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Arts and Heritage

OUR FOCUS THUS FAR in Volume 3 has been measures to correct disparities between the quality of life of Aboriginal people and that enjoyed by other Canadians. In this chapter we discuss policy to affirm and support the cultural identity and expression of Aboriginal peoples. We begin by recalling the framework for considering cultural issues established in Volume 1 and the effects of past assimilation policies on self-expression and intercultural relations. We then present the rationale for action to support cultural expression before turning to the specific areas in which such action is required.

In Volume 1, Chapter 15, we described traditional Aboriginal culture as a way of life shaped by intimate relationships with the land, reinforced by a world view attributing life and spirit to all elements of the biosphere, and expressed in ethically ordered behaviours in social, economic and political spheres. We also described how contemporary Aboriginal people reach into their traditions for wisdom and strength to cope with the diverse responsibilities of a modern environment.

Culture, in this view, is dynamic, grounded in ethics and values that provide a practical guide and a moral compass enabling people to adapt to changing circumstances. The traditional wisdom at the core of this culture may transcend time and circumstance, but the way it is applied differs from one situation to another. It is the role of the family — that is, the extended network of kin and community — to demonstrate how traditional teachings are applied in everyday life.

In Volume 1 we discussed in some detail the interventions of the Canadian state that interrupted the transmission of culture in Aboriginal nations: the imposition of the *Indian Act*, residential school policies, and relocation of communities. The harshly assimilative policies of the past have been abandoned, but school curricula, to which virtually all Aboriginal young people are exposed, have only begun to reflect facets of Aboriginal life. Radio and television now reach into the remotest Aboriginal communities and pull Aboriginal young people toward a world view in which urban, non-Aboriginal ways are held up as models.

In our special report on suicide, we cited culture stress as a major factor in the vulnerability of Aboriginal young people to self-destructive behaviour. We linked this phenomenon to the cumulative impact of assimilative policies of the past and the failure of public institutions to reflect to Aboriginal people positive images of themselves and their cultures:

In cultures under stress, the smooth operation of society and the sense of life that its members can be seriously impaired. Culturally transmitted norms that once provided meaning and guided individual behaviour become ineffectual as rules for living or sustaining relationships, and the rules themselves fall into disrepute. People lose confidence in what they know and in their own value as human beings. They may feel abandoned and bewildered and unsure about whether their lives have any real meaning or purpose.¹

As the history of Aboriginal experience over the last century demonstrates, living in a culture under stress does not lead people to abandon their identity and warmly embrace the culture of the dominant society, which is seen as the source of distress. In fact, young people in particular are likely to be caught between worlds, detached from the values of their culture of origin but not integrated into the alternative system. The confusion of these alienated young people adds to the dysfunction of their communities.

We have argued for the adoption of mutual recognition as a basic principle in a renewed relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada, considering not only the negative results of culture stress but also the positive value of a firm cultural base to support participation in a liberal democratic society. The protection and enhancement of civic participation and individual freedom and responsibility have always been central concerns of liberal democracies. However, it has not always been recognized that these goals can be achieved only when people are members of viable cultures that provide a supportive context for individual participation and autonomy. People can be active and responsible members of their communities only if they have a sense of their own worth and the conviction that what they say and do in both the public and the private sphere is capable of making a significant contribution.

The legacy of our colonial history bears heavily upon Aboriginal people in the form of culture stress. It also distorts the perceptions of non-Aboriginal people, sustaining false assumptions and a readiness to relegate Aboriginal people to the margins of Canadian society. To free ourselves of this legacy we need effective means of communication within and between Aboriginal nations to allow Aboriginal people to reclaim their history and tell it in diverse forums, especially for the benefit of the youth, who are forging their adult identities. Equally important, we need channels of communication between cultures, so that Aboriginal people can communicate in authentic ways who they are and how their cultural traditions continue to be significant for themselves and for society as a whole.

Myths and misconceptions about Aboriginal identity and culture have found a home in the popular imagination. They will be dislodged only through dialogue with skilful and authentic Aboriginal communicators. The issues discussed in this chapter are therefore fundamental to achieving the mutual respect and sharing proposed as the basis for a new relationship. Knowledge of one another and shared wisdom are essential to a true partnership of peoples.

Elsewhere in this report we have recommended ways to enhance communication within Aboriginal nations and between nations and cultures. In Volume 1, Chapter 7, we recommended publication of a multi-volume history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. In Volume 2, Chapter 3, we set out a process of communication and nation building to knit together old ties and solidify new ones, to adapt traditional practices of leadership and governance to today's requirements of self-government. In the chapters on treaties and lands and resources in Volume 2, we spoke of the need to educate Canadians about the role of treaties in the formation of Canada and the fundamental relationship that Aboriginal peoples maintain with the land. In Chapter 5 of this volume, we describe practical ways in which a cultural base can enrich and enhance education. In Volume 5, Chapter 4, we propose a detailed program of public education to add depth and commitment to a renewed relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

In the present chapter, we give particular attention to the cultural institutions and programs necessary to

- identify and protect historical and sacred sites and to safeguard Aboriginal heritage from misappropriation and misrepresentation;
- conserve and revitalize Aboriginal languages;
- enhance the presence of Aboriginal people and cultures in the media; and
- support the literary and artistic expression of Aboriginal people.

1. Cultural Heritage

The cultures of Aboriginal peoples are intimately linked to the land, not just to land in a generic sense but also to the particular places given to them, according to tradition, for sustenance and safekeeping. On these lands they have made their home since time immemorial, and there the bones of their ancestors are at rest. The events of history are marked by particular features of the landscape.

Traditions of wisdom and spirituality are represented in objects dedicated to ceremonial use, which have taken on sacred significance. Territories, family lineages and entitlements are recorded in stories and songs and represented in masks and crests.

As they gradually lost control of their lands and other elements of their environment, Aboriginal people became separated from many of these symbols of history and culture. Protection of historical and sacred sites, recovery of human remains so that proper burial can be arranged, repatriation of artifacts that are the private property or sacred inheritance of particular families and communities — these are essential to the spiritual health of nations and communities. Concerns about appropriation of cultural property and uses that violate the rules of propriety in the culture in which the property originates extend beyond material objects and include intellectual property as well.

1.1 Sacred and Historical Sites

The land was considered a mother, the giver of life. On the land were many sacred places and sites where religious ceremonies both collective and individual were visited and used. These include the mountains, rivers, hills, rocks, and lakes. The land, in addition to the plant and animal life it supported, provided sites for vision quests, burials, and places to plant special types of plants that were very important in the religious life of the Blackfoot, such as tobacco. It also provided material such as ochre used in painting and religious ceremonies, and sacred rocks used to mark sacred places such as medicine wheel and burial sites.²

This description of a particular people's relationship to the land applies to many Aboriginal cultures in Canada. To Aboriginal people, identity is deeply entwined with territory, the territory that has fostered their culture and ways of life.³ A more detailed exploration of Aboriginal peoples' relationship to the land and concepts of land ownership can be found in Volume 2, Chapter 4 on lands and resources and in Volume 4, Chapter 3 on elders' perspectives. Because of this deep relationship with the land, the control of sacred sites, burial grounds and archaeological sites is important to Aboriginal people.

Territory itself is important to Aboriginal nations, but certain areas hold special significance. Ancestral burial grounds or sites for spiritual ceremonies are considered sacred land. Other areas are significant for their role in the history of peoples — for example, The Forks in Winnipeg and Batoche on the North Saskatchewan River, which are important in Métis history. Other sites are reminders of battles marking boundaries between nations and of treaties concluded to maintain peace. In the north, inuksuit, the great stone markers erected by Inuit to guide hunters across the treeless landscape, are monuments to Inuit life in their ancient homelands.

It is not uncommon for sites to hold both historical and sacred significance. This is true of the weirs at the Atherley Narrows, near Orillia, a community in central Ontario. Weirs were a network of fences that 'herded' fish to an open area where they were netted or speared. Carbon dating shows that the weirs are about 4,500 years old, which means construction began in 2500 BC. They were part of a traditional fishing camp where the Ojibwa, Mississauga and other nations would meet to socialize and conduct healing ceremonies. The area, unique in North America and possibly the world, is of considerable historical interest to the Ojibwa in the area and to archaeologists. But there are other considerations:

More important to the site is the spirit that moved the site. The power that was in Mnjikaning [traditional name for the Ontario community of Rama] that moved the ceremonies, that made it such a clean place, such a harmonious place. It is that spirit we cannot lose....If we could ever get hold of the place, if we could ever reclaim it the power that would come from that place, the healing that would come from that place would be astounding.

