples to the values, beliefs and authority structures of neoliberalism involves the manufacture of a kind of syncretism by which various indigenous icons, beliefs, sensibilities and practices are invoked to elicit collaboration in a new social order. In the transformed society, some of the material benefits are shared with selected indigenous elites and

82 On the role of imposed political structures, and specifically the vote in northern Aboriginal communities, see Kulchyski, *Like The Sound of a Drum*, pp. 58–9. See also the account of 'aboriginal democracy' in Helin, *Dances with Dependency*, pp. 141–8.

83 The failures of the broader liberal approach to recognising cultural diversity in Canada are discussed in some depth in Tully, *Strange Multiplicity* esp. pp. 34–6.

communities, while companies – often sporting indigenous names – and the state commandeer the lion's share. While land claims are sometimes presented as a form of citizenship rights in which indigenous groups stand to gain from becoming partners in development,[84] it is obvious that such developments would not occur unless they were profitable to the developers themselves.

An instructive parallel is found in Joyce Cary's 1930s novel *The American Visitor*. The story, set in northern Nigeria, depicts a British colonial administrator attempting to balance the preservation of indigenous ways of life with 'civilisation'. Illustrating the thinking behind the process by which decolonisation becomes neocolonialism, the novel shows the kinds of existential dilemmas this poses for the individuals involved in the transformation. At the time, parts of northern Nigeria were being earmarked for private tin mining and mahogany logging. The success of these projects depended upon forming a cohesive 'nation' among the natives to provide legitimacy. The pensive, but often-inspired administrator, Bewsher raises his tumbler to the idea of an indigenous 'Birri nation',[85] even though 'the word for nation made them laugh, for the Birri had no word for such an odd thing and Obai used one invented by Bewsher himself meaning the all-Birri'. The idea was parodied as the equivalent of the 'all-fish', the 'all-goats', the 'all-calabashes' and the like.[86]

Just like aboriginal 'citizenship' in Canada, the invention of indigenous nationhood was a prerequisite for avoiding a rapacious corporate occupation of indigenous lands, but citizenship and nationhood cannot avoid development itself. The 'game', as Bewsher thinks of it, is '[f]ederation, native courts, a code of law; in a year the Birri would have a body as well as a soul. The tribe would be saved as a people. And with federation accomplished he could let the traders in'.[87] Because naked colonial occupation in Africa increasingly met indigenous resistance, justifying the commercial development of their lands was often delegated to natives themselves. It was the go-betweens of that world, people such as Bewsher, who were in charge of delegating. They were close enough to the natives, but visibly far enough away from the state and companies to assist in the transformations – precisely the position taken by some non-native advisers in the Canadian land claims system.[88] In order to guarantee such a fate, natives needed to have possession, occupation and reward from designated institutions specifically empowered to barter or buy collaboration. At the conclusion of hostilities that would open the way for the mining and logging of Birri lands, Henry, one of the headmen, 'has opened a store in the Paré minefield and is doing a splendid trade in condemned tinned meats slightly blown, second-

84 See Stern, 'Land claims, development and the pipeline to citizenship', pp. 105–18.
85 Cary, *An American Visitor*, p. 87.
86 Ibid., p. 46.
87 Ibid. p. 209.
88 See Samson, pp. 57–86.

hand caps and trousers, aphrodisiacs and smuggled gin. Abortions sixpence.'[89] Henry has succeeded in completing the transformation from a respected Birri leader into a small-time entrepreneur profiting from the adulteration of tribal lands.

North America abounds in Bewsher's 'federations' with indigenous characters like Henry buying and selling the things suddenly made necessary by incorporation into settler states. 'Absolutely central to neocolonialism', Colin Leys explained, is this ability to make a living from the new order and with it 'the formation of classes, or strata, within a colony, which are closely allied to and dependent on foreign capital, and which form the real basis of support for the regime which supports the colonial administration.'[90] This is close to 'indirect rule', established as a colonial strategy in British Africa. As anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski approvingly pointed out: Indirect Rule involves the recognition of Native Law with certain provisos; the need for new powers of legislation which can be delegated to Native chiefs; the division in jurisdiction, leaving the ultimate control in the hands of Europeans but most of the handing to Natives.[91] In a 1929 manifesto, 'Practical Anthropology', Malinowski argued that 'Indirect cultural control is the only way of developing economic life, the administration of justice by Native to Natives, the raising of morals and education on indigenous lines, and the development of truly African art, culture, and religion.'[92] While more aggressive methods could also bring about external control and indigenous transformation, more durable change could be brought about by eliciting collaboration.

Although the introduction of certain technologies into indigenous societies had necessarily eroded egalitarianism and encouraged individualism,[93] legally-sanctioned organisational methods were more compelling means of effecting economic and social change and securing external control via proxies. As decolonisation approached, power was gradually handed over to those in the colonised society most assimilated to the worldview and assumptions of the colonisers. This worked in Africa through a system of patronage in which families in various favoured ethnic groups, such as the Kikuyu in Kenya, became bound into the market economy through trade and wage labour. They also were able to benefit from indirect rule and 'notables quickly learned to turn to commercial advantage the colonial chieftains which they were able to obtain, and laid the foundations for many petty-bourgeois family fortunes'.[94] This new 'tribalism' in turn percolated into a modern social class structure.

89 Cary, *An American Visitor*.
90 Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya*, p. 26.
91 Malinowki, *The Dynamics of Culture Change*, pp. 144–5.
92 Malinowski, 'Practical anthropology', pp. 22–38.
93 In some hunting societies rifles had this effect. See Graburn, *Eskimos Without Igloos*, p. 109.
94 Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya*, p. 200.

This process, with all the attendant patronage and clientelism, is rife across the Canadian north through incentives offered in land claims agreements, but also through the selling-off of lands after treaties and agreements have been concluded. Today's indigenous elites are enmeshed in complex patronage systems between their own communities, the state and corporations. As Cornell and Kalt have explained, the 'standard approach' to American Indian economic development means:

> that there are enormous incentives for tribal politicians to retain control of scarce resources and use them to stay in office. This leads to patronage, political favoritism and, in some cases, corruption. It reduces politics to a battle between factions trying to gain or keep control of tribal government resources that they can then distribute to friends and relatives. People vote for whomever they think will send more resources in their direction. Leadership becomes almost meaningless under these conditions: the nation isn't really going anywhere; it's just shoving resources around among factions.[95]

'Shoving resources around among factions' is the upshot of the immense rewards for those in office. The rewards can best be obtained through patronage, which includes everything from taking campaign contributions from multinational corporations to giving out bribes to voters as witnessed in the week-long candidate-funded drinking sprees in Innu villages in Labrador, and the bribery and corruption that is rampant in aboriginal community elections across Canada.[96] Patronage is vital because the monies delivered to the Labrador villages are channelled through political bodies whose officials have the power to decide how they are distributed. Because elections decide who divides up the funds that flow into the community, those who obtain jobs, payments, contracts, trips, educational training and the like are those who are strategically placed within the patronage system. The 'practical sovereignty' that Cornell and Kalt recommended as a prerequisite for 'sustainable, successful economic development' is difficult to achieve in circumstances such as those that prevail in many indigenous communities across North America, where the accumulated knowledge of the people has been replaced by clientelist bureaucracies. These bureaucrats, while not always ignoring their indigenous intellectual inheritances, have necessarily had to understand the problems that have confronted them in terms dictated by the state.

Like the treaties of the 19th-century US, Canadian land claims today are fashioned from social suffering and promise alleviation through capitalism. Indeed, Economic Man can be seen perched atop the leadership structures of indigenous organisations, and anyone who desires can point to these

95 Cornell and Kalt, 'Two approaches to economic development on American Indian reservations', p. 8.

96 See Sandberg, 'Corruption infects the councils of many First Nations reserves'; CBC News, 'Booze used to buy Natuashish votes, court told'.

individuals as evidence of indigenous peoples' desire for non-indigenous kinds of prosperity and change. The fact that indigenous individuals end up as enthusiastic advocates of profit derived from the industrialisation of their own lands can be held up as proof.

These transformations can be observed across North America and they are not reliant upon patronage alone. Hence, a proposed $3 billion coal-fired power plant was approved by the Navajo Nation in 2009. As the Desert Rock power companies' website makes clear, with just under half of Navajo families living under the US poverty line, the 1,000 jobs and $52 million annual revenue to the tribal government it says it will provide over the next four years, are all attractive to present-day Navajo.[97] The high Navajo unemployment rates make collaboration with the coal company compelling and is a necessity of survival for many, even though similar projects in the past have only employed small numbers.[98] Perhaps the most extreme possibility is the use of indigenous lands, not for commercial industrial production but as a repository for the toxic debris of such production. This is the case for high-level nuclear waste storage, which was proposed by leaders at the Goshute Skull Valley reservation in Utah, in association with a consortium of nuclear utility companies. The project, now shelved, was depicted as a means of assisting with 'hopelessness, alcoholism, migration, and language loss' and 'a bottom-line tool for cultural survival.'[99] If it went ahead, the Goshutes' land would be a store for thousands of nuclear fuel assemblies, each containing ten times the long-term radioactivity released by the Hiroshima bomb over a 30-year period and weighing 44,000 tons in total.[100]

This backdrop helps explain why some families and individuals in indigenous communities find commercial uses of their lands attractive and why they might tolerate corruption, nepotism and destruction of the environment.[101]

97 See www.sitheglobal.com/projects/desertrock.cfm (accessed 22 Jan. 2013); Fonseca and Foy, 'Proposed coal plant pits economy v. Navajo belief'.

98 'In 1975 … during the height of the energy boom on the Navajo Reservation, mineral development provided jobs for less than 5 percent of the Navajo labor force; 67 percent remained unemployed or underemployed'. See Ambler, *Breaking Iron Bonds*, pp. 29–30.

99 Lewis, 'Skull Valley Goshutes and the politics of nuclear waste', p. 321.

100 Davis, *Dead Cities and Other Tales*, p. 59.

101 In a similar context, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing discussed the agency required of indigenous forest peoples to make their habitat uninhabitable in collaboration with powerful logging corporations. As she put it, 'I will not erase the conditions of terror in which agency is sometimes formed. I will tell stories of destruction'. See Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, p. 26.

Chapter 4

Nature and nation-building

The only feelings one experiences in journeying through these flowered wildernesses where, as in Milton's Paradise, all is prepared to receive man, are a tranquil admiration, a vague distaste for civilized life, a sweet and melancholy emotion, a sort of wild instinct which makes one reflect with sadness that soon this delightful solitude will be completely altered … in a few years the European will have cut the trees reflected in the limpid waters of the lake and forced the animals peopling its banks to retire to new wildernesses.

Alexis de Tocqueville[1]

…once the land was consolidated into a single nation, proper trouble started – the kind of trouble, it turns out, that never goes away, taking on a life of its own and playing out unenvisaged dramas that resonate throughout the circumpolar north.

Sara Wheeler[2]

Communicating with nature

The liberal market economy that facilitated settler colonialism and induced transformations of indigenous peoples, continually transforms nature. Indigenous land is the site for settler societies, nation building and the accumulation of capital. In this chapter, I will first sketch out the ideas and practices that settler societies necessarily supplanted.

While there are, of course, many variations and exceptions, non-capitalist economies such as those which Native North Americans operated were not based on the idea of nature as a commodity or of continual transformation of nature.[3] Their more conservative view of the environment is largely incompatible with the ethos of private economic gain. However, as we have seen, processes such

1 Quoted in Pierson, *Tocqueville in America*, p. 167.

2 Wheeler, *The Magnetic North*, p. 111.

3 There are various debates about the extent to which Native Americans were and are 'ecological'. See for example, Harkin and Lewis, *Native Americans and the Environment*. I do not presume to make any definitive judgment on this, but only to state that indigenous peoples have generally been far less aggressive in altering the physical environment than the emissaries of settler colonialism.

as the land claims system in Canada and the realities of material poverty and marginalisation in the US have pressured some indigenous groups, or at least their leaderships, to collaborate in resource extraction capitalism which is at variance with this conservative approach to the environment.

Until recently, indigenous peoples maintained their lands largely without money or profit-centred commerce, and while doing so they also maintained cultural continuity. Hunters traditionally have 'nothing resembling in any way our commercial ideas of "money" and "value"'.[4] As mentioned in the previous chapter, their relationship with animals is dependent on the building up of goodwill between themselves and the animals they hunt. This relationship is a long-term association extending back, according to Innu legends, for example, to times when animals and humans spoke the same language and when mammoths roamed the northern lands not covered by ice. Native American legends commonly tell of transformations and communications between humans and animals, and these show affinities and interdependence between different life forms. One of the most famous Innu legends is that of the boy who married a caribou, a tale of transformation and survival, which speaks to the negotiations made between humans and animals so that both can survive.[5] Sharing the meat of the animal was part of the unspoken agreement by which animals gave themselves to hunters.[6] Again, until recently, most hunters believed that intimate social or spiritual relationships bound them to animals in a process of mutual engagement in the world.[7] 'The skilled hunters were shamans', Dominic Pokue told me several years after our experiences at Utshisk-nipi, 'they would speak to the animals, they knew how to communicate with the animals … Once the shaman communicates with the animals, the hunt is always successful. Once this has been done, we know for certain where the animals are. The animal spirits are like government. They hand out permits to the Innu to kill animals'.[8]

4 Graburn, *Eskimos Without Igloos*, p. 72.

5 See the masterful telling of this legend by Innu hunter, Kaniuekutat, in Henriksen, *I Dreamed the Animals*, pp. 39–52.

6 See Bodenhorn, 'It's good to know who your relatives are, but we were taught to share with everyone', pp. 27–60.

7 See, for example, Coon, *The Hunting Peoples*; Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment*.

8 Interview with Dominic Pokue, Sheshatshiu, 1 July 2003.

Figure 4.1. Dominic Pokue, 2005. 'The animal spirits are like government. They hand out permits to the Innu to kill animals'.

Mary Adele Penashue made the same point about the connections between successful hunting and the intercession of a shaman, 'there were some times when we could find no caribou, but as long as there was an elder in the camp who was a shaman, we could use him to find animals. The shaman was always assisted by someone outside. When a shaman says something, it happens like that.'[9] Dreams and the playing of the *teueikan* (drum) helped to mediate between the shaman and the animals and remain important methods of perception among older Innu today. The Innu and other hunting peoples typically personify animals as 'he' or 'she' and often describe relationships between animals and people, using names such as 'grandfather bear.' Animals also think, act and have emotions. Describing a caribou, Matthieu Mestekosho remarked, 'but instead of running off right away, it stopped and, without noticing us, sat right down to think about the ice it had just crossed.'[10]

In the cosmology of hunting peoples, the relationships with the land and the animals are so profound that they are continued after death, at which time people go back to the land to travel and hunt animals. There is a conceptual separation between life and death, but it is permeable. The end of physical life is not thought to be a chasm forever removing us from the 'real' world nor is it

9 Interview with Mary Adele Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 3 July 2003.
10 Bouchard, *Caribou Hunter*, p. 53.

either a heavenly paradise or inferno. To many indigenous peoples, the dead, although they are 'late' in that we do not see them as we do the living, are alive in other ways. Dead people are alive on the land and also in the minds of the living. Crucially, the dead are not removed to another location of existence but remain with us.

Social relationships, however, are manifold, since it is not only humans and animals that are entwined but other sentient beings inhabiting the land. These beings instil a kind of fear in hunting peoples that help them maintain this conservative approach to the environment. Some of these creatures are seen and can be seen, if rarely, like *katshimatsheshu*, others are not seen but are thought to be present. After spending some time at Lake Kameshtashten in the interior of northern Labrador, I had a conversation with my friend George Rich, who asked, 'Did you see the *kamestasteniunuts*?'

> 'No, but are they *katshimatsheshu*?' I replied.
>
> 'No, they're different. They only travel at night. These ones live around Kameshtashten, and it's said that they are very hard to see. If you see them, bad things might happen. Johnny Tuma told me that one night when he was in his tent something grabbed his arm and pulled it outside the tent. It felt very heavy and strong but he resisted. He held on to the stick in the tent used for holding candles. He said the hand felt very hairy. Eventually he was able to loosen its grip and it went away. The next day they didn't see any tracks.'

When I have been in the country many Innu have told me such stories. Even younger people speak of these living beings. Jonathan Walsh, a humble and handsome young man, was in a group of youths that I joined who were riding skidoos up the Orma Lake Road, north of Churchill Falls. He told me that he and his friends had seen *katshimatsheshu* on the Mista-Shipu (the Churchill River), paddling canoes and looking like people. Jonathan's party saw them come to the shore, but when his group reached the landing spot, they could see no tracks or signs of their presence. A few days later on the same trip, one that heightened our sense of dependence on nature as the skidoos started to break down and we realised we might not make it far enough to find caribou, Etienne Pone spoke more about the living dead. Looking out through the tent flap, his eyes scanned the white frosting of the lake and the dark green forests. 'Lots of people out there', he said to me, 'I believe the dead are all around out there. Some say they live on caribou, porcupine and other animals, but they are smaller than our ones'. The dead and beings like *katshimatsheshu* form part of the environment itself. They, like animals, are living, feeling and reasoning beings.

Consequently, many hunters believe that having an appropriate respect for these various beings and treating animals correctly is essential to human fate. Cruelty, indiscriminate killing or disrespectful treatment may result in future adversities or even death. The reindeer herding Evenki of Siberia, for

example, blamed changes in the behaviour and migration patterns of animals on the 'lack of respect shown to migrating herds at the dozen points … where hired marksmen … efficiently but unceremoniously slaughtered thousands of migrating deer with automatic weapons'.[11] Yet, it is not only brutal culls that signal disrespect, but failure to observe subtle courtesies. Matthieu Mestekosho spoke of his grandfather reprimanding a hunter for carrying a caribou foetus, without covering it in a bag and warned of a cold north wind to follow. The next day, 'it was almost dawn when the north wind started blowing'.[12] By making connections between disrespect for animals and human adversities, many hunters say they can 'see' how an act of disrespect leads to problems. In doing so, they enlarge upon the scientific conception of sight to incorporate the discerning of invisible forces. This expansion of sense perception is something upon which they depend, and may account for the incredible precision with which hunters are able to locate animals, navigate perilous topography and find materials for tools and shelter.

While there was among some groups what one author calls 'indiscriminate killing and selective use of carcasses under prehistoric and early fur trade conditions,'[13] conservation of animals and the habitat within which they and people live has been one of the prime determinants of the annual cycles of hunters. Survival depends on acting collectively and taking a long-term perspective to preserve the environments that furnish hunters with a living. In northeastern Canada for example, hunting peoples dispersed themselves over wide areas, varied their routes and left certain areas fallow in order to allow animal stocks to repopulate. Even the seasonal migrations of the Innu from the interior forests to the coasts were governed by considerations of this sort, rather than purely because European missionaries and traders were installed along the coasts from the 17th century onwards.[14]

This does not mean that hunters made no changes to the natural environment. Trails and portage routes were maintained by constant use. Tanner observed that the Innu created 'berry farms' by burning pieces of the forest and growing berries in the carbon-rich soil.[15] Even during the early settlement period, Mushuau Innu set fire to particular areas of the country, often islands in lakes and rivers to encourage berry growth. For this reason,

11 Anderson, *Identity and Ecology in Arctic Siberia*, p.14.

12 Bouchard, *Caribou Hunter*, p. 66.

13 See Brightman, *Grateful Prey*, p. 296. There were times when Western Cree hunters killed vast numbers of animals and used only parts of the animals. Reconstructing evidence from 18th-century observers, Brightman argues that this practice was undertaken in order to minimise labour and to use particular parts of animals as and when they were needed instead of using the entire animal at all times, ibid., p. 257.

14 Tanner, *Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador*, p. 629.

15 Ibid., p. 684.

a forest fire a few years ago near the airstrip in Natuashish gladdened many women.[16] The fire also created good dry firewood, gradually felled by the people in the village. Similarly some groups of Aborigines in Australia have used fire as a means of both finding animals and creating habitats for them,[17] and British Columbia natives used fire for a wide variety of purposes such as stimulating berry growth to provide more food sources for birds, animals and a variety of plants.[18] Small-scale fire-setting was important as a shield to large and destructive forest fires. However, the intensive private partitioning of lands that accompanied the European settlement of indigenous lands required fire suppression efforts to protect each individual's property. Indigenous fire-setting practices were subsequently banned under state and city ordinances and, as a result, carbon-rich soils that many plants need for regeneration were eliminated. Ironically, the proliferation of protected stands of trees then supplied tinder for the fast-spreading forest fires across North America and Australia that now make headlines each summer.

While indigenous peoples manage their environments, there have historically been few attempts by indigenous hunters or agriculturists to make significant and enduring ecological transformations. This helps explain why, at least in the initial phases of negotiations over resource extraction on their lands in more recent years, indigenous groups have often been opposed to 'development' projects.[19] At a basic level, altering the environment compromises the delicate ecological balances that ensure food supplies. The avoidance of anything resembling manufacturing or the commercial use of nature means that hunting ecologies have not substantially changed over time. Even with the use of modern hunting and fishing methods, norms about limiting the number and type of animals they take has helped sustain populations and mitigate the effects of new technologies in highly unpredictable environments.[20] Natural

16 Discussion with George Rich, 12 March 2010.

17 Johnston et al., 'Ecohealth and aboriginal testimony', p. 495.

18 Turner, *The Earth's Blanket*, pp. 151–61.

19 Certainly this was the case with the Innu in Labrador, who commissioned several reports, each of which details community members' criticisms and concerns over mining, hydroelectric power generation and other projects. See Innu Nation, *Ntesinan Nteshiniman Nteniunan*; Innu Nation, *A Matter of Respect*; Innu Nation documentary film, *Ntapueu: I Am Telling the Truth*; Innu Nation, *Money Doesn't Last, The Land is Forever*; Innu Nation press release, 'Innu nation response to Voisey's Bay Project release'; Innu Nation, *Power Struggle*.

20 See Berkes et al., 'Wildlife harvesting and sustainable regional native economy in the Hudson and James Bay lowland, Ontario', pp. 350–60. This detailed study of the Omushkego Cree of northern Ontario's hunting patterns and country food consumption indicates how light is the touch of indigenous groups on the land. There are some 6,500 residents of eight communities, who consume 402 g of meat per adult per day. Four species account for two-thirds of all meat procured and, in all, 41 species are eaten. The hunting of these four species amounts to yearly totals

fluctuations in Arctic and tundra environments are common, and hunters have to be responsive to the changing seasons and periods of wildlife abundance and scarcity. On Baffin Island, caribou populations fell by nine per cent each year from 1910 to 1940, but then rose by eight per cent each year to 1980.[21] These variations were not due to changes in hunting effort by the Inuit. As Wagner maintained, 'to have existed in any area for as long a time as they did, these hunting and gathering societies must have been non-disruptive elements of the ecosystems of which they were a part'.[22]

Indeed, as the survival and well-being of hunters depends on the animals, their task is to safekeep the status quo. As Julius Lips remarked of the more southerly Innu in the period shortly after World War Two:

> Since hunting and trapping constitute the backbone of the economic structure of these Indians, they certainly know how to preserve the animals on whose bagging their whole existence is based. The catching and killing of game animals is organized in such a manner as to safeguard a certain amount of economic security. The game of the area is not decimated but, rather preserved, and skilfully protected. One was, and still is, interested in the increase of the game. No Indian would kill all beaver populating a beaver house or harm the mother of a number of very young beavers, since the offspring would perish miserably if the mother were killed or caught … growing out of economic reasons, the relationship of the Indians to the game is not hostile, aiming merely at the destruction and bagging of prey, but rather friendly, with an eye on the preservation of species.[23]

Conservation has also been the goal of many indigenous peoples who are not principally hunters. To them, disturbing or intensively using the environment would be counterproductive since it diminishes the numbers of animals, fish and plants and the habitats that these food sources need. In the Haida Gwai islands off British Columbia, the Haida took great care to preserve the highly prized abalone by harvesting only the largest, and then only in spring at low tide. In contrast, commercial fishermen had no such reservations and 'within a pitifully short time, beds that were once piled thickly with abalone, two and three deep, were completely cleaned out.'[24] The same

of 150,000 kg of moose, 120,000 kg of Canada goose, 105,000 kg of caribou, and 88,000 kg of lesser snow goose. There were 925 active hunters in the 1,116 households, who harvested between 8–20 kg of meat per day of hunting effort. Yet they travel across an area of 250,000 km^2, with an average density of one person per 38 km^2.

21 M. Ferguson et al., 'Inuit knowledge of long-term changes in a population of Arctic tundra caribou', pp. 201–19.

22 Wagner, 'Domestic hunting and fishing by Manitoba Indians', pp. 333–49.

23 Lips, 'Notes on Montagnais-Naskapi economy (Lake St. John and Lake Mistassini Bands)', pp. 5–6.

24 Turner, *The Earth's Blanket*, pp. 128–9.

depletion occurred to other North American species that 'aggregated', such as the salmon when commercial fishing was introduced. Although Native Americans had sometimes caught great quantities of fish, they varied the timings of the catches, controlled access through a variety of rules and rites, and left sufficient fish to ensure future stocks.[25] Elsewhere along the coast of British Columbia, indigenous groups made a point of '*not* destroying the salmon [as] … a conscious choice',[26] enabling numerous species of fish to flourish and be part of the diet and way of life of the people. Along the coasts of what are now Oregon and California, Karuk peoples built weirs on rivers and creeks for catching salmon. These structures permitted a number to escape, and the taking of fish commenced only after a ceremonial offering, thus limiting annual takes of salmon, but ensuring future supplies. 'In contrast to the coordinated tribal management', Hormel and Norgaard argued, 'Euro-American settlers set up canneries at the river mouth and harvested entire runs. This system led to immediate declines in overall fish volume taken from the river'.[27]

Similarly, pre-reservation-era indigenous farmers in North America varied the lands they used by leaving lands fallow, burning and clearing wooded areas for better soil quality and even adding certain herbs in the planting as a 'medicine' to enrich the crop and deter insects and predators.[28] Indigenous farmers, themselves also part-time hunters, often followed the same cautious policies as northern hunters and Pacific coast fishing people, moving around to find new combinations of wild plants and animals and practising crop rotation in different areas. Referring to the O'odham in Arizona and Sonora, Thomas Sheridan points out that, 'the line between domesticated and wild blurred in O'odham fields, where diversity was more value than yield per unit of land'.[29] Likewise, biologist Gary Paul Nabhan observed

> a mutually beneficial relationship between these plants and their Papago [Tohono O'odham] stewards. The Papago have evolved field management skills that have allowed them to sustain food production for centuries without destroying desert soils. The plants have evolved the ability to grow quickly, root deeply, disperse heat loads, and provide nutritious seeds for those who harvest them.[30]

By contrast, Euro-American farmers in the southwest planted water intensive crops using irrigation and groundwater, thus depleting valuable water stores, and they introduced cattle which quickly stripped much-needed desert grasses.

25 Nicholls, *Paradise Found*, pp. 363–5.
26 Turner, *The Earth's Blanket*, p. 149. Turner also documents intensive clam 'gardens' used to nourish and ensure continued supplies of shellfish, ibid., p. 150.
27 Hormel and Norgaard, 'Bring the salmon home!', p. 353.
28 See, for example, the discussion of Iroquois maize farming in Parker, *Parker on the Iroquois*, pp. 21–34.
29 Sheridan, *Landscapes of Fraud*, p. 37.
30 Nabhan, *The Desert Smells Like Rain*, p. 47.

Just as hunters personify animals, indigenous farmers and gatherers such as the O'odham regard plants as living entities that should be respected as one would other humans. Speaking to Nabhan of the treatment of the huge saguaro cacti, harvested every summer for their nutritious fruits, Marquita, an O'odham woman, pointed out:

> The saguaros – they are Indians too. You don't EVER throw ANYTHING at them. If you hit them in the head with rocks you could kill them. You don't ever stick anything sharp into their skin either or they will just dry up and die. You don't do anything to hurt them. They are Indians too.[31]

Using domesticated and wild crops, indigenous peoples managed the land by employing a wide variety of conservation practices. In turn, these have helped ensure continuous supplies of food. Nancy Turner makes this point forcefully:

> The productivity of the land and sea was not simply a random occurrence in which humans passively accepted their foods or endured hardship if the resources were not forthcoming. Far from it: In carefully monitoring and looking after their resources, in tending, weeding and burning over root gardens; in burning, pruning and even fertilizing their berry patches; in thinning out their clam beds and patches of basket 'grasses'; in keeping their rivers clean and unpolluted, and linking their lives directly to their ancestors and to the spirit world, they were — and are — participating in and contributing to the health and well-being of their territory, all the other life forms and their societies.[32]

Settlers to North America naturally had less significant connections to the environment and all the different animals, fish and plants living within it. Fired with individualism and their disconnections from Europe, their approaches to it were correspondingly more radical. The soils and climates often bore little resemblance to Europe and, during westward expansion, they discovered that environmental conditions across the continent were highly varied. Settlers were frequently ignorant of the kinds of techniques indigenous peoples used to protect the land. While indigenous farmers worked with what the sun and rain provided, varied the kinds of crops they planted and the planting locations, frontier farmers, and later the agribusiness that usurped them, used more intensive and expansionist forms of agriculture because they were bound into a market economic system depending on high yields. In this context, the colonisation of arid lands west of the Mississippi and the industrialisation of farming, and of the landscape in general, helped burgeoning migrant populations survive.

From the outset, communication with nature was through the technologies needed to radically alter the land and make it produce more in a shorter time. Frontier farming in the American West, and indeed most commercial farming

31 Ibid., p. 27.
32 Turner, *The Earth's Blanket*, p. 174.

there today, requires large tracts of land to be brought under cultivation, and the construction of thousands of dams, reservoirs and canals to transport water from the rivers draining out of the major mountain ranges. The widespread use of ground- and river-water irrigation canals has led to the high alkaline waters salting up the earth and making increasingly large swathes of land worthless.[33] The enthusiasm for turning profits from lands with little rainfall led to overgrazing and the near-eradication of valuable native species of plants, grasses, trees and cacti that indigenous peoples depended on for nutrition. Cattle further contributed to the biological denuding and desertification of large swathes of the American West. Agrarian settlement depleted and eroded soils, removed wetlands, forests and other ecosystems, and caused huge losses in animal, fish and bird species. Even when conservation was belatedly introduced, as for example in the US National Parks, it was implemented at the expense of indigenous peoples who were often evicted, as was the case at Yellowstone, Yosemite and the Grand Canyon. Only after the creation of parks on their lands were they brought into the conservation process, and this was relatively recently.[34] To make these places more amenable to tourists and appease neighbouring ranchers, keystone species such as wolves were exterminated, 'setting in motion a biological experiment in ecosystem impoverishment'.[35]

Such biological experiments are common manifestations of nation building, seen also in the Soviet Union[36] and decolonised African countries where vast dam, mine and drilling projects on indigenous groups' lands have established credentials to modernity. New uses of the natural environment were intimately related to appeals to progress and modernisation and some of these, in turn, became symbols of new nations. Among American patriots, Thomas Jefferson was perhaps the most ardent exponent of the rational exploitation of nature. He drafted the original Land Ordinance of 1784, which facilitated the division of lands into grids for settlement. Anyone flying over the vast interior regions of the US today can still see the perfect square patterns latticing the ground. This and other applications of his studies in the sciences, including geography, geology and cartography, supported his vision of the US as competing with Europe to advance in science, economics and other fields.[37] The availability of the vast land mass was essential to Jefferson's version of nation-building.

33 See Nabhan, *The Desert Smells Like Rain*, pp. 128–9; Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*.

34 See Keller and Turek, *American Indians and National Parks*. The removal of indigenous peoples from their lands has been justified by conservation across the globe. See Dowie, *Conservation Refugees*.

35 Fraser, *Rewilding the World*, p. 47. Wolves have since been reintroduced to Yellowstone and a few other places in the American West.

36 Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, p. 352, refers to 'the grand metaphor of universal evolution and Soviet history leading to a state of mechanized – and increasingly personalized – perfection', which was applied to the indigenous peoples of Siberia.

37 Even before the American Revolution, Jefferson was championing American

After exploration, surveying and mapping the US, the next step was the renaming of the transformed natural features to conform to the progressive vision of the nation-state itself. Renaming quickly followed the settlement of the American West that Jefferson encouraged as President, as well as the forays into the far north by British, French and Euro-Canadians.[38] In much the same way European colonisers refashioned local landscapes, holy sites and buildings around the world, the places in North America revered by indigenous peoples were reworked as emblems of the new nation. At Mount Rushmore, for example, the 60-foot-high faces of four American presidents were chiseled into a mountain, renamed after a New York lawyer who saw it in 1885 in the Black Hills, a place called *Paha Sapa* with deep roots in Lakota history and spirituality. These hills were transformed into 'a moment of communion with the very soul of America', in the words of President George H.W. Bush.[39]

Mining and indigenous lands

Renaming was accompanied by appropriations of lands for resource extraction, which in turn established claims to scientific and economic progress that legitimated nation-building. Consequently, indigenous peoples' relationships to land were altered, creating pressure to adopt wage labour. Mining has been and continues to be an especially prominent part of this transformative process.[40]

Mineral discoveries in settler states dictate patterns of settlement, inter-ethnic relationships and the creation of the legal (and often extra-legal) arrangements necessary to secure a transfer of ownership of subsurface rock. Indeed, mining sparked economic bonanzas such as the California Gold Rush, Yukon Klondike and other gold, diamond and silver booms in South America, Australia and Africa that all had drastic effects on indigenous populations in the immediate vicinities of the riches. The Gold (and Diamond) Rushes of the 19th century occurred in what Hannah Arendt called 'the phantom world of race',[41] a time of highly sensitised race consciousness among Europeans who had uprooted themselves to find wealth in places such as the Kimberly in South Africa. During this time, the native Bantu-speaking population, who vastly outnumbered the European miners, were turned into sources of cheap labour.

science and comparing it favourably with Britain, where 'the sun of her glory is fast descending to the horizon'. See Jefferson, *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*, p. 103.

38 For example, see Grace, *Canada and the Idea of the North*, p. 244.

39 Quoted by Glass, 'Producing patriotic inspiration at Mount Rushmore', pp. 270–1.

40 For more complete reviews of the histories and social ramifications of mining on indigenous lands, see Ali, *Mining, the Environment and Indigenous Development Conflicts*; Moody, *Rocks and Hard Places*.

41 Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 197.

In the California Gold Rush the demographic balance rapidly tilted in favour of the immigrants, who used cheap indigenous labour and indentured servitude, but also found it expedient simply to murder and displace Native Americans. The fervour for individual enrichment during both the California Gold Rush of 1849 and the Klondike Gold Rush in 1898 was such that both took place as if the indigenous peoples had no land rights whatsoever. The same occurred with the violent removal of the Black Hills from the Sioux after General Custer's party discovered, in Black Elk's words, 'much of the yellow metal that makes Wasichus [whites] crazy'.[42] Despite the fact that the hills had already been guaranteed within the 'Great Sioux Reservation' in the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie, the US government supported squatters to wrest the land away from the Lakota. This theft became the context for the indigenous resistance embodied in the Ghost Dance and the subsequent crushing of that resistance at the Wounded Knee massacre.[43]

Mining on indigenous lands has almost always resulted in the displacement of indigenous peoples and the loss of places important to them. At the same time, mining disturbs the wider ecology upon which the connections between indigenous peoples and places were formed. The vast chasms of earth excavated, the sides of mountains gouged out, and the dramatic colouring and discolouring of rocks are testimonies to the powers of labour, technology and possession. As Andrew Isenberg remarked of the emergence of company-owned hydraulic mining, which replaced individual prospectors engaged in placer mining, 'hydraulic mining engineers in California certainly did not understate the transformative power of their technology; for them, it radically changed the economic and natural environments, taming nature and laborers alike and thus making placer mining an attractive investment.'[44] Soon after the US annexation of California in 1848, miners poured across the Sierra Nevada mountains at over a thousand a week and claimed the lands for themselves without any of the formalities of treaties that initially accompanied settlement in other parts of the US. The non-indigenous population of California mushroomed from 14,000 in 1848 to 380,000 in 1860 when over $550 million in gold was produced.[45]

The richest gold-bearing regions in California contained the highest concentrations of native peoples. Being dispossessed by the sudden influx of miners, indigenous Californians sporadically retaliated and, when they did, the killing of one or a small number of Euro-American squatters was frequently met by massive retribution. US troops were quickly enlisted in support of the miners. Several massacres of indigenous villages occurred in

42 Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*, p. 79.

43 For a moving contemporary account of this history see Mooney, *The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890*, esp. pp. 69–73. See also Ambler, *Breaking Iron Bonds*, pp. 32–3; Wilson, *The Earth Shall Weep*, pp. 278–82.

44 Isenberg, *Mining California*, p. 25.

45 Ibid., p. 23.

northern California,[46] including the murder of 150 people on the Trinity River in revenge for the killing of one white man in 1852, and the massacre of 50 on an island in Humboldt Bay in 1860.[47] According to one historian, miners and other European settlers embarked on a 'sustained campaign of genocide'.[48] '*Genocide* is a term of awful significance', writes another, 'but one which has application to the story of California's Native Americans.'[49] More movingly, the contemporary observer, Stephen Powers wrote:

> Never before in history has a people been swept away with such terrible swiftness, or appalled into utter and unwhispering silence forever and forever, as were the California Indians by those hundred thousand of the best blood of the nation … Let a tribe complain that the miners muddied their salmon streams, or steal a few pack-mules, and in twenty days there might not be a soul of them living.[50]

Just as the near-extermination of the bison on the Great Plains enriched Euro-American industrialists and farmers at the expense of indigenous Plains peoples,[51] Native Californians were also killed indirectly as their sources of food were destroyed in the scramble for mineral riches. Indeed, official reports estimated that by 1878, less than 20 years after the initial Gold Rush, 'hydraulic mining debris had destroyed half of the salmon habitat in the state'.[52] The destruction of food staples like the salmon, and the making of lands adjacent to mining camps uninhabitable, prompted many indigenous men to take up wage labour in the mining camps. Some indigenous women became prostitutes, others married miners, and yet others became indentured servants.