Rob Belfry
Ogemawahj Tribal Council
Orillia, Ontario, 14 May 1993

Mr. Belfry's remarks convey a tone of urgency because, at the time he was speaking, the weirs were in danger of destruction. Dredging carried out years ago created currents that were causing the site to collapse. As of October 1995, negotiations to protect the site were continuing.⁴

Historical boards have limited authority to protect heritage sites from development and, in some cases, may not understand the importance of a site to an Aboriginal community. Aboriginal groups, unfortunately, often have little influence in deciding priorities. This situation exemplifies the problems Aboriginal people often experience in trying to practise their traditional spirituality today. All too often, Aboriginal people's desire or need for access to traditional sites for traditional activities has led to conflict with officials:

All along the foothills, ceremonial leaders are spiritually guided to conduct ceremonies at specific sites, some of which are off-reserve, located on provincial or federal Crown lands. Our elders are being denied full access by the discretion of park superintendents, with the excuse that fires are not permitted. The national parks make us pay, like common tourists, where at one time we were able to travel freely in the parks.

Alvin Manitopyes
Representative, Plains Cree people and Environmental Committee
Assembly of First Nations
Calgary, Alberta, 26 May 1993

The Commission also heard of Aboriginal people encountering problems when they tried to enter sites to pick berries or gather traditional medicines. In many cases, these people had first visited the sites with their parents, grandparents or great-grandparents.

A final threat to the integrity of sacred and historical sites comes not from development or legislation but rather from archaeological endeavours. The search for historically and culturally significant objects often leads archaeologists to burial grounds. Aboriginal people have asked that these objects be left in the ground and that graves not be disturbed out of respect for the dead and in recognition that the burial grounds remain the collective property of Aboriginal people. Concern about respect for Aboriginal interests in collective property is not limited to burial grounds. Aboriginal people have become involved only recently in the management of petroglyph (rock carving) sites and the interpretation of their significance. Aboriginal people believe it is important to document history, and in many cases they are willing to work with mainstream professionals to do so. However, control over excavation is within provincial and territorial jurisdiction. In some jurisdictions, Aboriginal groups are consulted as a matter of courtesy before excavation permits are issued, and in Nunavut any excavation permits will require Inuit approval. Generally, however, no consistent policies or laws are in place to ensure that Aboriginal people control this central element of their heritage.

In Volume 2, Chapter 4, we recommended that sites of sacred or historical significance should be considered in the reallocation of lands. For lands under the primary control of Aboriginal nations, those nations will make decisions about protection and use. For lands under the joint jurisdiction of the Crown and Aboriginal nations, protection and access can form part of co-management agreements. Where sacred or heritage sites are part of lands under primary jurisdiction of the Crown or subject to fee simple interests or ownership rights, then Aboriginal access and involvement in management will be negotiated.

There are a few concerns not addressed in these recommendations for future jurisdiction over lands. The first is a question of what can be done now. The new agreements will take time to conclude, but some initiatives can begin immediately. Indeed, given encroaching development and natural processes such as erosion that can threaten significant sites, initiatives cannot wait until agreements are concluded.

A necessary first step is for Aboriginal people and communities to identify and assess the condition of sites that are historically and culturally important to them. The legislation on historic sites must be reviewed to ensure recognition and protection of Aboriginal interests, and interim measures must be taken to protect significant sites that are endangered.

Some sacred and historical sites will be resources for all Canadians. When Aboriginal history and heritage are being represented in areas outside Aboriginal jurisdiction, Aboriginal people must be involved in designating the sites, designing interpretive materials, and managing the resource. It is also only fair that Aboriginal people share in the economic benefits deriving from historical sites.

There are examples of effective collaboration on these matters between Aboriginal people and public authorities. The Wanuskewin Heritage Park, which opened near Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, in 1992, is a good example. The project was in development for 10 years. Representatives from all five Aboriginal language groups drawn from across Saskatchewan took part in the planning. Aboriginal cultural values were respected throughout the project, and Aboriginal participants were full partners in a consensual decision-making process. The interpretive stories told at Wanuskewin are those that First Nations want told, and they are relayed by First Nations people themselves. The Commission points to this park as an example of appropriate Aboriginal involvement in a heritage project.

Finally, consideration must be given to heritage and sacred sites for Aboriginal people living in urban areas. We address this unique situation in Volume 4, Chapter 7. Land, together with the ritual, ceremony and traditions associated with it, is particularly important to the renewal and retention of Aboriginal identity. Support may therefore mean setting aside a parcel of land in urban areas as a sacred place for Aboriginal populations in cities.

1.2 Sacred and Secular Artifacts

Aboriginal people are seeking the return of artifacts held by museums and collectors as one way of reasserting control over how their cultures are depicted. These objects are the physical records of history and the physical manifestations of culture. They help define Aboriginal identity:

Traditionally, Aboriginal cultural knowledge is transmitted and documented primarily through the oral tradition, but also through such things as dramatic productions, dance performances, and they are documented on such artifacts as wampum belts, birch bark scrolls, totem poles, petroglyphs and masks. This is the Aboriginal way of transmitting knowledge and of recording information and history.

Greg Young-Ing
Vancouver, British Columbia, 4 June 1993

Items taken from Aboriginal people and communities over the years may be secular or sacred. Secular objects might include tools, hunting equipment and clothing — articles of everyday use. Some objects have sacred significance, such as medicine bundles, which contain objects associated with visions and are opened only on ceremonial occasions. In the case of sacred objects, the only appropriate action is repatriation to the nation to which they belong. The same is true of human remains, which hold both secular and sacred importance. Other objects integral to the history and identity of certain nations, communities or families should also be repatriated.

In many cases, Aboriginal people consider the term ‘artifact’, with its connotations of dusty relics tagged and catalogued, inappropriate. Sacred objects such as medicine bundles and totems still speak to the people; they are still used in traditional ceremonies.

In 1979, two large collections of potlatch regalia were returned to the communities of Alert Bay and Cape Mudge in British Columbia. They were housed in museums built specifically to receive them and financed by the federal government. Repatriation can be a deeply spiritual and powerful experience, as indicated in the Peigan Nation response to repatriation of their cultural materials:

When the Glenbow Museum allowed the return of these holy bundles and articles, I do not believe they realized their contribution to the total existence of Native people....We do not use the holy bundles; they use us. Our only responsibility is to show them reverence. We continually ask for their mercy and guidance. And because they are as alive as you and I...I now live with more confidence in the holistic development of my people.⁵

Some of the objects currently stored in museums were obtained through purchase; some were stolen. Legislation also played a role: laws were enacted to suppress religious practices, such as the potlatch ceremony of west coast nations, and items with spiritual import were often confiscated. Currently, in most provinces, ownership of archaeological material on both private and public land is asserted by the Crown.

The concerns of Aboriginal people centre on two issues: the illegitimate acquisition of these artifacts (even when obtained through legal means), and the inappropriate display and use of cultural items.

In 1988, the Lubicon Lake Cree organized a boycott of The Spirit Sings, the cultural showcase of the Winter Olympics in Calgary. Museums were asked not to lend objects for the display, and many people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, refused to attend. The boycott did a great deal to raise awareness of the issues, and as a result of the conflict, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the Canadian Museums Association (CMA) formed a task force with a mandate to “develop an ethical framework and strategies for Aboriginal Nations to represent their history and culture in concert with cultural institutions”.⁶ The task force report sets out guiding principles, policies and recommendations on repatriation and calls for the creation of new relationships to serve the needs of Aboriginal people and the interests of Canadian cultural and heritage institutions. (See Appendix 6A to this chapter for excerpts from the report.)

Although some change is under way, much remains to be done. Collections of Aboriginal artifacts, collection notes, and sound and photographic archives in museums are often not fully inventoried. Aboriginal people cannot easily gain access to these materials or, in some cases, even get information about them. As with sacred and historical sites, establishing inventories is an essential first step in developing repatriation policies and collaborating with Aboriginal peoples in the conservation, display and eventual return of heritage materials.

Of course, Canadian museums do not have a monopoly on Aboriginal artifacts. Some of the oldest collections are concentrated in museums and private collections elsewhere, particularly in Europe. Some Aboriginal groups have made informal inventories of European holdings or are aware of specific objects they wish to have returned. This might be one area where Aboriginal people and Canadian museums can work together to locate such items and request their return.

The *Cultural Property Export and Import Act* has been of some assistance in repatriating items.⁷ Under the provisions of the act, however, an Aboriginal group seeking the return of an object or prevention of its export must first have the support of an established cultural institution. The Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board may help qualified institutions to purchase artifacts by granting or lending up to two-thirds of the cost. A number of Aboriginal-controlled institutions, such as the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ontario, are eligible to participate in this program. The grounds for determining whether a particular cultural item should be repatriated, however, are relatively narrow and do not always address the needs of First Peoples.

The repatriation of cultural objects has also been restrained by the limited capacity of Aboriginal cultural institutions to receive and house them. There are currently 72 cultural education centres in or close to reserves and Inuit communities across Canada. A few have museums, but most do not.

As of October 1995, there are two federal programs that support Aboriginal museums. The department of Indian affairs provides some support through the Cultural Education Centres Program. Support is also available through the Aboriginal Museums Assistance Program, part of Heritage Canada's general museum assistance program. Most applicants are band councils, although cultural education centres and friendship centres are eligible. Some provincial and territorial programs may also be a source of support for Aboriginal cultural institutions, but funding is usually quite limited and available only on a project-by-project basis.

The capacity of Aboriginal nations and communities to receive, conserve and display repatriated items and participate in the joint management of museums must be developed. This will require physical facilities, whether for displays in cultural education centres or for temporary or travelling exhibits.

For Aboriginal people living in cities, friendship centres may be the best place to locate heritage displays and activities. There are 113 Aboriginal friendship centres operating in urban centres, delivering a wide variety of services to help Aboriginal people adjust to the urban environment and to improve their quality of life in general.⁸ Although the centres provide a number of cultural programs, there is limited interest in establishing museums at present. This is mainly because of a chronic lack of resources, but also because of the difficulty of doing justice to the many different Aboriginal cultures that coexist in urban settings. Our recommendation for a new urban Aboriginal cultural education program addresses this issue (see Volume 4, Chapter 7).

Even where Aboriginal museums do exist, they often operate on different assumptions from those of mainstream institutions. The difference relates to the perceived role of a museum in preserving heritage:

We [Secwepemc Cultural Education Society] have been told that our curriculum development, language and publishing program are not museum functions and cannot be reflected in our budget for funding purposes. These discrepancies between our native concept of heritage and the established form will continue to cause concern as Indian and Inuit museums are set up.⁹

This philosophical difference extends to the use of traditional objects. Because of a different perception of why objects are important to culture, culturally significant materials stored in a museum may actually be used by community members.¹⁰ Wampum belts held as cultural artifacts by a mainstream museum may be used in the Aboriginal community to validate claims or recall details of agreements. To Aboriginal people, labelled artifacts are often 'living' items relevant to the contemporary life of the individual, community and nation. There needs to be a reconciliation between museum policies and the traditional use of artifacts by Aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal people are not calling for museums to divest themselves of all Aboriginal artifacts. In the AFN/CMA report, *Turning the Page*, there was general recognition that collections and the museums that care for them can contribute to public education and

awareness of the contributions of Aboriginal people.¹¹ In particular, items that have no sacred value, such as tools, can be kept and displayed with community consent. As well, objects that cannot be traced back to a specific family, community or nation of origin can remain in a museum's collection. Where repatriation is called for, however, museums must respect the wishes of the Aboriginal community.

The programs that may support repatriation are limited by a number of factors. Even where there is program funding for cultural education centres, capital funding to establish physical facilities is generally unavailable. In many communities, few cultural materials remain; the very word 'museum' is often a reminder of what has been lost to Aboriginal people, not what has been preserved for their use.¹² Above all, Aboriginal people have so many urgent day-to-day needs that establishing a community-controlled museum, although important and desirable, is often not the top priority.

This makes it all the more important that Aboriginal people have access to mainstream museums and the items they hold. Aboriginal people must be involved in cataloguing museum holdings and consulted on appropriate modes of display and interpretation. This provides an opportunity for non-Aboriginal professionals to gain more insight into Aboriginal culture. Further, these collections must be accessible to Aboriginal people. Here we do not simply mean an open-door policy on the part of museums, inviting Aboriginal people to visit the displays. Rather, any facility that benefits from the display of Aboriginal culture should put something back into the Aboriginal community. This could mean bringing all or part of the exhibit directly to Aboriginal communities. Such initiatives could be coupled with workshops and information sessions on museum skills and careers.

Ultimately, many objects will be returned to Aboriginal people and communities. Cultural institutions controlled by Aboriginal people allow communities to develop trained professionals to staff the institutions, enhance local economic development and, perhaps most important, give Aboriginal people control over their own culture and heritage.

The initial steps in this movement will involve capacity building within the Aboriginal community, including urban dwellers. This provides an opportunity for mutually beneficial co-operative arrangements between heritage institutions and Aboriginal communities. Many larger Canadian museums offer training and internship programs, and some universities and other educational institutions offer academic courses in subjects related to the management of cultural materials. These courses should be made more accessible to Aboriginal people through sponsorship programs provided by the museums.

Training programs can be developed co-operatively between museums and other cultural institutions and Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal people can assist in cataloguing, interpreting and displaying materials and participate in other museum activities. While Aboriginal trainees learn about museum technology, museum staff will be able to learn more about Aboriginal people and culture. These kinds of training ventures should be

flexible; details can be worked out between the museums and communities directly. Such co-operative ventures can extend to mounting exhibits, displays and other cultural events, for example, 'living culture' such as traditional games, dances and ceremonies. Financial assistance, where needed, should be made available through federal, provincial and territorial employment and training and heritage programs.

Generally, museum training programs that reflect the needs and world views of Aboriginal peoples should be established in co-operation with museums and universities. A survey of existing programs could be undertaken by the Canadian Museums Association in consultation with Aboriginal groups, and the information could then be used to help ensure that future programs are developed and co-ordinated in a culturally appropriate manner.

In other chapters of our report, we have set out strategies for human resources development, emphasizing needs assessment, comprehensive strategy development, setting targets, and monitoring progress. In heritage conservation, as in other areas, capacity building must be part of long-range planning if Aboriginal nations wish to maintain their cultural heritage (see Volume 2, Chapters 3 and 5, and Chapters 3 and 5 in this volume).

In many Aboriginal societies there are no strict criteria for determining which objects are sacred and which are secular. An ornate carving may have been made as a gift or just to pass the time. By the same token, an ordinary stone may have been blessed in the past for use in special ceremonies. In any debate over the sacred or secular nature of a given object, Aboriginal representatives from the community of origin must be involved in making the distinction.

It is for this reason that the indiscriminate replication of Aboriginal artifacts can, in some cases, offend cultural propriety. In other cases, it violates the accuracy of reproduction or interpretation. In most cases, it ignores the legitimate interest of Aboriginal people in sharing the economic benefits from the sale of reproductions of historical items. Protective measures are needed to guard against this kind of misrepresentation. This issue borders on the subject of intellectual property rights, discussed in the next section.

1.3 Intellectual Property

Intellectual property rights should allow Aboriginal people to control representations of culture and knowledge that belong to individuals or collectives. There has been controversy recently about copyright on oral traditions, legends and songs collected for publication. The search for herbal remedies known to Aboriginal healers continues, and traditional designs are being incorporated in high fashion products. All of these activities raise questions about the appropriate means of protecting Aboriginal intellectual property.