The boom years were short-lived for the miners, but the changes made to the lives of indigenous peoples were permanent. The mineral-driven genocide in California was the primary context for the rapid enclosure of surviving indigenous peoples into small reservations without even the usual prerequisite of treaties.[53] Indigenous survivors found their lands drastically altered. Even where the scale and number of men involved were not so large, frontier mining almost always disturbed native lands irreversibly. The destruction of woods, rivers, plants and animals made indigenous ways of life unsustainable even if survivors had the fortitude to pursue them. Amadeo Rea's book on how the transformation of the Gila River affected O'odham lifestyles shows how mining (and other forms of colonisation) contributed to the 'death' of the Gila River and its watershed. Mining was a huge factor in removing the river as a

46 Hurtado, *Indian Survival on the California Frontier*, pp. 104–6.
47 Heizer and Almquist, *The Other Californians*, pp. 28–31.
48 Wilson, *The Earth Shall Weep*, p. 231.
49 Hagan, 'How the West was lost', p. 193 (emphasis in original).
50 Powers, *Tribes of California*, p. 404.
51 Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison*, p. 162.
52 Isenberg, *Mining California*, p. 46.
53 Heizer and Almquist, *The Other Californians*, pp. 68–70.

source of sustenance and culture. It also caused widespread deforestation in eastern Arizona and western New Mexico. The mines needed fuel, heat and buildings, nearly all of which came from the wood in local forests. Removing vast numbers of trees had perverse effects on biodiversity along the Gila River. The effects of mining, combined with beaver-hunting and overgrazing livestock, caused the river to dry up. As Rea observed:

> The amounts of wood extracted for mining are astonishing … hardwood stoked the boilers that ran the stamp mills to crush ore; it fuelled the smelters as well. As mines were excavated along the earth's surface, timbers were needed to shore up mine shafts. Wood cooked the food in the mess halls and heated the barracks of the armies of workers who flooded the territory. In addition to stripping the vegetation from the steep arid hillsides, mining support crews needed roads and burros to haul it to camp – two more sources of erosion. It was an onslaught with no thought to the short- or long-term consequences to soil or watershed.[54]

While mining has expanded to become a profitable sector of the global economy, the grades of ores are lowering, and mining companies have been seeking more remote locations to explore and more extreme environmentally damaging techniques to extract them.[55] This often leads them to indigenous peoples' lands outside the main arteries of European expansion, where they must engage in a range of negotiations with states and, increasingly, with state-created indigenous governments. Canadian corporations are especially prominent in mining in Latin America, and have benefited from state policies making 'mining codes that unambiguously favour foreign corporations over indigenous people, the environment and labour rights, and allow corporations greater ability to repatriate profits to their home economies while significantly reducing royalties imposed on them'.[56] Within Canada, the remaining aboriginal lands in the far north and British Columbia are part of a 'modern gold rush',[57] and are being separated from the indigenous peoples as avidly as were the Black Hills, Klondike and the Sierras 150 years ago. Across the far north as a whole, the new land rush, or 'second wave' of exploitation[58] of oil, gas, minerals, trees and waters, has seen Arctic states and multinationals claim all and any resource that might become a commodity.

Mining is also important to states because it is a source of materials necessary for the prosecution of wars. Uranium, the 'yellow cake' substance used to fuse nuclear power for fuel and weapons of mass destruction, is abundant in many

54 Rea, *At the Desert's Green Edge*, p. 48.
55 See Klare, *The Race for What's Left*.
56 Gordon and Webber, 'Imperialism and resistance', pp. 63–87, esp. p. 69.
57 Dirom, 'Modern "gold" rush underway.
58 See Sale and Potapov, *The Scramble for the Arctic*, pp. 159–77; Klare, *The Race for What's Left*, pp. 70–127.

indigenous territories in the US, Canada and Australia. Large amounts were discovered, originally by a Navajo man Luke Yazzie,[59] in the Four Corners area of the US southwest in the late 1940s, when the government authorised itself to be sole purchaser of the substance. Vast tracts of land, accounting for 1,200 mines were set aside for uranium mining in two major booms in the 1950s and 1970s. During these years, private companies ran the mines and Native American men were the prime workforce. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) approved the leases[60] and the Navajo tribal government received revenues from this and other resource extraction activities, including oil, gas and vanadium.[61]

The Navajo initially welcomed uranium mining, but its polluting effects prevented the continuation of customary subsistence activities. Tailings and waste products contaminated areas used for ceremonial and medicinal plant gathering and the fear of radiation and water contamination led to Navajo moving their herds of sheep to less desirable grazing lands.[62] There remain over 1,000 nuclear waste sites and over 1,000 abandoned mineshafts on Navajo lands. In 1979, a tailings dam burst and sent 100 million gallons of radioactive particles into streams that eventually flowed into the Rio Grande. This, and the serious health conditions incurred through radiation exposure, such as lung cancer suffered by Navajo miners and their families, made a return to other kinds of activities difficult, if not impossible. As with other miners elsewhere, they risked respiratory disease, lead and cyanide poisoning and the ingestion of toxic gases, dust and fumes, both in the mines and the smelters which process minerals at very high temperatures. Cancers, pneumonoconiosis, tuberculosis, silicosis and emphysema among Navajo uranium miners have been well documented, as have birth defects and miscarriages among Navajo women living near tailings.[63] Lung cancer from inhaling radioactive uranium particles is particularly common among men who have worked in uranium mines. Some have been compensated, but the US government contests every case, and for many years, despite contrary evidence, government scientists argued that the Navajo lung cancers were a result of cigarettes, not radon.

Uranium mining on the Navajo Nation lands was banned in 2005.[64] A clean-up of the river systems and uranium waste under a five-year government plan is still in progress. In February 2008, the US Congressional Oversight Committee instructed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to renew

59 Lippard, *The Lure of the Local*, p. 172.

60 See, for example, Brugge et al., *The Navajo People and Uranium Mining*.

61 Bailey and Bailey, *A History of the Navajos*, p. 237.

62 Brugge et al, *The Navajo People and Uranium Mining*, pp. 95–7.

63 Roscoe et al., 'Mortality among Navajo uranium miners'; Shields et al., 'Navajo birth outcomes in the Shiprock uranium mining area'.

64 However, a find of approximately 500 million pounds of uranium in 2008 means that commercial pressure will be exerted to lift the ban. See Lydersen, 'As uranium firms eye N.M., Navajos are wary'.

mitigation efforts. Only in 2010 did the EPA and one of the mining companies agree to spend $2.5 million on cleaning up two of the uranium-contaminated sites.[65] Mitigation of the toxic effects of uranium mining is complex and much remains experimental. Contaminated soils can be cordoned off and technologies are being researched to introduce bacteria to kill the uranium, but such lands are at present unusable. Contaminated waters can be diverted through pumping, but this is massively expensive. Continued water contamination is a threat because, according to the EPA, about 30 per cent of Navajos do not have access to a regulated public drinking water system and rely on local wells and springs.[66]

While mining methods have become less crude and, under pressure from environmentalists, some companies have attempted to re-green affected areas, it still has a devastating impact on landscapes (local wildlife habitats) and people. Further, if attention is not paid to disposal of waste materials, toxins can leech into lakes and rivers and leave highly poisonous tailing ponds. Placer gold mining, for example, may entail altering the courses of rivers and streams to obtain access to precious rocks that are deposited beneath running waters. Open-pit mining uses explosives to blast open of huge pits in the ground, introducing chemicals such as cyanide and sulphuric acid into the environment. Such mining frequently involves dumping tons of toxic tailings. Accidents involving the leaking, spilling or dumping of lethal substances such as cyanide, used in the extraction of gold from ore, destroy fish and plant life and make water undrinkable. While cyanide leaching was banned in several countries, it is still used by mining companies that are essentially squatting in areas of Nevada guaranteed to the Western Shoshone by treaty.[67] Despite widespread fears of contamination of humans, land, animals, plants and fish, there is some evidence that state environmental reviews are less than diligent with scientific assessment often biased towards a conservative interpretation of the damage to indigenous peoples and their lands.[68]

Mining not only degrades the physical environment, but also drastically alters social relationships since a shared attachment to land has always bound indigenous peoples together. Most immediately, mining removes land as a place for obtaining food and well-being and may be the first step towards permanently losing sources of history and memory. One graphic example of this is the mining town of Schefferville, with its associated Innu villages of Kawawachikamach and Matimekush. These villages were created by the relocation of Mushuau Innu (or 'Naskapi') who previously travelled and hunted in the Ungava peninsula, trading at the Fort Chimo post, and of the

65 McKinnon, 'Cleanup planned for uranium sites on Indian land'.
66 See www.epa.gov/region9/superfund/navajo-nation/.html (accessed 10 May 2013).
67 See Fishel, 'United States called to task on indigenous rights', pp. 619–50.
68 See Irlbacher-Fox, *Finding Dahshaa*, pp. 126–30.

more southerly Innu families, who traversed the vast areas between Uashat and Caniapiscau, trading at Sept Îles and other trading posts on the North Shore of the St Lawrence. After an Innu hunter led an exploration party to the mineral deposits, these groups were brought to Schefferville to work in the iron-ore mines that had been built around Knob Lake, itself unextinquished aboriginal title land at the time. Iron-ore mining took place in this region from the 1960s to 1980s. Although the story remains cloudy, it is known that the Fort Chimo people walked the 400 miles to Schefferville in 1956, where Canadian authorities promised to provide health care, education, housing and employment.[69] These assurances proved to be empty, as no preparations for the people's relocation had been made when they arrived at Schefferville. The much-vaunted employment prospects also turned out to be incorrect as 'Naskapi workers were restricted to token employment at the mine, primarily in the form of temporary, hard labor jobs at the lowest levels of the job hierarchy'.[70]

Innu in the nearby community of Matimekush, founded in 1971, became wage labourers at the Schefferville mines, but this was short-lived. The Iron Ore Company of Canada left when the reserves were thought to be exhausted in 1982. Most of the non-Innu workforce also vacated. On their way out, the company destroyed the newly built hospital and the church and even tried to dig up the roads. It abandoned mine machinery and oil barrels, and fuel oil for helicopters was left in the melting snow to drain into Knob Lake. So many tailing ponds were left around the vicinity that anyone foraying outside the village comes across discoloured snow, huge chasms in the earth and yellow 'Kustakuan' danger signs.

69 Hess, *Native Employment in Northern Canadian Resource Town*.
70 Ibid., p. 82.

Figure 4.2. Industrial sculpture with prominent phallus left by miners at Knob Lake, Quebec. Image taken in 2007.

Temples of progress, gifts of God

Despite its association with science and economic growth, nation-building is often promoted through the fusion of rationalism and magic. Like George H.W. Bush's communing with the soul of America at Mount Rushmore, the language of the spirits is called forth to describe miraculous transformations of

the earth that show the nation state to be a champion of progress. Some of the most ecstatic imagery surrounds dams and hydroelectric power generation. Like mineral exploitation, electricity is widely depicted as a key to modernisation, scientific ingenuity and prosperity, especially since it is linked to providing amenities to city dwellers and cities themselves are emblematic of progress. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India and significantly a nation-builder himself, famously called dams 'temples of progress'.

State building has a long association with dam construction and governments that sponsor hydroelectric power plants often use it to establish their credentials as modernisers. For example, the Brazilian government is currently undertaking a massive series of hydroelectric generating projects. In 2009 there were plans to build at least 229 small hydroelectric dams, to add to the 346 of which are already in operation. Most of the dams are in the rapidly denuded forest areas of Amazonia where numerous groups of indigenous peoples depend on fishing for a livelihood. The $17-billion-dollar Belo Monte dam on the Xingu river will require a reservoir of 668 square kilometres, flood 400 square kilometres of forest and dry up to 62 miles of river. Described as a 'gift from God' by the Brazilian government, which received written approval from President Ignacio Lula da Silva in 2010,[71] it will generate 11,000 megawatts of electricity. If it is a gift, it is one that sells light bulbs, internet connections, refrigerators and jobs to largely non-indigenous people, while taking away life from indigenous people. It is estimated that the flooding to be caused by the project will displace an estimated 30,000 river-dwelling indigenous peoples.[72] In February 2011, court action resulted in the Belo Monte dam being temporarily blocked, but with Lula's successor, Dilma Rousseff, also backing the project as a means of state-sponsored modernisation, pressure to implement the plan continued until a license to build the dam was issued in June 2011.[73]

71 Phillips, 'Blocked rivers threaten livelihood of Brazilian tribes'. See also Partlow, 'Doubt, anger over Brazil dams'.

72 See: www.culturalsurvival.org/news/brazil/brazil-oks-building-17-bin-amazon-power-dam (accessed 17 May 2013) and *The Guardian*, 'Brazil approves Belo Monte hydroelectric dam'.

73 BBC News, 'Brazil judge blocks Amazon Belo Monte dam'; *The Guardian*, ibid.

Figure 4.3. Armand Mackenzie at site of tailings pond outside Matimekush, 2007.

Hydroelectric projects are located on powerful rivers with high volumes of water and strong currents. The dams that these projects require to capture the fast-flowing waters to power the electricity-generating turbines can have a devastating effect on forests, soils, fish, wildlife and people close to them. Migratory fish such as salmon and sturgeon cannot migrate upstream and may therefore become extinct within dammed river systems.[74] By impeding the flow of rivers, dams cause banks to burst and the waters flood the surrounding lands. The organic matter that is flooded gradually decomposes, and deoxygenates the water, killing a vast amount of aquatic life. Before flooding occurs, lands are often deforested. People occupying adjacent areas are frequently relocated against their will. Around the world, this type of displacement has proved devastating for small farmers, hunters and pastoralists who depend on specific lands to maintain their economies and ways of life. The World Commission on Dams reported that 'the loss of cultivable land and inability to gain good-quality replacement land has significantly affected indigenous peoples and peasant farmers.' Examples it cites are the Chinantec and Mazatec peoples, displaced by the Miguel Aleman and Cerro de Orro dams in Mexico, the Kuna and Embera people in Panama, the Parakana, Asurini, and Gavio da Montanha people in Brazil, and the Tonga in Zambia and Zimbabwe.'[75]

74 Jobin, *Dams and Disease*, p. 15.
75 World Commission on Dams, *Dams and Development*, p. 107.

The effects of hydroelectric generating plants on indigenous peoples have been particularly well documented in northern Canada. The Jenpeg hydroelectric project on the Nelson River in Manitoba inundated forests, changed water flows and levels, damaging the habitats of muskrats and beavers. Built in the 1970s, the dam caused whitefish to disappear because of the destruction of spawning grounds, and contaminated other species of fish with mercury created by the dam. The local Cross Lake Cree have been severely affected by this project. As well as washing out ancestral graves and scattering remains on the shorelines, the project, 'is a focus for grievance because it impedes the Crees' ability to hunt and heal themselves on the land. The project is a source of displacement and dispossession'.[76] Additionally, Ronald Niezen argued that floating logs and tree stumps on the river caused a number of boat accidents, resulting in the drowning and deaths from hypothermia of 18 Cree from the community.[77] Further north, hydroelectric developments in the territories of Belcher Island Inuit have changed the nature and duration of ice cover, the habits of animals, fish and birds, the currents in and out of Hudson Bay, and estuaries and coastal areas have lower biological productivity.[78]

The extensive James Bay hydroelectric projects, involving the damming of several rivers used by the Cree and the Innu in the interior of northern Quebec, dramatically altered the landscape for all who live, hunt and fish across a vast expanse of land the size of California. Much of the hunting territory was flooded as huge reservoirs were created, trees rotted under the water, causing fish to suffocate, and in 1984 with a sudden release of water out of the Caniapiscau reservoir, ten thousand caribou were killed. The Hydro-Quebec officials called this 'mainly an act of God'.[79] To garner waters for the turbines, the headwaters of the Caniapiscau River, which flowed north to Fort Chimo on the Ungava peninsula, were turned back into the La Grande River.[80] Subsequently, some Cree hunters developed the symptoms of mercury poisoning, including neurological damage. The floods inundated many burial sites. The remains of Innu and Cree family members were exhumed on the authority of the Quebec provincial government, and only returned to families after they had been taken to Montreal for archaeological inspection.[81]

Tshenu François Aster, himself born at Caniapiscau 94 years earlier, spoke of how he thought about his land in relation to the hydro projects:

> The first thing that comes to my mind is how beautiful is the land where I was born, I played, I hunted and I lived. Now all I see is destruction of

76 Niezen, *The Origins of Indigenism*, p. 65.
77 Ibid., pp. 229–30.
78 Wein et al., 'Use and preference for traditional foods among the Belcher Island Inuit', p. 257.
79 LaDuke Kapesashesit, 'Forward' to Richardson, *Strangers Devour the Land*, p. xi.
80 Finkelstein and Stone, *Paddling the Boreal Forest*, p. 19.
81 Interview with Mani McKenzie, Matimekush, 2007.

> the land and I wonder how they will address this injustice to our people. I have to ask myself, what can I do when the land is flooded? I can no longer be there. What will be the future of my children and their children? Are there hunting grounds for them? What's left for me from all this destruction?[82]

The flooding effectively ended hunting and fishing in the area, which was rich in salmon, trout and arctic char and was on the caribou migration route. The projects were undertaken without the knowledge of hunters such as François Aster. The land was simply destroyed as if the occupancy of the Innu was meaningless. François is full of regret, 'I am never at peace with myself because of the destruction of my land'.[83] The village of Matimekush where he lived is situated almost equidistantly between the giant dykes and reservoirs of the Innus' former hunting territories at Caniapiscau and their other lands in Labrador, where Lake Meshikimau was turned into the massive Smallwood Reservoir in 1974. Between this and Matimekush is an important place for the Innu called Menihek, concerning which Ulderic McKenzie spoke in similar fashion to François while describing Caniapiscau, 'everything was beautiful in our area. The water was clear and clean in the lake. There was nothing there to make you think it was polluted. Our lake Menihek was very clear up to the time they decided to flood the land. It was nice and beautiful with sandy shores'. As with François, there was real emotion in his face and voice as he remembered the damage inflicted by the earlier hydro project on the Churchill River. 'All that was covered, including the trees and habitats of the animals. Of course, that also created a problem for the fish and many died'.[84] This adverse transformation was caused by the building of a dam in 1954 to provide power to the iron-ore mines being established at Schefferville.

Figure 4.4.
Ulderic and Mani Mackenzie, Matimekush, 2007. 'It's my belief that the government and mining company destroyed our way of life' – Ulderic.

82 Interview with François Aster, Matimekush, Quebec, 2 April 2007.
83 Interview with François Aster, Matimekush, Quebec, 4 April 2007.
84 Interview with Ulderic McKenzie, Matimekush, Quebec, 5 April 2007.

Innu lands elsewhere on the Labrador-Quebec peninsula have been affected by hydroelectric projects dating back to the 1940s. Within the Saguenay-Lac St Jean basin artificial lakes were created, fish-spawning grounds destroyed or moved, aquatic feeding and migratory habits have changed, and two species of salmon have disappeared altogether from the Péribonka and Bersimis rivers. The habitats of fur-bearing mammals and waterfowls have also been drastically reduced. All this has resulted in a fall in the hunting, fishing and trapping activities of the Innu of Mashteuiatsh (Lake Ouiatchouan) and Bersimis.[85] Further west, after suffering what was an internationally publicised outbreak of *E.Coli* in 2005, the Cree community of Kashechewan on the eastern shore of Hudson Bay are, according to an official government report, facing 'hydroelectric developments and mineral and petroleum developments [that] will permanently change the James Bay region. The traditional lands of the Kashechewan peoples will not remain what they are today'.[86]

Changes to the ecosystem brought about by hydroelectricity-generating plants likewise narrows the social and economic options of indigenous peoples to those available in village settlements. As Kirkness remarks of the effects of the Manitoba hydro project at Kelsey on the Split Lake Cree, 'the hydro project had a number of consequences on traditional activities, causing many families to stay in the community and collect welfare … Traditional harvesting became impossible to sustain as a main occupation and source of livelihood as fur bearing animals began to disappear'.[87] The construction of hydroelectric generating projects in indigenous territories is also associated with interpersonal violence, family break-ups, and alcohol and drug abuse among aboriginal peoples across Canada.[88] So pervasive is the evidence connecting these projects to social disintegration that Martin Loney remarked, 'what has happened to many communities must be understood as more than simply the sum of a series of discrete impacts. The cumulative effects of hydro regulation strike at the very core of a community's sense of self-confidence and well-being.'[89]

Industrial displacement of hunting and fishing

In pondering the fate of the lands he frequented in his younger days, François Aster inverted the Puritan assumption that non-agricultural land is wasted land.

85 Charest, 'Hydroelectric dam construction and the foraging activities of eastern Quebec Montagnais', pp. 420–1.
86 Pope, 'Report on the Kashechewan First Nation and its people'.
87 Kirkness, 'Northern communities in transition', p. 306.
88 Loney, 'Social problems, community trauma and hydro project impacts', pp. 237, 242; Kirkness, p. 309.
89 Loney, p. 248.

For François the new industrial landscape around Caniapiscau 'had become a wasteland, not productive, all is destroyed.'[90] The destruction also included the erasure of Innu history and experience. François's sister Mani McKenzie recalled finding 'the burial site of my uncle Shimun and his family there. We found them in a shallow grave. They [Quebec authorities] exhumed the remains and took them to Montreal. After a few years we got them back and performed another ceremony to put them back to the land'. Mani's husband Ulderic spoke of the changes to the natural environment around Schefferville. The more he spoke, the more he gesticulated with his arms, looking up and down, his voice rose in anger as he listed the effects of mining on the Innu way of life. Particularly troubling was how the building of the town and the iron-ore mines had altered the behaviour of the animals:

> Back then when I went hunting black bear with my father, we took off our moccasins and were barefoot in order to avoid the bear hearing us. We would approach the bear silently and would kill the bear, eat the meat and keep the fur. The meat was delicious. Nowadays it's impossible to do that. First of all, the bear is no longer afraid of human beings. It can come in the camp or a house and look around for food. But we can no longer eat the bear because the meat is no longer good. It eats so many things now, like from the garbage dumps. So, the meat is no longer good for consumption.
>
> The same with other kinds of animals. It's my belief that the government and the mining company destroyed our way of life. They have killed our culture and extinguished our rights. Pollutants fall in the rain to the earth. Animals are less scared of human beings. Caribou in the past could feel or smell human presence from ten miles away. Nowadays it's impossible. Caribou are nearby camps. They are not afraid. They will stand up there next to a car and won't be afraid to be shot at.[91]

According to Ulderic, the industrial sites, open-access garbage dumps and pollution have so altered the habitats that the wild animals are now feeding on rotting refuse and are put in such close proximity to humans that they have learned to behave in ways he considered unnatural. Animals no longer avoided humans instinctively. The bears were in effect adopting a convenience food diet, and according to some researchers, this is reason enough to alter their behaviour towards humans.[92] People have also noted bears foraging near the village of Sheshatshiu. 'Its strange for a bear to come around here', said Mary-Adele Penashue,

90 See Richardson, p. 172; and interview with François Aster, Matimekush, 2 April 2007.

91 Interview with Ulderic Mackenzie, Matimekush, 5 April 2007.

92 See Thiemann et al., 'Trans fatty acids provide evidence of anthropogenic feeding by black bears', pp. 183–93.

> It doesn't want to hurt anyone, but it's an indication that something bad will happen in the community. Of course, this bear communicates with us. If that kind of thing was happening in the country, it would still be strange, but we would simply kill it. Usually you find bears in the mountain areas, but never have I heard of any bear in the camp. There was no indication that the bear was hungry. It was just looking around. Even the dogs didn't chase this bear.[93]

Shushep Mark of Sheshatshiu made similar comments: 'there were recently a few black bears in the village. That's strange. I don't feel good about it. I'm sad. Is it a message? A sign? In the village we started to change, and the wildlife started to change.'[94] Here, Shushep's comments also demonstrate how alterations to an animal's environment might have unforeseen consequences for people.

Other older Innu mentioned similar changes in the behaviour, availability, numbers and taste of wild animals and fish. Katnen Pastitchi of Sheshatshiu, for example, spoke of caribou being distracted and changing their migration routes because 'of all the things happening now. The planes, boats, mining and other developments in the country … Every Innu person notices the changes with caribou.' Some say that outfitters encamped on Innu land even use planes to direct the routes of the caribou towards paying customers.[95] Even the humble porcupine, an important source of protein and fat in the cold months, has become industrially transformed. 'Porcupine meat', according to Katnen, 'is now a reddish colour. It has changed because of reforestation. It eats reforested planted trees. The meat takes on the colour of these trees. All wildlife has a different taste and flavour. It's very strange now. It tastes good, but not as strong as in the past.'[96]

The presence of industrial projects is closely related to difficulties in hunting, reduced availability of animals, and community concerns over the taste and safety of the wild foods.[97] These development projects discourage hunting and fishing while also pushing people to consume more processed foods, both because fewer wild foods are available and from fears that these are contaminated. Declines in the consumption of country foods are associated with relatively recent threats of contamination in these foods. For example, concerns over rising rates of cancer and childhood illnesses, coinciding with the discovery of contaminants and physiological abnormalities in fish and birds, and a toxic leak from a radar station have been cited as a reason for increased eating of processed foods by Inuit along the Bering Sea in Alaska.[98] Elsewhere

93 Interview with Louis and Mary Adele Penashue, Sheshastshiu, 3 July 2003.
94 Interview with Shushep Mark, 3 July 2003.
95 A sentiment expressed at a public meeting in Matimekush, 4 April 2007.
96 Interview with Katnen Pastitchi, Sheshasthiu, 5 April 2006.
97 Loney, 'Social problems, community trauma and hydro project impacts', p. 233.
98 See Horton, 'Pollution fears threaten way of life', p. 10A.

in the far north, radioactive caesium[99] and cadmium[100] have been found in caribou. Methyl mercury has been discovered in fish caught by eastern James Bay and northern Manitoba Cree,[101] and mercury, pesticides and a highly toxic class of persistent organic pollutants known as PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) have been found in marine mammals consumed by Inuit populations in Greenland and elsewhere.[102] In Labrador, environmental damage has already occurred as a result of activities at the Voisey's Bay mine, which lies between the Inuit community of Nain and the Innu village of Natuashish. Almost one million litres of alkaline water leaked out of a broken pipe into a small brook in September 2005, causing the deaths of more than 400 fish and further persuading the Innu people who often hunt and fish in the area to refrain from doing so.[103]

One of the most notorious cases of methyl-mercury poisoning in the world was that suffered by the Ojibwa people of Grassy Narrows, northern Ontario. In 1969, it was discovered that the production of caustic soda for bleaching paper at the Dryden Chemical Company pulp mill, owned by Reed Paper Company, was the source of mercury poisoning of fish, caught in the Wabigoon-English river system and consumed by Ojibwa. On visits to the Grassy Narrows (Asubpeeschoseewagong) and White Dog (Wabaseemong) reserves in 2002, the Japanese neurologist Masazumi Harada (who publicised the first cases in 1975) reported that some of the residents had, as they aged, experienced increased neurological and other symptoms of what is known as Minamata disease (named after the town in Japan where it first appeared). Of the patients he saw in the 1970s, 43 per cent had died, and 139 people had possible Minamata disease when tested in later visits. Harada and his team claimed that the Health Canada guidelines for mercury poisoning were very weak.[104] The report also stated that Canada had not fully acknowledged the numbers of sufferers from the disease, and that this was a 'familiar response' of governments following Japan's similar outbreak in 1956.[105] In a further clinical visit in 2010, Harada and his team found that of the group of 160 persons over the age of 20 from the two reserves, 33.7 per cent would be diagnosed with Minamata disease and a further 25 per cent exhibiting milder symptoms, would be suspected of having it.[106] Clean-ups or 'remediation' of some suspect industrial sites may be possible, but this risks further contamination of people, plants and animals.

The threats to indigenous peoples' health and livelihood is unfortunately not limited to industrial toxins emanating from developments in the immediate vicinities of their communities. Carcinogenic 'silent messengers' such as dioxins and other persistent organic pollutants from iron plants, copper smelters, cement kilns, pesticides and municipal waste plants have already been found in abundance in wild foods of the far north, thousands of miles away from their sources. Industrial effluents, including neurotoxins such as mercury have travelled up the Inuit food chain, being initially absorbed by plankton, then passed up

99 Tracy and Kramer, 'A method for estimating caribou consumption by northern Canadians', p. 48.
100 Adelson, *'Being Alive Well'*, p. 84.
101 Delormier and Kuhnlein, 'Dietary characteristics of eastern James Bay Cree women', p. 182; Loney, p. 249.
102 Pars et al., 'Contemporary use of traditional and imported food among Greenlandic Inuit', p. 29.
103 CBC News, 'Voisey's spills unacceptable: Innu Nation'.
104 See http://intercontinentalcry.org/mercury-poisoning-in-grassy-narrows-worse-than-ever/ (accessed 22 Jan. 2013); and Aiken, 'Japanese expert says mercury victims need more than money'.
105 Harada et al., 'Long-term study on the effects of mercury contamination on two indigenous communities in Canada (1975–2004)'.
106 CBC News, 'Mercury poisoning effects continue at Grassy Narrows'.

to fish, seals, polar bears and whales, as they move north to the coasts of Canada, Alaska, Greenland and Siberia. Inuit who have been tested in northern Quebec have extremely high levels of dioxins in their bodies,[107] some of which is passed from mother to baby in breast milk. A wide variety of industrial products use PCBs, including electrical appliances and wiring, coolants, flame-retardants, paints and pesticides. They have been associated with some types of cancer, especially skin cancer, developmental problems of the immune and thyroid systems and are also linked to liver damage.[108] According to environmental journalist Marla Cone, 'the Arctic's people and animals have been transformed into living, deep-freeze archives storing toxic memories of the industrial world's past and present'. They have become 'the industrialized world's lab rats'.[109] Greenlanders are the 'most toxic human beings on the planet'.[110]

While mining, hydroelectric power generation and factories spewing waste products into the air and waters are major threats to indigenous livelihoods in the far north, it should not be forgotten that changes to the ecosystems have also affected indigenous farmers and fishermen. These are often caused by industrialisation of agriculture and fishing preventing indigenous people from using the resources they have always depended upon. For example, Euro-American farmers in the American southwest used irrigation on such a large scale to produce many types of unsuitable water-dependent crops that it drained many rivers, including the Gila River in Arizona mentioned earlier. The Hoover dam, reservoirs and associated diversions of the Colorado River used for agribusiness and the support of some 30 million non-indigenous people in the US Southwest has caused the abandonment of most of the fertile agricultural lands used by the Mohave and Chemehuevi peoples. The damming also led to a loss of the fish that were dietary staples, including several native species now facing extinction. The evaporation of surface water resulting from irrigation has salted up land around the river and led to the loss of the ecosystem diversity needed to maintain indigenous agriculture. Elsewhere, drained rivers caused the depletion of sandbar willows, making many indigenous uses of the willow (baskets, for example) redundant along with knowledge of these crafts. Similarly, industrial-scale salmon fishing off the British Columbia coast removed the food sources of seals and sea lions, and this in turn affected the whales, removing not just one, but at least three major food sources.[111]

The effect of nature being industrialised is to make possible 'modern' lifestyles that are dependent upon industrial production and consumption on a mass scale. At the same time, industrialisation on indigenous peoples' lands makes land-based social and economic arrangements difficult, compromised or impossible to maintain. Industrial appropriation of the land in North America is the product of a series of processes of dispossession. Mining, damming and other extractive processes partake of the singular logic which I have identified as part of the extension of Europe and of settler state-building. It can only be maintained through ignoring or sidelining the inheritance of indigenous knowledge. While some traditional ecological knowledge is used in science, corporations and industry,[112] and

107 Dewailly et al., 'High levels of PCBs in breast milk of Inuit women of Arctic Quebec', pp. 641–6; Dewailly et al., 'Exposure of remote maritime populations to coplanar PCBs', pp. 205–9.
108 Bouwer et al., 'Characterization of potential endocrine-related health effects', pp. 639–49.
109 Cone, *Silent Snow*, pp. 23, 45.
110 Ibid., pp. 44–5.
111 See Turner, *The Earth's Blanket,* pp. 201–2, 211–12.
112 See, for example, the review in Huntington, 'Using traditional ecological knowledge in science', pp. 1,270–4.

especially in conservation biology, it is often made to serve science and settler state interests.[113] If understood in context, traditional knowledge can be seen to embrace a conservative outlook on nature and this is largely incompatible with the needs for growth, profit and cultural homogeneity in neoliberal capitalism. The cosmological aspects of these worldviews, although not entirely incompatible with Western science, threaten the presumed universal nature of science itself, and open up possibilities for radically incompatible cosmologies. Industrialisation is also part of the unjust dialogue, since it makes its entry into indigenous territories through either settler invasions (as was the case in California) or state processes of development and land claims (as for the Innu). In effecting or authorising the industrial and commercial transformation of nature the state appeals to progress and improvement of living standards, and in the process consolidates the nation-building project. This can be seen in the US and Canada as much as in countries like India and Brazil.

113 See Simpson, 'Anticolonial strategies for the recovery and maintenance of indigenous knowledge', pp. 373–84.

Chapter 5

Caribou to Chubby Chicken

Of all the changes we were forced to make, that of diet was doubtless the most injurious, for it was immediate and drastic.
Luther Standing Bear[1]

Nothing that the Indian of this region [British Columbia] eats is regarded by him as mere food and nothing more.
Charles Hill Tout[2]

Delocalising food

The industrialisation of nature has altered everyone's relationship with our most basic requirement, food. Food is now consumed far from the places where it originates, the cuisines of which it is part, and the people who produce it. The industrial processing, manufacture, packaging and selling of meat, grains and vegetables have had a profound effect on the diets and wellbeing of increasing numbers of people. Food products are made through mechanically extricating nutrients from plants, fish and animals and reconfiguring them in huge industrial batches. Other processed foods, which may originate from a whole food, are commonly infused with chemical additives for longer shelf life and transportation and then canned, refined and packaged. Such provisions have become the basis of the contemporary junk food diet. Recently, junk foods have become staples, especially among poorer urban people, the landless rural populations of the Third World, and in Western societies showing the highest degrees of economic inequality such as the US.[3] Junk food is a specific product of the commercialising of food and the requirement to produce increased quantities at lower unit prices for distribution to consumers over as wide an area as possible. Today, these products are truly global and many are heirs to European colonial expansion through settlers having sequestered and privatised lands, and eventually through agribusiness.

1 Standing Bear, *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, p. 234.
2 Quoted by Turner, *The Earth's Blanket*, p. 81.
3 Wilkinson and Pickett, *The Spirit Level*, pp. 90–1.

Food has always been a focal point of colonial endeavours in which efforts to redefine the meaning and uses of land were crucial. The transformation of indigenous peoples' diets is a specific result of the playing out of the unjust dialogue, especially via colonisers' presumption that they possessed universally valid ideas, among them the notion that agriculture, particularly private enterprise farming, was both progressive and a divine mandate.[4] From the New England Puritan ministers to the 19th-century architects of allotments and reservations, indigenous peoples were thought to be simply wasting the land and squandering its wealth-creating potential through laziness and collectivism. Indeed, apart from the need to transfer lands from Native Americans to settlers, one of the prime rationale for the creation of Indian reservations in the US after 1887 under the 'Indians' Magna Carta' (the Dawes Act), was to introduce them to Euro-American private enterprise farming, as well as other forms of assimilation.[5]

Although Europeans obviously benefited from the bounteous native foods available in North America and incorporated some of them into their diets, the continual seizure of the land for capitalist agriculture and natural resource extraction led more directly to the imposition of new foods and diets. Farmed animals and plants replaced wild ones, wheat breads replaced breads made from a diverse number of substances such as corn, beans and acorns, refined sugars were introduced as flavourings and fillers. These and many other alterations in indigenous diets arose through closer contact with settlers and the reduction of indigenous groups to small tracts of land in Canada and the US.[6] In northern places where indigenous peoples have been more recently relocated, sedentarised and subjected to various assimilation policies, the new diets comprising disparate foods and food products of more distant and often untraceable origins have replaced diets based on local meats, fish, gathered foods and plants. This was facilitated in northern Canada, as I shall illustrate later, through the establishment of the village store, where the newly agglomerated indigenous peoples used welfare and other money to procure manufactured foods. While this did not, in many areas including Labrador-Quebec, make hunting redundant, it did alter the diet significantly. Until these social transformations occurred, many indigenous peoples in the far north, and other areas more remote from the main corridors of European expansion, maintained distinctive diets based upon their fishing, farming, hunting and gathering lifestyles. However, resource extraction booms, development projects and agribusiness have made it harder for indigenous peoples to obtain the

4 See Brody, *The Other Side of Eden*.

5 See Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, pp. 70–7; Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West 1846–1890*, pp. 213–15.

6 See Mihesuah, 'Decolonizing our diets by recovering our ancestors' gardens', pp. 807–39.

foods that physically and culturally sustained them over generations. Many indigenous lands used for food procurement are being (or already have been) denuded of the flora and fauna needed to support the plants and animals comprising the traditional diet staples.