In asserting claims to their traditional knowledge, Aboriginal people are not trying to retreat from the world or make their culture inaccessible to others. In fact, the opposite is

true. Aboriginal people are willing to share the wealth of their cultures and are anxious to have their knowledge of the land and environment used for the benefit of all. At the same time, they want to ensure that their knowledge is used appropriately and their identity portrayed authentically. They also want fair remuneration when their intellectual and cultural property is turned to appropriate commercial use. In other words, Aboriginal people want to protect their intellectual property rights. In the words of D. Soyini Madison, “How we are represented by others shapes how we represent ourselves, what is real to us and the worlds we imagine; and images and representations are a formidable culture force”.¹³

Profit drives commercial exploitation of intellectual property. But financial issues are only part of Aboriginal peoples’ concern. Loss of control of traditional ideas and knowledge may lead not only to commercialization but also to the identification of sacred places by those who do not appreciate their significance, resulting in intrusions on customs and beliefs. Revealing spiritual knowledge to outsiders can destroy its sacredness or twist the meaning of teachings; inappropriate imitation of a community’s cultural practices, such as that indulged in by some new age groups, is a blatant misrepresentation of Aboriginal culture, weakening the teachings in the eyes of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

The cultural heritage of Aboriginal peoples should be protected, and the terms of protection must be consonant with their needs. This issue runs through discussions of Aboriginal heritage and culture:

There ought to be developed an Aboriginal copyright law or a mechanism parallel to the Canadian copyright law, a law that would be respected and upheld by all levels of government....After all, these [are] the measures that Canada has undertaken....They were afraid of encroachment of the American culture into Canadian culture. So I think we should learn from this and take measures to protect our own Native culture.

Sharon
Stoney Creek, British Columbia
18 June 1992

However, existing intellectual property law is inherently unsuited to protecting the traditional knowledge and cultural heritage of Aboriginal peoples. It is premised on balancing a creator’s economic interest in his or her work with the larger public interest in promoting the use of ideas to increase society’s general store of knowledge. The present law seeks to achieve this by protecting rights for a defined period of time, after which the material enters the public domain. In legal terms, this means that almost all traditional Aboriginal culture and knowledge is already considered to be in the public domain and therefore beyond protection. In the few cases where the present law might apply, protection would be short-lived. This system is antithetical to the community-based cultural heritage of Aboriginal peoples in which there is often no individual economic interest.

In addition, the existing intellectual property regime recognizes rights only in individuals, not communities or entire societies. This too prevents protection of traditional knowledge and Aboriginal cultural heritage, since they have no individual owner. While artistic styles such as woodland painting or Inuit carving cannot be copyrighted, there should be protection from imitative work that trades on the reputation of Aboriginal art and artists. Finally, the existing law does not recognize Aboriginal peoples' understanding of the sacredness of knowledge. Copyright law is not broad enough to protect a song or a prayer that has a spiritual origin, the use of which should be restricted but over which individuals are reluctant to assert ownership.

Only a new approach and new legal framework can address the need to protect the collective intellectual and cultural rights of Aboriginal peoples. This need is not unique to Canada. As early as 1963, the legal vulnerability of Aboriginal arts and design was a topic at international meetings. There was an effort to fill the gap, led by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which administer, respectively, the Berne Copyright Convention and the Universal Copyright Convention. Their efforts culminated in a model statute, prepared by WIPO, that in 1985 was recommended by the executive committee of the Berne Convention and the intergovernmental copyright committee of the Universal Copyright Convention as a basis for national legislation by member-states of both organizations.¹⁴ The recommendation has not been acted upon by the Canadian government.

In its brief to the Commission, the Assembly of First Nations listed three main objectives relating to Aboriginal people and cultural heritage:

- to gain and maintain control over cultural objects, archival data and human remains held in museums;
- to participate fully in all matters pertaining to the history and culture of First Nations people; and
- to operate First Nations museums and cultural centres.¹⁵

These objectives capture the priorities expressed by Inuit and Métis people as well, and we have used them as guiding principles in developing our recommendations.

Although the process of repatriating cultural materials has barely begun, the path ahead is clear. The future relationship between Aboriginal peoples, their cultural institutions and Canadian museums will revolve not only around repatriation but also other collaborative efforts to preserve and protect Aboriginal heritage. Repatriating sacred objects and human remains is a priority, but inventory work is needed before this can proceed.

With regard to portable items, such as sacred and secular artifacts, museums and other cultural institutions must ensure that Aboriginal people are fully involved in all aspects of disposition, display and representation of Aboriginal heritage. Indeed, the Canadian

Museums Association agreed to this in principle in *Turning the Page*, the task force report on museums and Aboriginal peoples (see Appendix 6A).

Recommendations

The Commission recommends that

3.6.1

Federal, provincial and territorial governments collaborate with Aboriginal organizations and communities to prepare a comprehensive inventory of historical and sacred sites, involving elders as expert advisers, before negotiations on designation of lands in accordance with our recommendations in Volume 2, Chapter 4.

3.6.2

Federal, provincial and territorial governments review legislation affecting sacred and historical sites to ensure that Aboriginal organizations and communities have access to urgent remedies to prevent or arrest damage to significant heritage sites such as the Mnjikaning Fish Fence, whether they be threatened by human actions or natural processes.

3.6.3

Federal, provincial and territorial governments in collaboration with Aboriginal organizations review legislation affecting historical and sacred sites and the conservation and display of cultural artifacts to ensure that

(a) Aboriginal interests are recognized in designing, protecting, developing and managing sites significant to Aboriginal culture and heritage and in conserving, repatriating and displaying Aboriginal cultural artifacts;

(b) Aboriginal people are fully involved in planning and managing heritage activities relevant to their cultures; and

(c) Aboriginal people share the economic benefits that may accrue from appropriate development of relevant heritage sites and display of cultural artifacts.

3.6.4

Museums and cultural institutions adopt ethical guidelines governing all aspects of collection, disposition, display and interpretation of artifacts related to Aboriginal culture and heritage, including the following:

(a) involving Aboriginal people in drafting, endorsing and implementing the guidelines;

- (b) creating inventories of relevant holdings and making such inventories freely accessible to Aboriginal people;
- (c) cataloguing and designating appropriate use and display of relevant holdings;
- (d) repatriating, on request, objects that are sacred or integral to the history and continuity of particular nations and communities;
- (e) returning human remains to the family, community or nation of origin, on request, or consulting with Aboriginal advisers on appropriate disposition, where remains cannot be associated with a particular nation; and
- (f) ensuring that Aboriginal people and communities have effective access to cultural education and training opportunities available through museums and cultural institutions.

3.6.5

Aboriginal, federal, provincial and territorial governments, in collaboration with Aboriginal elders, artists, educators and youth, develop and implement joint strategies to ensure that Aboriginal people have

- (a) effective access to cultural and heritage education;
- (b) resources to develop facilities for display of cultural artifacts; and
- (c) means to participate in exchanges and joint undertakings with museums and cultural institutions.

3.6.6

Aboriginal, federal, provincial and territorial governments include heritage research, conservation and presentation in the list of skills identified as priorities in building the capacity to implement self-government.

The global economy knows few boundaries. An Inuit image can be used by a souvenir maker in Taiwan and the resulting product sold in Alaska, Moscow and Toronto. A distorted version of a Haida song can be recorded in Denver, Colorado, and broadcast to France and Senegal via German satellite. While individual countries have jurisdiction over the protection of intellectual property within their own borders, international protection requires international agreement and co-operation. This is particularly true of Aboriginal cultural rights. Canada should enact legislation affirming the obligations to Aboriginal peoples it has assumed under international human rights instruments. (See Volume 2, Chapter 3, and particularly Recommendation 2.3.1 on the support of international initiatives and enactment of related domestic legislation.) It should also, in collaboration with Indigenous peoples, work through international bodies for the further protection of Aboriginal intellectual and cultural property rights. In particular, the goal

should be the implementation of an international regime that recognizes that Indigenous cultural rights are collective, and not based primarily on economic interest.

Even within Canada's borders, much remains to be done. Governments, consumer groups, manufacturers and retailers associations, and Aboriginal groups should cooperate in educating and informing their members and the public at large about the difference between authentic and imitation Aboriginal arts and crafts. Governments should carry out a comprehensive review of labelling regulations, consumer protection legislation, controls on misleading advertising, and import-export regulations to ensure that Aboriginal peoples' heritage and culture are legally protected from misappropriation and misrepresentation.

Any new policies or legislation should be established in consultation with Aboriginal people. These new policies should recognize society- or community-based ownership of cultural property, not just individual ownership. They must encompass traditional knowledge, which under the present legal regime is generally considered in the public domain. Aboriginal people should have the authority to preserve the integrity of their cultural knowledge by determining who has access to it and how it can be used. Other countries, notably Australia and the United States, have adopted legislation that begins to address these needs.¹⁶

Aboriginal people should define the content of their indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage. One of the primary tasks of Aboriginal museums and cultural institutions should be documenting this knowledge and conserving it for their communities. Aboriginal people should also be supported in developing their knowledge for commercial purposes when it is appropriate and they choose to do so. When this knowledge creates benefits for others, policy and legislation should ensure that Aboriginal people share those benefits. A thorough legislative review is in order.

Recommendation

The Commission recommends that

3.6.7

The federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, review its legislation on the protection of intellectual property to ensure that Aboriginal interests and perspectives, in particular collective interests, are adequately protected.

The scientific community and the education system also have roles in ensuring that Aboriginal knowledge is recognized as legitimate and worthy of protection. Aboriginal knowledge should be incorporated in academic programs. While it is obvious to many that Aboriginal knowledge can inform such fields as ecology and the environment, it is no less true for other sciences, history and the arts. In our chapters on education (Volume 3, Chapter 5) and elders' perspectives (Volume 4, Chapter 3), we illustrate a number of ways to incorporate Aboriginal knowledge and philosophy in mainstream education.

Research systems and practices should enable Aboriginal communities to exercise control over information relating to themselves and their heritage. Research projects should be managed jointly with Aboriginal people, and communities being studied should benefit from training and employment opportunities generated by the research. Above all, it is vital that Aboriginal peoples have direct input in developing and defining research practices and projects related to them. To act otherwise is to repeat that familiar pattern of decisions being made for Aboriginal people by those who presume to know what is best for them. (This Commission, with the advice of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal researchers, formulated Ethical Guidelines for Research to guide our research effort. The guidelines appear as an appendix to Volume 5.)

Knowledge is not static. Neither is culture. They grow and change in an ever-evolving environment. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures have changed and will continue to change as a result of contact and interaction. Aboriginal people know that growth can come from adapting other peoples' ideas and knowledge to their own needs. Growth can also result from re-exploring their own knowledge. Aboriginal people want to share what they know and create. But they want their communities and knowledge to be respected and accorded the same rights, in their own terms and cultural context, accorded other Canadians in the area of intellectual and cultural property. They want a relationship that is beneficial to all.

2. Language

2.1 The Importance of Language

We have defined culture as the whole way of life of a people (see Volume 1, Chapter 15). Language is the principal instrument by which culture is transmitted from one generation to another, by which members of a culture communicate meaning and make sense of their shared experience. Because language defines the world and experience in cultural terms, it literally shapes our way of perceiving — our world view.

While Aboriginal peoples and nations in Canada have diverse cultures and ways of life, there are commonalities between cultures that can aptly be described as an Aboriginal world view, shaped by life close to the land and a deep appreciation of the spiritual dimension of being. For Aboriginal people, the threat that their languages could disappear is more than the prospect that they will have to acquire new instruments for communicating their daily needs and building a sense of community. It is a threat that their distinctive world view, the wisdom of their ancestors and their ways of being human could be lost as well. And, as they point out, if the languages of this continent are lost, there is nowhere else they can be heard again.

I Lost My Talk

I lost my talk

The talk you took away. When I was a little girl
At Shubenacadie school.

You snatched it away:

I speak like you I think like you I create like you
The scrambled ballad, about my world.

Two ways I talk

Both ways I say, Your way is more powerful. So gently I offer my hand and ask, Let
me find my talk So I can teach you about me.

—Rita Joe¹⁷

Many forces are contributing to a decline in the use of minority languages around the world. With Aboriginal languages, however, an underlying reason for the decline is the rupture in language transmission from older to younger generations and the low regard many Aboriginal people have had for traditional language proficiency as a result of policies devised by government and enforced by churches and the education system. As documented in our chapter on residential schools, the use of Aboriginal languages was prohibited in those institutions expressly to dislodge from the children's minds the world view embodied in the languages. The policies were also meant to alienate the children from their families (and hence their cultures), which were regarded as impediments to civilization (see Volume 1, Chapter 10). As the Mi'kmaq poet Rita Joe described it, the communication of many Aboriginal children became a "scrambled ballad" as a result.

In this section, we examine the fragile state of most Aboriginal languages and the prospects for and means of conserving them, whether they be thriving, in decline or severely threatened. In our view, Canadian governments have an obligation to support Aboriginal initiatives to conserve and revitalize Aboriginal languages and as much as possible to undo the harm done to Aboriginal cultures by harshly assimilative policies. These measures must be undertaken, however, only after careful evaluation of what can be achieved and after developing an understanding of the roles public policy and Aboriginal communities and nations should have in pursuing language revitalization.

2.2 The State of Language

Canada's Aboriginal languages can be divided into 11 distinct language families identified with First Nations, to which must be added Inuktitut, with its several dialects, and Michif, which also has dialects drawing on several Aboriginal languages. The groupings are established by comparing languages and using a number of procedures that allow the reconstruction of a common ancestor. There are between 53 and 70 languages in these families.¹⁸ The actual number is not clear, since the languages have not been standardized, and attempts at classification are complicated by the existence of dialects. In addition, the fact that some Aboriginal groups use distinct ethnic labels often leads to

erroneous identification of their dialect as a distinct language. Table 6.1 lists Aboriginal languages by family.

TABLE 6.1
Aboriginal Languages in Canada

Family	Language	Family	Language
Aleut-Eskimo	Inuktitut	Wakashan	Nootka
[Isolate]	Tlingit		Nitinat
[Isolate]	Haida		Kwakiutl
Athapaskan	Dogrib		Bella Bella (Heiltsuk)
	Hare (North Slavey)		Kitanat-Haisla
	Beaver	Tsimshian	Tsimshian
	Sekani		Nisga'a
	Sarcee (Sarsi)	Gitksan	
	Tsilhoqot'in	Siouan	Lakota - Dakota
	Carrier (Wet'suwet'en)		Nakota (Assiniboine, Stoney)
	Chipewyan	Iroquoian	Seneca
	Slavey (South Slavey)		Cayuga
	Yellowknife		Onondaga
	Kutchin (Gwich'in or Loucheux)		Mohawk
	Kaska		Oneida
	Tahltan		Tuscarora
[Isolate]	Kutenai	Algonquian	Blackfoot
Salishan		Algonquian	
<i>Interior</i>	Lillooet	<i>Cree</i>	Cree
	Shuswap		Montagnais-Naskapi-Attikamek
	Thompson (Ntlakyapamuk)	Algonquian	
	Okanagan	<i>Ojibwa</i>	Ojibwa
Salishan			Odawa (Ottawa)
<i>Coastal</i>	Songish		Algonquin (Algonkin)
	Semiamhoo		Saulteaux
	Cowichan	Algonquian	
	Comox	<i>Eastern</i>	Delaware
	Sishiatl (Sechelt)		Abenaki
	Bella Coola		Mi'kmaq
	Squamish		Maliseet

Notes: [Isolate] = Language not belonging to any of the recognized language families. *Italics* indicate sub-groupings within a family.

Source: Adapted from Jonathan D. Kaye. "The Indian Languages of Canada", in *The Languages of Canada* ed. J. Chambers (Montreal: Didier, 1979), pp. 15-19. See also Lynn Drapeau, "Perspectives on Aboriginal Language Conservation and Revitalization in Canada", research study prepared for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [RCAP] (1995).

Inuktitut, a group of dialects belonging to the Aleut-Eskimo family, stretches across the Canadian Arctic. Iroquoian languages are found in Quebec and Ontario. Algonquian languages extend from Alberta to the maritime provinces. The remaining eight families are found west of Lake Winnipeg only. Siouan is present in the prairies, as is Athapaskan, and the latter is also found in the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and British Columbia. Three languages, Tlingit, Haida and Kutenai, and three language families, Salishan, Wakashan and Tsimshian, are found only in British Columbia, where there is extreme linguistic complexity. None of the families is confined to Canada.