The loss of nutritional variety incurred by the consumption of industrialised food products, and of the sense of connections between food, nature and lifestyles, directly relate to the illnesses now prevalent in Native settlements established by Canada and the US. Health problems associated with dietary change were not as acute or did not occur when indigenous people were able to maintain a diversified diet of plant, animal and fish foods. 'The problems were to arise later', epidemiologist Thomas McKeown argued, 'from the introduction of processed and refined foods in which the starch was separated from fibre'.[7] The progressive removal of fibre, characteristic of the Western diet, is also a function of narrowing the staples to meat, grains, sugar, dairy products and oils, and of reducing the seasonal and geographical variations that were once more prevalent. This general diminution of both fibre and dietary variation can be traced to the early industrial processing of plant and meat foods, such as the mechanical grinding of wheat grain to produce refined flour. Industrial processing eliminates whole foods, and severs the linkages between seasonality, place and food consumption, by breaking down foods into chemical compounds that can be combined with other compounds to create refined food products.[8]

By eliminating much of the unpredictability of sourcing fresh local food supplies, manufactured food producers addressed the needs of populations around the world experiencing difficulties in obtaining their own foods. The door was then opened further by assimilation policies, land confiscation and integration into capitalist markets, all of which compromised or eliminated local indigenous food procurement. By the mid-20th century, food products were extensively advertised and marketed and became symbolic of modernity itself. Increasing numbers of people adopted a diet reliant on a restricted range of name-brand food products.[9] Indigenous people became caught up in a global process as lands were increasingly taken out of local food networks and more people came to eat the same foods or food products, manufactured by a small number of multinational companies.

Much industrial food now comes in the form of over-concentrated sugar from refined carbohydrates like white bread, refined white sugar and breakfast

7 McKeown, *The Origins of Human Disease*, p. 46.
8 Pollan, *In Defense of Food*, pp. 101–14.
9 Hawkes, 'Uneven dietary development', pp. 1–18.

cereals, as well as an array of manufactured junk and restaurant fast foods.[10] These changes in diet have occurred far too quickly for human physiology to adapt, creating a 'maladaptation'[11] that has resulted in diet-related illness now having severe and costly public health consequences. The gradual delocalising of food economies is encouraged by the manufacture of food products with long shelf lives for long-haul travel. But in order to do this, not only fibre but essential nutrients must be removed from plant and animal foods. The substances that remain are then chemically enhanced, flavoured, repackaged and marketed for rapid mass distribution and consumption.[12] As the market has expanded and come under the ownership of a small number of huge transnational companies,[13] the varieties and nutritional content of foods have also diminished.

In turn, the industrial conditions in which food is produced and distributed have contributed to the emergence of deadly infections like mad cow disease in England in the 1980s and 1990s and *E. Coli* contamination in American fast food chains.[14] The transit of fresh foods from where they have been produced to supermarket distribution centres, and then on to retailers, requires products to survive for longer periods before they can be consumed, affording multiple opportunities for bacterial contamination from *salmonella* and *E. Coli*, which is sometimes lethal. Foods transported to indigenous consumers in remote aboriginal communities in Australia and in the Arctic and subarctic – as I will illustrate later in this chapter with reference to Natuashish – are therefore at high risk of spoilage. This form of contamination adds to the risks already incurred in the mass production of meat, fish and eggs. In 2010, half a billion eggs in the US were recalled because of possible *salmonella* infection, associated with battery production where chickens live in caged flocks as large as 150,000.[15] The reduced capacity of lands to support local food production has led most people in the world to depend on imported foods from sources such as these. Almost always inferior to local food, these imports do not supply the right balance of nutrients for a healthy life.

10 Pollan, *In Defense of Food*, p. 112, estimates that 'Americans are consuming a diet that is at least half sugars in one form or another'. Some pioneers in the study of Western disease have argued that 'refined carbohydrates cause obesity, dental cares and some colon-related diseases'. See Burkitt, 'The emergence of a concept', p. 7.

11 See Burkitt, 'Western diseases and what they encompass', p. 17.

12 For excellent discussions on this subject see Schlosser, *Fast Food Diet*, and Lawrence, *Not on the Label*.

13 My comments in what follows are based on Saker et al., 'Infectious diseases in the age of globalization', p. 21.

14 See Pollan, 'The food movement, rising', pp. 31–3. Marion Nestle argued that 'the most authoritative estimate of the yearly number of cases of foodborne disease in the United States defies belief: 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalizations, 5,000 deaths'. See Nestle, *Safe Food*, p. 27.

15 Eckholm, 'Egg industry faces new scrutiny after outbreak'.

Displacing indigenous foods

Ironically, these changes often came after colonists had themselves escaped starvation by having access to the foods of the native peoples who initially welcomed them. Such occurrences were common in the English North American colonies, as Haudenosaunee archaeologist Arthur Parker explained:

> Our Pilgrim fathers and the less hardy cavaliers of Jamestown and Maryland were rescued from starvation more than once when it was hard upon them by foods made from the corn given them by the Indians who had cultivated and harvested it. Had it not been for the corn of the Indians the stories of Jamestown and Plymouth instead of being stirring accounts of perseverance and endurance might have been brief and melancholy tragedies.[16]

Likewise, in early 17th-century New England, the corn of Parker's ancestors saved many newcomers' lives and their generosity in teaching colonists how to survive by planting corn strengthened the settlers' position. Even earlier, in the mid-16th-century Pueblo lands, Native Americans' skilful farming and copious stores of food saved the De Soto expedition, 'which might have perished or been forced to turn back, because the Spaniards became dependent upon Indian crops, particularly corn, for a major portion of their food supply.'[17] Further west, Pueblo peoples' generosity with their stores of corn and knowledge of planting saved starving Spanish soldiers,[18] and when Americans traversed Pueblo lands in the 1850s, 'the Zunis were selling thousands of bushels of excess corn to American troops who came into the region to establish forts to control the Navajo'.[19] Quickly adapting to the use of European domestic animals, the Pueblos also had an abundance of horses, mules, donkeys, cows and oxen at this time.[20]

It was not long after being rescued that the early English settlers on the eastern seaboard began the process of securing the land for private ownership and using it for their own exclusive agriculture, making it difficult for indigenous peoples of New England to maintain their own food supplies. Partly in response to these pressures, indigenous peoples launched sporadic attacks on the English leading to retaliation and counter-retaliations. During King Philip's War in 1675–6 native peoples responded to English attacks by targeting their plantations. Particularly offensive to the English was the destruction of farms, cattle, fields and houses, the emblems of private property, which they believed

16 Parker, *Parker on the Iroquois*, p. 13.

17 Hurt, *Indian Agriculture in America*, p. 28.

18 Stuart, *Anasazi America*, p. 165. Early Spanish records indicate that the crops Pueblos grew in one planting year were sufficient to last them for seven years. See Vlasich, *Pueblo Indian Agriculture*, p. 13.

19 Ibid., p. 90.

20 Ibid., p. 95.

they had earned as Christians and through 'improving the soil'.[21] However, it was ironic that the agricultural foods held to be the basis of both civilisation and their distinction from the 'savages' would become a target of retaliatory vandalism. This was the case in the late 18th century, in what is now the state of New York, when cornfields and corncribs were burnt as a means of displacing the Haudenosaunee. Shortly after the American Revolution, General Sullivan reported to Chief Justice John Jay concerning the American destruction of 40 Iroquois towns and about 500 acres of cultivated land. This included 'two hundred acres of excellent corn with a number of orchards one of which had in it 1500 fruit trees … The quantity of corn destroyed must be at a moderate computation … 160,000 bushels, with a vast quantity of vegetables of every kind'.[22]

During westward expansion, the thronging numbers of Euro-Americans travelling the emigrant trails through the Plains from the 1840s onwards destroyed wild animal habitats and diminished ecological diversity. With stock animals having been introduced, lands fenced off, mining and – most notoriously – the mass killing of an estimated 60 million bison, the food supplies of indigenous peoples from the Plains and adjacent areas came under great strain. Despite military and diplomatic resistance, indigenous subsistence was massively jeopardised. To ameliorate this, Euro-Americans provided salted and preserved foods and also offered fresh produce from their own agriculture and husbandry to displaced indigenous groups.

The fact that some Native Americans were rescued from the hunger their rescuers had caused in the first place was slim recompense for the obliteration of their traditional diet, which on the Plains was a protein-rich and nutritionally-diverse combination of wild meats, fish and plant foods obtained locally and through trade networks. According to Luther Standing Bear, in the early reservation days, 'everything that was natural and therefore healthful was displaced with things unsuitable, foreign and unfitted'. Standing Bear mentioned that the Lakota accepted syrup, molasses, gum, candy, sugar and all fruits, but 'coffee, baking powder, cornstarch, cheese and white flour were not so well liked and proved to be not beneficial, while bacon and cattle meat could, at first, scarcely be endured'.[23]

One of Standing Bear's Oglala contemporaries was Black Elk, whose celebrated life and religious thought were publicised as memoirs told to the Nebraska poet John Neihardt. Like Standing Bear, Black Elk lived through a period of rapid and profound change, and he also witnessed the mass killing of wild animals, causing hunger and starvation for the Lakota, and indeed on many of the newly created reservations on the Great Plains:

21 Lepore, *The Name of War*, p. 76.
22 Parker, *Parker on the Iroquois*, p. 19.
23 Standing Bear, *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, p. 167.

> That fall [1883], they say the last of the bison herds was slaughtered by the Wasichus (whites). I can remember when the bison were so many that they could not be counted, but more and more Wasichus came to kill them until they were only heaps of bones scattered where they used to be. The Wasichus did not kill them to eat; they killed them for metal that makes them crazy, and they took only the hides to sell. Sometimes they did not take the hides, only the tongues, and I heard that fire-boats came down the Missouri River loaded with dried bison tongues. Sometimes they did not even take the tongues, they just killed and killed because they liked to do that. When we hunted bison, we killed only what we needed.[24]

Euro-American traders killed buffalo principally for their tough hides that were sold on to become drive belts powering machines in the factories in industrialising America, while the bones were sold to farmers as fertilizers for the lands vacated by the bison. Maureen Lux describes how 'the hunt turned to slaughter, with hide and robe traders concealing themselves in bushes and indiscriminately emptying their repeating rifles into the herds. Ox teams and chains ripped hides from the still-warm flesh'.[25] As they came to be incorporated into the settlers' trading economy, various Plains groups participated in selling bison hides and sometimes slaughtering vast numbers of bison in exchange for trade goods, and often alcohol.[26] This slaughter then acted as a pressure to induce members of these mobile groups to accept confinement to reservations, where they eked out a meagre existence on government food rations.[27]

At around the same time, Plains peoples further north in Canada suffered a similar fate. The destruction of the buffalo herds was the most important factor inducing groups such as the Blackfoot, Sioux, Assiniboine, Ojibwe and Western Cree to sign treaties and surrender massive tracts of land in exchange for small reserves, government annuities, medical aid and assistance with agriculture. The destruction of the bison forced indigenous groups further west and north in search of food. Unable either to live from wild animals or from farming, thousands suffered hunger, famine and starvation. Some people resorted to eating gophers, mice, horses, contaminated pork and bacon rations handed out by the Canadian government, and even the flesh of poisoned wolves and dogs. There is evidence that the government deliberately planned the starvation in some locations by using meagre rations, forced relocations and other pressures to extract further land concessions. The people's weakened condition gave rise to a massive death toll from dysentery and a number of infectious diseases.[28]

24 Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*, p. 213.

25 Lux, *Medicine That Walks*, p. 22.

26 In the 1830s, at Fort Pierre, South Dakota, a gallon of alcohol could sell for five prime bison robes. See Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison*, p. 104.

27 Lux, *Medicine That Walks*, p. 162.

28 Ibid., pp. 32–70.

The same dynamics played out as the frontier moved westward. By the 1870s, Euro-American market hunters in northern California had so exhausted the deer and other wildlife that the Modocs were forced to shift rapidly from hunting to wage labour.[29]

It was not simply the cruelty of the Euro-American settlers and government policies that destroyed the vital native foods. Commercial agriculture also had a similar effect in eliminating or reducing the extent and variety of plants and wild foods. As frontier farming enlarged from domestic units to private businesses operating on large tracts of formally indigenous lands, 'a short list of useful plants and a growing list of weeds … relegated hundreds of plants to archaic and forgotten medicinal, ornamental, as well as culinary traditions'.[30] This also meant that the wider ecosystem of which these plants were a part and which sustained the habitats of wild animals were depleted of the sources of food needed for these animals to survive. At the same time, the Plains were repopulated through an invasion of European species of domesticated animals, plants, insects and microbes.[31] After the buffalo on the grasslands had been brought to the point of extinction by wanton killing as well as the frontier settlers' open-range stock raising,[32] other wild plant foods also started disappearing. This meant that imported foods were all that kept the Lakota alive at the end of the 19th century.

Under Spanish colonisation of parts of North America, the conditions in which indigenous dietary change occurred were more controlled since emphasis was placed not merely on displacement, but on conversion to Catholicism. This took place through establishing *reducciones* throughout Latin America and in North American missions in Florida, California and the southwest. For example, in 17th-century Florida, the 'relatively heterogeneous diet, rich in seafood and a variety of plants and animals, was replaced by a more homogenous and less nutritious diet focused on the cultivation of a single crop: corn.'[33] In early 19th-century California, 'at the mission, the diverse native diet was replaced by one composed mainly of corn, wheat, barley, beans and beef'.[34] The mission societies imposed a highly ordered regimen on the native peoples,

29 Isenberg, *Mining California*, p. 150. The Modoc were also almost annihilated by 'killing campaigns' between 1851 and 1873. Madley has estimated a 75–88 per cent population decline during these years. Madley, 'California and Oregon's Modoc Indians'.

30 Knobluch, *The Culture of Wilderness*, p. 114.

31 Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison*, p. 32.

32 See Knobluch, *The Culture of Wilderness*, pp. 82–3. It has been estimated that there were 30 million bison in 1800 and only 1,000 in 1900. See Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison.*

33 Larsen, 'Reading the bones of La Florida', p. 100; Larsen et al., 'Population decline and extinction in La Florida', pp. 25–40.

34 Walker and Johnson, 'Effects of contact on the Chumash Indians', p. 132.

imposing a carbohydrate-heavy diet, and thwarting access to the full panoply of hunted animals, wild plants, fish and shellfish that would have made up their normal diets in places like Florida, Northern Mexico and California.

The Pueblos were an exception in not succumbing to the general impoverishment of their diets. They were able to maintain their agriculturally based diet despite encroachments from colonisers such as the Spanish, Mexicans, Euro-Americans and semi-nomadic peoples such as the Navajo, Comanche and Apache. They even enhanced the traditional diet with new fruit, vegetables, grain crops and domesticated animals introduced by the Spanish. In 1866, one visitor to New Mexico found that the Pueblos, 'always stored a year's supply of food and raised every kind of fruit and vegetable known to the region'.[35] The decline of Pueblo agriculture would not occur until after World War Two when the activities of new migrants, intensive agriculture and industries began to induce water shortages, salinisation, soil erosion and relocations. All this, along with government programmes, made agriculture less economically viable for those who remained in their own communities. After these changes the Pueblos were left only with cash production of market crops such as alfalfa to supplement what they could buy in stores or were issued from government commodities.[36] Their tastes also altered as Pueblos and other indigenous groups joined the military and entered other areas of North American life, adapting to a steady diet of processed foods.

The nutrition transition

Barry Popkin identified a series of historical stages associated with a global 'nutrition transition'. These begin with the decline in famine, the rise of agriculture some 10,000 years ago and a gradual shift in more recent years away from diets based on locally-derived foods, typically high in fruit, vegetables and cereals, to diets high in refined sugars and cereal, and high in fats and salt.[37] With economic and technological change, along with urbanisation, refined cereals replaced coarse grains and people began to eat more livestock products and processed foods. In most contexts, people were largely dependent on the produce from agriculture for several thousand years and the significant nutrition transition involved a change towards foods that are more indirectly related to the agricultural sources. As Popkin described it:

> The global transition in nutrition patterns – from stages of periodic famine, heavy physical activity and undernutrition to a situation in which dietary and physical activity patterns are among the main causes of noncommunicable diseases – has happened slowly over this

35 Vlasich, *Pueblo Indian Agriculture*, p. 95.
36 Ibid., pp. 283–7. See also Nabhan, *The Desert Smells Like Rain*, pp. 107–9.
37 Popkin, 'The nutrition transition'; Popkin and Mendez, 'The rapid shifts in stages of the nutrition transition', pp. 68–80.

> past century in higher-income countries, and much more recently in many lower-income and moderate-income countries … Since 1980, this trend towards poor diets, physical inactivity and energy imbalance (obesity) has accelerated globally, and is increasing the burden on the poor.[38]

For many indigenous societies, this transition occurred abruptly through sedentarisation and confinement to reservations. The consequences were tragic for several generations of indigenous children in the US, Canada and Australia, who were taken away from their families and placed in boarding schools over the last one-and-a-half centuries. As well as living with the physical and psychological traumas of forced removal, many children went from eating wild foods or farmed crops to refined and processed foods overnight. Their tastes were affected by their boarding school diets, and students took these back to the reservations, thus influencing a more general move away from traditional diets. Nutrition was a concern in some boarding schools, but these were the exception. Jean Keller argues that 'the starch and fat laden diet learned at non-reservation boarding schools a century ago continues to predominate among many Native Americans to this day and may be partly responsible for a number of health problems that have persisted inexplicably'.[39]

The nutrition transition occurred across North America under variable conditions of duress, degrees of rapidity and political circumstances. Where indigenous people were already operating a semi-agricultural economy, and were to some degree able to protect their activities, as is the case with the Pueblos, much of the traditional diet survived. Pueblos adopted a kind of cultural syncretism, by which their own festivals, for example, could exist side by side with Catholic masses. This ensured that they did not offend the Spanish colonisers and at the same time protected their religious and political activities. By outwardly accepting the coloniser's worldview, they were able to safeguard many aspects of their way of life, including their agriculture and close religious connections between it and their social organisation.[40] Even though they lost land to both Spaniards and Americans, most Pueblos have been able to maintain traditional communal agriculture and this no doubt helps offset the influence of some aspects of the Western diet. While not as extensive today, lowland Pueblo diets at around the time of Spanish contact included domesticated crops such as corn, squash and beans, supplemented by wild greens, roots, berries and nuts, some domesticated turkey and nearly 50 species of wild animal meat.[41]

38 Popkin further cited evidence of the link between the nutrition transition and cancer. See 'Understanding global nutrition dynamics as a step towards controlling cancer incidence', p. 61.

39 See Keller, 'When native foods were left behind'.

40 Wilson, *The Earth Shall Weep*, p. 205.

41 Stuart, *Anasazi America,* p. 156.

Early European contact in British Columbia in the 19th and 20th centuries was also not immediately negative in dietary terms. In the more temperate climate of the Pacific coast, European crops supplemented the already-plentiful and varied aboriginal diet, comprising a high consumption of fish, including five species of salmon, shellfish, land mammals, gathered plant foods, roots and berries.[42] As well as being central to their cosmologies and collective wellbeing, these foods, especially salmon, helped ensure good health among the Pacific coast peoples. Salmon, for example is nearly as high in Vitamin A and three times higher in fat content than cod liver oil. When dried, it also contains phosphorous and calcium. Berries contain high levels of Vitamin C, iron and copper, and some have nearly three times as much iron as dried raisins.[43] Problems emerged when British Columbia peoples' access to these foods was reduced through squatters taking command of land, and through coastal areas and the sea being colonised for industrialised food production in sea fishing and canning. In the early 20th century, changes in diet brought about by these activities were observed to have disturbed the rich traditional diet and to have replaced it with one dominated by carbohydrates,[44] making the nutrition transition there a slightly longer process than in some other places.

As mass-produced foods gradually came to displace farmed, fished and hunted foods, Canadian medical observers drew links between store-bought foods and aboriginal ill health, yet they failed to endorse any policies that would help reverse the situation in the crucial early stages when processed foods were introduced. As Mary Jane McCallum maintained:

> The general consensus that Native and Inuit people were healthier before contact, however, did not translate into a policy of non-interference, an interest in non-Western medical practices, or even a desire to protect the integrity of Native and Inuit cultures, resources and territories. Instead, doctors and nurses, alongside police missionaries, and Hudson's Bay Company personnel, felt compelled to closely monitor the impacts of civilization on so-called isolated communities in ways that would improve health.[45]

Of course, the eventual recognition that indigenous peoples' foods possessed healthy properties went contrary to the idea of progress, and flatly contradicted the 1950s' Canadian government policy that stated: 'Eskimos and Indians must … learn to eat our food if they are ever to become part of our way of life.'[46]

The nutrition transition in the far north has occurred over a far shorter time than elsewhere in the US and Canada. While many indigenous peoples there today eat both wild and junk foods, the diet that has become the norm over

42 Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*, p. 25.
43 Ibid., pp. 20–3.
44 Ibid., p. 35.
45 McCallum, 'The last frontier', p. 108.
46 Quoted by Mowat, *People of the Deer*, p. 272.

recent decades in the far north is one that is calorific, yet deficient in many of the healthy properties associated with nutritional food. A survey of seven northern aboriginal communities in the 1990s characterised this pattern as:

> a diet with a much lower consumption of fruits, vegetables and dairy products than is recommended for Canadians, a high consumption of sugar and sweets, intakes of fat and saturated fat that are above recommended levels and intakes of calcium, magnesium, folate, vitamin C and vitamin A that are lower than recommended. Overweight also appears to be a significant and increasing risk to health in these communities.[47]

In the Arctic and subarctic regions, diets have changed from foods that are 'nutrient-dense, with high levels of protein, fat (especially omega-3 fatty acids), and antioxidants (selenium, for example), while low in carbohydrates' to diets 'high in carbohydrates and saturated fats and low in essential nutrients such as omega-3 fatty acids'.[48]

Similarly, detrimental changes to diets under parallel forms of coercion occurred for a number of other indigenous groups worldwide. For the Nuxalt of British Columbia, there was a steady decline in consumption of wild plant foods, wildlife and oily fish as legislation on fish and game, urbanisation and the introduction of market foods encroached. The !Kung Bushmen of the Kalahari moved from a rich meat, vegetable, nut and root diet to a far more limited maize and store-bought food diet between the 1960s and the 1980s as a result of the Botswana state policy of sedentarisation.[49] In Borneo, the sedentarisation and urbanisation of some groups of Punan hunter-gatherers led to new agricultural diets that were far less nutritionally diverse than the wild food diets of Punan who maintained nomadic lifestyles.[50]

One exception to this general trend of reduced country food consumption is presented in Siberia where the failure of Russian and global capitalism has led indigenous peoples to revert to marine hunting. This comes after indigenous diets were already changed towards 'Russian' or 'European' foods during the Soviet era. According to Kozlov, in recent years younger Chukchi and Inuit peoples have come to prefer wild foods to market foods.[51] Given the nutritional advantages of country foods, market failure could actually be a lifeline to other

47 Lawn et al., *Nutrition Surveys in Isolated Northern Communities*, p. 10.

48 McGrath-Hanna et al., 'Diet and mental health in the Arctic', pp. 230–1.

49 Kuhnlein and Receveur, 'Dietary change and traditional food systems of indigenous peoples', pp. 417–42.

50 See Dounias et al., 'From sago to rice, from forest to town', pp. S294–S302.

51 Kozlov, 'Impact of economic changes on the diet of Chukotka natives', pp. 235–42. For Kozlov, however, this reversion represents a modified traditional diet since fewer people are killing mammals used for fermented foods and many of the hunters lack appropriate skills, causing fatalities.

northern peoples who might start to pursue hunting, gathering and fishing with more vigour.

Caribou to Chubby Chicken

Noreen Willows's comment that in Canada 'the tremendously diverse [indigenous] diet was in general, high in animal protein and low in fat and carbohydrates, and provided adequate amounts of energy and micronutrients for health',[52] can be applied equally to many of the world's indigenous peoples' eating patterns. A crucial aspect of this diet is the consumption of whole foods in the form of plants, fish and animals. Prior to sedentarisation – and even in many cases today – Innu families would eat virtually the whole caribou and use parts of it for making clothes and tools. The brains, for example, are often used for tanning hides. In addition to the meat on the carcass, most of the organs and the entire head, eyes and tongue are eaten. Blood soups are made from the copious amounts left in the body cavity once the stomach and organs have been removed. Innu people today, as in the past, mix the fat and marrow from bones into semi-solid bars for *mukushan* to eat with meat and bread to celebrate the kill and the caribou god. Even the undigested mossy contents of the stomach are dried and mixed with blood into a compact substance like a stock cube, which is then boiled in a nutritious soup called *uinastakan*. Its contents would typically include moss, willows, berries and parts of spruce boughs. This is an old Innu food, and some say that it is coming back into vogue, being mixed not only with caribou cuts but whatever meat is to hand. I have eaten it with my friends Sam and Angela Pijogge at a camp in Misteshuapi, Angela having used both store-bought chicken and wild ptarmigan. It is an example of a huge variety of vitamins, proteins, fats and other nutrients being consumed from one food: the caribou. Eating *uinastakan* with chicken in this fashion in some ways creatively adapts processed foods to what is a predominantly Innu cuisine, albeit with the processed chicken providing some nutritional disadvantages.

The Innu hunting diet is now combined with manufactured foods such as flour, sugar, preserved meats and vegetables, and more prominently in recent years by restaurant fast foods plus frozen, canned, packaged and microwaved junk foods. While Western foods have been available for some time – more so in the southerly areas of the St Lawrence's North Shore than the Mushuau Innu forests and tundra – these foods were not eaten in large amounts until after sedentarisation. Even the traded foods available through the Hudson's Bay Company and other merchants were, 'merely additions, seasonings and supplements to the principal meat diet'.[53] Until the late 1970s when the Quebec government authorised the flooding of Innu and Cree lands in the

52 Willows, 'Determinants in healthy eating in aboriginal peoples in Canada', pp. S32–S36.

53 Tanner, *Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador*, p. 394.

eastern interior of James Bay, 90 per cent of the food the Cree consumed came from wild foods.[54]

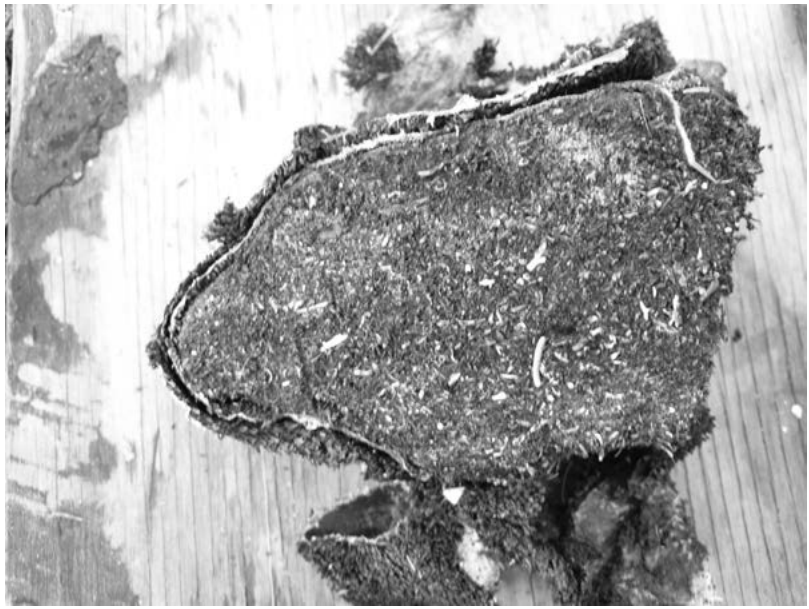


Figure 5.1. Uinastakan, the dried undigested contents of caribou stomach, in Angela Pijogge's tent at Misteshuapi, 2009.

The increasing consumption of Western foods is the overall trend, however. Frank Speck observed that white flour had gradually risen in significance, so that by the early 20th century it had replaced caribou meat for weeks at a time among the Innu he met around Pukuatshipit.[55] This was not by preference, but because the fur-trade economy demanded that more time be spent on trapping fur-bearing mammals than on hunting caribou and other big animals. The fur trade also put pressures on Innu to eat less caribou and more small animals such as porcupine, rabbits and fish. Bannock, a bread made from lard and white flour, became a kind of filler in the absence of caribou. Speck also noted a gradual decline in the numbers of Innu, a situation of which they were fully aware. 'The condition is commonly attributed to their change of diet from wild fruits and the flesh of game to the food of the Europeans, which they regard as not fitted to their constitutions'.[56]

Money, introduced via the fur trade, hastened the nutrition transition of the Innu. Cash earned through trapping and distributed at the coastal posts

54 Richardson, *Strangers Devour the Land*, p. 34.
55 Quoted in Leacock, 'The Montagnais hunting territory and the fur trade', p. 25.
56 Speck, *Naskapi*, p. 18.

created a need for it to be spent on the spot, especially given that Innu did not establish bank accounts until much later. Before and during sedentarisation, money surplus to hunting could only be spent in the company or government stores, and food items were prominent on the shelves. McGee describes how Innu in the early 1960s gradually adopted these foods through individuals buying and trying out some new item, then being copied by others. Thus, 'all three storekeepers that I talked to at Mingan, Natashquan and Pointe Parent … told me that the Indians have a tendency to spend their [welfare] checks rather quickly, then, when their money runs out, revert to their more traditional diet of meat, fish, bread, berries, lard and tea'.[57] According to McGee, when first introduced to non-indigenous foods, the Innu at Mingan and Natashquan ate some fruits, but hardly any vegetables other than potatoes and 'sweets such as candy and cookies'. While they spurned vegetables, he noted that many of the food purchases at this time were simply accessories to the traditional diet. They purchased ingredients such as flour, baking powder and salt to make bread as an accompaniment to wild meat or fish, and grease and butter for cooking, as well as tea, coffee and tobacco, the latter being 'universal' over the age of 15. Only later, after the connections to the land were severed further, did food purchases completely disassociated from wild meat and fish, start to become widespread.

For many, however, especially the most northerly Mushuau Innu, the fur trade never induced complete dependence on trade mainly because people needed to be strong and vigorous in the demanding subarctic terrain, and the key to this was eating caribou. Consequently, the fur trade did not act as such an important lever of dietary change as it did elsewhere. Mushuau Innu were not introduced to European foods on the same scale as their relatives further south until much later and it is likely that, even in the first decades of the 20th century, they lived almost entirely on meat, fish and berries without flour and sugar.[58] Even in times of difficulty in finding food, observers such as Väino Tanner recorded the especially nutritious soups that were made 'mixing in the caribou's stomach blood and a mass of partially digested lichen from the entrails of the animals; the mixture is boiled and evaporated and becomes a brownish, granular mass'.[59] This is the same *uinastakan* still enjoyed by Sam and Angela Pijogge almost a century later. The Mushuau Innu diet often included nutritiously dense foods such as caribou foetus and marrow, together with several varieties of berries including bilberries, cranberries and cloudberries, the latter being an effective guard against scurvy. Further south,

57 McGee, 'Field trip to visit the Montagnais Indians at Mingan and Natashquan', p. 27.

58 Tanner, *Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador*, p. 655.

59 Ibid., p. 684.

blueberries and raspberries were eaten in abundance in season, as was maple syrup and arrowroot.[60]

Depending on location, the Innu diet could be highly varied with combinations of dense meats such as: caribou, moose, bear, porcupine and beaver; waterfowls and varieties of birds such as ptarmigan, partridges, geese and ducks; fish such as trout, arctic char, salmon, pike, cod and smelt; in some coastal locations different types of seals; and of course vast amounts of seasonal berries. All foods were cooked in a variety of ways – spit roasted, boiled, fried, smoked or dried – to produce delicious meals. Various combinations of parts of the animals, fish, birds and berries were also made into meals. An important food for the Innu has been pemmican in which caribou or bear meat is cooked and ground with marrow and fat. If sealed up tightly, it can be preserved for up to three years. Formerly, pemmican was sealed in decorated birch-bark containers.[61] Other foods included jams made from berries and occasionally mixed with bear grease and spread on bannock. Julius Lips referred to 'bear or beaver meat accompanied by *banock* thickly spread with *minish pemmican*', as 'the national dish of the Indians'.[62]

It was not until relatively recently, following the Innu's separation from the land, that manufactured foods became a big part of their daily diet. Settlement life reduced the accessibility of wild foods and, by the 1960s, canned and processed foods with some frozen livestock meats became more prominent on account of the heavy reliance upon the village store. The early phases of sedentarisation would have been marked by a movement towards foods such as those McGee reported for Mingan (now, Ekuantshit) and Natashquan, 'fresh or canned fruit, fresh or canned meat, baby food, canned vegetables, milk, ingredients for bread, butter, lard, cookies, candy etc.'[63] Unfortunately, McGee did not say in what proportions fresh and canned fruits and meats were consumed, but given the costs of transportation to northern Quebec for items with a short shelf life, it is likely that the bulk of fruit and meat consumed by Innu families was canned. During this time, however, at Ekuantshit and Natashquan – although more so at the former – people consumed a full range of wild meats, as well as seal, fish and numerous kinds of berries. After sedentarisation, this pattern altered again to junk and fast foods that became more readily available with convenience stores and fast food restaurants, especially in nearby settler communities such as Goose Bay in Labrador and Sept Îles in Quebec. Younger generations of Innu began consuming these foods in abundance and this remains the case today.

60 Lips, 'Naskapi law', p. 390.
61 Lips, 'Notes on Montagnais-Naskapi economy', pp. 24–31.
62 Ibid., p. 31.
63 McGee, 'Report on a field trip to visit the Montagnais Indians at Mingan and Natashquan', p. 27.

Figure 5.2. Food in youths' cabin at Kameshtashten, 2005.

Older Innu believe that store-bought foods are not only unhealthy and make people ill, but they do not fulfil the basic function to satisfy hunger. This was evident almost as soon as the Innu were sedentarised. Father Frank Peters, the first priest to be billetted at the new Davis Inlet village in 1972, quoted a typical Innu commentary: 'In the store is always food. But when we eat that food, we are still hungry. It is not the same as caribou meat, it is not Indian food'.[64] At the same time, Peters observed that, 'tooth decay takes a heavy toll specially among young children because of the availability of sweets and soft drinks in the store, while in the … past living on a meat and fish diet they kept their teeth in nearly perfect condition'.[65] A few years later, a visiting physician reported that people in the country were remarkably healthy, with very few

64 Peters, 'Acculturation process among the Naskopi Indians of Davis Inlet under influence of the North-American society', pp. 10–11.

65 Ibid., p. 30.

cardiovascular or lung problems, and good dental health.[66] The major causes of mortality were trauma from accidents and infant illnesses.

Norwegian anthropologist Georg Henriksen was watching the transition to permanent village life at the same time as Father Peters. He, too, noted the reactions of the Mushuau Innu to the change in diet incurred by village life on the coast:

> They say that the food in the interior tastes better, and specifically that caribou makes one stronger, gives one more energy and keeps one satisfied for longer periods of time than any other food. Today they can buy certain foods in the store at Davis Inlet, but as several men said to me: 'turkey and chicken taste like bread'. While living at Davis Inlet, both men and women will often say that they long towards the interior where they can get proper food.[67]

Speck had heard similar sentiments expressed some 60 years before by the Innu of the North Shore. 'Wild game to them is "pure" and conducive to health', he recalled, 'while European food, like alcohol they believe to be detrimental to their health and vitality'.[68] At about the same time, Lips found that among the Innu of Lac St Jean and Mistassini 'feeling against any meat of domesticated animals is very strong'.[69] The Innu hunter Matthieu Mestekosho also believed that such meats were damaging, especially on the land where physical and mental sharpness is most important and can best be enhanced by wild meat like caribou. As he said, 'out on the land, eating pork makes you weak, especially if you are sick'.[70] It is not surprising that some groups like the neighbouring Cree viewed store-bought food, or 'whiteman's' food, as literally and symbolically polluting.[71]

The reports of Innu worries about store food in the early days of Davis Inlet are supported by the reminiscences of Innu people who remember the times of transition from permanent country living to semi-sedentary village life. Elizabeth Penashue's reflections, like those of many other older Innu, focus on her parents' dread of living primarily on store food. Elizabeth's mother told the missionary trying to persuade her to stay in Sheshatshiu, 'I worry about my kids because I know there is food in the country, such as caribou, beaver

66 See Sarsfield, *Report ... Regarding the Health Care Delivery System in Northern Labrador*.

67 Henrikson, *Land Use and Occupancy among the Naskapis of Davis Inlet*, p. 4.

68 Speck, *Naskapi*, p. 18.

69 Lips, 'Naskapi law', p. 421.

70 Bouchard, *Caribou Hunter*, pp. 60–1. Among the farming Cochiti Pueblo peoples, there exists a parallel perception that sugary American foods make Pueblo peoples 'weak'. See Furman, 'Technological change and industrialization among the southern Pueblos', p. 11.

71 Adelson, *'Being Alive Well'*, p. 104.

and porcupine, but there is not enough food in Sheshatshiu'.[72] Shushep Mark's complaint of experiencing hunger pangs after eating manufactured food echoes what the people of Davis Inlet were saying almost 40 years earlier, 'when I eat canned food, I am hungry in one hour'.[73] Similarly, 'if I don't have caribou meat for one week, I feel sick. It sustains me for two or three days, but store-bought food makes me hungry just after I eat it', said Katnen Pastitchi, also of Sheshatshiu.[74]

The separation of the Innu from their healthy foods after sedentarisation was exacerbated by enforcement of provincial game laws, whereby Newfoundland officials patrolled Innu lands with helicopters and planes, making numerous arrests and confiscating animals, especially caribou. Many Innu served jail time for such offences.[75] Similar restrictions were placed on the Inuit of Labrador in the 1970s and 1980s, who, according to one source, could only shoot two caribou per year, while the Newfoundland government allowed paying sports hunters to kill up to 30,000 a year.[76] In Quebec, Cree were prohibited from hunting moose at the times of the year when they were most in need of meat.[77] In other areas of the far north such as Alaska, national game regulations caused major conflicts from the 1920s onwards between Yupik and police over the hunting of fur-bearing mammals, waterfowl and big animals such as caribou and moose.[78] Along the Pacific coast, the US government set limits for indigenous groups like the Karuk, allowing them only two salmon per person. Consequently, an important means of redistributing food and sharing in community activities was eliminated.[79] These measures made it a crime to procure indigenous foods. Although many of these laws have been rescinded, they undoubtedly affected indigenous peoples' confidence in being able to continue securing wild, fished and hunted foods by impressing upon them that their activities, beliefs and the fulfilment of their needs required approval by an external jurisdiction. Undoubtedly, this also affected the tastes of younger generations who, deprived of wild foods, consumed the manufactured ones that were so easily available.