Michif, the language of the Métis Nation, cannot be tied to a specific territorial base. Métis people have settled all across Canada, with a concentration in the western provinces and the Northwest Territories. This is a hindrance to developing and promoting Michif, as there are few concentrated areas where speakers could immerse themselves in the language.

Only a small number of Aboriginal people speak Aboriginal languages. While more than a million people claimed Aboriginal ancestry in the 1991 census, only 190,165 said an Aboriginal language was their mother tongue, and 138,105 reported using their Aboriginal mother tongue in the home. Table 6.2 shows the number of people whose mother tongue is an Aboriginal language and who use that language at home. The relationship between mother tongue and actual language use is an important indicator of language vitality. A discrepancy between the two indicates a language shift, since a language that is no longer spoken at home cannot be handed down to the younger generation. Table 6.2 shows that 92.5 per cent of all Aboriginal mother tongue reports originated from three linguistic groups — Algonquian, Inuktitut and Athapaskan — while the remaining 7.5 per cent stemmed from the eight other language families.

TABLE 6.2
Population by Aboriginal Mother Tongue and Aboriginal Home Language

Language Family	Mother Tongue	Home Language	Ratio of Home Language to Mother Tongue (%)
Algonquian	131,330	96,230	73
Athapaskan	19,140	13,750	72
Haida	165	45	27
Inuktitut	24,995	21,905	88
Iroquoian'	—	—	—
Kutenai	175	40	23
Salish	2,835	835	30

Dakota (Siouan)	4,105	2,965	72
Tlingit	105	10	10
Tsimshian	395	65	17
Wakashan	3,445	1,090	32
Other Amerindian	2,925	1,065	36
Total	190,165	138,105	73

Notes:

1. Iroquoian language data are of little value given the refusal of Mohawk reserves to participate in the census or the Aboriginal Peoples Survey. The partial data provided by Statistics Canada for this group have therefore been omitted.

2. Mother tongue and home language numbers include single and multiple responses. The 'Other Amerindian' group reports all responses that could not (for various reasons) be included under other language families.

Source: Statistics Canada, catalogue nos. 93-317, 93-333; and Lynn Drapeau, "Perspectives on Aboriginal Language Conservation and Revitalization in Canada", research study prepared for RCAP (1995).

So few people speak some languages that the languages appear to be in critical condition. The linguistic isolates (languages not belonging to any of the recognized language families) — Haida (165), Kutenai (175) and Tlingit (105) — are the mother tongues of very few people. Tsimshian is the mother tongue of fewer than 400. Wakashan has five distinct languages and fewer than 3,500 people for whom it is the mother tongue. That some of these languages are also spoken in the United States does not offer much hope, as the situation there is as desperate as it is in Canada, if not worse.¹⁹ There are at least a dozen Salishan languages, but only 2,835 people claim them as their mother tongues. The number of people whose mother tongue is in the Athapaskan family varies from 3,520 South Slavey speakers to 35 North Slavey (Hare) speakers, while the overall number of Athapaskan speakers reported in the census is 19,140.

Among the Algonquian languages, Cree is the mother tongue of the greatest number of people (82,070); Cree speakers make up 43 per cent of all those in Canada with an Aboriginal mother tongue. Cree includes several dialects, however, that not everyone who speaks Cree understands. Ojibwa is also the mother tongue of a sizeable number of people (25,255), who account for 13 per cent of all those with an Aboriginal mother tongue, but the same caveat about dialects probably applies. The Algonquian language in the most fragile state appears to be Maliseet, with 255 speakers reported.²⁰

A high ratio of home language to mother tongue indicates that the language is likely to be passed to the next generation. Ratios of less than 100 per cent indicate some decline in the strength of the language, with low scores pointing to a steep decline. Table 6.2 shows that the linguistic family with the greatest vitality is Inuktitut, where the ratio is 88 per cent, followed by Algonquian, Athapaskan and Siouan, with ratios of 72 to 73 per cent. Among individual languages in the Algonquian group, Montagnais has a ratio of 97 per cent; in the Athapaskan family, Dogrib has a ratio of 87 per cent.²¹

Many language groups are experiencing a sharp decline, however. Among those whose mother tongues are Salish (30 per cent) and Wakashan (32 per cent), less than one person in three reports using the language at home. The proportion is even less for Haida (27 per

cent), Kutenai (23 per cent) and Tsimshian (17 per cent), and drops to one in 10 for Tlingit. (These are global, undifferentiated statistics for language and community. A closer look needs to be taken at every community within each language group, but such a task far exceeds the limits of the present examination.)

The ratio of home language to mother tongue, combined with the number of mother tongue speakers, shows clearly that the following languages are highly endangered: Haida, Kutenai, most Salishan languages, Tlingit, Tsimshian and the Wakashan languages. In the Athapaskan family, Kutchin, North Slavey (Hare) and Tahltan are in a critical state, as are Maliseet and Abenaki in the Algonquian group.²²

Languages spoken by only a few thousand people can also be judged endangered. Nevertheless, some such as Dogrib and other Athapaskan languages appear stable when the ratio of home use to speakers is taken into account. Attikamek, a language usually counted as a member of the Cree group, has fewer than 4,000 speakers but a very high incidence of use in the home.

Languages boasting large numbers of speakers and a high overall ratio of home use can be considered viable. Cree, Mi'kmaq, Montagnais, Ojibwa and Inuktitut seem to fall into this group, although Cree and Ojibwa may include very divergent dialects, lessening the effect of the number of speakers.

Although the 1991 census data on Iroquoian languages are unreliable because of under-reporting, other sources of information suggest that Tuscarora is on the verge of extinction in Canada. Seneca has only 25 speakers left in Canada, but a large number in the United States. From the small number of people whose mother tongue is an Iroquoian language, it appears that all such languages in Canada are in critical condition, with the possible exception of Mohawk.²³

The analysis so far has drawn on 1991 census data and the population of just over one million reporting Aboriginal ancestry. The Aboriginal peoples survey, with adjustments for under-reporting, is based on a population of 720,000 respondents who identified themselves as Aboriginal. Data from the 1991 Aboriginal peoples survey provide information on overall Aboriginal language competence and use across Canada. Custom tabulations prepared for the Commission indicate that of respondents five years of age and over who identified themselves as Aboriginal, 50 per cent did not understand any Aboriginal language, 17.5 per cent understood one but could not speak it, and 32.7 per cent could speak an Aboriginal language. As shown in Table 6.3, the percentage who can speak an Aboriginal language is especially low among non-registered Indians (9 per cent) and Métis people (14.4 per cent). Among Inuit, on the other hand, 72.5 per cent of a population of nearly 38,000 speak the language.

TABLE 6.3
Speakers of an Aboriginal Language by Age Group, 1991

	Total Aboriginal Population	North American Indian		Métis	Inuit
		Registered	Non-registered		
	%	%	%	%	%
5-14 years	21.9	28.6	5.2	5.1	67.0
15-24	27.4	33.7	8.6	8.2	71.2
25-54	36.7	47.6	9.7	18.1	74.5
55+	63.1	74.7	24.5	43.5	90.6
% of speakers age 5+	32.7	41.8	9.0	14.4	72.5

Source: Statistics Canada, 1991 Census and Aboriginal Peoples Survey, custom tabulations.

When Aboriginal language speakers are considered by age group, the decline in language transmission is starkly apparent. Even among Inuit, there is a decline of 23.6 percentage points between people 55 years old and older and those between five and 14. Among Métis people and non-registered Indians between the ages of five and 14, only one person in 20 can speak an Aboriginal language. Registered Indians, however, have suffered by far the sharpest drop in Aboriginal language transmission.

2.3 Language Maintenance and Identity

There are two essential prerequisites to devising Aboriginal language policies. First, the phenomena of language shift and language maintenance (conservation) must be thoroughly understood. Second, the relationship between language and identity must be recognized.

The extreme fragility of Aboriginal languages (and of minority languages in general) must be taken into account when considering future prospects. An understanding of language shift allows the situation to be considered in a broader context and avoids the perception that the decline in Aboriginal languages is unique in all respects. In addition, a comparative study of language maintenance efforts around the world affords valuable information about the likely success of endeavours to save Aboriginal languages.