A sedentary life in the villages virtually condemns Innu to an unhealthy diet. Even today, few have the knowledge or money to seek out more nutritious non-Innu foods, which are still perceived as strange because the village diet has consisted almost entirely of junk foods. Shimiu Penashue observed high numbers of children getting sick in the community and in *nutshimit*: 'Now

72 Interview with Elizabeth Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 1994.
73 Interview with Shushep Mark, Kenamu, 3 July 2003.
74 Interview with Katnen Pastitshi, Sheshatshiu, 5 April 2006.
75 See Innu Nation, *Denial of the Right to Subsistence – Interviews*; Samson, *A Way of Life That Does Not Exist*, p. 149.
76 Berthe and Grey (eds.), *Voices and Images of Nunavimmiut*, vol. 1, p. 140.
77 Richardson, *Strangers Devour the Land*, p. 54.
78 Oswalt, *Bashful No Longer*, p. 162.
79 Hormel and Norgaard, 'Bring the salmon home!', p. 355.

they eat store food. It makes them sick'.[80] Naisa, Shimiu's wife connected this with a number of losses inflicted upon the people with settlement, 'We lost a lot of things, particularly a loss of energy. In the country we had active lives, and coming here, we just lost energy'.[81] Many *Tshenut* such as Pien and Lizette Penashue said that the food purchased in the stores did not taste good. As Pien remarked, 'I don't eat much food from the store. I would rather go across the Bay and catch a porcupine'.[82] These sentiments were shared by Mary Adele Penashue, 'the food in the community has an effect on people today. I really miss eating wildlife and berries in the country. I have strange feelings when I'm in the house eating store-bought food. I really miss what we used to eat. It's making us sick and weak, this fast food.'[83]

Figure 5.3. Innu atuatshuap (store), Sheshatshiu. Microwave foods in cabinet, 2005.

Part of the suspicion many Innu have towards store-bought foods has to do with concerns over the artificial ingredients, additives and chemicals used in manufacturing. As Katnen Pastitshi explained,

> In the old days, people looked out for food themselves. With the wildlife out there, no one feeds them, they feed themselves. *Akaneshaut* [Sheshatshiu Innu variant of *Kakeshaut*] feed chickens and cows and

80 Interview with Shimiu Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 1June 1995.
81 Interview with Naisa Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 20 April 2006.
82 Interviews with Pien and Lizette Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 5 April 1997.
83 Interviews with Mary Adele and Louis Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 4 July 2003.

> put needles into them. With the wildlife, we don't use needles on them. We don't use anything to make them grow big. It's the same with vegetables. They put stuff on them to make them grow big, but we don't give any stuff to the wildlife.[84]

The belief that store food causes weakness and ill health is ubiquitous. I have never known or heard of any *Tshenut* disagreeing with this view. Many – such as Katnen Pastitchi, Elizabeth Penashue, Mary-Adele and Louis Penashue, Dominic Pokue and Shushep Mark, in Sheshatshiu – related their concerns about food safety to human interference with animals. Shushep pointed out that cows were injected using needles and that people did not know what this did to the animals. Prior to being impacted by industrial sites and pollutants, the composition of hunted animals had always been known, in that the hunter could see what the animal consumed, discovering this easily through opening up the stomach and by inspecting the organs. Domestic plants and animals, on the other hand, are unknown quantities and processed food products are even more so. The origins of the food products available to the Innu in the local stores are even more obscure. When I stayed with a family in Natuashish in 2003, I noticed that the packet that had contained the chicken legs they were cooking for me had no label to indicate where the chicken was from, no information on ingredients and no 'sell-by' date, only a packing date. Checking this the next day, I found that other products in the store were similarly lacking sell-by dates. When I mentioned this to my hosts and other people in the village, they shrugged it off as part of the profiteering that occurs through Band Council contracts, such as the one needed to run the store. Since then others have suffered from *E.Coli* in Natuashish. When I arrived in 2012, my host Sam Pijogge, who was in hospital with *E.coli* poisoning, told me that several others in the village also had the bacteria. No investigation into the causes ever took place.

The two community grocery stores in Sheshatshiu specialise in non-perishable foods. On the many occasions I have visited them, a typical array of fresh goods might include a few oranges, apples and bananas and some limp, sprouting potatoes, but otherwise the shelves and freezer compartments are dominated by junk foods. At Blake's Store there are a few aisles of frozen foods, mostly chicken, French fries and pre-assembled 'dinners', shelves brimming with canned and potted meats, spaghetti, ravioli, the ever-popular Kraft Macaroni and Cheese dinner and various canned 'stews' that resemble dog food both to the eye and nose of the uninitiated. Also on display are soda pops in the most lurid eye-catching coloured plastic bottles, a huge rack of potato chips and, by way of a grand finale, a selection of microwave pizzas, sandwiches and burgers by the cash register. At the other store in Sheshatshiu, I wandered around and took photographs. The non-Innu attendant seemed indifferent to

84 Interview with Katnen Pastitshi, Sheshatshiu, 5 April 2006.

my unusual activities. While I was over at the refrigerated shelves, packed with microwave pizzas and submarine sandwiches, he strolled over and we both stared at the plastic packages. 'Most of Sheshatshiu lives on these', he blurted out without any preliminaries, adding that they were 'breakfast for the kids on their way to school'.

Unsurprisingly, the consumption of store-bought foods is having a direct impact on the Innu. Comparing the nutritional intake of women aged 15–44 in seven northern communities, Lawn et al. found, worryingly, that the fat intake of 57 women in Davis Inlet in 1992 was more than 150 grams per day, more than twice the recommended daily intake of 60 grams.[85] The same survey showed that, whereas these women exceeded the Canadian recommended allowance for many of the nutrients, they were deficient in vitamin C, folate and calcium. However, the relatively higher amounts of calcium, zinc, iron, magnesium, potassium and vitamins B6 and B12 in Davis Inlet, compared with the other communities, was boosted by the inclusion of country foods in their diets.

Advertisers, of course, constantly promote cheap and unhealthy foods to populations like the Innu with limited cash incomes. Over a few rainy days in a camp at Kenamu, Shushep Mark, his son-in-law Shustin Rich, biologist Jules Pretty and myself spent a lot of time in the tent. Crackling across the airwaves, our companion was the local Goose Bay radio station. Commercial breaks cheerily pushed 'Double Season Chubby Chicken' and 'Big Bite Pizza'. Each day we pulled several large salmon out of Shushep's nets and ate these with simple unleavened bannock bread made from flour and water. We reflected on the contrast between what we were eating here and Chubby Chicken. Later, I checked on the nutritional values of the A&W chain's 'Chubby' food products. While it has some virtues, the Chubby burger alone contains 105 per cent of the daily allowance of calories from fat. If a large order of poutine, french fries smothered in gravy and curd cheese is added, the restaurant-goer would be 340 per cent over the daily recommended allowance of calories from fat. If one were to splurge on the Chubby Chicken dinner, which includes chicken, seasoning, fries and coleslaw mix and dressing, one would be 355 per cent over the recommended daily intake of calories from fat and have consumed 65 per cent of the daily limit of saturated fats.[86] Since the Innu have no tradition of village cuisine, Chubby Chicken advertisers are pushing at an open door.

Fears over pollution in the country from dams, mines and other industrial plants are an additional incentive to buy Chubby Chicken and non-perishable foods in the local stores.[87] While we were lying in our tent at Kenamu listening

85 Lawn et al., *Nutrition Surveys in Isolated Northern Communities*, p. 14.

86 Data obtained from: http://calorielab.com/restaurants/a-and-w-ca/3025 (accessed 17 Jan. 2013).

87 For a commentary on these processes in the neighbouring Inuit community of Nain, see Pufall et al., 'Perception of the importance of traditional country foods to the physical, mental, and spiritual health of Labrador Inuit', pp. 242–50.

to the Chubby Chicken commercials, a study conducted around the same time was finding mercury in fish at Kenamu and other locations as a result of an upstream dam.[88] Several Innu in Sheshatshiu had participated in the study as field guides to the researchers and had told others that salmon at Kenamu had higher concentrations of mercury than other fish, especially during the summer months. In the thinking of many Innu people like Basile Penashue, one of the project researchers who told me this, there were close connections between the sicknesses of the animals and fish from pollution and those of the Innu. The dangers of industrial toxins are widely discussed locally and have made some Innu fearful of eating wild foods.

The dangers of eating junk foods are also well known, but many Innu (and poor people everywhere) think these pitfalls are less immediate and quite simply unavoidable. To obtain healthier foods, Sheshatshiu and Natuashish residents really need to go to Goose Bay. For the former this is a 60-kilometre round trip, while for the latter it is almost two hours by airplane. Because the Innu know meat more than any other food, there tends to be far more alarm about the toxic possibilities of both farmed and wild animals than non-meat junk foods. Although people are aware of the enormous amount of fat and sugar in soda-pop drinks and candy, and salt in potato chips, all are avidly consumed by Innu children. There is much less conspicuous alarm about these items, which are not only eaten in the villages but taken in large quantities on hunting and fishing trips as snacks. While on a strenuous and very cold snowmobile trip north of Nain with several Innu families, I found that when the going was tough and much exertion needed, I was imbibing a toxic combination of rapid, yet unsustained, energy release. The salty potato chips made a quick snack, but then made me thirsty and sent me scuttling for the only available drink, soda pop, which in turn soon made me hungry again.

Pointing out that the Innu diet has drastically deteriorated is not to say that the Innu did not face difficulties in obtaining their healthier wild food prior to sedentarisation. But the problems they faced in the relatively recent past were of a completely different order than those of today. There are several recorded instances of starvation. But like the Plains Indians' experiences in the late 19th century, this was often caused directly or indirectly by the normal round of hunting activities and seasonal movements having been disrupted by settlers. Fur traders are recorded as refusing to provide ammunition for hunters who had become dependent on firearms for killing animals to sell to the traders. In some cases, the closure of trading posts meant that essential supplies could not be procured and hunting families sometimes starved as a result. As many as a hundred Inuit and Innu may have suffered from extreme hunger around the

88 See COMERN Project, 'Mercury in lakes of the boreal forest – Labrador component'.

Fort Chimo area of Ungava in the winter of 1941–2.[89] Hunger and sometimes starvation were reported on account of natural occurrences such as forest fires and fluctuations in caribou migrations[90] as well as from fur traders denying Innu hunters ammunition when they brought in insufficient furs.[91]

The fur trade was an important factor since, by making Innu and other northern peoples' dependent on trade goods, it gradually reduced their self-reliance. This became particularly acute when large-scale trapping of beaver began to reduce the supply of beaver meat and distract attention from caribou hunting, which provided more food for more people over a longer period. The fur trade also made hunters dependent on items like tea, flour, manufactured foods and ammunition, without which their lives increasingly came to be imperilled on the whim of the fur trader. Depletions in the number of animals were also a function of the use of firearms themselves and the accelerated pace at which animals were killed for furs.[92] There were also some occasions in the 20th century when Innu starved as a result of natural fluctuations in the numbers of animals and simply not being able to find them, especially caribou, as Henriksen recorded from personal testimony.[93]

Other instances of hunger occurred when about a hundred Mushuau Innu were placed on a ship by Newfoundland authorities and relocated en masse 300 kilometres north to the island of Nutak in 1948. While there, the people found it difficult to survive by being forced to hunt in a landscape well beyond their normal territories and mostly above the tree line. According to Elizabeth Rich of Natuashish, who was a child at the time and has stunted growth, the people never had enough to eat. Eventually, Elizabeth got sick and was taken to Nain and from there to the hospital at St Anthony's, Newfoundland. 'My illness related to hunger experienced at Nutak', she said, 'That's the reason I was sick. I was always hungry. I was really starving. I can still feel it today. That's the way I feel right now talking about it'.[94]

Even in such times of need, however, Innu developed techniques to ward off hunger, such as boiling spruce boughs as 'tea',[95] among numerous other temporary measures like eating boiled lichens.[96] They also had a sophisticated semaphore system to alert travellers about difficulties a camp might be encountering. Writing in the 1930s, Lips believed that this system was highly effective because all Innu were bound by an 'unwritten constitution' to assist

89 Graburn, *Eskimos Without Igloos*, p. 120.
90 Tanner, *Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador*, p. 633.
91 See Anderson, *Angel of Hudson Bay*, pp. 131–4; Samson, *A Way of Life That Does Not Exist*, pp. 127–33.
92 Samson, ibid.
93 Henrikson, *Land Use and Occupancy among the Naskapis of Davis Inlet,* p. 5.
94 Interview with Elizabeth Rich, Misteshuapi, 9 April 2009.
95 Interview with Dominic Pokue, Sheshastshiu, 3 July 2003.
96 Henrikson, *Land Use and Occupancy among the Naskapis of Davis Inlet*, p. 3.

others when they came across the notched pole signals in the woods: 'No instance is known where assistance has ever been refused', he wrote.[97] Almost all observers commented on the mental and physical capacities of the Innu to withstand hunger. The fact that these capacities could only be called into play during occasional emergencies is a testament to the Innu's hunting, fishing and tracking skills. Summing up the benefits of the menu of eggs, ducks, geese, ptarmigan, hares, rabbits, porcupines, bears, salmon, trout, white fish and berries, included in the Mushuau Innu pre-sedentarisation diet, Honigmann argued that 'in the long run this way of life provided a varied and nutritious diet'.[98] Such fare was necessary for Innu feats of physical endurance in the Labrador-Quebec interior as described by both contemporary Innu and observers of pre-sedentarisation hunting life.[99] The same observations could be made of present-day Innu hunting activities as well as those of related groups such as the Whapmagostui Cree. For the latter, 'the more physically active one is the stronger one will be. At the same time, the only way to acquire that strength is to eat Cree food, and the only way to get Cree food is by hunting'.[100]

The meanings of food

There is a certain immediacy and vitality associated with hunted and fished food. Fishing, for example, entails catching the fish by rod or net, killing it with a knock on the head, cleaning it of its guts and entrails. Hunting engages whole groups of people in travelling, following, shooting or capturing animals. Innu porcupine-hunting in the spring means strapping on snowshoes, walking into forests covered in deep snow of variable solidity, and checking the trees for recently stripped bark – a sign of a porcupine feeding on the inner bark. When the hunter spots a porcupine, he generally shakes it off the tree or chops the tree down. When the animal falls to the ground, the hunter concusses it with a rifle or axe and turns it over to grab and stop the heart. It is cut open immediately, its stomach contents removed and the gut sewn up using hard twigs from spruce boughs. The porcupine is then brought back to camp, where someone will be asked to inflate it from the anus. If an outsider like me is on hand, the honours often go to that person. The quills of an inflated porcupine are easier to remove and this is done by singeing the animal over a fire, while raking a knife across its body and holding on to it by one of its paws. When all the quills are off – and this can take some time – the porcupine is cut into

97 Lips, 'Public opinion and mutual assistance among the Montagnais-Naskapi', p. 227.

98 Honigmann, 'Indians of Nouveau Québec', p. 329.

99 See Henriksen, *Hunters in the Barrens*; Leacock and Rothschild, *Labrador Winter*.

100 Adelson, *'Being Alive Well'*, p. 94. See also the Cree testimony recorded by Richardson, *Strangers Devour the Land*, pp. 42–3, in which hunters were unequivocal that wild food is superior to the 'white man's food' that they were required to eat while at a court hearing in Montreal.

pieces and boiled in fresh lake water.

Many people in a camp are intimately involved in the transformation of living creatures like the porcupine into food. Dead animals have to be gutted and cleaned, and this means viscera, blood, bone, foetuses, eyes, head, guts and faeces. But it also involves preparing animals in a respectful manner. The procuring, preparing and consuming of country foods are deeply social activities that are vital to maintaining relationships and norms, and even to expressing morality.[101]

Animals are not just food on legs, but living beings with emotions, language and wisdom – respecting such creatures is essential to survival in the world. Consequently, for hunters, as I have stressed earlier, animals possess great powers over us. Sanctions, some of them lethal, may follow from acting disrespectfully. As the hunter Kaniuekutat said to Georg Henriksen, 'people got hungry because they didn't respect the animals'.[102] For the Innu, the animal gods, which govern the behaviour and availability of animals, have laid down basic proscriptions concerning how humans should conduct themselves towards animals. This includes following detailed rules about methods of killing, preparation, distribution and consumption: basic moral codes apparent in origin stories of the Innu, Inuit and other Native Americans. Stories often recall a time when animals and humans were not distinct and could speak to one another.[103] Even when they separated, human-animal association, including sexual intercourse, was possible. The trickster animals in many Native American stories – for the Innu it is *Kuekuatsheu*, the wolverine – demonstrate reasoning, cunning, trickery, empathy and many other human qualities,[104] a pattern found among many hunting peoples around the world.[105]

Killing animals is not the end result of an adversarial or competitive relationship because an entity known as 'nature' is not distinguished from humanity. Anthropologist Tim Ingold articulated this succinctly when he remarked more generically that, 'animals … participate as real-world creatures, endowed with powers of feeling and autonomous action, whose characteristic behaviours, temperaments and sensibilities one gets to know in the very course of one's everyday practical dealings with them'.[106] Humans are dependent upon animals for survival and, as a result, must respect them in order to live. For Innu, this is done through killing only what is necessary, using all parts of

101 Martina Tyrell made this point vividly in regard to Inuit beluga whale hunting. See 'Sentient beings and wildlife resources: Inuit, beluga whales and management regimes in the Canadian Arctic', pp. 575–86.

102 Henriksen, *I Dreamed the Animals*, p. 59.

103 See Adelson, *'Being Alive Well'*, p. 30.

104 Millman, *Wolverine Creates the World*; Wilson, 'The enduring world of the Innu', BBC3 Radio broadcasts, 9–11 Dec.; Henriksen, *I Dreamed the Animals*.

105 See Coon, *The Hunting Peoples*, p. 8.

106 Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment*, p. 52.

the animals, sharing the meat and, when caribou have been killed, celebrating the animal gods with a *mukushan* feast. If these basic rules are adhered to, the caribou god will release more caribou for them to kill. If violations of these rules occur, the animal may not be plentiful, and sickness, starvation and other calamities may occur. George Rich, for example, recalled that in his youth two young, competent hunters chased a caribou off a cliff, a practice seen as inappropriate for hunters and disrespectful to caribou, and so likely to bring bad luck. Despite being good swimmers, both hunters perished by drowning later the same year.[107] Other Innu have told me similar stories about people who died prematurely or fell ill following acts of disrespect to animals. Collective trauma is thought to be another consequence. Many of the *Tshenut* in Davis Inlet believed that after the people were moved to the village in 1967, they allowed dogs to take caribou bones – instead of keeping them safe for *mukushan* – and this angered the caribou god. It was no surprise to some of them that suicides and unknown sicknesses started to occur.

Other creatures are respected in similar ways – for example, throwing fish bones and entrails back in the water, and asking permission for the life of an animal before shooting it. There are many rules, prohibitions and beliefs surrounding the techniques and manner of killing. Almost all of these involve respecting the lives of the living creatures that must be killed so that the Innu can survive. This is done by ensuring they are killed as cleanly as possible and are never subjected to taunting or kept alive in unnatural circumstances. Henriksen summarised this relationship:

> To the Naskapis [Mushuau Innu], Man and nature are parts of one spiritual world. Hence, Naskapi behaviour is guided not merely by what white people call 'rational principles' but also by the spiritual and moral principles which exist in nature of which Man is an integral part. They believe that a hunter does not kill an animal against its will, but with its consent. Hunters and hunted alike are part of nature. As long as the Naskapis follow the customs of their people, as handed down from their forefathers, they will continue to live in peace with each other and with nature.[108]

More poetically, in the 1930s Frank Speck depicted the labyrinthine boreal forests, great snaking rivers and flat expanses of tundra as having an almost magnetic hold on the Innu, urging them to travel not only in search of animals but to explore deeper realms of being and imagination. Speck observed that part of the reason Innu admire the landscape is not simply for its physical grandeur, but for celebrating the unity of nature, including the spirits that make themselves present to the human senses:

> Regions of vastness and desolation weave upon the imagination of all human beings a gossamer web of distraction. The northern Indians are

107 Interview with George Rich, 2004.
108 Henriksen, *Land Use and Occupancy among the Naskapis of Davis Inlet*, p. 8.

> conscious of such influences. Something present there takes hold of the emotions, while the sense of the present, of time in general, becomes dulled. Senses respond equally to passing impressions arising from within or from without and as readily to a passing thought, a fancy, or to the image of a presence which crosses the vision or which vibrates to the ear. Nothing is tested for its reality, for it is all felt as being real.[109]

Speck proceeded to elaborate on the differences between Innu and European views of the natural world, 'The realm of non-human agencies which the European calls the unseen is to the northern aboriginal as often sensed by sight as are the familiar creatures of everyday life that surround the most pragmatic minded'.[110]

These beliefs encouraged the Innu to think of themselves as collectively in a moral relationship with animals. The offering of goodwill within this is at the heart of the relationship with food itself. Even when food was scarce, communication with the animal gods could be used as a means of seeking assistance, as for example with the Innu *kushapatshakan* or 'shaking tent', in which a shaman was needed to diagnose the causes of such problems and to restore good relations with the animal gods. Hence, the pursuit and sharing of food were at the core of their identity and spirituality. Hunting is not simply a process by which animals are transformed into food, but a way of life that depends on a deep and non-exploitative relationship with them. As Harvey Feit put it in relation to the Waswanipi Cree, 'animals give themselves to the hunter only if the hunter treats the animal well and shares the animal gifts with other families'.[111] Similarly, Tlingit peoples of British Columbia and Alaska have engaged in a tradition stretching back thousands of years linking them to the salmon or 'salmon people'. The weirs and inter-tidal fish traps they make allow only those fish that do not jump up into their spawning ground and return on the ebb side to be caught. These fish are thought to have given themselves to the people, a process seen by contemporary Tlingit as 'treating salmon "like we would like to be treated"'.[112]

Eating country food rejuvenates the individual, the group and the land, and health is a function of these interconnections. To replace this with foods that are mere commodities in villages, reserves and reservations signals a change in the social role and meaning of food. The acquisition, distribution and consumption of food becomes decommunalised and largely unrelated to the surrounding lands. Food purchased at a store and brought back to individual family dwellings, where it is often minimally prepared and then consumed is stripped of meaning, shedding its role in cultivating civility and losing the

109 Speck, *Naskapi*, p. 242.
110 Ibid.
111 Feit, 'Dreaming of animals', pp. 289–316.
112 See Langdon, 'Inquiry into the emergence of a logic of engagement with salmon among southern Tlingits', p. 267.

essential communitarian aspect of eating. The relationship between people and food begins to take on the same characteristics as it does for much of Western society. That is, food disconnected from the cooperative spirit, adventure and flux of the seasons may diminish to mere 'fuel' for people dedicated to more atomised lives in domesticated settings. These general points also apply to farming, which contains a similar immediacy and can involve collective engagement with the soil, the plants and even the heavens. Indigenous farming, like that elsewhere before the advent of agribusiness, is connected to the experience of generations.[113]

Crucially, however, the global industrialisation of food transforms people who have earned a living through subsistence agriculture or hunting into consumers. Practices become governed not by collective allegiances, beliefs and a sense that there are powerful non-human forces at work, but by a market in which they are principally consumers. From the point of view of the state, those who produce food for subsistence and use non-edible parts of the foods for other purposes – such as furs or pelts for clothing, or in the case of farmers, draft animals for transportation – are not consuming in the market economy. They are therefore not full participants in the national economy or indeed in progress itself because goods and services are being recycled, exchanged and bartered.

Nutritional inferiority of Western foods

As soon as northern indigenous people cease having constant access to country food, they undergo a steep nutrition transition. The more their lands are taken from them, the more bound into the social order of reserves and settlements they become, and, as village stores become the source of food, the more this transition takes hold.

Hunted and gathered country foods are very different in nutrient content and density to store-bought foods. **Table 1** shows the energy, protein, fat and key vitamin content of nine types of wild meat and fish, chosen because they roughly approximate to a northern indigenous diet, and several of these foods are staples. These are compared with equal numbers of domestic meats and meat products widely available in local stores in the far north and elsewhere, and with fast foods from equally-prevalent restaurants. The selections are neither the most nor least nutritious in the categories. This data from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Nutrient Database shows that on average country, store and fast foods in these samples have roughly the same energy content. However, country foods have almost twice as much protein as store foods, and three times that of fast foods. When we add in caribou bone

113 The Pueblos are a good case in point. See Vlasich, *Pueblo Indian Agriculture*, p. 95.

ow, eaten by the Innu and other northern peoples, the proportions are magnified, being five times more ein-rich than store foods and almost ten times richer than fast foods.

Table 1 Nutrient content for wild, store and restaurant fast foods

ntry food	Energy kcal 100g^{-1}	Protein g 100g^{-1}	Total fat g 100g^{-1}	Saturated fat g 100g^{-1}	Iron mg 100g^{-1}	Vitamin C mg 100g^{-1}	Thiamin mg 100g^{-1}	Riboflа mg 10
bou bone marrow, raw	786	678	84.4	--	4.5	--	0.04	
bou hind quarter, cooked	159	28.81	4.82	1.88	4.8	0	0.291	0.8
sant	239	32.4	12.1	3.908	1.43	2.3	0.07	0.1
se, cooked	134	29.27	0.97	0.29	4.22	5.0	0.05	0.3
k, scoter	84	20.2	0.4	--	--	--	--	
on, dried chum	378	62.09	14.38	2.395	2.2	0	0.356	0.4
ringed, meat	142	28.4	3.2	0.82	19.6	0	0.14	0.5
t, steelhead, dried	382	77.27	8.06	0.83	2.96	0	--	
er	212	34.85	6.96	2.07	10.00	3.0	0.05	0.3
age for country foods	279.55	110.14	15.03	1.52	5.52	1.47	0.14	0.4
age without caribou cow	216.25	39.16	6.36	1.52	5.65	1.47	0.16	0.4
foods								
mel Spam Luncheon meat	310	13.24	27.24	9.98	0.9	0.9	--	
gna beef & pork	308	15.2	24.59	9.301	1.21	0.8	0.217	0.18
mel pork centre cut chops	167	18.74	9.62	3.6	0.6	1.7	--	
, chuck, top blade, mmed to 0" fat, broiled	216	25.73	11.73.	3.906	2.76	0	0.121	0.22
Buddig Corned beef	142	19.3	6.8	2.8	2.4	--	0.09	0.2
r Mayer beef franks	327	11.35	30.26	12.46	1.34	0	0.34	0
ken breast, oven-cooked	293	15.78	17.69	3.786	1.14	0	0.256	0.8
ed shrimp, cooked	99	20.91	1.08	0.289	3.09	2.2	0.31	0.3
ed Atlantic salmon	206	22.10	12.35	2.504	0.34	3.7	0.34	0.13
age for store foods	229.77	18.04	15.71	5.4	1.53	1.16	0.24	0.2
urant fast foods								
chain 14" pizza, meat and getable topping, regular crust	244	11.02	10.9	4.407	1.86	0.1	0.256	0.26
foods, fried chicken breast, eat and skin with breading	252	21.91	14.80	3.92	0.66	0	0.072	0.14
foods, cheeseburger, double, ge patty with condiments, getables and mayonnaise	253	15.5	15.63	6.519	4.12	0.5	0.254	0.2
foods, biscuit with egg and con	305	11.33	20.73	5.3	2.49	1.8	0.09	0.1
foods, cookies, chocolate ip	423	5.25	22.08	9.709	2.68	1.0	0.16	0.3
foods, fish sandwich with rtar sauce	273	10.72	14.41	3.313	1.65	1.8	0.21	0.1
foods, potato, French fried vegetable oil	319	3.76	17.05	3.965	1.37	2.7	0.175	0.00
foods, submarine sandwich ith cold cuts	200	9.58	8.17	2.986	1.1	5.4	0.44	0.3
ger King, croissan'wich with usage and cheese	376	13.73	25.45	8.595	1.87	0	0.329	0.31
age for restaurant foods	268.33	11.42	16.58	6.64	1.98	1.48	0.22	0.22

vin 0g-1	Niacin mg 100g-1
--	.2
14	5.89
18	7.5
34	5.26
--	3.317
53	14.650
53	--
--	--
31	2.2
44	5.57
44	6.47
--	--
35	2.521
--	--
27	3.761
24	4.2
.1	2.292
34	5.559
32	2.59
35	8.045
29	4.14
56	3.100
41	8.878
23	3.26
15	1.6
35	2.53
14	2.15
57	2.497
35	2.41
17	4.09
23	6.55

As shown in **Table 2** for comparison, fat levels for country foods (without caribou marrow) are on average 6.36 grams (g) per 100g compared to 15.71g and 16.58g respectively for store and fast foods. The country foods in the sample contain well under half the fat of the manufactured foods. With the inclusion of caribou marrow, fat levels exceed those of store and fast foods, but do nothing to the saturated fat levels. This may be important because, according to Kozlov and Zdor who researched the diets of Chukchi and Inuit in Siberia, 'lack of fats in the indigenous diet of high latitudes may prove disastrous' because of the need to maintain high energy levels in demanding environments.[114] Kozlov and Zdor argued that northern hunters can consume great quantities of animal fat with no effect on cholesterol levels in blood serum because of documented differences in metabolism and different hydrochloric acid levels in different portions of their stomachs. Northern hunters therefore have lower risk of arteriosclerosis, which is far likelier in those who consume more livestock products since they contain far more saturated fats, compared with the simple fat in caribou marrow and blubber.[115]

Table 2 Comparisons of nutrient content for wild, store and restaurant fast foods averages

Food	Energy kcal 100g-1	Protein g 100g-1	Total fat g 100g-1	Saturated fat g 100g-1	Iron mg 100g-1	Vitamin mg 100g
Average for country foods	279.55	110.14	15.03	1.52	5.52	1.47
Average without caribou marrow	216.25	39.16	6.36	1.52	5.65	1.47
Average for store foods	229.77	18.04	15.71	5.4	1.53	1.16
Average for restaurant foods	268.33	11.42	16.58	6.64	1.98	1.48

114 See Kozlov and Zdor, 'Whaling products as an element of indigenous diet in Chukotka', p. 129.

115 Kozlov and Zdor's, ibid., explanation for this is: 'In the course of evolution of the "high latitude" type of adaptation there has developed a specific type of "polar metabolism". This type of metabolism is characterized by an augmented energy role of lipids and proteins with a less important role of the carbohydrates arriving from the ambient environment. Accordingly, medical specialists define this type of nutrition as "proteinlipid"'. If this is correct, the market failure in post-Communist Russia may therefore be a means of helping to reverse the nutrition transition of indigenous Siberian peoples, but at the same time there are increasingly well-documented risks of consuming carcinogens through the PCBs and other toxins emanating from industrial plants further south, which lodge in marine mammals. For more on this issue, see chapter 4.

Source: USDA National Nutrient Database, available: at www.ars.usda.gov/Services/docs.htm?docid=18878 *(accessed 17 Jan. 2013).*

When we look at saturated fats, the average differences in the samples summarised in **Table 2** are even starker, with country foods averaging 1.52g per 100g, store foods 5.4g and fast foods 6.64g, meaning that country foods have less than one-third (28 per cent) of the saturated fats of store foods, and less than one-quarter (23 per cent) of the saturated fats in restaurant fast foods. Furthermore, country foods have almost four times more iron, and more of the B vitamins of thiamine and niacin, but slightly less riboflavin. Country foods also contain more vitamin C than store foods and about the same amount as fast foods. In view of all this, it is no surprise that the health of indigenous peoples has suffered greatly from the nutrition transition, as we shall see in more detail in the next chapter.

The fact that country foods also contain more iron is very important given that deficiency in this mineral was a recognised problem for many northern indigenous children in Canada, possibly as a result of the switch from wild food solids to baby formula.[116] Traditionally, Innu and other northern babies would have been fed solid foods early and also consumed caribou blood soups, seal liver and fish containing plenty of iron. In fact, the Innu had a pacifier containing bone marrow and other country foods called *kukumanatsheuake*. This was, however, replaced by Carnation milk and then baby formula on the medical advice of nurses in the villages from the 1960s onwards.

The high concentrations of vitamins in country foods are important for hunters such as the Innu with little or no cereals or vegetables in their diets. Some country foods are very high in certain vitamins – ptarmigan, for example, contains ten times as much niacin as other meats and fish[117] – while caribou and duck are high in thiamine. A variety of berries, including blueberries (*Vaccinium uliginosum* and *Vaccinum angustifolium*), crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*), cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*), cloudberry (*Rubus chamaemorus*) and red bearberry (*Arctostophylos uva-ursi*) are important sources of vitamin C, even though only relatively small amounts can be consumed owing to the limited growing season. Nevertheless, the Vitamin C from berries is also a very important factor facilitating the absorption of iron. Clearly, these country foods were once able to supply the necessary macro- and micro-nutrients to ensure adults and children remained healthy. The nutritional value of hunted, fished and gathered foods is magnified still further because northern peoples consume almost all edible parts of the foods. With the caribou, for example, the organs and bone marrow provide important sources of fat from an animal that

116 Moffatt, 'Current status of nutritional deficiencies in Canadian aboriginal people', pp. 754–8.

117 Mackie, 'Nutrition: does access to country food really matter?'.

is typically very lean.[118] While much of the country diet is low fat, waterfowl are a source of fat in the spring, as is the porcupine, which has a layer of fat around the skin. The Innu method of preparation retains this valuable tissue, which is drunk as a broth accompaniment to the meat.

Table 3 contains details of the US government recommended daily intakes (RDAs) for adults and children. It demonstrates that RDAs for minerals, vitamins and energy can be reached with relatively modest quantities of country foods. The problem in village or reserve diets and those of many urban dwellers, however, is over-nutrition, especially of fats (particularly saturated). The USDA recommends limiting saturated fats to about ten per cent of daily caloric intake.[119] Because saturated fats are present in store and fast foods in much higher proportions, the likelihood of exceeding this recommendation is extremely high.

Table 3 Recommended daily dietary allowances of key nutrients, minerals and vitamins

	Protein g	Fat total g	Iron mg	Vitamin C mg	Thiamin mg	Ribo-flavin mg	Niacin mg
Children 4–8years	19	ND*	10	25	0.6	0.6	8
Males							
9–13	34	ND	8	45	0.9	0.9	12
14–18	52	ND	11	75	1.2	1.3	16
19–50	56	ND	8	90	1.2	1.3	16
> 51	56	ND	8	90	1.2	1.3	16
Females							
9–13	34	ND	8	45	0.9	0.9	12
14–18	46	ND	15	65	1.0	1.0	14
19–50	46	ND	18	75	1.1	1.1	14
> 51	46	ND	8	75	1.1	1.1	14

** Not determined*

Source: Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, available at: www.iom.edu/Activities/Nutrition/SummaryDRIs/~/media/Files/Activity%20Files/Nutrition/DRIs/5_Summary%20Table%20Tables%201-4.pdf (accessed 2 Feb. 2013).

118 Tracy and Kramer, 'A method for estimating caribou consumption by northern Canadians', p. 48.

119 See: www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/pdf/Chapter6.pdf (accessed 17 Jan. 2013).

While I have concentrated on comparing northern hunted and gathered foods with the junk-food diets that have come to replace them, the broad conclusions apply also to indigenous agriculturists. Their forms of agriculture, while clearly benefiting from some introduced technologies, crops and domesticated animals, produced more nutritious fruits and vegetables than those of their Euro-American neighbours employing different methods. Nabhan makes this point by showing that floodwater agriculture, practised by the Tohono O'odham of the Sonora desert produces tepary beans with higher protein content than those from groundwater pumped irrigation fields of Euro-American farmers.[120]

Clearly, the loss of diversity in indigenous peoples' diets has meant a parallel reduction in sources of vital nutrition. As I observed in chapter 1, some non-indigenous residents in Innu villages in the 1990s perceived the descent into adopting a junk food diet as part of the trajectory of progress itself. For others, such as the local doctor in Sheshatshiu in the 1990s, junk food represented parents' moral failure to exercise restraint over their children and to choose appropriate foods at the store.[121] When confronted with the many problems caused by junk food diets, some observers cling either to discourses of inevitability or to indigenous failures of adjustment to modern circumstances. This is in spite of us knowing from history that, 'native foods … were part of an Aboriginal lifestyle that was viewed by missionaries, educators and doctors as diseased and inferior'.[122] As such, food is part of the unjust dialogue and represents another attack on cultural diversity. The introduction of a Western-based diet with high amounts of carbohydrate and saturated fats occurs through the colonial processes that make traditional foods more difficult to access while competing with more convenient store foods.

120 Nabhan, *The Desert Smells Like Rain*, p. 8.

121 See Samson, 'A colonial double bind: the social and historical contexts of Innu mental health', pp. 195–243.

122 Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*, p. 36.

Chapter 6

Western diseases

We have known for a century now that there is a complex of so-called Western diseases – including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and a specific set of diet-related cancers – that begin almost invariably to appear soon after a people abandons its traditional diet and way of life.
Michael Pollan[1]

Oppression makes a wise man mad.
Frederick Douglass[2]

The most important consequence of the remaking of indigenous lands as territories for agriculture, resource extraction and settlement, is that indigenous peoples have been constricted to ever-smaller areas of lands. In this chapter, I will examine how the loss of lands coincided with new diet-related diseases and a broader 'epidemiological transition'. This was spurred initially by infectious illnesses. Later it manifested itself in an upsurge of Western diseases which have had a greater effect on indigenous peoples than on other state populations, largely as a result of the living conditions in which many groups were placed. The transition is also related to the relatively recent loss of physical activity and autonomy that indigenous peoples in the far north have experienced. The testimonies of many Innu *Tshenut*, and reports of pre-settlement visitors to Labrador-Quebec, point to the largely healthy character of Innu people during those times, showing that the deterioration in their health is directly related to their induction into sedentary village life.

Food sickness

Although varying across time and place, the establishment of settler societies denied many indigenous groups the ability to use the lands to procure their traditional diets, and over time encouraged a move towards a modern Western (including junk food) diet. This transition is associated with a rapid increase in

1 Pollan, *In Defense of Food*, p. 87.
2 Douglass, 'What to the slave is the Fourth of July?', p. 126.

health problems, particularly type II diabetes, which often occurs in epidemic proportions among indigenous people,[3] but also coronary heart disease and obesity. Many indigenous communities now have rates of these chronic diseases far in excess of the already high rates of other North Americans,[4] despite the fact that low prevalence figures were recorded for diabetes and heart disease in indigenous peoples with widely differing diets before the adoption of a Western diet.[5] One study of Cree women in Quebec in the late 1990s found 29.8 per cent with a BMI (body mass index in kg/m^2) of 25–29.9, and 56.9 per cent in the obese category with a BMI of more than 30.[6] Fifty per cent of the 36 Innu women surveyed in Davis Inlet in 1992 had a BMI greater than 30 per cent and 75 per cent of them exceeded a BMI of 27 per cent, making Mushuau Innu women the most obese of all the seven northern aboriginal communities surveyed by the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) study.[7]

Story et al. suggested that 'obesity is now one of the most serious public health problems facing American-Indian children'.[8] Hovering at around 25 per cent, the rates of obesity among aboriginal populations in Canada are almost twice those of Canadians as a whole,[9] but more specific studies have found the obesity rate much higher, including rates of 52 per cent among aboriginal children, 67 per cent among adults and 71 per cent among elders in selected communities in Quebec.[10] In the Northern Territory region of Australia an epidemic of end-stage renal failure has accompanied soaring rates of hypertension, diabetes and obesity among Aborigines, who have been subjected to similar processes of land confiscation and restriction to village or urban settlements. One study estimated that the rate of end-stage renal failure for Aborigines is 21 times higher than for other Australians and was doubling

3 Lee et al., 'Diabetes and impaired glucose tolerance in three American Indian populations aged 45–74 years. The Strong Heart Study', pp. 599–610. The authors found among their samples that Native Americans in 'Arizona had the highest age-adjusted rates of diabetes: 65 per cent in men and 72 per cent in women'. For rates of diabetes among indigenous groups in Canada, see Young et al., 'Type 2 diabetes mellitus in Canada's First Nations', pp. 561–6.

4 See Thouez et al., 'Obesity, hypertension, hyperuricemia and diabetes mellitus among the Cree and Inuit of northern Quebec', pp. 180–8; Hegele et al., 'Are Canadian Inuit at increased genetic risk for coronary heart disease?', pp. 364–70; Story et al., 'Obesity in American Indian children', pp. S3–S12.

5 See Kuhnlein and Receveur, 'Dietary change and traditional food systems of indigenous peoples, p. 421.

6 Delormier and Kuhnlein, 'Dietary characteristics of eastern James Bay Cree women', pp. 182–7.

7 Lawn et al., *Nutrition Surveys in Isolated Northern Communities*, p. 44.

8 Story et al., 'Obesity in American Indian children', p. S3.

9 Canadian Institute for Health Information, *Improving the Health of Canadians*, p. 116.

10 Dougherty, 'Action needed "now" on aboriginal health'.

every four years.[11] In addition, Aborigines have rates of heart disease that are 30 per cent higher than those for other Australians.[12] Elsewhere, such as in Borneo, recently sedentarised Punan peoples' shift towards a more agricultural diet characteristic of urban populations has had similarly negative effects: 'Although they are not yet a critical problem for the Punan', wrote Dounias et al., 'other nutritional disorders, excessive weight, hypertension, elevated cholesterol levels, and diabetes, are emerging signs of dietary imbalance'.[13]

The public health consequences of new diets are seen vividly in the far north, where store food was introduced as part of modernisation policies in the 1950s and 1960s. Waldram et al. argued that, 'exchanging a traditional for a "modern" diet high in fats, particularly saturated fatty acids, would have a detrimental impact on the risk of chronic diseases'.[14] Chronic illness may arise from nutritional deficiencies of iron, iodide, folic acid, vitamin D and omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, but most are due to excess consumption of energy and fat (causing obesity), sodium as salt (high blood pressure), saturated and trans fats (heart disease) and refined sugars (diabetes and dental caries). Omega 3s, abundant in many traditional northern indigenous diets are, on the other hand, known to be protective against cardiovascular disease and malignant tumours.[15] The change in northern areas from fat with high amounts of omega 3s in seal, fish and marine and land mammals to fats in processed foods such as margarine, vegetable oils and junk foods containing omega 6 fatty acids 'raises the levels of cholesterols and triglycerides of blood serum and causes subsequent development of arteriosclerosis'.[16] As well as more energy expenditure and lifestyles that are more protective of the body (for example, the shorter gap between menarche and childbirth among some hunter gatherers protects against breast cancer), hunter-gatherer diets comprise foods that are denser and more fibrous, have a high protein-to-fat ratio and lack the large amounts of sugar, salt, saturated fats and high calorie counts characteristic of the modern Western diet.[17]

Moreover, degenerative diseases that are now very common, such as diabetes, coronary heart disease and cancer, were relatively rare in hunter-gatherers. One graphic example of the rapid effects of dietary change is that of the Inuit of northern Labrador, where doctors and Moravian missionaries, working with the Inuit along the coast in the 19th and 20th centuries, documented the impacts of new diets. These coincided with the rapid shift from a mobile way

11 Hoy et al., 'The multidimensional nature of renal disease', pp. 1,296–304.
12 Cresswell, 'Heart disease rate 30pc higher among Aborigines'.
13 Dounias et al., 'From sago to rice, from forest to town', p. S301.
14 Waldram and Young, *Aboriginal Health in Canada*, p. 119.
15 Kozlov and Zdor, 'Whaling products as an element of indigenous diet in Chukotka', p. 131.
16 Ibid., p. 133.
17 Eaton on Eaton, 'Hunter-gatherers and human health'.

of life to sedentary living at village locations on the coast. Moravian records for 1912–13, for example, recorded that of 11 children born that year only four remained alive after one year. 'Lack of the natural food of the Esk. [Eskimo] is the reason for this',[18] the entry for Okak asserted. Samuel Hutton, an English doctor who attended Inuit gathered at the Moravian missionary stations at the turn of the 20th century, maintained that the health changes coincided with more sedentary lives. At this time, the Inuit were changing from living in more dispersed fashion along the bays and fjords in tubiks and stone shelters to being concentrated around the missionaries in wooden huts, a process which had effectively been completed at the encouragement of the Moravian Brethren. At these locations, the Inuit also came under ever-greater contact with European settlers, traders and fishermen.

Dr Hutton noted how the Inuit had begun to adopt the settler diet, thus displacing the seasonal fish and meat diet. 'They were healthier … when they ate plenty of fish (or sun-dried) meat and fish, their aboriginal diet', and Hutton, 'feared that their race would not long survive if it continued to replace this diet with imported, particularly farinaceous, food'.[19] A few decades later in 1926, when the Czech doctor V. Suk visited the Labrador coast, he observed that those older Inuit who maintained their fresh fish and meat diet were much freer of tuberculosis than those Inuit and settlers consuming a settler diet. He also reported the relative absence of dental caries among these Inuit on traditional diets and the vast numbers of extractions carried out on the settlers and Inuit who lived on tinned milk and meat, tea, flour, molasses and hard tack.[20] So unbalanced had the diet become in the years after World War Two, that missionaries recorded numerous deficiency diseases among the Inuit. Dental caries were so common that many women could no longer chew the sealskins necessary to make and mend their families' sealskin boots.[21] Without these boots, hunting would have been impossible for much of the year, creating another force leading Inuit to opt for store-bought foods.

The same general conclusion that indigenous peoples in Canada enjoyed excellent health before major displacements from their lands, extended well into the 20th century, holding from east to west coast. In her study of the health of aboriginal peoples in British Columbia, Mary Ellen Kelm pointed out that around the time of World War Two:

> We can … see indications that Aboriginal bodies were, in some ways, healthier and stronger in this period than their non-native contemporaries. Cancer accounted for a much higher percentage of total deaths among the non-Native population than among First Nations. The same was true of heart and circulatory disease. Whereas

18 Kleivan, *The Eskimos of Northeast Labrador*, p. 176.
19 Quoted in Jenness, *Eskimo Administration: III. Labrador*, p. 47.
20 Ibid., p. 65.
21 Ibid., p. 70.

> cancer, heart, and circulatory disease accounted for 13 per cent, 11 per cent, and 26 per cent of all deaths in British Columbia, respectively, in 1935, among the First Nations these same diseases accounted for only 2.4 per cent, 4.6 per cent, and 3.5 per cent.[22]

A similar case could be made for other indigenous groups, whose diets protected them from diabetes and other Western diseases, but whose rapid transition to a modern Western diet brought on these conditions in epidemic proportions. According to a 2004 report by the United States Commission on Civil Rights, Native Americans in the US are 420 per cent more likely to die from diabetes than the general population.[23] With well over half of them affected, Tohono O'odham people, for example, are often cited as having the highest incidence of diabetes per capita of any group on the planet. Before the changes in their diets in the early 20th century, diabetes was unknown to the O'odham. Their foods contained energy-rich carbohydrates, high in protein quality with sufficient vitamins and minerals.[24] Like wild meats eaten by northern hunters, the O'odham diet of drought-resistant desert beans, cacti and nuts, such as acorn and mesquite pods, slowly release sugars and therefore protect them against diabetes.[25] These foods help the O'odham and other desert peoples survive long periods of intense high temperatures in the Sonoran desert environments and may be protective against diabetes. Agricultural food products and junk foods, on the other hand, are composed of fast-release carbohydrates that rapidly dump sugar into the metabolism and create the risk of obesity, dental caries, colon-related diseases and diabetes.[26] The quick release of sugar produces a need to eat continuously, which can be fatal when we consider that the non-indigenous foods are generally low in fibre and that people with little employment or occupation on reservations may be prone to doing no exercise. The ability of the O'odham to eat the foods suited to this environment was eroded by railroads, frontier farmers and settlement on reservations. The loss of river water was a particular problem inhibiting the growth of their crops. Many O'odham shifted from their gathering, farming and hunting lifestyle to open-range cattle ranching and wage labour on farms, precipitating an abrupt shift in diet and to the ecology since cattle grazing removed top soils and native plants and trees.[27] As Carolyn Smith-Morris explained:

> First, the change in subsistence activities from farming to wage labor increased sedentism. A cultural value of 'exercise for exercise's sake' had never been necessary in the precontact Pima [Akimel O'odham]

22 Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*, p. 16.
23 United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Broken Promises*.
24 Nabhan, *The Desert Smells Like Rain*, pp. 103–7.
25 Nabhan, 'Rooting out the causes of disease: why diabetes is so common among desert dwellers', pp. 371–2.
26 See Burkitt, 'The emergence of a concept', p. 7.
27 See Robinett, 'Tohono O'odham range history', pp. 296–300.

> culture, given the demanding tasks of daily life. Second, the need for alternative sources of food led – not inevitably but certainly – to subsequent reliance on government commodities and other processed foods. Commodities held a leading position in the introduction of capitalist relations at Gila River, especially fatty and sweet foods and drinks. These processed foods, made available first through government rations and later in the fast food market, have had a highly negative and steadily worsening impact on Pima health.[28]

The O'odham broadly reflect the larger processes that were set in train by the US government from the mid 19th century to concentrate and amalgamate native peoples in the US on to smaller land bases across the Plains, in 'Indian country' in Oklahoma, and eventually to the Sonora desert, which was one of the final frontiers of Euro-American settlement in the US. Available foods on reservations were more squarely based on farmed crops and livestock, produced on individual allotment parcels that the American government insisted Native Americans adopt following the 1883 Dawes Act. When farming failed, as it often did on account of poor soils, lack of equipment and using inappropriate European techniques, the government furnished rations comprising low-quality processed foods. This method of feeding Native Americans has persisted through the surplus commodity food programme, by which reservation dwellers can obtain foods with a long shelf life not saleable on the market. Typical foods include cheese (in orange bricks), canned beef, chicken and pork, canned vegetables and fruit, flour, sugar, beans, rice and powdered and tinned milk. These carry United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) white 'not for sale' labels and packaging.

There is evidence that dietary change may also be implicated in the high rates of mental health problems suffered by many indigenous groups in recent years. Based on an extensive review of literature on the subject, McGrath-Hanna et al. argued that the sudden shift from diets derived from hunting, fishing and gathering to those based on Western store-bought foods is an important risk factor, linked with the deterioration in the mental health of circumpolar peoples.[29] The researchers base this claim on several lines of evidence. For example, the decline in consumption of Omega-3 fatty acids has important implications for neuronal and brain development, function and health, and this has been associated with increased levels of aggression, depression, postpartum depression and suicide. Omega 3s are also essential for mental functioning and visual acuity in babies,[30] and because they are important for brain function, may reduce neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's.[31]

28 Smith-Morris, 'Reducing diabetes in Indian country', p. 36.
29 McGrath-Hanna et al., 'Diet and mental health in the Arctic', pp. 233–5.
30 Pollan, *In Defense of Food*, p. 130.
31 Cone, *Silent Snow*, p. 49.

The epidemiological transition

These new diet-related illnesses, associated with imposed social changes including new forms of stress induced by alien living conditions, are part of an epidemiological transition. The recent transition follows and is built upon early epidemics of diseases that occurred almost on first contact with European colonisers. As is well known, North American indigenous peoples were stricken with a huge variety of fatal infectious diseases beginning in 1492,[32] but continuing today as ever more remote zones of the world are brought under the authority of states and multinational corporations.

For those indigenous North Americans that survived the disease and violence, morbidity and mortality has shifted from being related to their own ways of life on the deserts, plains and tundra to mirroring the depressing conditions in the restricted spaces to which they have been relocated. In this context, it is little surprise that the Canadian government estimated aboriginal life expectancy at between five and 14 years shorter than other Canadians, and both chronic and infectious diseases were recorded as affecting aboriginal peoples with much greater frequency than other groups.[33] Within Nunavut and the proposed Nunavik territories in which Inuit are the vast majorities, life expectancies, from 2000–6, were 11 and 13 years lower respectively than for Canada as a whole.[34] Native Americans in the US are estimated to live about five years less than other Americans.[35] In Australia contemporary life expectancy of Aborigines is an astonishing 20 years behind the general Australian population.[36] In New Zealand, the gap between the Maori and other New Zealanders is about eight years.[37] Among indigenous peoples worldwide, Stephen Kunitz claimed that in each country the life expectancy of indigenous people is substantially lower than that of non-indigenous people.[38]

This is not to ignore the fact that life in many indigenous communities could be hard, unpredictable and cut short before their lands were colonised. Archaeological research on the highly diverse pre-contact North American indigenous populations indicates that they suffered a number of diseases such as tuberculosis, sinusitis, treponemal diseases (associated with syphilis and

32 For an overview, with many specific historical examples of the devastation wrought by European diseases on indigenous peoples, see Dobyns, 'Disease transfer on contact', pp. 273–91.

33 Canadian Institute for Health Information, *Improving the Health of Canadians*, pp. 80–3.

34 Statistics Canada, 'Life expectancy in the Inuit-inhabited areas of Canada, 1989 to 2003'.

35 Kunitz, 'Globalization, states and the health of indigenous peoples', pp. 1,531–9.

36 Zhao and Dempsey, 'Causes of inequality in life expectancy between indigenous and non-indigenous people in the Northern Territory, 1981–2000', pp. 490–4.

37 Ring and Brown, 'The health status of indigenous peoples and others', pp. 404–5.

38 Kunitz, 'Globalization, states and the health of indigenous peoples', p. 1,532.

yaws), bacterial and parasite diseases, all incumbent upon largely outdoor lives, fluctuating food supplies and sometimes crowded, unsanitary living conditions indoors.[39] However, there were many variations in rates from place to place and across time with deterioration in health occurring periodically due to population pressures and environmental changes. Of course, this was also the case in industrial capitalist Europe, where massive differences between social classes in life expectancy made life for many, 'nasty, brutish and short', in Thomas Hobbes's immortal words. Indeed, exposés like Friedrich Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England* in 1845, Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives* of 1890, Jack London's 1903 *People of the Abyss*, George Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*, which appeared in 1937, as well as a pile of muckraking journalism and novels show that the health and living conditions of the English and American working classes in the recent past were indeed grim. And they remain so for those on the lowest incomes in societies with such high degrees of economic inequality. Even those who do live longer in supposedly wealthy countries often have diminished health spans because of upsurges in long-term degenerative diseases.

As well as suffering few chronic diseases, hunter-gatherers are thought to have experienced relatively low viral and respiratory infection on account of living in small mobile groups. According to Graburn, 'the Eskimos say that before the coming of the white man there were *no* diseases, and although this is a little extreme, it is quite true that most deaths were from causes other than disease'.[40] Because of diverse, seasonal and varied supplies of food, hunter-gatherers rarely suffered from undernutrition – except at times of starvation when they could not find animals – and they almost never experienced overnutrition. Deaths in hunting societies were dominated by accidents, trauma and, only occasionally, infectious diseases.[41]

In the far north, coastal and island Inuit groups were affected by imported diseases in much greater numbers than inland groups such as the Innu because they had more opportunities to come into contact with Europeans and in Labrador because their mobile way of life had been restricted much earlier than in the case of the Innu. From the earliest establishment of European contact with fishermen and Moravian missionaries in the 1750s, epidemics of smallpox, fever, pleurisy, influenza, whooping cough, rubella, measles, mumps and typhus broke out at the locations where missions had been established at Hebron, Okak (later at nearby Nutak), Nain and Hopedale. Rates of mortality were very high, often killing up to a hundred people out of small populations numbering only a few hundred.[42] The Spanish flu pandemic killed vast numbers

39 Waldram et al., *Aboriginal Health in Canada*, pp. 3–47.

40 Graburn, *Eskimos Without Igloos*, p. 142.

41 See Pollard, *Western Diseases*, pp. 9–22.

42 Jenness, *Eskimo Administration: III. Labrador*, pp. 43–4; Kleivan, *The Eskimos of*

of Inuit on the Labrador coast in 1919. At Okak, 207 out of 263 people fell victim causing the mission to close that year.[43] The transfer of the surviving people from tents to shacks caused further fatalities later in the 20th century. These arose from tuberculosis, 'ever present in most of the people of Hopedale in 1947'[44] and other diseases brought on by the enclosed living conditions and lack of hygiene such as trench mouth, scabies and impetigo. Graburn put it starkly with regard to the situation in neighbouring northern Quebec:

> with every new contact, hundreds became ill, and tens of people died within hours of each other. This situation was either unrecognised or kept fairly well under control before the war [World War Two], when the white man and his germs only arrived once a year by ship each summer. Over the decades before the war the natural game of the Arctic had declined in numbers and increasingly the Eskimos were living off the white man's food, thereby lowering even more their resistance to disease.[45]

Similarly devastating epidemics hit Inuit as well as Athabascan-speaking peoples in Alaska. Robert Fortuine referred to the smallpox epidemic of 1835–40 and an influenza and measles epidemic of 1900 in Alaska as causing, 'death, social disintegration, abandonment of traditional homes, and despair on a scale unparalleled by anything but a major war. Never would the survivors of such overwhelming personal and collective tragedy be quite the same again'.[46] The 'big death', as Yupik author Harold Napoleon called it, then became the context for the loss of community and the rise of individualism and dysfunctions such as alcoholism which made it difficult for the Yupik – and undoubtedly many other peoples – to maintain their ways of life.[47] Indeed, these demographic declines were not simply a result of infectious disease. 'Big deaths' spurred other declines and, as social demographer Russell Thornton has shown, fertility decreases occurred when indigenous social cohesion was undermined and people could no longer continue to reproduce as they once did.[48]

Similarly devastating epidemics occurred in other areas of the world where indigenous peoples were colonised. In combination with violence, these diseases were the main causes of death and extinctions of whole peoples. Entire indigenous populations were killed in the more remote island societies such as those in Newfoundland and Tasmania, where extermination had run its course

Northeast Labrador, pp. 146–95.

43 Ibid., p. 180.

44 Ibid., p. 190.

45 Graburn, *Eskimos Without Igloos*, p. 142.

46 Fortuine, *Chills and Fevers*, p. 199.

47 Napoleon, 'Yuuyaraq: the way of the human being', pp. 311–37.

48 Thornton, 'Health, disease and demography', p. 73.

by the 1830s, and Tierra del Fuego, where the same result was achieved by the early 20th century.[49]

Contemporary indications of the epidemiological transition

Infectious diseases were the first signs of epidemiological transitions experienced by contemporary indigenous peoples such as the Innu. Only a few years into sedentary living, a host of new sicknesses started to appear. 'After we were settled in Sheshatshiu', Mary Adele Penashue explained, 'we found new illnesses such as the flu and chest infections. Now I feel ill but they cannot find anything wrong with me. I will find my own Innu medicine to heal myself'. She recalled her early childhood, travelling to the old Davis Inlet post. There she 'saw people die of TB and jaundice. There were many signs of non-Innu people there and I think that's where the diseases came from'.[50]

Large population declines and abnormally high disease mortality affected indigenous peoples, regardless of their locations or who colonised them. A study by the Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit in London argued that, so pervasive are the health inequalities between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, that few differences exist between First and Third World conditions.[51] A federal Canadian study, calculating various indices of wellbeing based on the UN Human Development Index (HDI), ranked the wellbeing of indigenous peoples in Canada, along with their counterparts in the US, Australia and New Zealand, about the same as a mid-level country on the HDI rather than at the high level that the average citizen of these countries enjoys.[52] The housing conditions and material poverty in indigenous communities throughout North America and Australasia have made them susceptible to a host of other epidemics in greater proportions than those suffered by the general population. The expectation of surplus deaths in the 2009 outbreak of the H1N1 'swine flu' epidemic was such that the Canadian government sent body bags to an aboriginal reserve in Manitoba.[53] This caused outrage among indigenous communities because it was thought to be a bland but macabre admission by the state that fatalities would be much higher among aboriginal peoples, which was not found to be the case in an early study of the epidemic.[54]

49 See Marshall, *A History and Ethnography of the Beothuk*; Lemkin, 'Tasmania', pp. 74–100; Brantlinger, '"Black armband" versus "white blindfold" history in Australia', pp. 655–74; Government of Chile, Informe Comisión Verdad Histórica y Nuevo Trato, esp. 'Los pueblos indigenas del extermo sur', p. 525.

50 Mary Adele Penashue, interview in Sheshatshiu, 4 July 2003.

51 See Bourne, *Invisible Lives*.

52 Weber, 'Federal research suggests Inuit communities have well-being level of Brazil' (2006); see also, Cooke et al., 'Indigenous well-being in four countries', pp. 7, 9.

53 CBC News, 'Health minister orders probe over flu body bags'.

54 However, the disproportionate extent of comorbidities such as lung disease, hypertension, obesity and a history of smoking among aboriginals was a 'cause for

The patterns of disadvantage in Canada as a whole are systematic and persistent, with disproportionate ill health being linked to the loss of autonomy, and the corresponding provision of substandard forms of provision in housing, education and basic infrastructure common across Canada.[55] Conditions are so squalid in many communities of Aborigines in Australia that the blinding disease trachoma still occurs, the only 'developed country' where it does (trachoma was prominent in urban slums of 19th-century Europe and is found in contemporary cities in poor countries).[56] Likewise, Native Americans in the US are still far more likely to experience diseases of hygiene and overcrowding, being 650 per cent more likely to die from tuberculosis than the US general population.[57]

Modernisation policies induced a shift from tents, huts, and igloos to European-style wooden housing that had more chance of retaining stale air, placing people in closer proximity, and thereby becoming vectors for infectious diseases. Although they may sometimes retain heat more effectively, houses are far less porous than tents or igloos and concentrate airborne pathogens. The house is also immobile and ties people to one place, thus also reducing the physical activity needed for good health. While government officials and missionaries touted houses to indigenous peoples as symbols of progress, private property and modernity, these buildings literally became containers for disease. Upon settling in houses, Innu immediately succumbed to a number of sicknesses related to confined, unventilated and overcrowded conditions. In Nunavut, the Inuit have the highest reported rate of hospital admissions for lower respiratory tract infections in infants in the world. This has been found to be associated with overcrowding, low ventilation and indoor cigarette smoke.[58]

Among the Innu, the lack of access to fresh supplies of water in the early days of the settlements, and lasting until 2003 in Davis Inlet, also caused health problems. Contaminated water often required sick people to be evacuated to the hospital at St Anthony's, Newfoundland,[59] and caused many hygiene-related conditions such as impetigo in young children. For similar reasons, contamination of drinking water led to the 2005 outbreak of *E. Coli* in Kashechewan and still affects about a hundred aboriginal communities across

concern'. See Kumar et al., 'Critically ill patients with 2009 influenza A(H1N1) infection in Canada', p. 1,877.

55 See Adelson, 'The embodiment of inequity: health disparities in aboriginal Canada', pp. S45–S62.

56 Taylor, 'Trachoma in Australia', pp. 371–2.

57 United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Broken Promises*.

58 Kovesi et al., 'Indoor air quality and the risk of lower respiratory tract infections in young Canadian Inuit children', pp. 155–68.

59 Innu Nation and Mushuau Innu Band Council, *Gathering Voices*, p. 39.

Canada.[60] This is not surprising, given that many of the villages in the far north and elsewhere in Canada pump out their untreated waste into oceans, rivers and lakes.[61] Not only can this be an extreme health hazard, but it also discourages indigenous peoples from consuming the fish in their waters. In the Coast Salish territories of British Columbia, 'most beaches are closed permanently due to a host of toxins – from algal blooms to sewage'.[62] This is the case for Sheshatshiu, located on scenic Lake Melville, into which raw sewage is pumped directly.

According to a 2003 Health Canada report, only 56.9 per cent of aboriginal homes were considered to offer adequate shelter, only a little over 40 per cent of these homes had piping to centralised water treatment plants and many residents were required to boil water before drinking.[63] By 2011, 116 aboriginal communities in Canada were under a drinking water advisory, meaning that they could not access clean tap water and many of these and others also had no sewerage.[64]

Within the context of these generally demoralising living conditions, new patterns of non-activity have emerged and contributed to the emergence of previously rare causes of death. Whereas the *Tshenut* would have known about deaths of infants and youth from accidents in pre-sedentarisation days, such deaths would not have been on anywhere near the scale that they are today. According to local unpublished health statistics 33 per cent of the deaths in Sheshatshiu, and 21 per cent of those in Davis Inlet between 1986 and 2000, were of children and youth. This compared with a figure of 7.8 per cent for First Nations on reserves in Canada. A separate analysis I did, using a list furnished by an Innu health worker and drawing on the memories of several of her family members, revealed that of the 60 deaths identified in Sheshatshiu between 1995–2005, 33 (55 per cent) were of people under the age of 30. As presented in **Table 4**, whereas the infant mortality rate for Canada from 1994–2000 was 5.5 per 100,000, it was 15 per cent in Sheshatshiu and 8.2 per cent in Davis Inlet. Deaths for Innu residing in the Labrador villages were listed as resulting disproportionately from injuries, respiratory diseases, endocrine and immune causes, and diseases of the nervous system. These statistics demonstrate new patterns of mortality in which the young are dying in higher proportions than the old.

60 La Rose, 'Kashechewan, a "community in crisis": waves of suicides by young people ravage northern Ontario community'; CBC News, 'Kashechewan: water crisis in northern Ontario'.

61 See Fediuk and Thom, 'Contemporary and desired use of traditional resources in a Coast Salish community'.

62 Ibid., p. 15.

63 Health Canada, *Health of First Nations in Canada*, pp. 65–6.

64 Pauls, 'Water access "a disaster" on northern Man. [Manitoba] reserves'.

Table 4 Causes of death in Sheshatshiu (population 1,200), 1995–2005, and Canada, 2002, 2005

Cause of death	Number	Percentage of deaths	Percentage of deaths in Canada 2005	Rate per 1,000 births in Canada/ Sheshatshiu	Rate per 1,000 live births in Canada/ Sheshatshiu**
Stillborn	7	11.7		3/35	
SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)	2	3.3			0.3/1
Pneumonia	2	3.3	2.5		
Pulmonary conditions	1	1.7	4.6		
Cardiovascular	4	6.7	22.4		
Cancer	7	11.7	29.3*		
Old age	7	11.7			
Complications from alcohol	3	5.0			
Accidents	14	23.3	4.1		
Suicide	12	20.0	1.6		
Unknown	1	1.7			

Sources: local informants, Statistics Canada, available at: www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/hlth36a-eng.htm?sdi=causes%20death (accessed 16 Jan. 2013); McClure et al., 'Maternal mortality, stillbirth and measures of obstetric care in developing and developed countries', pp. 139–46; Hunt and Hauck, 'Sudden infant death syndrome', pp. 1,861–9. These statistics need to be interpreted in light of the difficulties in comparing small with large populations. They are suggestive rather than statistically rigorous.

**Defined as 'malignant neoplasms'.*

***2002 for Canada.*

Looking at the reasons for the 60 deaths in Sheshatshiu over the 1995–2005 decade, almost half of them are due to accidents, complications from alcohol and suicides and, according to the local informants who went through these figures with me, many of these are linked to alcohol. Over one in ten of the deaths are stillborn babies, many of which were thought by these informants to be caused by parents' alcohol and drug problems or lack of adequate nutrition. Although data collected in Sheshatshiu is not always compiled in the same manner as official statistics, the available data suggests massive disparities between the Innu and other Canadians. While it is true that long-term chronic

diseases that were previously rare or non-existent have now arisen, perhaps the most alarming disparities are those indicating social breakdown. The number of suicides in Sheshatshiu, as a proportion of all deaths, is about 12.5 times more than for Canadians as a whole, and those who die from accidents do so at about five times the national rate. With stillbirth rates almost 12 times higher than for Canada and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome occurring at about three times the Canadian rate, Sheshatshiu children certainly do not get off to a good start.

Sickness is a dominant topic of conversation in Sheshatshiu and Natuashish – talk about hospitals, treatments and medications is common. In 2009, only a few days into my stay to undertake a film project, I sensed the macabre surrounding me. At the Band Council office in Natuashish, I met an old friend, David Nui. We talked about going to the land. He was interested, but his teenage daughter was ill and having treatment in a hospital in faraway Halifax. Christine Poker, who was the main Innu filmmaker on the project, was not able to work either. Her best friend, a woman in her early 40s, was in the Goose Bay hospital and died of cancer just as we started filming. The friend with whom I was staying had diabetes and his teenage daughter was talking seriously about suicide and the friend who picked me up in Goose Bay had virtually no sight left in one eye and was awaiting an operation. Both of these men are in their 40s. Another friend, Daniel Ashini, who hosted me on my first trip to *nutshimit* (see chapter 1), and had paid two return visits to England, died at 49 from complications arising from cirrhosis of the liver. He was barely hanging on when I last saw him at Heathrow airport. Daniel's close friend, Ben Michel, another great leader from Sheshatshiu and also a diabetic, had a heart attack in 2006 aged 52. Daniel and Ben introduced me to Innu country life in 1995 at Utshisk-nipi when they were relatively young men. At the time, I never would have imagined that these men, who were so healthy and strong in that environment, would have died so young.

Figure 6.1. Daniel Ashini at Utshisk-nipi, 1995.

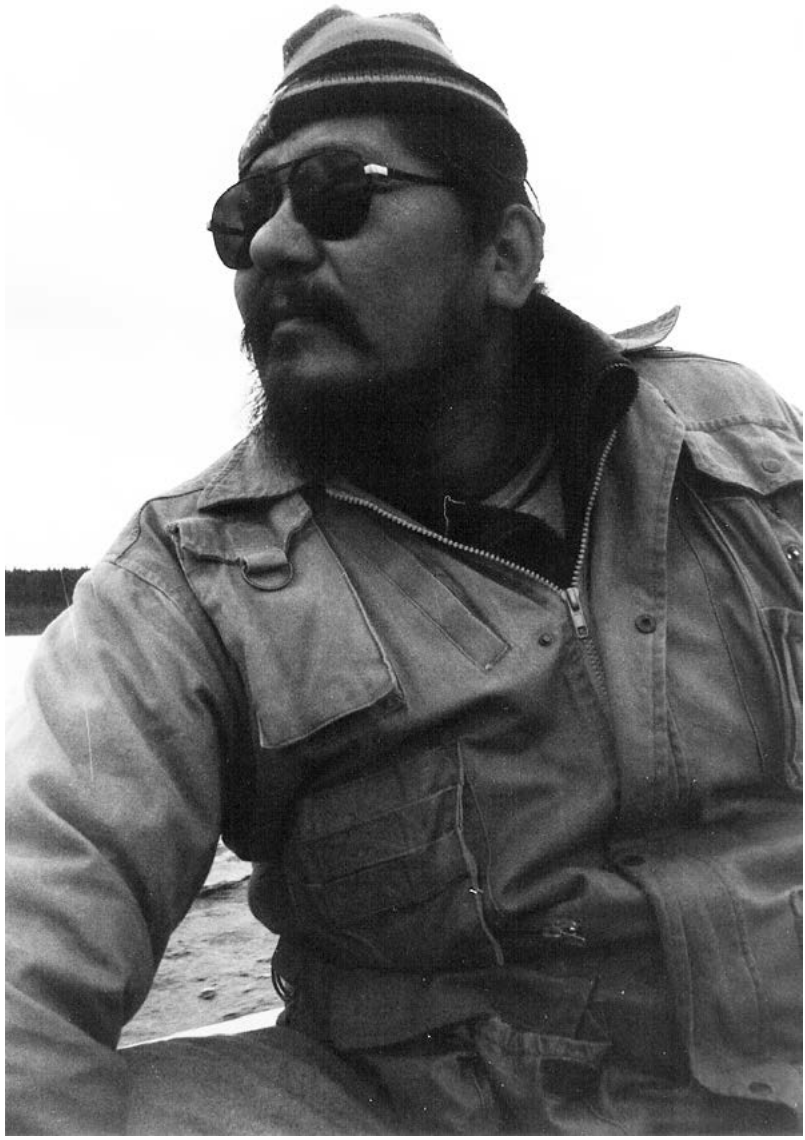


Figure 6.2. Ben Michel at Utshisk-nipi, 1995.

While new physical illnesses have arisen in indigenous communities and some infectious diseases persist which have been eradicated elsewhere, vast numbers of indigenous people do not live long enough to come down with any

of these. If they do not succumb to diabetes and other chronic ailments, they die from a second kind of epidemiological transition associated with accidents, suicide, drugs or alcoholism before serious physical debilitation arises. In Canada, children take their own lives in some aboriginal communities in epidemic proportions. Over the last 30 years, names of places like Davis Inlet, Pikangikim and Putawagan, where a little over a generation ago people were living independent and healthy lives, appeared in disquieting media reports. In the Swampy Cree village of Shamattawa on the western side of Hudson Bay, 37 children and ten adults, out of a population of only 1,500, attempted suicide in 2009. In response, the Canadian state spent $100,000 to 'fast-track a one-year suicide prevention program'.[65] In 2007, five suicides and dozens of suicide attempts among people as young as 15 took place in the Sandy Bay Cree reserve in Saskatchewan, also with a population of 1,500.[66] The suicide rate in Nunavut more than doubled in the last decade of the 20th century.[67] Boothroyd et al. recorded that the suicide rate among the Inuit of northern Quebec (Nunavik) rose from 32.3/100,000 in 1982–6 to 121.5/100,000 in 1997–9.[68] Another study found that the rate in Nunavik had doubled again since 1990.[69] These may be some of the worst cases, but they are also commentaries on how disturbing and disorienting life in aboriginal communities today can be.

Rates of youth suicide are also disproportionately high for Maori in New Zealand and Aborigines in Australia.[70] In the US, American Indian and native Alaskan suicide rates hover around twice the national rate with some reservations in Arizona, Alaska and Washington State having rates well above the already-high average.[71] Indigenous suicide rates to rival those in North America appear in Brazil, where in the face of extensive land confiscation, influxes of farmers and miners, deforestation and imported infectious diseases, clusters of suicides arose in areas of the Amazon and southwestern Brazil, extending across the Paraguayan border. In these areas distinct indigenous livelihoods have been made next to impossible, with violence and lawlessness being the norm since the 1980s when large

65 Welch, 'Manitoba First Nations fighting wave of child suicides'.
66 Warick, 'Suicide epidemic: northern community of Sandy Bay rocked by five deaths, 12 attempts in recent months'.
67 Inuit Tapiiriit Kanatami, 'World Suicide Prevention Day, September 10, 2004: Inuit Backgrounder'.
68 Boothroyd et al., 'Completed suicides among the Inuit of northern Quebec, 1982–1996', pp. 749–55.
69 Inuit Tapiiriit Kanatami, 'World Suicide Prevention Day, September 10, 2004: Inuit Backgrounder'.
70 Durie et al., 'Mental health and the indigenous peoples of Australia and New Zealand', p. 47.
71 Alcántara and Gone, 'Reviewing suicide in Native American communities', p. 461.

numbers of poor immigrants flooded into indigenous territories.[72] In a thorough and compelling study, Carlos Coloma and his colleagues attributed the extraordinarily high rates of suicide among Guaraní youth to 'rapid transculturation', increasing landlessness caused by encroachments of non-indigenous people, the influence of urban culture and ruptures between the generations for which the society of Guaraní families and leaders had been unable to find solutions.[73] The rates vary between villages, but in some Guaraní villages they exceed 500 per 100,000. Between 1980 and 2005, the mean suicide rate in Brazil was a little over four per 100,000.[74]

The health of the Innu before social transformation

One objection to observations about indigenous peoples' vulnerability to Western diseases and persistent health inequalities, is to point out that they suffered other, sometimes worse, ailments prior to colonisation. This argument can be examined in the case of the Innu since dramatic changes to their way of life are so recent that a living knowledge still exists of Innu health before sedentarisation, a time when suicide was virtually unknown. Sitting at her table in front of a Singer hand-operated sewing machine made almost a century ago, Katnen Pastitchi was stitching caribou hide moccasins. I asked if she had noticed any changes in the health of the Innu over the years. 'Of course we have noticed changes in our health', she began as if chiding me for the absurdity of the question, 'especially with the store bought food. In the past we didn't know cancer, diabetes, heart disease. We never used to be in hospital because we stayed strong in the country. The major impact on our health has been the change away from country food. I never used to hear anything about sugar in the blood. Now many people have it.'[75] *Tshenu* Naisa Penashue[76] echoed these views; 'I think and believe that diabetes comes from canned food. When I was a teenager in the country, I never saw my mother get sick at all … We ate all country food, beaver, partridge, caribou, fish'. She was sitting on her couch next to her elderly and ailing husband. Occasionally assenting, his placid eyes followed our conversation and the translations from his grandson David. Naisa proceeded:

72 See Hamlin and Brym, 'The return of the native', p. 43; McSweeney, 'Indigenous population growth in the lowland Neotropics', p. 1,377; Rabben, *Unnatural Selection*.