Vulnerability

The eclipse of 'marginal' languages in favour of more dominant languages is almost as old as the world itself: politically and culturally dominant languages, spoken by greater numbers, have always overwhelmed languages that are less prestigious and spoken by fewer people. The consensus among researchers today, however, is that the phenomenon has reached acute proportions, occurring at a rate and on a scale never witnessed before.²⁴ Recent assessments suggest the impending extinction of as many as 90 per cent of the world's 6,000 languages.²⁵ Aboriginal languages in Canada are not alone; minority languages on every continent are at risk.

A better understanding of the challenges facing Canada's Aboriginal languages and the formulation of an effective response require an analysis of the causes of language

disappearance in the past and the specific factors making Aboriginal languages especially vulnerable today.

Bilingualism

Is bilingualism realistically sustainable, or does it lead inevitably to assimilation by the dominant language? It is, of course, perfectly possible for an individual to master several languages. But people do not learn and use languages in a socio-cultural vacuum. The fate of a language (and the incentive to learn, use and transmit it) depends on factors that are neither linguistic nor cognitive. They are economic, socio-cultural and political. Scholars of bilingualism have come to the conclusion that bilingualism can have profoundly different consequences, depending upon whether it involves majority or minority groups, members of social elites or less advantaged groups, nation-states or stateless groups, and many other factors.

Cultural aggressiveness

Conflict with a more powerful social group is an obvious factor and the one most often encountered in language replacement situations. The resulting culture shock is characterized by demographic, socio-economic and cultural inequalities, and its effects on minority communities and their families can be devastating. The language might be replaced by that of the culturally more aggressive people or modified in pidgin form. It might be relegated to culturally inferior and unimportant roles and functions or, very occasionally, to some special uses. It might be heavily influenced, especially in its vocabulary and to some extent also in its structure, by the language of the more culturally aggressive people. Finally, the language can lose the cultural characteristics of its speakers and become an imitation of the language of the more aggressive people. It will no longer reflect the unique world view of its speakers but that of the dominant culture.²⁶

The historical reasons for the decline of Aboriginal languages provide only part of the picture. Most modern western societies no longer pursue strong assimilationist policies, and some even promote multiculturalism. Yet the process of shift to the majority language and the ensuing death of minority languages continues unabated. In other words, even the best intentions of the majority group, embodied in specific efforts to promote linguistic diversity, offer no guarantee that minority languages will hold their own.

Oral tradition

Only a minority of the world's 6,000 languages have a written form and a tradition of literacy. Indigenous languages fall into the majority of so-called 'oral tradition' languages; they are essentially spoken languages. Even if most can now claim to have written forms, their use is generally infrequent. Written work is rare, and reading and writing (and transmission of these skills) are often restricted to the classroom. Research carried out for the Commission, for example, revealed that in Quebec, "despite an increase in formal schooling in the Aboriginal language and the growing number of

language experts (such as Aboriginal language teachers, interpreters, techno-linguists and the like), the rate of actual spontaneous use of Aboriginal literacy skills in everyday life is quite low. Everyone somehow seems to favour reading and writing in the majority language".²⁷ That Aboriginal languages exist predominantly as oral tradition may have a profound impact on their survival and the nature of efforts required to strengthen them.

In concrete terms, the limited amount of writing in Aboriginal languages results in a lack of textbooks, teachers' manuals and other essential tools for language instruction. There is also a dearth of teachers trained to teach Aboriginal languages as second languages. Formal instruction to the level of full fluency is therefore difficult to find, and the only option is natural immersion in a community where the Aboriginal language is still spoken. While this may offer a culturally enriching learning experience, it is impractical for many Aboriginal people, especially for the large number living in urban areas.

Currency

Modernization is also a factor. Contact with other cultures may bring about changes that are so drastic the language is unable to adapt quickly enough to express new, everyday realities. Changing contexts have characterized indigenous life across North America. Even in the non-Aboriginal world, 50 years of socio-cultural upheaval has overwhelmed the ability of many languages to absorb and communicate new concepts and realities. Aboriginal languages have been stretched to the limit; it is therefore not surprising that Aboriginal speakers draw upon majority language resources to express these new ideas.

Linguistic enclaves

Another factor contributing to language decline is the separation of Aboriginal peoples into linguistic enclaves within an immense majority-language territory. As long as these enclaves remained isolated from the rest of the world, they stood a chance of maintaining their linguistic integrity. Geographic isolation no longer protects them, however; schools, businesses and the media have now penetrated most, if not all, communities, and the fact that speakers of Aboriginal languages are scattered rather than concentrated in geolinguistic strongholds has become a powerful impediment to the maintenance of those languages.

Other factors

Apart from minority language fragility, several factors tend to promote a shift to the dominant language. The first is asymmetrical bilingualism, where only minority members become bilingual while members of the majority remain unilingual. The second is generalized bilingualism. As bilingual ability becomes the norm within a given group, there tends to be a shift to the dominant language simply because people will not maintain two languages indefinitely where one will suffice. Children are more likely to learn their ancestral language if a significant proportion of their community is unilingual, since inability to speak it would prevent communication, or at least make it more difficult. On the other hand, if all age groups, including elders, can understand the

dominant language, any failure of younger generations to acquire the ancestral language is not socially disruptive. In the case of Aboriginal peoples, everyone is now schooled in one of the dominant languages (English or French), and it is likely that within a few generations at most, there will no longer be any unilingual speakers of Aboriginal languages. This means that there no longer will be Aboriginal language speakers whose unilingualism forces others to communicate in the Aboriginal language.

Finally, intensive use of and exposure to the dominant language in everyday life is an important element in the shift to the dominant language. Living off-reserve and in urban settings ensures constant exposure to and use of the dominant language. In Aboriginal communities, the requirements of schooling (and often the workplace), as well as the intrusion of the media, also result in intensive use of and exposure to the dominant language.

Identity and symbolism

Most people find it impossible to separate language and identity. Language is perceived as the quintessence of a culture. It expresses a unique way of apprehending reality, capturing a world view specific to the culture to which it is linked. But language is connected to identity in another important way: its presence and use in a community are symbolic of identity, emblems of group existence. Using a language is the ultimate symbol of belonging.

Language is usually seen as an essential component of ethnic identity, and it is commonly understood that the loss of a minority language automatically entails assimilation with the dominant group. But the preservation of a distinctive language may not always be essential to preservation of a distinct identity. In other words, language shift does not automatically imply ethnic assimilation. There are clear examples in Canada of Aboriginal groups who have lost their language but retain a sense of group identity and of belonging to the Aboriginal world.²⁸ While language is an important cultural and ethnic marker, its loss does not automatically signal a redefinition of group allegiance.

In deploring the loss of its ancestral language, an Aboriginal group may be deploring the loss of a symbol of its identity rather than an instrument of communication. Hence, the motivation to revive the ancestral language is not communication, since the dominant language fulfils that need, but stems from the desire to revive or protect a tangible emblem of group identity.

One perspective on group identification is that the group gives the individual a sense of security and continuity with the past, affirming the value of behaviours and attitudes shaped by the heritage culture and practised by the individual. The Aboriginal group or nation certainly serves the survival needs of the individual, but in many Aboriginal cultures the individual also has important obligations to contribute to the survival of the group through ethical behaviour. The nation or community, in Aboriginal thought and morality, has responsibilities of a spiritual order. Thus, maintenance of the language and group integrity has both a social-emotional and a spiritual purpose. In nations where the

language has fallen into disuse, the question may have to be asked whether revival of the language in ordinary discourse is the only avenue or the most effective avenue of revitalizing the culture and fulfilling these purposes.

In our discussion of Métis perspectives (Volume 4, Chapter 5), for example, we consider the possibility that Michif as a distinct language may not be revived for daily discourse in a dispersed Métis cultural community. This prospect makes it all the more vital that the distinctive perspectives and experience embodied in the Michif language be recorded, understood and communicated in new environments so that Métis culture can continue to enrich the understanding of Métis people and all Canadians.

Throughout our report, we have emphasized the distinctive world view that characterizes diverse Aboriginal cultures. As we will see in the next section, measures can be taken to counter language shift. However, while undertaking language initiatives, Aboriginal nations will need to examine what other measures are needed to conserve Aboriginal cultures and world views, particularly for the substantial numbers of Aboriginal people whose daily activities require fluency in French or English and who are distant from the lifestyle that makes fluency in an Aboriginal language essential for survival.