73 Coloma et al., 'Suicide among Guaraní Kaiowá and Nandeva youth in Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil', p. 205. See also Robbins, 'The Guaraní: the economics of ethnocide' for the wider connections between land dispossession and suicide.

74 Brzozowski et al., 'Suicide time trends in Brazil from 1980 to 2005', pp. 1,293–302.

75 Interview with Katnen Pastitchi, Sheshatshiu, 5 April 2006.

76 Interview with Naisa Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 20 April 2006.

> When we had caribou, we would dry the meat before the flies arrived. We stored dried caribou in canvas to eat later. This food is very healthy. Back then people didn't have allergies or other kinds of sickness. There was not much sickness back then. Now when we have sickness, it's the lungs, kidneys and heart. Back then it was pain in the muscles or breathing problems [possibly from smoky fires]. Then we didn't have any eye problems, either … I never heard of any chronic diseases like diabetes, heart problems or cancer.[77]

Figure 6.3. Katnen Pastitchi sewing caribou hide, Sheshatshiu, 2006.

Further north, in Natuashish, Monik Rich spoke of her life in the 1950s, travelling between old Davis Inlet and Nain, and the one month-long journey pulling toboggans from these coastal places on to the tundra of the interior. She admitted physical hardships and difficulties in finding animals, but they always had a lot of dried meat to see them through. Back then, she recalled, 'we never really had illnesses. In the country we were really healthy. My sisters gave birth in the country. They never had any kinds of diseases. We didn't know diabetes or heart disease'.[78]

When they did fall sick, Innu could draw upon medicines and medical practices known to most adults, and also upon the specialised expertise of *tshenut*, *kamateuet* (shamans) and midwives. Their medical system could be highly effective and many Innu have told me that it held advantages over

77 Ibid.

78 Interview with Monik Rich, Misteshuapi gathering site, 9 April 2009.

biomedicine. This was especially so since Innu medicine developed in the context of hunting itself. For example, Mary-Adele Penashue told us a story about the use of beaver testicles. 'Beaver testicles make the bleeding stop', she said, 'there was an old lady who shot herself accidentally through the arm with a 30-30 shotgun. Her bones were crushed and there was a big hole in her arm. The lady healed herself using beaver testicles. Now if the lady went to the doctor, she would probably end up losing her arm through an amputation'.[79] Whether or not this would actually happen in the hypothetical situation of the woman going to a hospital, we do not know, but we do know that physicians do not use beaver testicles as treatments. Not only did the Innu have their own pharmacy and practical remedies in the country, they improvised with the materials supplied by Euro-Canadians. For example, 'When we had eye problems, we used crushed sugar on the eyes and it helped. For snow blindness, we used teabags', according to Naisa Penashue. For more common Innu remedies, 'we used birch bark and spruce sap. We used something like a hot water bottle and put hot sap in it to help with pain'.[80]

Although many of the early European visitors judged Innu life by situating it as a stage of human cultural history already long traversed by Europeans,[81] without irony these same scribes depicted the Innu as a vibrant people. The hazards to their wellbeing were almost entirely a matter of environmental conditions such as cold weather and periodic absences of animals. These early visitors were struck by immediate impressions of good health as their descriptions of the Innu physique reveal. For example, Väino Tanner remarked, of the Innu gathered at Davis Inlet in 1937:

> It was an attractive, selected party who came to meet the Catholic priest: thin, supple men, with unbelievably long legs, slim women with flashing glances and shy children … the hair was intensely black, coarse and thick, the teeth regular and beautifully white … they shook hands in a most friendly way, laughed and joked and all talked at the same time.[82]

Tanner proceeded to describe the Innu at Davis Inlet as robust people and well adapted to inclement weather. By staying in the interior much of the year, they were spared the worst effects of contagious European diseases that ravaged the Inuit along the coast. To Tanner's eyes, 'the Labrador Indians look healthy if mostly thin, powerfully built and sinewy'.[83] After noting the physical endurance and strength of Innu men, Tanner went on to pay tribute

79 Interview with Mary Adele Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 4 July 2003.

80 Interview with Naisa Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 20 April 2006.

81 This can be seen in the works of Frank Speck, William Duncan Strong, Vaino Tanner and William Brooks Cabot among others. See Samson, *A Way of Life That Does Not Exist,* pp. 127–49.

82 Tanner, *Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador*, pp. 658–9.

83 Ibid., p. 594.

to the women, describing the younger among them as 'nearly always slim and lithe' and all of them as strong.[84] 'A few days after childbirth the mother is up and about, the baby is stuffed into a fur bag with moss as a napkin and on goes the caravan', Tanner wrote.[85] As they aged, observers noted a tendency of Innu women to go from 'stout' to 'corpulent'.[86] Both sexes, however, were depicted as physically very strong and resilient (presumably in comparison with Europeans). For example, 'during illness they are stolid, and appear to suffer intense pain without the twitching of a muscle. When death approaches it has but little terror, and is awaited with indifference'.[87]

Visiting the Innu living in the more northerly lands around Ungava Bay in the early 1880s, American ethnologist Lucien Turner documented an excess of births over deaths for the two years he was at Fort Chimo.[88] He observed that 'both sexes attain great age … in some cases certainly living over 70 years. Some assert that they were well advanced in years before the white man came in 1827 [when the fur trading post was established]'. Maud Watt, wife of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) factor at Fort Chimo from 1915 to 1918, was full of praise for the Innu, whom she welcomed at the post without reservation. Her account stresses the efficiency of their lifestyle through using tools, vessels and dwellings entirely fashioned from the environment:

> They needed nothing from civilisation to erect their wigwams, some of which were extraordinarily roomy. Even the cord with which the poles were tied together a top was twisted from roots and the inner bark of willows. Fireplaces of stone were set in the middle of the wigwams, and the floor, circling the fire, was buried deep in fresh spruce branches, so that there was a fresh and fragrant smell inside. The babies, too, laced in their cocoon-like cradles, were kept surprisingly clean by the use of soft antiseptic and absorbent moss for diapers and a very clean white piece of cloth wrapped around their bodies.[89]

84 Ibid. p. 599.
85 Ibid., p. 594.
86 Ibid., p. 18.
87 Ibid., pp. 105–6. I take this to mean that pre-sedentarisation Innu were not indifferent to death per se, but when facing imminent death, awaited it without drama or protest.
88 Turner, *Ethnology of the Ungava District and Hudson Bay Territory*, pp. 105–6.
89 Anderson, *Angel of Hudson Bay*, pp. 75–6.

Figure 6.4. Maud Watt, an early commentator on the health of the Innu.

Like Turner, Tanner noted that many Innu lived to be over 70 years of age. But he also observed that lives were often shortened by infant mortality, lung diseases and stomach disorders, as well as by infectious diseases brought by Europeans. From Tanner's descriptions, however, it is impossible to tell whether the infant, stomach and lung disorders were a result of their mobile life or changes brought about by the more concerted European incursions that began at the time he was writing. The children were, however, 'thoroughly healthy', he said.[90] Also observing lung and bowel disorders, Turner believed that these were a result of constant exposure to extremes of wet and cold and the inhalation of smoke from resinous woods used in fires inside tents.[91] Turner also supposed that 'gluttony', induced by huge feasts after the kill of caribou

90 Tanner, *Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador*, p. 601.
91 Turner, *Ethnology of the Ungava District and Hudson Bay Territory*, p. 105.

'produces half of the illnesses that occur among these people'.[92] But zealous eating would be a sensible reaction to the variable supplies of food and in keeping with the need to consume food immediately because hunting requires fairly constant movement. Furthermore, gluttony would not have been foreign to Europeans, or indeed to early settlers.

Väino Tanner remarked that 'the birth rate is said to be good and the natural increase in their numbers is satisfactory'.[93] Upon closer observation, he described the Innu as 'being healthy, families are large, the children fit and jolly … never did I see the brand of "fire water" on the face of a Montagnais [southerly Innu]'.[94] The mortality experienced by the Innu prior to sedentarisation seems to have been associated very directly with the sporadic difficulties of finding wild foods in a harsh, unpredictable climate. Sudden and prolonged cold or wet weather can make hunting and fishing very difficult, and the varying migratory cycles of the animals also mean that plentiful supplies of food can never be guaranteed.[95] Moreover, the sometimes-overcrowded and smoky tents might be implicated in lung ailments. Frank Speck portrayed Innu mortality in the 1920s as closely bound up with these factors, noting that,

> In the main, the Montagnais-Naskapi faces the prospect of losing his life directly by accident or mishap resulting in starvation or freezing; next, by the contraction of bronchial or pulmonary inflammation and disease through malnutrition or exposure. The latter is a cause of high mortality of the children. Year after year, I have seen the summer gatherings of these Indians numbering some hundreds of individuals, not a single one of whom was free from the cough.[96]

As part of the Algonkian project, John McGee and his students visited the Innu at Mingan (Ekuantshit) and Natashquan on the North Shore of the St Lawrence in the early and mid 1960s at the time they were shifting from a pattern of regular almost year-round hunting in the interior, with periodic visits to the traders and priests on the coast, to life in tent and house dwellings at coastal settlements. Apart from some health perils at infancy, McGee reported that the older people often reached 70 and even 80 years of age.[97]

However, one factor that might have adversely affected Innu health was their annual journey to the coastal missionary and trading posts, which eventually became the Innu villages. These migrations were motivated by the wish not to offend the priests and to get trade goods. Tanner argued that the annual summer trips to the coast cost the Innu up to 40 per cent of the year that could have

92 Ibid.

93 Tanner, *Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador*, p. 663.

94 Ibid., p. 599.

95 Periodic changes in caribou migration routes, such as that which occurred in 1893, often led to starvation. See ibid., pp. 668, 677.

96 Speck, *Naskapi*, p. 21.

97 McGee, 'Field trip to visit the Montagnais Indians at Mingan and Natashquan', p. 24.

been spent hunting and fishing.[98] The trips were long and arduous and took them far away from favoured hunting locations in the interior. Furthermore, it exposed them to 'diseases which were formerly unknown and from which they will never be free – especially consumption'.[99]

Activity transitions

As the earlier discussion of diabetes indicated, the surges in the prevalence of Western diseases are closely related to alterations made to the physical movements of indigenous peoples. One of the objectives of modernisation policies was to integrate indigenous peoples into market economic networks through trade and, more significantly, wage labour. When this did occur, the things they customarily did – their independent travels, labours and exertions – diminished while new industrial and agrarian work activities were done under supervision and according to the mechanical rhythms of clocks. Settlers often interpreted the resistance many indigenous people displayed towards supervised wage labour, and the discretion many of them customarily had over their time, as indicative of constitutional yet correctable laziness.[100]

Unlike the mechanical regimentation that came into existence with 19th-century factories, then enhanced by industrial management and bureaucracy, hunting families, working as parts of autonomous communal units, required almost complete discretion over the use of their time. The body bends to the circumstances of the environment, the rain, sun, winds, cold and heat, but must be able to travel when circumstances demand it, and be agile and strong enough to withstand the elements over prolonged stretches of time. Whereas the industrialised workplace is dominated by routine activities dictated by schedules, task mandates and workdays of prescribed segments and lengths, the hunter must be alive to the infinite variations in the use of time demanded by the weather, the capabilities and dispositions of people in the camp, the migration patterns of the animals, and the availability and condition of tools and machines. There can be no place for prescription. While physical and labouring activities in industrialised contexts are under externally imposed time constraints, the travelling and working that accompany hunting are dictated either by nature or the needs of the group itself. Even indigenous farmers such as the Pueblos operated not according to the clock, but the weather, seasonality and spiritual proscription.

98 Tanner, *Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador*, p. 631.

99 Ibid., p. 631.

100 Hence, the replacement of task-oriented labour with clock orientation through education, boarding schools and paid employment was therefore a primary objective of settler colonialism in North America and elsewhere. See Pickering, 'Decolonizing time regimes: Lakota conceptions of work, economy and society', pp. 85–97.

The reorientation of the body and the use of time and space also occurred when wage labour failed, as in the many situations in which indigenous peoples like many Innu morphed almost overnight from gainfully occupied hunters to 'unemployed' social welfare recipients. At a very basic level, welfare dependency required much less physical activity, and for hunting peoples this was a particularly drastic change, since walking, climbing, canoeing and tobogganing were common daily routines.[101] In many villages in northern Canada, where unemployment is typically high, people live in houses with labour-saving technologies, motorised vehicles and little call for demanding physical activity. Those who are employed often have inactive desk jobs or at the other extreme physically stressful and dangerous work in resource extraction industries.

The overall decline in physical activity incurred by sedentarisation, wage labour and welfare removes an essential link to meaning, purpose and psychological fulfilment. Rode and Shepherd documented this process in Igloolik, Nunavut, over the period from 1970 to 1990. They found serious declines in the health of the Inuit youth, concluding that 'the current generation of Inuit children are no more fit than their sedentary peers in southern Canada'. Their findings led them to argue that 'habitual physical activity has decreased progressively, with lesser participation in family hunting expeditions, transportation around the villages by snowmobile and all terrain vehicles, the arrival of satellite television and Nintendo games, and the opening of video rental outlets'.[102] So ubiquitous were overweight people that travel writer Sara Wheeler, perhaps uncharitably, called the Nunavut capital, Iqaluit, 'Fattytown'.[103]

Innu people speak almost unanimously of the physical activity involved in hunting as rewarding and therapeutic, providing a stark contrast to their inactive and stressful lives in the villages. Hugh Brody described similar transformations in northern Athapaskan people when they go on hunting trips in the country:

> When they set out for the bush, to hunt and trap, they do not drink, are not violent. They are, instead, supportive of one another, attentive and cautious. Tense people relax; the uncertain and shy become more confident. Everyone feels a sense of well-being that comes only with tasks and activities which they find deeply satisfying.[104]

As late as the end of the 1960s, the Mushuau Innu were using dog teams, walking on snowshoes and transporting themselves across long distances in blizzards, often in sub-zero temperatures with no guarantees of a successful hunt

101 The importance of sedentarisation as a factor in reducing physical activity has been documented in Cree communities in Canada. See Lavalée et al., 'Promoting physical activity in a Cree community', pp. 197–203.

102 Rode and Shephard, 'Growth and fitness of Canadian Inuit', pp. 525–6.

103 Wheeler, *The Magnetic North*, p. 110.

104 Brody, *Maps and Dreams*, p. 253.

anywhere they travelled. Various groups of Innu tended to favour particular areas. For example, many Innu that frequented the St Augustine trading post in the 19th and 20th centuries travelled along the Augustine River for up to seven days to reach hunting areas. Sometimes they carried on into the Kenamu River and across Lake Melville to the North West River HBC post.[105] There, they might meet with Innu from the tundra areas further north and continue their journey. Hypothetically, this could involve continuous journeying by foot and canoe, depending on the season and route taken, across distances of up to 1,500 kilometres. In the late 19th century on the southeastern Labrador coast, the American ornithologist and traveller, Winfred Alden Stearns, observed the Innu camping up to 30 miles from caribou.[106] Hunters would have had to make trips of several days' duration, carrying heavy loads on a tumpline fastened across the forehead or the chest, or pulling loads on toboggans to bring meat back to the camp.

Carrying heavy loads was integral to Innu mobility. Reporting on the 800-mile journey undertaken by HBC factor, James Watt and his wife Maud with several Innu families in 1917, Maud Watt's biographer, William Ashley Anderson, described how loads of 200 pounds were considered reasonable. A 'sturdy small boy … carried his pack with the two papooses balanced on top', and an 83-year-old woman carried a partial load of pans and kettles.[107] Describing his sojourns with the Innu in the 1930s, Väino Tanner mentioned Pierre Gabriel's annual cycle from Sêpt Iles up the Moisie River to Petitsikapau Lake. This involved canoeing and much portaging of the canoe and the groups' possessions. From reconstructing Pierre Gabriel's journey – 'the Indian is strong; it is said that he finds it no trouble to carry a 198-pound barrel of flour over a 3 to 4 mile long portage, and even heavier weights over shorter stretches … He has also learnt to solve the carrying problem; the centre of gravity of the burden must follow the middle lie of the body and this is achieved by placing a carrying strap around the forehead'[108] – Tanner estimated that the weight carried by the Pierre Gabriel group amounted to half a ton and that the canoe part of the journey proceeded at a daily rate of 20 miles per day in the late summer. Overall, 'the continual moves from one place to another can, in the course of a year, amount to 1500 or 2000 miles, and all the transport at their disposal are … canoes, tabanask [toboggan], and snowshoes on his own back'.[109] When dragging loads on toboggans, the stronger men pull 100 kilograms and the weaker 70 kilograms over dry, floury snow. They do this

105 See Tanner, *Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador*, pp. 608–14, for a description of the travels of various groups of Innu northward and inland from the St Lawrence's North Shore in the 1930s.

106 Stearns, *Labrador*, p. 178.

107 Anderson, *Angel of Hudson Bay*, p. 105.

108 Tanner, *Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador*, p. 614.

109 Ibid., p. 619.

'from morning till night without stopping, day after day, winter after winter. No meals are provided. Eat light to travel far, they say.'[110] Similarly, Matthieu Mestekosho described these sorts of feats as regular occurrences throughout his youth in the early 20th century. Travelling inland from the North Shore of the St Lawrence, he and the families he hunted with walked almost everyday. 'I was strong and nobody got tired', he told Serge Bouchard, compiler of his memoir, 'We were all very fit'.[111]

The active lives that Innu enjoyed required a thorough knowledge of the land itself, including its geography, topography and river systems for navigating. Today's Innu are heirs to an extensive system of geographical knowledge handed down orally and enlarged by constant experience with the landscape. Observers of Innu life before sedentarisation were impressed by their depths of knowledge. In 1864, British geographer Randle Holmes explored inland from North West River up the 'Grand River' (known to the Innu as Mista-shipu, but now listed on maps as 'Churchill River'). 'The Indians', he remarked, 'are … acquainted with a complete system of navigation joining Seven Islands [Sêpt Iles], Mingan and the mouth of the St. Augustine River on the South coast with North West River on the East and Ungava on the North'.[112]

Many of the *Tshenut* now living in Matimekush have vivid memories of their annual trips from the North Shore of the St Lawrence up one of the many rivers comprising the watershed, and into the interior regions around what are now vast 'wastelands', the industrially flooded areas around Meshikimau and Caniapiscau. *Tshenut* recalled these journeys as arduous, but happy and communal. Eighty-year-old Mani McKenzie's journey began in the autumn to the west of Sêpt Iles on the Sainte Marguerite River, where there is now a 884-megawatt hydroelectric generating station. In total, she and her family must have traversed almost 800 kilometres to get to Caniapiscau, making a 1,600-kilometre return journey:

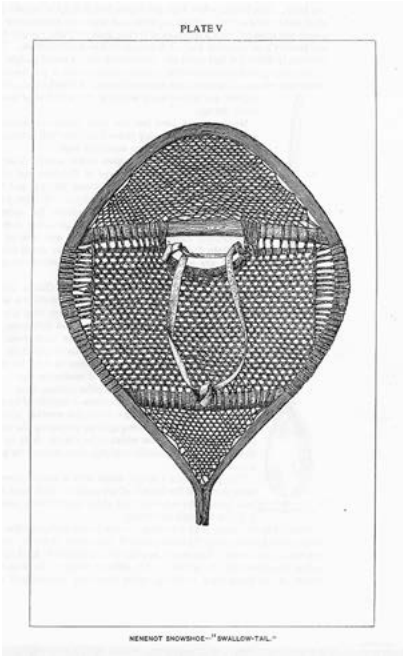
> My brothers paddled the canoe with my father and we were all on the canoe with my parents. That was a beautiful time in my life. We had many camps and stayed overnight. We had a number of portages up to the point we reached the big lakes in the interior of the land. We paddled and paddled and travelled long distances. Then we would take a break, have a small fire and do that over and over again. Then we didn't have anything other than wild food, only a few things from the store like butter and flour. People would tell me when we arrived at Caniapiscau, 'This is where you were born.' When we reached Caniapiscau, we had little white food left. It gets colder and ice forms. My father would tell us how we would spend winter in the area. We stayed there through the summer. My father would show us old campsites of the Innu in that

110 Ibid., p. 620.
111 Bouchard, *Caribou Hunter*, p. 51.
112 Holmes, 'A journey in the interior of Labrador, July to October 1887', p. 4.

> area. I was always afraid to see those things like old buckets and rifles. My father would say, 'those are the belongings of your grandfather and your great grandfather. It was a very good and beautiful life, especially compared to today.[113]

This pattern was evident elsewhere in the Innu territories. Just prior to sedentarisation, McGee noted that 'some of the Indians go as far as one hundred and fifty miles into the bush' on foot and by canoe.[114] Men and women worked very hard while in the country, and were observed by McGee to perform difficult acts of physical strength and endurance. One informant told him that he had 'seen one woman of forty carrying her tent and all her household items necessary for the [hunting] trip on her back and carry her canoe over her head'.[115]

113 Interview with Mani McKenzie, Matimekush, 5 April 2007.
114 McGee, 'Field trip to visit the Montagnais Indians at Mingan and Natashquan', p. 44.
115 Ibid., p. 45.



Figures 6.5 and 6.6. Contemporary Innu showshoe hanging outside tent at Kapaumiskat, 2006 (left) and illustration of 1880s Innu snowshoe from Lucien Turner's Ethnology of Ungava *(1894) (right).*

Henriksen recounted a tale of Innu endurance and stamina in the 1960s, which indicates just how much exertion was experienced within living memory.[116] The camp that hosted the anthropologist was a hundred miles inland from the Davis Inlet post. There, a group of men decided to go to the trading post to purchase some provisions. They rose at one in the morning and set off on sleds, taking turns to ride and run beside the sled. Some of the men shot ptarmigan along the way. Travelling non-stop until noon, with only a 15-minute tea break, they proceeded further until five o'clock, when it became dark and they then had to find a suitable campsite near a brook. The tent frame and supports were then fashioned from surrounding trees and the canvas thrown over the frame. They built a floor by shovelling away snow and then tramping down the remaining snow. The dog's meat was boiled and the dogs tied up before the men were able to prepare their own food for the night. After eating, the men got up and tramped down a path in the snow to make their passage easier the next day. They returned to the camp at one o'clock in the morning, having been up for 24 hours. Rising after two hours' sleep, they finally arrived at Davis Inlet by the next afternoon. After spending a short night

116 Henriksen, *Hunters in the Barrens*, pp. 21–4.

there, the group set off back for their camp a hundred miles distant, proceeding in the same fashion as with the outward journey.

Hunting life requires many different types of physical activity. As well as travelling enormous distances, the Innu had to hand-make clothing, footwear, shelter, modes of transport (such as canoes and toboggans), weapons and tools (such as knives, scrapers, augurs and shovels). This involved procuring materials including wood, bark, bone, skin, animal organs and fur, exerting much physical effort to make all the material objects necessary for survival.[117] Objects like snowshoes and canoes are complicated to make and constructing them often involved several skilled people over many weeks' duration. Other objects, including musical instruments, combs, dolls, games and toys, also had to be manufactured.

Tshenut who remember life before settlement spoke lucidly of the times they travelled and what occupied them on their journeys. For Mary-Adele Penashue:

> Men would often spend 12 hours a day walking. They would walk long distances to find animals. They would not come back until they killed a caribou. They would tell their families, 'I will not come back until I find something to eat.' Food was procured at the HBC post in the form of flour, tea and butter, but once in the camp we would try to find wildlife to last us a year.[118]

Even today, Innu hunting life is physically demanding for all members of the camp. The labour begins with the establishment of the camp itself. The first job is to search the woods for straight, thin trees to form the various tent supports, and a large quantity of spruce boughs for the floor of each tent. When I first spent time with the Innu in the country, at Utshisk-nipi in 1995, I was detailed to search for boughs with four teenagers. This entailed walking up a steep hill from the campsite situated on a lake cove and down to an area of spruce trees with large boughs. The journey – in pouring rain – took about 15 minutes each way. Often the best method of taking boughs was to axe them off the trees, or in some cases chop the entire tree down. Each teenager and I would then carry a huge pile of boughs up the hill and back down to the shore. The teenagers never lingered or complained, but many times during the five trips we made I felt as if I would break down and drop my entire load of boughs.

Also at Utshisk-nipi we moved the camp itself on two occasions. With three tents and three large families this became a time-consuming and laborious operation, taking about three days of almost constant work per move. The temporary nature of the camps, rising water and changing snow conditions in

117 Turner, *Ethnology of the Ungava District and Hudson Bay Territory*, pp. 116–52, provides a thorough and well-illustrated description of Innu material objects.

118 Interview with Mary Adele and Louis Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 2003.

the spring made our jobs challenging. The need to move to different areas to find animals makes for constant activity. The chainsaws, outboard motors and snowmobiles assist and make some of the work quicker, but camp life remains physically demanding. These technologies are used because they are available, but also because they have become a necessity since sedentary living in villages demands that hunting is often a planned excursion from these settlements. In the past, as Mary Adele Penashue explained, 'we made our own tools such as the ice augur. We made this from our own materials except for the metal tip, which we took from traps. Today's technologies make it all really easy. Maybe that's why some people are weak and sick now'.[119] While greater distances can be travelled and many tasks are easier with snowmobiles and outboard motors, these technologies still require maintenance and repair, and people have to know how to do these jobs in inclement conditions far from camp.

Some Innu remember acts of extraordinary physical endurance and capacity. In the days of their regular hunting expeditions, men could travel very long distances, often spending several days away from the camp until they were successful in the hunt.[120] Jean-Pierre Ashini recalled carrying a whole caribou weighing approximately 160 kilograms some 2.5 kilometres back to camp.[121] Dominic Pokue remembered canoeing as a young man 40 miles in two days, and travelling 70 miles in five days to reach camp at Minaipi Lake.[122] Sometimes travel to the camp could involve walking both day and night, often carrying or dragging heavy loads across the rugged interior of Labrador, where vast forests, trackless tundra, dense thickets, huge boulders and wide rivers all have to be traversed. Today, most northern hunters use snowmobiles in winter and spring. From the camp, men hunt, fish and trap, and collect and haul fuel wood for chopping and splitting. They will often be away for the whole day. Women gather plants and spruce boughs for tent floors, snaring rabbits, setting nets for fishing and a wide range of camp activities, including preparing and cooking foods, collecting water, looking after infants, repairing cloths and tents, and taking care of meat and hides. In conversation at Kameshtasten Lake, Jean-Pierre Ashini said, 'we were always busy in the country. I didn't consider this hard work'.[123] Only when there were heavy snowstorms or days of continuous rainfall did activity diminish. Hunting days would typically begin at daybreak

119 Ibid.

120 Other indigenous peoples covered similarly massive distances and this is not simply limited to those living mostly from hunting. The Puebloan farmers, for example, often travelled from western New Mexico to Oklahoma and sometimes ventured even further into the Great Plains in search of buffalo in the winter, potentially making this a round-trip distance of approximately 3,000 miles. See Stuart, *Anasazi America*, p. 165.

121 Interview with Jean-Pierre Ashini, Sheshatshiu, 3 Oct. 2005.

122 Interview with Dominic Pokue, Sheshatshiu, 1 July 2003.

123 Interview with Jean-Pierre Ashini, Sheshatshiu, 3 Oct. 2005.

so that the Innu could maximise the hours of daylight. This could mean 12–15 hours of walking a day, which during the spring and summer would require 4,500–6,000 kcal of energy expenditure and up to 9,000–11,500 kcal in winter. Another typical day might involve six hours of cutting trees and hauling wood for fuel – with an expenditure of 4,200 kcal. Innu today recognise what such activity does to them physically. As Jean-Pierre Ashini remarked, 'I eat a lot in the country, but I burn it off. Even though I am eating fatty foods, I am still 20–30 pounds lighter than when I live in the village'.[124] This is significant because not only does exercise help maintain physical health, but it is essential to mental health. The many studies on this subject indicate that physical activity helps boost self esteem, lifts moods, improves sleep and builds resilience to stress.[125] So pervasive are these findings that exercise has become a component of public health promotion in many countries, where increased obesity and sedentary lifestyles have significantly contributed to psychological depression.

Innu like Jean-Pierre commonly speak of a loss of vitality incurred by returning to the settlements. Despite openly admitting some hardships, the country is depicted, as it is for other hunting peoples,[126] as providing the physical, mental and spiritual sustenance needed to survive. For example, in the compendium of testimony in *Gathering Voices*, Innu repeatedly mentioned *nutshimit* as the source of all-round good health. One said, 'people were very healthy and happy in the country'; another indicated, 'in Nutshimit, people were free to go anywhere. We had more freedom. We were happy in Nutshimit'; and yet another that 'we were very healthy. We were very strong in Nutshimit because we were physically active'.[127] As Naisa Penashue explained, 'since settlement we lost a lot of things. There was a loss of energy because in the country we had active lives. Coming here we just lost energy'.[128] The late Mary May Rich[129] said women also were active all day until they went to bed – chopping wood, collecting boughs, preparing foods. She accepted this as an integral part of her life and identity. 'I miss life in the country. It hurts to be in the community now'. These feelings are common among the older generation of Innu who remember life before settlement. *Nutshimit* life was highly communal. Families were involved in common activities, driven by a common purpose in which they were autonomous. The village offers far fewer opportunities for such engagement, and the tasks that people are involved in are often connected only with their individual sedentary households, offering

124 Ibid.
125 Fox, 'The influence of physical activity on mental well-being', pp. 411–18.
126 See, for example, Adelson, *'Being Alive Well'*.
127 Innu Nation and Mushuau Innu Band Council, *Gathering Voices.*
128 Interview with Naisa Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 20 April 2006.
129 Interview with Mary May Rich, Sheshatshiu, 2003.

none of the drama or adventure of travelling through the forests, across the lakes and on to the tundra.

Loss of freedom

A crucial factor in the decline of indigenous peoples' overall health is the loss of freedom that they formerly held as individuals and groups. While there were strictures, norms and conventions in their own society, some of which could be quite harsh, these were at least their own rules and they could adapt or change them accordingly. It is psychologically a different matter when outsiders place controls on them and make it a matter of law that they accede to them.

Many indigenous groups had strong attachments to personal independence, and these contributed to social stability. As Burch said of the Iñupiat, 'to a degree scarcely fathomable in the contemporary United States, Iñupiat were free to decide what they would do, how they would do it, and with whom they would do it'.[130] This freedom extended to refraining from judging others and from making commentaries on their conduct or decisions in life unless directly asked.[131] Except in some close family dealings, Inuit peoples preferred to intervene only when called upon, and have not until recently had institutional, temporal and state demands imposed on them as individuals. Hence, to be told where and how to live – as depicted in several Inuit films, including those written by Zebedee Nungak like *Qallunat: Why White People are Funny*[132] – is both bizarre and at a more profound level challenges their fundamental belief in the autonomous self.

Connected to this is the parallel undermining of the communitarian ethos. In some northern societies, to influence or demand actions of others is to be 'bossy', which is seen as a dysfunctional trait, associated widely with the behaviour of settlers. This is the case with some of the Innu uses of the word *utshimau,* which means 'first man', and has customarily described the person responsible for deciding the occasion and place of an individual hunting expedition. To carry over such limited leadership roles into other spheres is seen as inappropriate. For example, Elizabeth Rich of Natuashish, reflecting on the abortive 1948 relocation of the Mushuau Innu to the Inuit territory of Nutak and the collaborative role played by her father (Shushebish), said, 'We were never allowed to go close to white people … My father was the one who spent time with white people and my mother didn't agree with that. The white store manager was always giving orders … white people are very strong in their thinking. I couldn't get involved with them because of that, even with the priest'.[133] Significantly, this was the first attempted relocation of the northerly

130 Burch, *Social Life in Northwest Alaska*, p. 125.
131 See Briggs, '"Qallunaat run on rails; Inuit do what they want to."', pp. 229–47.
132 Directed by Mark Sandiford, National Film Board of Canada, 2006.
133 Interview with Elizabeth Rich, Misteshuapi camp, Labrador, Canada, 9 April 2009.

Innu and, consequently, the first engineering of conformity to Euro-Canadian norms – in this case to wage labour and sedentary living.

Incorporated into the strictures against bossiness is a high regard for the rights of people to make their own decisions. This kind of egalitarianism is also extended to children. Thus, for the Inuit, 'parents identify children with respected elders, trust children to know what they need, do not seek to manipulate who children are or what children say they want. This way of treating children tends to secure confidence and mental health'.[134] This, however, does not amount to children having free rein, since Inuit parents have often decided on marriage partners and how any children would contribute to familial chores.[135] The point is that the Inuit and other indigenous societies had combinations of independence and regulation that fitted their ways of life and environment. The altering of a people's relationship to the land and their abilities to govern themselves, ultimately entails a realignment of values and this includes some to which the indigenous people had been resolutely averse. To suddenly move from a situation in which bossiness, for example, was stigmatised to one in which it is routinely exhibited, encouraged and even rewarded is bound to be psychologically disorienting.

Just as on US Indian reservations of the 19th century, the new villages of the Canadian north, like Sheshatshiu and Natuashish, contain institutions that replace collective independence with structured dependence. This process completely alters the social and economic functions of families, including gender roles within them.[136] In the country, men and women both had active parts to play in maintaining camps and obtaining food supplies and there were conventions about the roles children and adolescents played in all this. Without the constant activity and movement of hunting life, and with little active work to do to replace these in houses or in the community, the path was open for less coordinated and more fragmented relations between the generations and sexes. Sedentary life presupposed a male economic breadwinner and an attachment to wage labour or social welfare, and in turn this often meant that women were downgraded from their former statuses where they could be prime decision-makers, and assumed physically active and even strenuous roles in indigenous economies.

Losing one's place as a man or a woman, mother or father inevitably precipitates melancholy self-reflection. On the surface, Mary-Adele Penashue, sitting cosily with her husband Louis, son Basile and several grandchildren around her, appeared rooted in community. Yet, she was not happy. 'It feels lonely here in the community. It makes me feel very weak here'. As she continued, sometimes looking out the window at the dirt road and the identical tract house opposite, Mary Adele reflected on how the community distanced people from one another. For her, 'community' was a misnomer, bringing people together only as individuals and, unlike hunting, it bound them to no common allegiances. 'In the old days we helped each other. We talked to each other. All that was there in the country. It's not like it was in my days now. The feeling of loneliness is killing us and making us weaker. We are all alone here'.[137] As schooling and assimilation into the foreign values of the larger settler society gripped younger generations, rifts with their elders suddenly appeared and the connections between the generations needed for social cohesion eroded. The ubiquitous heavy drinking that took root in the 1970s further distanced the generations from each other. The fact that many children have not learned traditional ways in the country also means that parents do not know how to teach youth with discrepant experiences and values. As a result, when families do go to the country, as Naisa Penashue remarked, 'we have a hard time to take them [children] out because the parents don't teach their kids. In the country, families are more together than in the village. I wish the youth would listen and learn more from us and do what they are told to do'.[138]

As I shall relay in the final chapter, there are signs that some young people are listening.

134 Brody, *The Other Side of Eden*, p. 298.

135 Briggs, '"Qallunaat run on rails; Inuit do what they want to"'.

136 This is the well-known thesis of Eleanor Burke Leacock who researched the Innu on the North Shore of the St Lawrence. See Leacock, *Myths of Male Dominance*. Graburn, *Eskimos Without Igloos*, pp. 198–9, made similar points about the loss of economic functions in the Inuit families at Salluit in the 1960s and the greater variety of sexual arrangements that this makes possible at the expense of social and psychic stability.

137 Interview with Mary Adele Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 4 July 2003.

138 Interview with Naisa Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 20 April 2006.

Chapter 7

Land-based revitalisation

What's the future of our past?
Note seen in San Xavier del Bac Museum, San Xavier O'odham Reservation, 2010

They have assumed the names and gestures of their enemies, but have held on to their own, secret souls; and in this there is resistance and an overcoming, a long outwaiting.
N. Scott Momaday[1]

The search for indigenous and other kinds of cultural continuity exists at a time of deep ambivalence. The ideas that justified the transformations of indigenous peoples, such as progress, industrialism, Economic Man, private property and nation-building, are often depicted as the *only* ways in which all of humanity can proceed *and* as leading *only* to social and environmental catastrophe. This tension is heightened by the fact that indigenous peoples whose cultural differences were diminished to bring them in line with what were thought to be universal mandates are also questioning these mandates. Perhaps at no other time since the 1960s has there been so much general distaste for what has been defined as progress. In the spirit of this scepticism, some indigenous peoples are attempting to address, if not reverse, some of the transformations imposed on them. Despite being incorporated into settler states, as Frank Tester noted, 'resistance, change, and the reinvigoration of cultural diversity emerge as possibilities'.[2] Old ideas and practices can be retrieved and recast as preferable ways of living. Some of these can be carried out in such a way that they are not merely an adaptation to change, but alterations of the very contexts of change.

Cultural revitalisation projects enable indigenous values, ideas and practices to take new shapes from old patterns and to make their histories relevant to their future. While prime indicators of progress such as capitalist accumulation, individual gain, mass consumption and industrialism have been touted as universally beneficial, they have not improved indigenous peoples' collective wellbeing. Older indigenous people frequently speak of their more

1 Momaday, *House Made of Dawn*, p. 58.
2 Tester, 'Iglu to Iglurjuaq', p. 249.

autonomous lives on the land as happier and more prosperous than the state-ordered modern present,[3] and many of them are today important figures in cultural revitalisation. Since the 1970s, indigenous peoples have initiated revitalisation projects in North America, Australasia, the Pacific, South America and Africa.[4] In this final chapter, I will look at the possibilities of different kinds of cultural revitalisation, along with efforts to sustain and *improve* indigenous communities through reclaiming the very ideas and practices that were taken as baselines for improvement itself.

The economy: beyond neoliberalism

At one level, indigenous cultural revitalisation can be seen as an attempt to regain a measure of economic autonomy. But unlike, say, the casino economies that have proliferated on reservations across the US, and more ominously the corporations forged by the Alaskan Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) – making economic survival dependent upon oil and gas exploitation, mining and clear-cutting old-growth forests[5] – or the hydroelectric megaproject that has largely dictated the terms of the Innu Nation Tshash Petapen agreement, most cultural revitalisation takes place according to a modified economic logic at variance with neoliberalism. The association of neoliberalism with widespread social inequalities, cultural collapse and environmental ruin has provoked communities of all kinds to focus on internal and more equitable sources of economic wellbeing.

The most important factor that threatens neoliberalism is its alarming disregard for the environmental context within which economic activity occurs. With demonstrable rises in the amount of carbon dioxide trapped in the Earth's atmosphere, average temperatures – especially around the poles – are rising. Consequently, glaciers and permafrost are rapidly melting, sea levels are rising, and some oceans and waterways are becoming depleted of oxygen, while the forests, our natural carbon sinks, are receding by the minute. Populated islands are starting to disappear and industrial accidents such as oil

3 See, for example, Billson, 'Opportunity or tragedy', pp. 187–218.

4 Several examples are cited in Pilgrim et al., 'Ecocultural revitalisation', pp. 235–56. See also Nagel, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal*; Oswalt, *Bashful No Longer*, pp. 188–93; for Hawaii, Matsuoka et al., 'Molokai: a study of Hawaiian subsistence and community sustainability', pp. 25–44 and Goodyear-Ka'ōpua's *The Seeds We Planted* on an indigenous charter school in Hawaii. I have visited several such projects, including: Aang Serian, a group of Maasai and Hadza people attempting to retain indigenous knowledge through indigenous schools and economic activities in Tanzania; the Uitkom 'resettlement farm' of Ju/'hoansi San in Namibia which hopes to introduce eco-tourism; Ka'ala in Wai'anae, Hawaii, who have developed language courses, permaculture and the regeneration of taro terraces on Oahu; and the Nibutani Ainu Museum in Japan which is a base for Ainu language revitalisation.

5 See Strohmeyer, *Extreme Conditions*, pp. 186–9.

spills imperil oceans and shorelines. Parched lands and dwindling groundwater in many parts of the world known for plentiful rainfall, floods elsewhere and sudden shifts towards cataclysmic weather are all warnings of the dangers associated with continuing to live the dream of perpetual industrialisation, urbanisation and mass consumption. The narrative of progress seems less universally desirable when we recognise that the same forces boasted as bringing improvement may have created such calamitous declines in bio- and cultural diversity that the prospects for survival of many human and non-human living systems are almost hopeless. Such observations have prompted different ways of organising economic activity to be considered. As Taiaiake Alfred suggested:

> The imperial demand for uniformity is obsolete … justice, demands recognition – intellectual, legal, and political – of the diversity of languages and knowledge that exists among people, indigenous peoples' ideas about relationships and power commanding the same respect as those that used to constitute the singular reality of the state.[6]

But instead of paying any heed to alternative visions, much of the governmental pronouncements and policies surrounding the adverse effects of climate change refrain from connecting it with the intensified industrial and resource extraction activity which they enthusiastically support. Most prominent among these governments were those of George W. Bush in the US and Stephen Harper in Canada, the latter having withdrawn from the Kyoto protocol in 2011. Other states whose leaders seem more genuinely concerned, such as many in the European Union, have taken actions that are slow, small scale, and counteracted by public investment to stimulate fossil fuel consumption and economic growth. Business and industrial lobbies shell out millions of dollars in campaign and other contributions to pro-business politicians, and many politicians and government officials are themselves drawn from this same business community. Virtually every government requires financial and ideological legitimation from businesses which generally view environmental protection as an obstacle to pleasing shareholders and securing investments. Public relations companies in North America have played a huge role in framing the terms of the political debate as principally about *perceptions* of energy supplies, safely and reliability rather than open public dialogue on environmental damage.[7]

The intimate codependency between state and capital is such that continued reliance on industrial production is proceeding largely by underestimating the environmental problems it causes, trying to 'green' the technological processes and seeing market potentials in the effects of climate change – shipping lanes through the Arctic for example. These strategies are generally

6 Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness*, p. 63.
7 Greenberg et al., pp. 65–82.

preferred over policies that would reduce fossil fuel and other types of mass consumption. Governments have proven to be reluctant to regulate most capitalist undertakings that damage the environment, at least until after major disasters have occurred like the Exxon Valdez or BP Macondo oil spills. This is in part because politicians work to short election cycles, depend on economic growth as an indicator of their commitment to progressive betterment and therefore need corporate backing through campaign contributions. That such contributions come from companies involved in oil drilling, mining, utilities and consumer goods, is a huge factor in national elections. Bribery and corruption are common wherever huge financial gain can be made through political decisions.[8]

Indigenous efforts to reignite sustainable local economies predicated upon cultural continuity are fighting powerful forces. As shown in the Canadian land claims system and ANCSA, states are often more concerned to integrate indigenous peoples into the neoliberal economic order than to facilitate economic pathways more consistent with indigenous values and conservation. Thus far, the dominant pattern of economic modernisation for indigenous populations has been exogenous and centred on businesses providing employment in exchange for being able to exploit local resources or markets for products. In this arrangement, external capital, technologies and institutions are drawn to local contexts because the investment in the production processes and costs of providing employment are much lower than the profits that are extracted using that labour. From the point of view of the state, employment of this type helps move indigenous people off welfare and, at a larger level, fills the social development mandate.

In Labrador, the neoliberal arrangement has involved the Canadian government subsidising and facilitating industrial projects including hydroelectric power generation, low-level flight training and nickel and copper mining. Elsewhere in Canada, the state is intimately associated with megaprojects such as dams, gas pipelines, and perhaps the most environmentally destructive single development on the planet, the Alberta tar sands, adjacent to the lands of four groups of Dene and Cree and home to a rich ecosystem containing migratory ducks and geese, numerous species of fish and large herds of woodland caribou. As Helen Ingram inferred with the monitoring of the tar sands project, Canadian protocol permits only negligible amounts of aboriginal consultation and these are biased towards approval of such projects. The same was true with regard to the environmental assessment of the Voisey's Bay mine in Labrador.[9]

8 For an example in Alaska, see Strohmeyer, *Extreme Conditions*, pp. 123–50.

9 See Samson, *A Way of Life That Does Not Exist*, pp. 96–102, 119–23 on Voisey's Bay; See CBC News, 'Water expert quits Alberta oilsands monitoring panel' on the tar sands.

How can indigenous cultural revitalisation projects address such vast extensions of corporate power? Of course, it is not possible for local indigenous renewable resource economic activities to reverse the ecological destruction that we are currently seeing, but they could lessen reliance on the forces that are contributing to it. Reverting to some indigenous activities within a different economic framework may reinforce communitarian principles of distribution and help to slow the erosion of biodiversity. The priority of an alternative economic approach would be to look at locally-available natural, social and human assets that could emerge from communities and so reflect the needs of local people. Such activities would be dependent on at least some recovery of indigenous autonomy and control over land and resources.

Indigenous political bodies receive various types of transfer funds and resources from the outside, principally from the state, for the running of these bodies and social services. In the north of Canada funds also come from developers occupying their lands. However, people in these communities spend much of this inflow of assets outside in the wider national commercial outlets and retain few of the resources that come to them. To balance this loss, assets must be created locally and/or money must flow in, such as: i) when external people buy local products or services; ii) when local people work outside and bring back or remit monies; and iii) when communities receive pensions or welfare benefits and grants from government. Such monies are usually in short supply, but even when a community is successful at increasing the inflow of resources, the flows out of the local economy often increase in proportion.

At another level, the leaks in the local economy could be plugged by maintaining as much of the natural, social and human assets at the local level as possible. Examples of activities that plug the leaks in this way include: hunting and gathering of local foods; sustainable agriculture (that emphasises natural resource-based food-production technologies rather than those derived from fossil fuels); local food systems with direct links to consumers; buying local and community regeneration campaigns for businesses such as those promoted by the global Transition movement (networks set up to equip communities against the challenges of climate change and peak oil); renewable energy generation (wind, water, tidal and biomass sources); and development of community cooperatives and any type of non-market collaborative activities such as child care. Indigenous peoples already possess the values that such ideas are based upon, and some have formalised existing sharing and cooperative economic methods.

Some cultural revitalisation groups are pursuing possibilities along these lines. For example, the Tshikapisk Foundation, a loose association of Innu hunting families, has procured funds through donations, Band Council monies and grants to build a camp at Kameshtashten Lake in the northern Labrador interior, about 90 kilometres from Natuashish, 300 kilometres from Sheshatshiu and 100 kilometres from two Innu communities around

Schefferville. 'Unemployed' youth from Sheshatshiu and Natuashish have been employed by the Band Councils to work on building the infrastructure of the camps, while at the same time being able to spend time hunting and fishing, but also exploring the lake region and even participating in archaeological projects coordinated by the Smithsonian Institution. Importantly, the building materials for the cabins and the future Innu cultural centre were procured from local seasoned wood using volunteer labour. The Foundation has been looking for opportunities to use the camp for ecotourism, trail hiking, fishing, artists' visits and wildlife viewing. If this were realised, it would help employ Innu on the land, assist with cultural continuity and bring resources into the Innu communities. Even without outsiders contributing funds through ecotourism and other activities, the camp is a draw for Innu wishing to hunt and fish and thus also serves to perpetuate a local communitarian economy. The Band Councils have committed funds to assisting Innu in going to Kameshtashten and elsewhere, seeing it as a worthwhile expenditure even in the absence of any achievable micro-economy thus far. As such the Kameshtashten project remains a prototype.

Figure 7.1. Camp at Kameshtasten viewed from hill, 2005.

While new indigenous economies may have to rely on global finances, their own non-capitalist economies can still be used as models to reintroduce or maintain beliefs in reciprocal rather than hierarchical relationships with each other and with nature. In the case of hunting peoples, religious taboos against hoarding or stinginess meant using and sharing the products of nature

such as meat and fish. For farmers such as the Pueblos and Tohono O'odham, agriculture was tied closely to religious beliefs around the planting, irrigation, storing, sharing and consuming of vegetables.[10] Sharing and non-monetary exchange were a means by which resources stayed local. Communal agriculture and hunting therefore retain local economic assets and keep resources within the group. Of course, many of the other products that indigenous people need will not be produced locally, but cooperatives could be a way of helping subsidise or even stem the need for so many external products. For example, the cooperatives established among Inuit in northern Quebec in the 1950s, serve as a basis for markets in carvings and crafts. These initiatives later included small Inuit-run hotels and fishing lodges for outside clients.[11]

Development of human capital in the form of skills, knowledge and wellbeing is clearly vital for many indigenous peoples. Examples of activities that enhance this include ecological literacy programmes for young people and adults to help with the transmission of traditional knowledge. Customarily, children and young people living and working in close association with adult members of their families acquired knowledge directly. Altered village and quasi-urban circumstances now hinder the effective operation of the system as it worked previously. However, groups like Tshikapisk that sponsor land-based projects necessarily stimulate the perpetuation of indigenous knowledge. The most important educational context is the land itself, and land-based projects are now manifold across the far north.[12] The maintenance and renewal of indigenous knowledge could provide a basis for indigenous people to run and promote their own enterprises within modified market arrangements. Important opportunities for these enterprises centre on attracting external resources by allowing outsiders to assist through ecotourism, scientific visits, school exchanges and grants for local programmes. Such investments are needed to help underwrite hunting and fishing, as outboard motors, snowmobile maintenance and firearms all require money. With indigenous farmers in other parts of the world also needing to purchase equipment for irrigation and soil conservation, both farmers and hunters need payment of some sort.

Education: 'What [my grandparents] taught me is priceless'

None of this will happen if indigenous people lose interest in their beliefs and practices. In the past, the boarding and other state and Christian institutions were vehicles for the supplanting of indigenous knowledge and values. To redress this, some schools in aboriginal communities now attempt to balance indigenous with Western knowledge. But in many northern communities such efforts can sometimes be either half-hearted or absent. Alan Pope's comments

10 See Vlasich, *Pueblo Indian Agriculture*; Nabhan, *The Desert Smells Like Rain*.
11 Vick-Westgate, *Nunavik: Inuit-Controlled Education in Arctic Quebec*, pp. 66–7.
12 Pilgrim et al., 'Ecocultural revitalisation'.

in his report on schooling in the Cree village of Kashechewan, for example, apply to many other communities, 'there are no cultural or traditional value programs. Science and mathematics are not offered because of inadequate class size. No online courses are offered. Co-operative education programs are not available'.[13]

As I found in my 1999 study of education in Sheshatshiu, parents and teachers believed that the village school failed to teach and socialise their children either in the aboriginal or non-aboriginal realms.[14] According to *An Educational Profile of the Learning Needs of Innu Youth*, a 2004 Canadian government study, just three Innu children out of hundreds graduated from high school in Natuashish, and only 12 have completed adult basic education.[15] Other areas of the far north have experienced the same pattern. As Wendell Oswalt remarked of the Yupik of Alaska, 'The problem of retaining the sense of Eskimoness while adequately preparing students to compete effectively with other Alaskans for jobs has not yet been solved … [T]here is yet to be developed an amalgam that will lead to a viable sense of being Eskimo at the same time it produces individuals who can succeed socially and economically in contemporary Alaska.'[16] In Canada, the failure of education was compounded by widespread physical abuse and rape of aboriginal children by priests and teachers.[17]

While people in indigenous communities are continually contesting the content and form of state schooling, some common impediments to cultural continuity could easily be removed. For example, an adjustment to the calendar could be made to assist northern families with balancing country activities and village obligations. In the far north, schoolchildren are in session during the most important hunting seasons, the autumn and the spring, and are on vacation during the long summer months when more extensive hunting expeditions are less frequent and activities like fishing, berry picking, and repairing and making equipment can be done in or near villages. Many Innu are perplexed as to why there is so little recognition of their rhythms of life in the school calendar. One of these is David Penashue, a counsellor at the Family Program in Sheshatshiu, with whom I had an unexpected meeting in 2006. The last time I had seen David was ten years earlier as an adolescent at a camp with his grandparents. He was now a strapping, round-faced man. Speaking

13 Pope, 'Report on the Kashechewan First Nation and its people', p. 17.

14 Samson, *A Way of Life That Does Not Exist*, pp. 207–11. My observations were shared by numerous Innu including the Chief Anastasia Qupee, who remarked, 'the education system doesn't even meet its own requirements'. Interview, Sheshatshiu, 4 Oct. 2005.

15 Philpott et al., 'An educational profile of the learning needs of Innu youth'.

16 Oswalt, *Bashful No Longer*, p. 143.

17 For a commentary on sexual abuse and schooling of the Innu see Samson, 'Sexual abuse and assimilation: oblates, teachers and the Innu of Labrador', pp. 47–54.

of the therapeutic potentials of the country, David singled out the school as an obstacle to healing. 'Take our school', he gestured placidly, 'we could have school in summer, while parents take kids out to the country in the spring. When that does happen [removing children from school to go to the country], they are listed as "absent". But the kids are learning something out there, like how to walk on snowshoes. But to teachers, that has no value. I think the kids should get an award for those kind of things.' [18]

David linked the ethnocentric calendar with some non-Innu teachers' ethnocentric attitudes. While teachers may, of course, emphasise the value of walking on snowshoes and other Innu forms of learning, the competitive reward structure is such that students who leave the community during semesters are penalised for missing what are regarded as essential learning activities. As his voice gathered momentum, David recalled the role of his own grandparents as teachers, 'I learned a lot from my grandparents because they took me out of here [the village]. What they taught me is priceless. They taught me how to be in a canoe, on snowshoes, what to do in a storm, how to read the winds and the signs of the animals. My grandfather', he paused, 'when there is red or purple on the snow, he knows it will be cold tomorrow. The school will not teach us that.' Intimate knowledge of the immediate physical environment, an absolute essential for hunting families, is not a priority in the Canadian public school.

Innu like David and researchers, including Georg Henriksen (for the Mushuau Innu of Davis Inlet) and I (on behalf of the Sheshatshiu Innu Band Council), have made recommendations to the Labrador School Board to change the school calendar. To date, the authorities have taken no action and, in the case of my report, they postponed several appointments to discuss it in 1999, never addressing it in any meaningful way.[19] Although the schools in Sheshatshiu and Natuashish include 'culture days' in curricula, these consist primarily of *Tshenut* providing instruction in Innu skills or storytelling in the school building, and therefore out of the experiential context of the country in which Innu knowledge is meaningful. In Labrador, at least, it is clear that the state education authorities have not been keen to introduce a more balanced curriculum.[20]

In 1999, up to one third of the qualified teachers in schools in the Quebec North Shore villages of Bersimis, Uashat, Maliotenam and Ekuantshit were Innu. Unlike those in Natuashish and Sheshatshiu under the Labrador School Board, such schools had far higher proportions of Innu graduates, infinitely

18 Interview with David Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 19 April 2006.

19 Henriksen, *Social and Economic Development of the Innu Community of Davis Inlet*, p. 6. I summarised my report in Samson, '"Teaching lies": the Innu experience of schooling', pp. 83–102.

20 This was also pointed out in the 2004 film, *The Mushuau Innu: Surviving Canada* (director, Ed Martin), in which several teachers admitted to ignorance of Innu culture and promoting a standard 'K-12' curriculum.

better attendance rates and numerous young Innu had gone on to universities. Although these communities are not facing the same sorts of educational crises as those in Natuashish and Sheshatshiu, the cost of their apparent success is that the children have lost their fluency in the Innu language more rapidly. When I visited, only a tiny fraction of the curriculum was taken up with Innu language and cultural studies. Yvette Michel, interviewed at the Uashat school, admitted that a policy to take children to the country had been abandoned a decade earlier due to a lack of funding. Several Innu teachers admitted that the people in these villages had lost many of the skills and values associated with the hunting life.[21] This example shows that while local control of schooling is important, in order to maintain Innu values and knowledge, special efforts must be made to maintain the links with the land and to involve younger generations in such activities. Although schools on the North Shore and in the two Schefferville villages have made modifications to the school calendar, enabling Innu children to participate in hunting activities for short periods during the spring and autumn, these may simply be token gestures. Testimony from Innu teachers in the North Shore villages suggested that they – and many families from their villages – had all but given up on the Innu way of life. The emphasis appeared to be on keeping the language and vestiges of the culture principally for symbolic reasons.

Nunavik presents a contrasting and more positive example. As part of the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, education in Nunavik was devolved to the Kativik School Board. The Board was empowered to implement various school calendars to suit the needs of the various Inuit settlements in the region. Part of this involved basing curricula on Inuit culture and language.[22] Under the same agreement, the Cree School Board, serving ten Cree communities around the James Bay and northern Quebec areas, committed strongly to the provision of instruction in the Cree language and value system. Although school calendars primarily follow the dominant North American model of instruction from August to June, they allow for country activities in May through the 'floating goose break'. While there is a danger that these will also be token changes to the curriculum, they are a way of beginning a dialogue that could, it is hoped, end in more assiduous transmission of indigenous knowledge.

In some other parts of Canada, similar arrangements have been made to incorporate native activities within schools, but on the whole little has been done across North America to reconcile the conflict between the state schooling schedule and the seasonal rhythms of indigenous cultural activities. The current North American school calendar is an inheritance from European

21 Information on North Shore schools gathered on a Sheshatshiu Local Education Committee visit to Bersimis, Uashat, Maliotenam and Ekuantshit in 1999.

22 Vick-Westgate, *Nunavik: Inuit-Controlled Education in Arctic Quebec*, p. 76.

agricultural society reflecting the need for summer holidays to allow children to help with the harvests, a need which is nonsensical in the far north, and indeed among non-agricultural societies. As early as the mid 1960s, McGee noted the destructiveness of this system of 'enforced integration' through schooling, noting how it operated to erode hunting, fishing and trapping activities. 'There appears to be no logical reason why Indians should be forced to attend schools which are tied to an agricultural complex', he remarked, 'whether or not agriculture exists locally, as it does not … east of Sept Iles.'[23]

Education projects have been established elsewhere in North America to resuscitate aboriginal practices associated with travelling and hunting life. In 1996, a partnership between political and educational authorities and the Tlicho (Dogrib) communities in the Northwest Territories worked with schoolchildren to build a birchbark canoe. The project, which identified canoes from photographs and used a design in consultation with elders, was filmed and allowed community members to gain confidence in reacquiring canoe-building skills.[24] Although the ultimate result was the permanent housing of the canoe in a case within the school, it at least helped the Tlicho students value their ancestors' skills, and possibly supplied a motive to reinvigorate them. Similarly, Takako Takano documented a more extensive project of land-based education through the Inulariit Society in Igloolik, Nunavut. Elders took Inuit youth on to the land and taught them the various skills needed there – 'navigation, place-names; how to stalk caribou or seals; the recognition of hazard; firearm safety; vehicle management; sled loading; snow formation; weather prediction'.[25] In the process, they demonstrated how skills and values are interconnected.

Other educational projects have focused on language revitalisation, and such programmes are in operation throughout the world. In North America in the 1980s, the Blackfeet of Montana were one of the first peoples to attempt this, while indigenous Hawaiians introduced their state's first native language immersion school. Across the US a series of indigenous community colleges were established, also with the aim of maintaining languages.[26] Some language revitalisation projects involve groups that have lost their original landbase and many of the ideas and practices associated with the land – in Oklahoma, for example, where many of the reservation schools comprise amalgams of indigenous groups originally moved from elsewhere – or where territories have been encroached upon to the point that the surviving land bases of the groups involved are only small, as with the Creek and Seminole peoples in Florida. Such programmes are predominantly rescue operations to prevent languages

23 McGee, 'Report: Algonkian Project: 1966: Montagnais east of Sept-Iles', p. 6.
24 Andrews and Zoe, 'The Dogrib birchbark canoe project', pp. 75–84.
25 Takano, 'Connections with the land: land-skills courses in Igloolik, Nunavut', pp. 468–9.
26 For all these programmes see Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, pp. 360–7.

becoming extinct altogether.[27] Other formal efforts to incorporate indigenous and local knowledge in classroom settings have been made in colleges and universities across the world. For example, the Association of Canadian Deans of Education's accord to teach indigenous knowledge in Canadian universities was signed in Montreal in 2010.[28]

Whatever their character, indigenous educational projects undoubtedly enlarge and diversify North America's predominantly Eurocentric schooling and this extends beyond pure academic content into realms of morality and cosmology that can be creatively translated into contemporary contexts. Take for example, the notion of 'reading'. One day in the Labrador interior, when I was travelling on the back of hunter Etienne Pone's snowmobile at Kapaumiskat in search of porcupine, Etienne waved his arm in the direction of the forests. Proclaiming over the noise of the engine, 'I read the country like you read a book', I knew immediately what he meant. He was reading everything around him – the consistency of the snow on the ground and how it forms around the trees, the shades of discolouration of the bark on the trees, the direction of the winds and much more. This was not just in the service of finding a porcupine, but encountering other animals, making decisions about when and where to camp, and what might be suitable activities for the rest of the day and the next. The difference between Etienne's observations on the land and the reading he saw me doing in the tent at night was that mine was restricted to the medium of the book, and the words comprised my single source. While my books projected me into different worlds and filled me with images and ideas, Etienne's readings were additionally linked to his physical presence on the land. His body and the knowledge he received through his perceptions were of the same order, while mine were not. His knowledge was direct, experiential and embodied, while mine was abstract and mediated.

In her essay on this subject, Barbara Bodenhorn suggested that for the Iñupiat of Alaska 'reading' has the additional function of imparting the information gained to other people, whereas in English, reading has no such necessary connotation.[29] Importantly, Iñupiat reading of the lands, seas, forests, animals, fish, plants, rocks and even the stars, is not written. It is stored in the mind, and it is incumbent upon the *Taiguaqtit* interlocutor, as described to Bodenhorn, to relay this to others when called upon or required. However, it is not the job of *Taiguaqtit* to provide a model for other peoples' actions, only to relate facts that they are free to consider in their own ways. Beyond this, Iñupiat pedagogy was described as:

> (1) developing the ability to perceive, interpret, and pass on important information; (2) developing the ability to experiment, test limits and

27 Hirata-Edds et al., 'Language training in Oklahoma and Florida', pp. 48–52.
28 Dwyer, 'Deans sign accord on aboriginal education'.
29 Bodenhorn, '"People who are like our books"', pp. 117–34.

> to adapt; (3) developing a strongly autonomous self; and finally, (4) developing an understanding of one's place and responsibilities within family and community.[30]

In a similar vein, Martina Tyrrell documented how Inuit knowledge of the sea on Hudson Bay, for the people of Arviat (the Arviarmiut), was closely linked to lifelong conversations:

> The conversations Arviarmiut have regarding the sea, and the experiences they have in engagement with it, lead to a detailed and ever-growing knowledge and understanding of the sea. Places at sea gain importance for various reasons: they may be known as dangerous or safe passages, as good or bad hunting grounds, or as places to be avoided or sought out. Thus, through long-term use and habitation the sea becomes filled with meaningful named places that are a part of the on-going conversations amongst Arviarmiut, informing individual and community identity and memory and leading to certain ways of being while visiting these places.[31]

While indigenous educational projects help to maintain such conversations, they also reinforce the knowledge base and worldviews of particular peoples. This is especially crucial to indigenous youth who are subject to competing and often conflicting worldviews. At a broader level, indigenous educational projects contribute to a global intellectual rediversification.

Food and health: reversing the nutrition transition

A large part of indigenous education is associated with food, its procurement and the maintenance of food sources. Some groups, especially those in the far north, have been fortunate enough to maintain knowledge of wild foods. Despite there being clear reductions in northern diets in the proportions derived from wild foods,[32] many indigenous peoples are still able to eat hunted, fished and gathered foods. For example, Oswalt reported that, in 1979, 70 per cent of Yupik households in the Alaskan village of Bethel ate country food and that one third of them relied on hunting, fishing and gathering for more than half their dietary needs.[33] More recently, the Alaska Economic Information System (AEIS), which formed part of the Alaska Division of Community and Regional Affairs, estimated that, as of the 2000 census, 54 per cent of the calories consumed by the people of the Bethel region were derived from subsistence sources and, of this, fish accounted for 74 per cent.[34] Peter Usher found that

30 Ibid., p. 124.

31 Tyrrell, 'From placelessness to place', p. 225.

32 See the review of studies in Samson and Pretty, 'Environmental and health benefits of hunting lifestyles and diets for the Innu of Labrador', pp. 536–7.

33 Oswalt, *Bashful No Longer*, p. 180.

34 The AEIS website, which I accessed on 4 July 2007 for this information, no longer exists; its parent site (Alaska Division of Community and Regional Affairs) is

the major source of food and income in northern Labrador in the 1970s came from country foods.[35] In the 1980s, Mackay indicated that 30–65 per cent of the Innu in Labrador continued to spend the autumn and/or spring months in the interior hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering.[36] These observations in relation to the Innu are roughly the same as those made by others in the far north during the early phases of sedentarisation indicating high proportions of food being hunted and fished.[37] It was only later, after many people in Davis Inlet and Sheshatshiu had developed alcohol, substance and mental health problems, that food products from cans, packets and freezers started to replace – but not eliminate – wild foods.

Other indigenous groups on the paths of colonial settlement and industry at an earlier time have not been as fortunate in retaining their diets. But, even in such cases, people are attempting to find routes back to their older ways of sustenance. In these places, the return to indigenous foods is in part a reaction to the obesity, diabetes and poor health associated with the high-fat foods Native Americans on many reservations have been purchasing with food stamps or have had delivered to them via the Commodity Food Programs. Today, some groups are attempting to restore wild food production and consumption.

One of the most interesting of these is bison restoration. Contemporary restoration projects would not have been possible had it not been for the small remaining herds from which to source the animals and rewild the lands. The bison was fortunately saved from total extinction thanks to the efforts of several native northern Plains men in the 1870s and 1880s, when only a few hundred of the animals had survived the mass slaughtering that accompanied the Great Land Rush in North America. Many of the new bison projects are being undertaken in accordance with cooperative economic principles, combined with indigenous groups' ecological and religious knowledge and alliances of the groups in the American Midwest and Plains. The Rosebud Sioux (Lakota) in South Dakota, as well as the Ho-Chunk and Oneida in Wisconsin, are raising bison herds and the Inter-Tribal Bison Cooperative (ITBC) is coordinating efforts to restore bison to tribal lands. The ITBC has a total herd of 15,000 bison spread among 57 different tribal groups in 19 states[38] and has at its potential disposal 12 million acres capable of sustaining 120,000 head.[39] Restoration and rewilding efforts, however, are being undertaken against the opposition of local cattle ranchers who have argued that bison would 'take

available at: www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/ (accessed 15 Jan. 2013).

35 Usher, *Renewable Resources in the Future of Northern Labrador*.

36 Mackie, 'Nutrition: does access to country food really matter?'.

37 For example, Graburn, *Eskimos Without Igloos*, p. 154, noted that, in Sugluk (now Salluit) in the 1960s, hunting often supplied more than 50 per cent of the food in the village.

38 Herzog, 'Herds of hope'.

39 Zontek, *Buffalo Nation*, p. 82.

over', spread bruscellosis to cattle and negate all their hard work in converting the lands to commercial agricultural use.[40]

The resuscitation of bison herds has led to the selling of their meats to a number of Native American groups in the region, and the US Congress has set aside $4 million in bison meat contracts. However, it is still difficult to market it to some Native American groups who were traditionally bison hunters. This is partly because of the taboo on the commercialisation of wild animal meat, but also because of many reservation dwellers' prolonged exposure and addiction to processed and junk foods.[41] To address the first of these problems, people at Fort Belknap reservation, as well as the Crow and the Flathead in Montana, have attempted to restore populations of huntable wild bison, thus reverting to treating them as wild animals rather than livestock.[42] Additionally, the ITBC sponsors educational programmes on bison restoration, preservation and range dynamics to promote 'wildculture' as well as agriculture.[43] The reclamation of healthy foods and cultural practices is codependent on restoration of ecological niches, including those of plants regarded by non-indigenous farmers as 'weeds', and predators such as wolves and bears, which are the equivalent for cattle ranchers. While mono-crop agriculture and livestock husbandry can survive in controlled and ecologically denuded spaces, wild animals will not do well in polluted and toxic landscapes, depleted of the plants, fish and other animals they need.

Essential to the continued or renewed use of native foods is the preservation or 'rewilding' of the land, and numerous groups are moving in this direction. Even though many landscapes have been altered by agribusiness and industrial activity as well as migrations of people, some groups in areas subject to more intensive intrusions are attempting to restore landscapes to pre-industrial or pre-agricultural states. The Winnebago in Nebraska, for example, are harvesting wild plums and choke cherries to improve their diets and are using milkweed to prepare a soup used in the past.[44] The Shakopee Mdewekanton are currently restoring 450 acres of land around Minneapolis-St Paul. The wild ryes, compass plants, big bluestem and Golden Alexander that Euro-American colonists called weeds, and which were cleared for commercial agriculture, are being replanted.[45] Aboriginal groups in British Columbia such as the Tmixw, Heiltsuk and Haida are engaged in a number of projects, often in collaboration with colleges and conservation groups, to restore the landscape and reverse

40 Ibid., p. 92. See also, Brown, 'Spared slaughter, some bison migrate into Montana, toward private property'.
41 Ashton, 'Indians need nudge to eat buffalo again', p. A16; Zontek, *Buffalo Nation,* p. 92.
42 Jawort, 'Are wild bison coming back to Montana?'.
43 Zontek, p. 83.
44 Condon, 'Tribe restores land to prairie roots'.
45 Ibid.

some of the degrading effects of logging and the introduction of non-native species on local biodiversity.[46]

As well as the positive effects of eating wild and local foods, there is also a possibility that renewed or maintained contact with local plants will also stimulate the renewed use of medicinal oils, resins, gums and poultices drawn from plants, roots, berries and animals. Much of the Innu pharmacology, for example, addresses itself to ailments and accidents that occur in the country environment, but there is also some evidence that certain substances, as well as being preventive, might also be used to treat the symptoms of diseases that were until recently unknown to indigenous peoples. A series of studies of eastern Cree pharmacology has shown that in laboratory tests Cree substances, including pitcher plant, Labrador tea (*Rhododendron tomentosum* and *Rhododendron groenlandicum*) and black spruce cones, proved effective in improving insulin production or secretion and free radical scavenging similar to antioxidants, and hence have anti-diabetic qualities.[47] At a broader level, however, the plants in the country are materials for new pharmacopoeias. While it is impossible to reassemble certain forms of thought and practices that related to these plants, their use can be refashioned within contemporary circumstances. At the very least, renewed use of indigenous medicinal plants may help promote health, prevent illness and lessen the reliance on commercial pharmaceutical remedies, which often have debilitating side effects.

As well as renewing animals and plants, fish can also be introduced. After being deprived of fresh salmon, in part because the dams on the Klamath River prevented them from swimming upstream to spawn, the Karuk and Yurok are attempting to regenerate the fish that was a source of excellent nutrition and cultural continuity. These two groups straddling the California and Oregon border have been successful in getting state legislatures to approve the removal of dams on the river by 2020.[48] If what will be the world's largest dam-removal project proceeds, the salmon will return to their 300-mile migratory route up the river. The Karuk and Yurok will then be able to reclaim an important part of their diet and this ought to address the problems of obesity, diabetes and, by extension, the poverty, unemployment and suicide that are associated with the

46 Turner, *The Earth's Blanket*, pp. 212–28.

47 See Spoor et al., 'Selected plant species from the Cree pharmacopoeia of northern Quebec possess anti-diabetic potential'; and Leduc et al., 'Plants used by the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee (Quebec, Canada) for the treatment of diabetes', pp. 55–63.

48 Under the 2010 Klamath Restoration Agreements, currently awaiting Congressional approval, see www.klamathrestoration.gov (accessed 9 Aug. 2013). Hormel and Norgaard, 'Bring the salmon home!', pp. 343–66, analyse the Bring the Salmon Home! Campaign which mobilised indigenous support to remove the dams. Another large project in Washington state involves the Lower Elwha Klallam people working with a contractor to remove dams, some as high as 200 feet, to help restore Chinook salmon, an endangered species. See Mapes, 'First step in removal of Elwha River dams'.

dams. To help with these problems and with the renewal of dances and other cultural practices, the Yurok are also attempting to reintroduce the condor to the northern California coast.[49] This involves seeking ways to mitigate damages done by lead, water-borne remnants of pesticides, mercury and organochlorides that have accumulated in the environment and which are toxic to the birds because they interfere with the metabolising of calcium.

In the US southwest a number of collaborative projects have attempted to regain knowledge of the planting practices, uses and properties of native plants with a view to reintroducing them into the diet (see Figure 7.2). However, here, unlike the far north, there has been a more prolonged period in which native practices fell into disuse. This means that among the O'odham of the Sonoran desert, for example:

> The [Farm Cooperative] Board found no one left in the native community who could offer traditional instruction on indigenous O'odham agriculture and no one who had traditional seeds. There was a two-generation gap in traditional knowledge and seed saving, in effect a local extinction of the local gene pool of an unknown number of folk varieties, and the local extinction of a cultural tradition.[50]

Figure 7.2. Tepary beans produced by O'odham Cooperative, 2010.

49 Greenson, 'A condor question: Yurok tribe works toward reintroducing condors to north coast'.

50 Burgess, 'Cultural responsibility in the preservation of local economic plant resources', p. 134.

Yet, this has not prevented the reintroduction of O'odham plants and farming practices and the restructuring of some of the cultural contexts around the use of desert plants. Some of this is being done through the Tucson-based Native Seeds/Search organisation working with local indigenous groups to find seeds that have long been lost.[51] O'odham floodwater agriculture, involving the strategic use of summer monsoon rains, channelling ditches to fields and using nutrient rich ponds or *charcos*, is making a comeback, partly in response to the rapid depletion of soils and waters by mechanised groundwater-pumped and irrigation systems used in intensive desert agriculture.[52] Elsewhere in Arizona, various indigenous groups are attempting to reintroduce seed and crop diversity. Such a strategy is likely to have a better chance of maintaining both crops and the land than that of selecting only high-yield seeds and strains, as practised by agribusiness. Remarking on the Hopi use of a variety of corn seeds – small, large and misshapen – Nabhan positively contrasted Hopi methods to the agribusiness model:

> The pest and disease epidemics that sporadically plague modern farmers are most likely to occur where the environment is so uniform that the same seeds can be sown horizon to horizon. The genetic vulnerability of the major crop in a region may be just as much due to this ecological homogeneity as it is to the genetic uniformity of the crop itself.[53]

After dramatic declines in farming, 'the 1990s witnessed an invigorated return to the land by a number of Pueblos'.[54] Renewed concentration on their own crops and farming practices led to both better internal consumption of Pueblo foods and to sales to outsiders, generating internal revenue to be reinvested locally. Among the recent projects noted by James Vlasich in his study of Pueblo agriculture are those that now operate on lands that went unused for decades. These lands are used by cooperatives producing dried chiles, smoked tomatoes, pozole stew, beans, squash, corn, dried apples and melons, supplemented by water conservation and the identification and regeneration of ancient Pueblo seeds. Pueblos have also renewed their production and use of blue corn, which contains 20 per cent more protein and 50 per cent more iron than yellow corn. This has proved popular in the healthfood market and also in cosmetics – for example, the Body Shop contracted the Santa Ana Pueblo for blue corn to make seven types of moisturiser and body oil.[55]

51 Trainer, 'Environmental anthropology, applied anthropology, medical anthropology', p. 315.
52 Nabhan, *The Desert Smells Like Rain*, p. 46.
53 Nabhan, *Enduring Seeds*, p. 76.
54 Vlasich, *Pueblo Indian Agriculture*, p. 288.
55 Ibid., pp. 287–90.

Like the Pueblos, some northern groups have turned to limited forms of commercialisation to enable or encourage more wild food consumption. Although trafficking in wild animal meats and body parts continues throughout the world, within indigenous peoples' economies, wild foods were not commercial entities on account of specific taboos connected with respect for animals and nature. In Greenland, the Home Rule government has been promoting local country food markets since 1988, and hunters regularly sell via formal kiosks, informally to relatives and neighbours, directly to schools, hospitals and senior citizens' homes, and directly to government-controlled processing facilities. According to one study, the foods most frequently sold are fish (26 per cent of total), seal products (22 per cent), beluga or narwhal (14 per cent) and caribou (14 per cent), and hunters acknowledge these markets as being highly beneficial for them. The aim of the policy is to support country food consumption as a substitute for expensive and less healthy imported foods.[56]

An important factor that enables Greenland to operate such a policy is 'effective indigenous control over land and sea tenure systems'.[57] Although threatened by climate change and multinationals drilling for oil and other minerals along vast stretches of the western Greenland coast,[58] the small and scattered coastal communities encourage a local food economy that mixes customary sharing with limited commercialisation that does not break taboos.[59] Commercial game ranching and farming may also result in serious depletions of animal and fish populations.[60] If it is not tempered by adherence to sharing customs, experiential education and respect for animals, commercialisation of wild foods could easily lead to the same problems of sustainability, including the depletion of plants, animals and wider ecosystems, and the adulteration of foods through long food miles and industrialisation.

Some aboriginal peoples in Canada have, through their own resources and state assistance, been able to benefit from projects to reintegrate food procurement into local economies without commercialising it among

56 Marquardt and Caulfield, 'Development of West Greenlandic markets for country foods', pp. 107–19.

57 Ibid., p. 116.

58 Emmerson, *The Future History of the Arctic*, pp. 295–6; Pfeifer and Thompson, 'The struggle for Greenland's oil'.

59 However, the commercialisation of wild meat in places that are more densely populated than Greenland, such as in many parts of Africa, are threatening several animals with extinction, including red colobus monkeys and duiker antelopes. Here, unsustainable hunting is often motivated by the poverty of rural people and the demands of urban populations for bush meat, see Mainka and Tivedi, *Biodiversity Conservation, Livelihoods and Food Security*.

60 Notzke, *Aboriginal Peoples*, pp. 131–8.

themselves. In Nunavik, for example, networks of Inuit cooperatives allowed communities to sell fish and other products to outsiders or institutions in the local vicinity.[61] In the same region, a Hunter's Support Program has been in existence since 1982. The programme operates through the Province of Quebec releasing funds to aboriginal organisations that pay Inuit and Cree hunters for the meat and fish they bring home. It also helps to subsidise the purchase of hunting equipment, transportation and contributes a small fee for the hunters' time. After taking some of the food for themselves, the aboriginal organisations then distribute the free food throughout the villages. The aim of the programme is to encourage the perpetuation of hunting and to offer alternatives to aboriginal families that are excluded from, or do not wish to participate in, wage labour. Japanese anthropologist, Nomburu Kishigami, who has documented this programme as a new variant on Inuit sharing patterns, related how much food it redistributed in the spring of 1997 when 132 caribou were brought back to the village of Akulivik:

> Assuming that one caribou can provide for 5 persons for 2 weeks, the hunter support program secured food for 9,240 person/days … This means a total of 23 days' food for the Akulivik population. In addition there were 17 purchases totalling 2,750 pounds of seal meat.[62]

The Hunter Support Program creates a local market for country foods, regulated by the Canadian government, yet at the same time operated by Inuit in such a way as to both maintain their relationships with the animals and sea mammals and help facilitate the sharing economy. As Nicole Gombay maintained, this and other programmes enable Inuit 'to accommodate both the obligation to share country foods and the need to sell them.'[63] Inuit do this through selling country foods to non-Inuit or institutions only, such as a cooperative, or through the Hunter Support Program. By these means, Inuit are able to keep country foods as staple parts of the diet, economically support hunters and distribute meat without disrespecting wild animals. Importantly, most Inuit regard the hunters' payment as being the reward for their supplies and labour, and not for the fish or animals that they bring back.[64] These programmes show that hunting can still be an important part of contemporary economies. Even without such policies, George and his colleagues estimated that the hunting of wild meat by members of the Cree communities of the Hudson Bay area made available 402 grams of wild meat per adult per day and represented 25 per cent of the average total household income.[65] If these sorts of

61 Vick-Westgate, *Nunavik: Inuit-Controlled Education in Arctic Quebec*, pp. 65–6.

62 Kishigami, 'Contemporary Inuit food sharing and Hunter Support Program of Nunavik, Canada', p. 185.

63 Gombay, 'The commoditization of country foods in Nunavik', p. 116.

64 Ibid., p. 124.

65 George et al., 'Envisioning cultural, ecological and economic sustainability: the Cree communities of the Hudson and James Bay Lowland, Ontario', pp. S357–

activities were to become more widespread, a reinvigorated communal system of food distribution could make some commercial transactions superfluous and reduce reliance on cash.

The considerable economic investment in the Hunter Support Program is also a preventive measure, averting suffering from the many diseases caused by the Western diet and promoting health through the reintroduction of wild foods. One clear illustration of this lies in the research of Kerin O'Dea in Australia. O'Dea conducted a field study in the Mowanjum community involving ten diabetic and four non-diabetic Aborigines between the ages of 47 and 62 over a seven-week period. Throughout this time, the Aborigines hunted, gathered and fished for food and ate nothing else:

> The most important finding in this study was the striking improvement in all the metabolic abnormalities of diabetes in this group of Aborigines: Fasting glucose was greatly reduced, consistent with reduced hepatic glucose output; the impaired insulin secretory response was improved; insulin sensitivity was improved as evidenced by reduced fasting glucose in the face of lower insulin levels and the normalized triglyceride levels. In addition there were important reductions in a number of cardiovascular disease risk factors: abolition of the hypertryglyceridemia, reduction in blood pressure, and increased bleeding time (interpreted as indicating a reduced thrombosis tendency).[66]

Reviewing this study and mentioning others with similar conclusions, Michael Pollan commented that, 'some of the most deleterious effects of the Western diet could be so quickly reversed … at least to some extent, we can rewind the tape of the nutrition transition and undo some of its damage.'[67] A similar project by Nabhan found that Seri, Tohono O'odham and Akimel O'odham diabetes sufferers of Arizona and northern Mexico could sustain themselves on a 12-day, 220-mile hike through the Sonoran desert eating only local native foods. These slow-energy-release foods decrease the speed of digestion and absorption of sugars, and foods such as prickly pear pads 'were considered by all the participants to be nutritious, satisfying, and filling enough to sustain our arduous pilgrimage.'[68] In British Columbia, Métis physician Jay Wortman's long-term study of diets in Alert Bay found that those who adopted a low-carbohydrate native diet of meat, seafood and non-starch vegetables lost weight

S358.

66 O'Dea, 'The therapeutic and preventive potential of the hunter-gatherer lifestyle', pp. 368–9. A review of evidence suggesting an association between participation in traditional aboriginal activities and lower rates of chronic diseases is presented by Burgess et al., 'Healthy people: healthy country?'

67 Pollan, *In Defense of Food*, pp. 87–8.

68 Nabhan, 'Rooting out the causes of disease: why diabetes is so common among desert dwellers', pp. 378–9.

and had improved cholesterol levels and diabetes control.[69]

Michael Milburn pointed out in his review of indigenous nutrition that foods are embedded in ideas about nature and place and these are closely connected to conceptions of human health. As he put it, 'this knowledge, far from being archaic and irrelevant in this era of computers and space travel, offers solutions for modern health problems, crucial technology for a sustainable agriculture, and important approaches and tools for ecosystem "management"'.[70] In reviewing the field studies of 20th-century hunter-gatherer diets, Cordain and colleagues argued that animal-based diets do not cause the high lipid levels found in those adopting the Western diet and their high protein diet may prevent cardiovascular disease.[71] Unlike in the Western diet, animal fat is not combined with high levels of carbohydrates and saturated fats with little exercise, but with high intakes of omega 3 fatty acids, antioxidants, fibre and prolonged exercise.

The land: 'You have to do it to know it'

One of the most important aspects of cultural revitalisation is direct experience of the lands which provide the contexts of indigenous cultures. Many indigenous groups are reinvigorating land-based activities, but here the Innu will serve as my sole example. Anthony Jenkinson, a British-born resident of Sheshatshiu and one of the Tshikapisk Foundation organisers, remarked on how four Mushuau Innu adolescents had benefited greatly from spending time at Kameshtashten:

> They all have histories of gas sniffing and are prominent in Ed Martin's film.[72] The kids showed no sign of aberrant behaviour. Only one needed guidance and needed to speak about his anger. He was disturbed some of the time. Some of the others had minor problems. But, they helped with building cabins, went fishing, worked on the floor in the main lodge with Aputet. They were here for four weeks. They were capable country people, erecting tents themselves, cleaning fish and did everything else by themselves. They were here in July–August when blackflies made conditions difficult … In 2001, Justin Rich came here. He was a gas sniffer in the village, but he was a model person in the country and would spend days off hunting by himself.[73]

I have witnessed similarly positive reversals in young people while in the country. On the Tshikapisk Foundation-sponsored Orma Lake trip in 2006

69 CBC News, 'West coast aboriginal community tests low-carb diet'.
70 Milburn, 'Indigenous nutrition: using traditional food knowledge to solve contemporary health problems', p. 421.
71 Cordain et al., 'The paradoxical nature of hunter gatherer diets: meat-based yet non-atherogenic', pp. S42–S52.
72 Bestboy Productions, *The Mushuau Innu: Surviving Canada*.
73 Interview with Anthony Jenkinson, Kameshtashten Lake, 29 Sept. 2005.

I was one of several adults, including the hunter Etienne Pone, Anthony Jenkinson and the British biologist, Jules Pretty,[74] to travel with a party of Innu youth on snowmobiles, hunting and camping along a route that took us from the Churchill River north towards Shipiskan Lake through brooks and forested land adjacent to Smallwood reservoir. One of the boys in our party, 17-year-old Nikeshant Penunsi, was born with lung problems and Foetal Alcohol Syndrome. With his history of gas sniffing, the organisers of the trip had some worries about him. One day he showed me the scars on his arms from suicide attempts. He had run away from home, but found occasional sanctuary with his grandparents who instilled in him Innu values. On this visit to the country, however, he was a competent and happy young man. I remember him taking me on a skidoo ride in search of ptarmigan. I marvelled at his navigational skills as we meandered in and out of forests, along brooks and found our way back to camp with no hesitation – and with no previous knowledge of this particular area. In the camp, Nikeshant was constantly active and attended to many of the practicalities. When we moved to a new camp he was the first person to find a good water source and do the arduous labour of chiselling through thick ice to get at the fresh water. He was always one of the first up in the morning. On several mornings he returned with five or six ptarmigan just as I was rousing from my sleeping bag. Not only did Nikeshant hunt, fish and do the hard work necessary to maintain camp, but he obviously enjoyed what he was doing and was often the life and soul of our mealtime conversations.

Nikeshant became a teacher, showing me patiently how to take down our tent and fold it properly for travelling. When we were on the move he constantly surveyed the landscape for animals, and spotted and killed our first porcupine on the trip. At the end of a day spent travelling about 50 kilometres, we came across a camp previously used by Euro-Canadian sports hunters. They had killed caribou, leaving body parts including heads strewn around in the snow. I asked him what he thought of the scene. 'It's bad', he said, 'We wouldn't do that'. The next day, Etienne Pone, one of the older hunters, carefully extracted what meat he could from the caribou body parts and burnt the bones as a mark of respect. That evening Etienne told us stories, things that just occurred to him, about times when he was in the country with others who are now departed. Etienne's narratives were packed with presences of other forms of life, including the dead, sensed in dreams, and felt to be palpably close in the country. As we lay around the tent after our meal of ptarmigan accompanied by vegetables I had purchased at the supermarket in Goose Bay, Etienne reclined, smoking a rolled-up cigarette, and told us about being in the country with Greg and Anne-Marie Penashue. One night Greg had a dream that they were all in the tent eating caribou and his grandfather said, 'Why didn't you give me any food?' The second night another member of the camp had the same dream.

74 Jules Pretty's accounts of his visits to the Innu are in *The Earth Only Endures*, pp. 188–92.

The grandfather said he had been passed over when they served the food out – the hunters had not put the bones and scraps in the fire for the grandfather.

This is of course not just a fireside story, but a parable about the importance of our relationships with the animals and people who are dead. It is a reminder that people should not be driven by a sense of their own unique importance. The grandfather's presence in the dreams and his gentle reprimands to dreamers conveys a philosophy of the world that depicts all of it, including the dead, as alive. The country environment itself acts as a stimulus to memory and helps in passing down histories, stories, dreams and other knowledge that the younger Innu would ordinarily not have access to.

The Innu presence on the land is crucial to the perpetuation of this way of understanding the world, and is also connected to alleviating some of the most debilitating problems associated with settlement life. While hearing such stories, young members become more aware of themselves as Innu, independent of their status (or lack thereof) in the settlements. On the numerous times, I have asked young people in the country, if they felt any different on the land, the answers have almost always been couched in negative characterisations of their lives in the villages. For example, 20-year-old Jonathan responded, 'Oh yeah, I feel different here. Here there's no drinking. In Sheshatshiu, all I do is drink and get laid.' While it's true that being in the country transforms young Innu and builds skills, confidence and a sense of identity, a reverse transformation, a descent into alcohol or drug binges is often the sequel to a return to the village, although this is not always the case.

It is also true, as Anthony Jenkinson intimated, that a small number of the young people who come to the country do not respond positively. Some are so traumatised, addicted or psychologically damaged that even the new environment cannot shift their burdens. One young man on the Orma Lake trip became psychologically disturbed towards the end of the trip. It may have been significant, however, that this happened only after he was separated from his peers, Jonathan and Nikeshant, who went to another camp, and was left with adults, of whom three out of four were non-Innu. Other Innu youth are so addicted to alcohol or drugs that even a short period away from these substances brings on anxieties. There can also be serious problems if tobacco runs out. Nevertheless, many Innu who have been through very hard times from alcoholism, deaths of children from suicide and familial break-ups are drawing upon this knowledge and have returned to country life. Evidence from other researchers, who have witnessed similar country projects aimed at assisting disturbed aboriginal youth, also indicates that reconnecting with the land might be a positive way to deal with illness and dysfunction.[75]

75 For example, Turner, *The Earth's Blanket*, p. 221, noted that a 'group of seriously ill young people', who attended a country project involving salmon fishing, dancing

Figure 7.3. Etienne Pone and Nikeshant Penunsi cleaning caribou bones at Kaupamiskat, 2006.

This is why many Innu wish to maintain their country activities. Some do so very directly and quietly. Others, such as Elizabeth Penashue of Sheshatshiu, gather together Innu and outsiders to make an annual 150-mile walk from Sheshatshiu to Minipi. This involves walking ten miles a day on snowshoes in up to 12 feet of snow. According to Elizabeth, the walk serves many purposes. It is a protest against military intrusions on Innu land, educates non-Innu in the Innu way of life and helps people in the community use their own cultural resources to deal with some of their problems.[76] Mary Lucy Dicker and Christine Rich of Natuashish, both middle-aged mothers have completed long walks across ice-covered lakes and through the forests on snowshoes. In 2009, Mary Lucy and Christine walked from Natuashish to Hopedale, a distance of about 50 kilometres in support of the even longer walk undertaken by Michel Andrew (aka 'Giant') from Sheshatshiu to Natuashish. When Giant arrived in Natuashish at the end of his 300-kilometre walk to raise money for diabetes, the people of the community set up a huge tent, where they enjoyed fresh caribou meat and *mukushan*. Giant's walk was recorded in

and playing games, guided by the Heiltsuk in British Columbia, returned 'renewed and reinvigorated, with a heightened awareness of their place in the world and of the beauty and continuity of life'.

76 See McDowell, 'Porcupine lessons: Divinity School student spends a month trekking with Innu people'.

pictures on Facebook and people across the world followed his footsteps. When a CBC reporter interviewed the lean, sunburnt and partly frostbitten Giant, he said modestly that he wanted to do the walk so more people would be aware of diabetes and the fact that the junk food they ate was killing them. He continued that he hoped it had helped more people to go to the country where they could eat wild foods and be healthier. Giant was very direct and without any sense of triumphalism. In 2011, Giant and several other people from Sheshatshiu walked to Pukuatshipit on the Quebec North Shore, again in support of diabetes awareness.

Giant led another internationally publicised walk in February and March 2011 in support of Innu life in the country, wild foods and diabetes awareness. The walkers traversed the lands along the St Lawrence from Pukuatshipit to Uashat, a distance of 400 kilometres, camping and being received at the villages of Unamenshipit, Natashquon, Ekuantshit, Maliotenam and Uashat. He and a number of followers continued until 2012 by which time they had circumnavigated the entirety of the Innu territories, walking a distance of 4,500 km. Two indicative Facebook posts from the walk's early phases indicate the excitement felt by people across the Innu communities of Labrador and Quebec:

> From Natasha Hurley, Sheshatshiu:
>
> When I spoke with Giant the night before he left, I could hear the passion in his voice and heart that what he was doing was for the right reasons, to help our Innu People and to protect the Innu way of life. He wasn't doing this for money or fame, he is sincerely doing this from his heart. I believe that the other walkers that have joined him are doing it for the same reason and I again envy them all. These are the true leaders of our future and I think it's time the whole community comes together and supports our young people as they are the future of the Innu. We need to learn to put our differences aside and act like true Innu people. I believe we have many great people in our community and we need to recognize each and everyone of them, we need to recognize each other. Nothing should stop us Innu from supporting each other. I support people like Giant and his fellow walkers 100%. So much time has gone by that we have not been utilizing our strongest strengths such as our Elders and our Youth. Without them, what are we and what are we going to be? I am not trying to find blame or point the finger as that has been done long enough and honestly, I'm tired of it. Let's work together and with everyone. Let's celebrate Life!
>
> From Helen Aster, also of Sheshatshiu:
>
> Yesterday morning my mom called me up and wondering if I was going to the airport to see off the walkers when they leave, here I was thinking I was going to spend my Saturday at home but she sounded really disappointed when I said I didn't know if I was going, so I called her few minutes later to tell her we are going. Never have I seen my mom really excited that I was taking her to airport and to see how proud she was when the walkers left. That moment was really priceless for me it

will stay with me and I would like to thank Giant for that moment and the youth walkers. Knowing that our elders still have hope for our youth have made me really proud of our youth especially my nephew and my nieces who are taking part in the most exciting journey of their lives and Giant has given them this opportunity and the experience of a life time. Once again I am thanking Giant and the youth walkers.

The Innu lawyer Armand Mackenzie wrote a moving tribute to the walkers in the Quebec newspaper, *Le Soleil*, which I reproduce here at length:

> Several years ago when I was at the United Nations's Palais des Nations in Geneva, I took part in the launch of the report of an enquiry, conducted by the NGO Survival International, which examined the troubled relationship between the Innu people and Canada. Against the backdrop of images of young Innu sniffing gas and threatening to kill themselves – pictures which were flashed around the world – we denounced the desperate situation of our young people in the Innu communities and the actions of government and religious institutions whose effect was to create a state of total dependency amongst a people who were formerly proud and self reliant. The name of the report was 'Canada's Tibet: the killing of the Innu'. Today however I want to talk to you about hope.
>
> A little like young Gandhis marching to the Indian Ocean to demand their freedom, the Young Innu Walkers marched from Labrador to Sept Iles, first overland to Pakuashipu/St Augustine then along the North Shore to Uashat.
>
> Inspired and guided by their leader, a young Innu from Labrador called Michel Andrew, named 'Giant' because of his height, last year they began their odyssey through the territory of their Innu ancestors at Sheshatshit [variant spelling of Sheshatshiu], near Goose Bay. This winter they continued on from the Innu village of Pakuashipu, walking along the 'white road' (the snowmobile trail that links the North Shore villages in the winter) and finally finishing their journey in brilliant spring sunshine at Uashat.
>
> Dressed in white, like winter caribou, they walked in single file hauling their toboggans, rising early in the morning, travelling through the Innu homeland Nitassinan until nightfall each day, putting up and then taking down their tents. The Young Innu Cultural Health Walkers didn't walk to be popular but for a simple reason: to fight against diabetes (since settlement an omnipresent scourge amongst the Innu) and to promote physical activity amongst our People.
>
> Struggling against their own personal demons – so numerous amongst the Innu people in the villages – in a journey which was also a journey of the soul, they became young Innu nomads of hope. Greeted as heroes in the scattering of small villages along the coast, Michel Andrew 'Giant's' group has reawakened amongst many of us – I am certain of this – the pride and hope which was once a natural part of being Innu. By so

doing they have touched not only the emotions of Innu youth but have moved persons of all ages. Moreover they have shown that with effort, courage and determination we can as indigenous Peoples, confront our problems, face them squarely and find the necessary solutions – some straightforward and others which are sometimes more complicated.

Utilizing social media such as Facebook, our nomads of the internet have known how to inspire those following the group's quest with the winds of hope.

Their task and their message – as was that of the Innu surgeon from Pessamit, Dr Stanley Vollant who is undertaking his own Innu pilgrimage – was simple. To walk and then walk some more as did our fathers, mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, from the coast of Labrador to the interior of the Innu territory, so as to show that the best way to reach our goals, to get to where we want to get to, is by redoubling our efforts, learning daily, working hard and staying in shape for as long as possible so as to bring something back to our camp, our village, our Nation.

Listening to the stories of her life told by my 86-year-old Innu mother, now living in Schefferville, as she speaks to me of her youth, rising at the crack of dawn, at Lake Nitshikuan in the Kaniapiskau [also 'Caniapiscau'] region, to break the ice on the water hole so she could make the morning tea, working all day long, fishing for whitefish, working on caribou skins – scarce in those days a little like they are today – I can't help feeling that it is through accomplishing the simplest tasks that individuals can achieve great things so long as they remain faithful to those things and persevere every day of their lives.

For many years before the building of roads and before the coming of trains and planes, my mother, like all the Innu of that time, travelled throughout the Innu territory of the North Shore, as far as James Bay and the coast of Labrador, to the Hudson Bay Post at Davis Inlet, passing Patshetshunau (Churchill Falls) and going as far as Moisie near Sept Iles. To survive, her family overcame hunger, exhaustion, long portages, journeys involving great distances, cold, the heat of summer, and strong winds. They did it through the solidarity, ingenuity and discipline of the Innu People. In the course of the seasonal movements of the nomadic life of the Innu and in spite of all the hardships, my mother and the other Innu of that time lived happy lives as free people in their own country.

(translation by Anthony Jenkinson)

Figure 7.4. Walkers arriving at Sheshatshiu after final leg of Giant's walk, 2012.

Figure 7.5. Giant at the completion of the final leg, Schefferville to Natuashish, 2012.

Also recorded on Facebook, a Walkers' Expedition group in Natuashish has undertaken several strenuous journeys across the land, often retracing old Innu travel routes, sometimes walking and at other times canoeing or using snowmobiles. While at the Natuashish gathering site at Misteshuapi in the

country in 2009, I had a conversation with George Gregoire Junior, a young man who had been on several of the trips. 'Everyone of us on the trip had stories from our grandparents', he said, 'and we wanted to try it out and see what its like. The young people asked lots of questions that I couldn't answer, but others could. There was lots of learning and health for us'. During the canoe trip, the participants 'canoed until darkness, set up tent, cooked. We went fishing along the way and also did some porcupine and partridge hunting. Some of us had to walk along the shore when the waves got too big on the waters'.[77]

In 2009, I accompanied George and many other Innu families travelling on ten other snowmobiles and komatiks from Natuashish to Kauauautshikamats, Nataquon and Kameshtashten, all historical crossroads where Innu people used to meet and camp as they travelled across their land. Hunting on snowmobiles 'is not the same', George relayed to me, 'but in some ways it is. Hunters can stop and hunt porcupine. On skidoos everything is instant, all you have to do is accelerate. It's not the way it used to be. I like to go with a group together. You get more experience that way'. Clearly, Innu are aware that snowmobiles mediate nature and make the travelling and hunting experience different from walking or travelling by dog team. Nevertheless, it also facilitates hunting and permits journeys over longer distances, especially for those who are less mobile. However, in -30C temperatures like those we experienced on the trip, the travelling tends to be cold, and the fast passages across long lakes require strength and endurance.

77 Interview with George Gregoire Jnr., Misteshuapi, 7 April 2009.

Figure 7.6. Manian Nui (left) and Nora Mistanapeo (right) in blizzard en route from Natuashish to Kameshtashten, 2009.

While being exacting for visitors such as myself, these trips will build stamina and strength. More energy and resourcefulness is needed if snowmobiles break down or get stuck in soft snow, as they often did on this trip when we ventured through wooded areas. Extricating a heavy skidoo requires a lot of pushing, pulling and levering, often in soft snow, making for frequent sudden descents into the cold ground. Innu men and women who go to the country have strength and muscular agility, as well as knowledge of how engines and other mechanical parts work together. When things go wrong, they have an ability to improvise. Although machinery has changed Innu hunting by expediting travel and the amount of provisions that can be carried, it has introduced new challenges. Each year new snowmobile models are produced and Innu hunters try to obtain the best ones, but these were generally not made for the very rugged and often punishing conditions that they are subjected to as transport for hunters in the Labrador-Quebec interior. I have travelled with Innu hunters, weaving through forests, along winding brooks, across lakes with wildly varying ice conditions, and through blizzards. Machines have got stuck and broken down on every trip, and each time Innu men and women have repaired them, often with few or no tools.

As George Gregoire Junior pointed out, one of the most important features of the Walker's Expedition is that it is a shared experience of learning and physical activity in the country. The exercise may be crucial in helping Innu fight Western diseases such as diabetes, but the country life is not purely

about physical health. It is also about reclaiming friendships, relationships and personal connections that the atomised conditions of life in the village do little to nurture. Equally important is the reclaiming of the stories. Without these, Innu are simply disembodied ethnic minorities with no more sense of history and connection to the land than settlers and immigrants. The stories of a grandfather's exploits, a long journey from the interior to the coast, or an area long favoured by a particular family for spring camps give rootedness and meaning to Innu lives that they do not find in modern Canada.

The leader of the group I joined in 2009 was Tsheniss Pasteen, a broad-shouldered man who was a Natuashish fire-service worker and one of the Walker's Expedition founders. His motivation for setting up the project was prompted by his sense of loss for the skills, stories and enjoyments of life on the land. Being around older people in his household, he kept hearing talk of their lives on the land. When Tsheniss showed curiosity, the old people told him 'you have to do it to know it'. As part of the first generation raised in the settlement, Tsheniss realised that his children's generation would know little of this life if they were not exposed to it. He encouraged Innu youth to go on the trips and discovered enormous interest. As he told me, 'When the kids returned from the first trip, they said they wanted to go on another one. They were telling their friends that they had a good trip. Then, new kids asked me about the next trip by canoe'. While participating, the young people learned the basics of Innu country life – how to set up a tent, where to set it up out of the wind and near a lake or brook. After this, accompanied by adults, they went to find and hunt any animals that might be near the camp. Importantly, all this was done cooperatively in groups. Then 'at night we tell stories and pick someone to tell them. For example, we tell the story of the wolverine [who created the earth], the little boy with lice and was left behind in the camp. The spirits heard him crying and this was his grandfather. It's different to tell these stories in the country because there are no distractions like radios, TVs and the computer.'

From what Tsheniss and others told me, and my observations of Innu youth on the trips, the interest in Innu history has not been wiped out by exposure to mass media or displaced by the supposed comforts of modern household life. The stories and legends they hear on the land help organise their experience and redresses the cultural imbalance which sedentary life embodies. Being in the country is a post-sedentarisation world of imagination, fun and direct physical engagement. It is never boring because people must always be generalists. You must be a competent engine mechanic and a carpenter of sorts to adjust and repair the wooden komatiks. You must have or develop physical fitness and endurance. To travel on the lands of the interior you have to know geography and topography, and if you also know history you will be able to pass on valuable stories and parables to others. You also have to get along with others, be able to laugh at yourself and be a good listener, all traits important to

the cooperative spirit needed to survive on the land, travel easily together and sleep in close proximity in multi-family tents.

Life on the land is also a good tonic for the low spirits of the Innu in the community. The Innu Band Councils in Labrador both run mobile treatments for people troubled by family tragedies, alcohol, suicide and drug and solvent abuse. While some of these projects use imported New Age and pan-Native therapies that pay only passing attention to local Innu customs and sensibilities, the movement into the country assists in creating a genuinely communal and therapeutic environment. However, renewed contact with the land through mobile treatment can be bittersweet for some, since it is a powerful reminder of what has been lost. As the late Mary May Osmond of Sheshatshiu explained:

> Since we were settled I lost my grandparents and parents as teachers. I lost the ability to live in the country. It was painful when I went back to Border Beacon [known as Ashuapun in the 'barrens' region of Northern Labrador] for mobile treatment. Being there made me more and more aware of what I have lost. I am angry because I am not able to do what is mine. This is not how I wish to live. A part of me is missing. I'm not a whole person. I would feel whole if I had the skills my mother had. It makes me angry when I think about that.[78]

As well as having a sideline as a very able musician with a wonderfully haunting voice, David Penashue, an excellent translator, involved himself in the mobile treatment centre that Mary May attended all those years ago. Walking with him around the centre I gazed at some of the posters on the wall and asked him how he thinks the mobile treatment has affected the troubled Innu youth. 'The kids in the country find it easier to deal with their problems and talk about them when they are doing something – like cleaning a porcupine',[79] he answered. The activity David referred to, however, is not only physical but cooperative involving action, life, death, blood and ritual. The porcupine cleaning is one of the end processes that begins with the hunt, the search for signs of the solitary animal on the bark of the trees, the walk through the forests, sometimes on snowshoes, and ends with the eating of the delicious meat and broth in the tent. Sometimes hunters are solitary, at other times they hunt with others. Sometimes they travel far from camp, at other times, porcupine can be found close by. Back at the camp, a fire will have to be prepared and people will take it in turns to stand over the heat removing the quills with a knife. In other words, there is adventure, fun and connection with others in hunting and preparing the porcupine. In this atmosphere, David continued, 'they speak of their frustrations with their parents or with drinking … it's better than being in a classroom. They are lazy in a building, but energetic when they are out doing things'.

78 Interview with Mary May Osmond, 1996. It is also highly significant here that when she returned to the country, she did so under the very different circumstances of 'mobile treatment' for alcoholism that had emerged since sedentarisation.

79 Interview with David Penashue, Sheshatshiu, 19 April 2006.

Contemporary hunting requires synergies between the mind and body. In the far north, hunters need to have an excellent understanding of the constant changes in weather, how such changes affect the lands, trees and waters, and how all this might affect the movement of the camp and of the animals. In constantly changing conditions, one needs to be alert to the changes and know how to deal with them. When one plan of action proves not to be fruitful, hunters have to improvise a second, third or fourth option. Such programmes have the potential to give indigenous youth sophisticated understanding of the land, animals, weather, and be agile, strong and competent in dealing with the sometimes-demanding realities of the physical world.[80] The ongoing hunting, fishing and travelling require and reinforce generalism, and as such act as a bulwark against the fragmentation of knowledge and the narrowing of the use of our senses, which are often encouraged by specialisation within wage labour and formal education. The many Innu now travelling across their lands, across the seasons and the colonial border are remobilising themselves, refusing to be sedentary village dwellers, reminding themselves and others that they are a people with a knowledge and understanding of their lands.

Concluding reflections

Despite rapid social changes and the spread of neoliberal economic processes, all societies contain continuities that many people today are attempting to revive or maintain. Karl Polanyi observed that studies of a variety of societies indicate the 'changelessness of man' and 'the remarkable constancy in societies of all times and places'.[81] In fact, many groups within the very societies that promulgated rapid social change and imposed it around the world are now attempting to draw upon history to reclaim practices that were assumed to be archaic. This is the case with the Transition movement that began in Britain and is spreading to other countries. Local Transition groups are trying to persuade governments to encourage bartering schemes, local currencies, use of bicycles, and land sharing and exchange arrangements for growing vegetables.[82] Significantly, this is one of several movements aiming to reverse precisely those features of scientific, technological and economic change interpreted as synonymous with progress. Undertakings that not so long ago would have been derided as nostalgic or

80 Takano's ethnography of similar initiatives in Igloolik found that the projects helped young Inuk value country food and gave them confidence in an Inuk identity and a knowledge of their history. The wellbeing of those with little to do in the settlements other than drink and take drugs also improved. See Takano, 'Connections with the land: land-skills courses in Igloolik, Nunavut'.

81 Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 46.

82 See Hopkins, *The Transition Handbook*. See also the Landshare movement, championed by Hugh Fernley-Whittingstall, www.landshare.net (accessed 22 Jan. 2013).

utopian are being embraced by growing numbers of people, and may help reverse many problems that have arisen from modern lifestyles.

In spite of the formidable powers of states and corporations, many of us know that the present holds no unique claims to wisdom or the good life and that ceasing some of the activities that were supposed to increase our yields of everything from food to happiness can reinvigorate diverse ways of living and being. For example, under the inspiration of first-wave environmentalists like Rachel Carson, the cessation of spraying crops with DDT resulted in the reappearance of birds of prey like peregrines, eagles and osprey that had become endangered.[83] These have in turn increased biodiversity and made for more varied human engagements with food and nature. Many people and communities across the globe are taking action to lessen dependence on some of the poisons that flew under the flag of modernity and, by doing so, restore older ideas and practices.

Indigenous peoples are doing this after their traditions were attacked as part of the establishing of settler societies. Today, however, the lack of a materialist and growth-oriented approach to nature in indigenous (and indeed, other) societies can be seen more positively. The emphasis on the interconnections between people and nature is closer to the emerging scientific consensus about what is needed to address the various environmental problems we face. The increasingly questionable idea of nature as a machine, useful primarily as a source of marketable commodities, makes indigenous peoples' philosophies more persuasive sources of human knowledge. As Nancy Turner put it:

> Even if Nature worked like a well-run machine – and we know that it is much more complex than this – we have been demolishing the machine without keeping track of the pieces, or in some cases without even keeping the pieces. Any attempt to rebuild it is bound to be defective.[84]

The aim of indigenous peoples' land-based rebuilding is not a literal return to the more sustainable, yet often difficult, lives before the establishment of settler societies, but the creation of alternative futures that can build upon rather than erase their own inheritances.

Land-based revitalisation is itself a *contemporary* idea and contemporary indigenous peoples can help themselves and others through keeping ideas and practices alive. By doing so, they are engaged in a kind of civil resistance. The United Nations now recognises cultural revitalisation as a human right and has incorporated it into the 2006 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Both protect the transmission of unique cultures, practices

83 See Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, p. 203.

84 Turner, *The Earth's Blanket*, p. 145. See also the popular advocacy of reintroducing children to nature in Louv, *Last Child in the Woods*.

and knowledge in the context of revitalisation.[85] These international standards may bring hope and may be used in future political struggles. However, it is their own actions that will decide how people deal with the wreckage that colonialism has so evidently made in so many indigenous communities, and whether they are capable of facing the uphill battles needed to choose a path consistent with the values of their own societies. While the forces ranged against this are dauntingly powerful, grassroots projects like the bison reintroduction schemes, the Hunter Support Program, the Tohono O'odham seed recovery initiative, Giant's walks and simple acts of affirmation linking the indigenous person to the lands promise more understanding of 'a world you do not know' and a more culturally diverse future.

85 The full texts of these documents are at www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf and http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001325/132540e.pdf (both accessed 7 Oct. 2012).

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A World You Do Not Know explores the wilful ignorance demonstrated by North America's settlers in establishing their societies on lands already occupied by indigenous nations. Using the Innu of Labrador-Quebec as one powerful contemporary example, Colin Samson shows how the processes of displacement and assimilation today resemble those of the 19th century as the state and corporations scramble for Innu lands. While nation building, capitalism and industrialisation are shown to have undermined indigenous peoples' wellbeing, the values that guide societies like the Innu are very much alive. The book ends by showcasing how ideas and land-based activities of indigenous groups in Canada and the US are being maintained and recast as ways to address the attack on cultural diversity and move forward to more positive futures.

Cover image: Jimmie Durham, 'We Have Made Progress...', 1991, mixed media. Photograph by Philippe De Gobert.

Innu walkers at conclusion of 250km walk in support of cultural revitalisation. Photo: Alex Andrew.

"This is a powerful, articulate and troubling book about many kinds of poison. It is a journey to the devastation that colonial history has brought to indigenous peoples around the world, from land seizure to transformation of diet, from losses of resources to the loss of self … a book of immense importance.

Hugh Brody, author of Maps and Dreams, Canada Research Professor, University of the Fraser Valley

"This is a thoughtful book, highlighting the arrogance with which we approach indigenous ways of knowing and being, while also highlighting the continued resistance of indigenous peoples to western colonisation.

David MacDonald, Professor of Political Science, University of Guelph

"A World You Do Not Know should be read by everyone interested in Native American societies and their political and economic struggles ... it represents the best in engaged scholarship that seeks to renew a dialogue with indigenous peoples that is a little less unjust and one-sided.

Richard A. Wilson, Gladstein Chair of Human Rights, University of Connecticut

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