2.4 Countering Language Shift

Defining objectives

Language maintenance means taking the steps necessary to ensure the survival of a language community for which the Aboriginal language is both the mother tongue and the primary vehicle of verbal exchange within the family and social networks. A language must have native speakers to survive and will remain viable only if intergenerational transmission can be maintained. It must also be used in everyday life, not just in restricted domains.

Revitalization strategies apply to linguistic groups undergoing shift to the dominant language. They usually aim to increase the number of persons with a knowledge of the Aboriginal language, but in some cases it may be possible only to slow the shift or halt further deterioration. The most common revitalization strategy is to increase the number of second-language speakers. This is at best ‘palliative care’ and will not by itself make the language viable. To revitalize a language, the capacity to transmit it from one generation to the next must be restored.

Stages in Reversing Language Shift

A. Ensuring Intergenerational Transmission

1. Reconstruct the language.
2. Mobilize fluent older speakers.

3. Restore intergenerational transmission through family, neighbourhood and community reinforcement.

4. Teach the language in school.

B. Extending Usage

5. Implement immersion and strong bilingual education.

6. Use the language in work environments.

7. Offer government services in the language.

8. Use the language in higher education, media and government.

Source: Joshua A. Fishman, "What is Reversing Language Shift and How Can It Succeed?", *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 11/1&2 (1990), p. 5.

Reversal of shift involves increasing the number of first-language speakers of a language. Language revival means bringing back an extinct or near-extinct language as the medium of communication in a community.

Stages in reversing language shift

Faced with the prospect of erosion of their language, activists tend to advocate government intervention and make proposals to confer enhanced status on the receding language. The Commission has been urged to recommend that Aboriginal languages be used in educational institutions from primary school to college, that they be given official language status, and that they be used at all levels of government.

However, sociolinguists who have studied language loss and efforts to stop it generally agree that action must originate at the community level and be directed to those who can assure intergenerational transmission. Eight stages have been suggested for reversing language shift, of which the first four are the most urgent (see box).

In the first stage, the language itself must be reconstructed; this is especially critical for Aboriginal languages that are poorly researched and sparsely documented. The second stage involves the mobilization of older speakers in the community, who are often the last fluent speakers. The third stage, which lies at the heart of the process, is the promotion of family, neighbourhood and community reinforcement to restore the normal pattern of intergenerational transmission. The next stage is formal linguistic socialization, usually accomplished through literacy and schooling, but without displacing formal education in the majority language. These four stages constitute a basic, minimal program that forms the necessary foundation for the next stages.

The succeeding stages seek to extend the revived language into broader communicative and symbolic uses. The fifth stage would see the endangered language replace the dominant language in schooling through the use of immersion and other strong forms of bilingual education. The sixth would see Aboriginal languages used in the work environment. This would require considerable planning to overcome the absence of widespread literacy in Aboriginal languages.

In the second-last stage, government services offered to citizens would be provided in the Aboriginal language. Since Aboriginal communities have already begun to take responsibility for providing many services, this might be realized more easily than the preceding stage, at least within Aboriginal communities that still have a high proportion of Aboriginal language speakers and where single-language use reduces potential complexity. The final stage coincides with the recognition and implementation of cultural autonomy and contemplates use of the Aboriginal language in the upper reaches of education, media and government operations.

Formal interventions

Formal education is often viewed as the solution that will save endangered languages, but many Aboriginal language conservation and revitalization efforts remain largely symbolic in intent and achievement. Where Aboriginal languages are taught, only one or two hours of classes a week are offered.²⁹

Aboriginal language immersion is popular in communities where the language is in decline. For example, to preserve Maori, the Aboriginal language of Aotearoa (New Zealand), an immersion program has been implemented at the pre-school level. In Canada, the Mohawk people are investing heavily in immersion programs. While it is clear that formal immersion can assist in the acquisition of an Aboriginal language as a second language — which is what immersion is designed to do — it is far from obvious that it will have any effect on re-establishing intergenerational transmission. It cannot be assumed that immersion students will take the language home from school; in fact, experience with French immersion programs suggests the contrary. Unless immersion is reinforced with programs to ensure that the language learned is used in family environments, the need for immersion programs will be entrenched forever, since no one will acquire the language as a first language.

There is also a danger that a heavy emphasis on immersion could encourage parents and the community to leave language transmission to teachers. Any success in formal schooling would thus be undermined, as sustained use of Aboriginal languages at home is an essential condition for their survival.

Similarly, seeking to restore a language to vitality by implementing measures at stage seven or eight of the process — that is, requiring access to a language in formal institutions — is unlikely to have broad effect if the critical stage three — reinstating or reinforcing intergenerational transmission — is neglected. Passing on the language as a

first language can occur only in the family and community, in the everyday business of learning and communicating.

Experience with Canada's official languages policy is instructive regarding the impact of institutional services on language conservation. Under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Official Languages Act*, English and French are recognized as the official languages of Canada. Everyone has the right to use the official language of their choice in the debates and other proceedings of the Parliament of Canada and before federal courts. Section 23 of the Charter guarantees the right of minority official language citizens, where numbers warrant, to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in their language. Moreover, Canadians have the right to use the official language of their choice when communicating with and receiving services from federal institutions in the National Capital Region and at head offices of federal institutions located elsewhere, where there is significant demand and when the nature of the office warrants it. Canadians working in federal institutions also have the right to use the official language of their choice in designated regions. Despite all these efforts, however, the 1991 census shows that the percentage of francophones outside Quebec who speak French at home continues to decline. In fact, the data show that the percentage of francophones outside Quebec who speak English most often at home rose from 29 per cent to 35 per cent between 1981 and 1991.³⁰

Declaring a language official can do little more than sanction a reality. If there is a wide discrepancy between the official status of a language and its actual use, the status will be essentially symbolic or political in intent and effect. Assigning a language official status will not guarantee intergenerational transmission.

In Aboriginal nations where the ratio of home use to mother tongue is high, making the Aboriginal language official might give impetus to its continued use in the community and to the elaboration of vocabulary to deal with contemporary inter-cultural experience. While legislation alone cannot work a reversal in language shift, its role in a multi-faceted, community-based strategy for language conservation and revitalization may be valuable.

2.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Conservation or revitalization of a language demands maintaining or restoring intergenerational language transmission. Since intergenerational transmission depends primarily on family and community networks, the focus of language conservation and revitalization efforts must shift from formal institutions to Aboriginal communities, families and social networks. This does not mean that other avenues should be ignored. It does mean, however, that the effect of all actions on language use and transmission in everyday communications must be taken into consideration.

It is possible to envisage a range of objectives that Aboriginal nations and their communities might adopt. The only way of ensuring survival of a language is complete cultural autonomy. In linguistic terms, this means maintaining or recreating a sizeable

body of unilingual speakers of the Aboriginal language who can go about their daily lives with no more than incidental exposure to the dominant language. One step down the scale of cultural autonomy would be the maintenance of geographic areas where people, while remaining bilingual, would carry on their normal lives in the Aboriginal language, with minimum exposure to and use of the dominant language; the greater the exposure to and need to use the dominant language, the less the degree of cultural autonomy. At the other end of the scale, continual exposure to the dominant language and the necessity to use it in every facet of daily life is a powerful catalyst for the decline of the Aboriginal language.

Each nation, community and language group must decide what level of cultural autonomy it wishes and can realistically achieve. We particularly hope that communities where an Aboriginal language is still transmitted within the family will strive to maintain this situation and expand the domains in which the language is used.

Community objectives should also be established regarding the number of speakers who have achieved a satisfactory level of proficiency in the Aboriginal language and actually use it in their daily lives. Communities seeking to maintain or revitalize their language must work to increase the number of first- and second-language speakers who meet these criteria, and policies aimed at conservation or revitalization should have a demonstrable effect on attaining this goal. The ability of Aboriginal peoples to assert their inherent right to determine the status of Aboriginal languages in self-governing nations on their own territory is a first step in halting the erosion of Aboriginal languages.

Recommendations

The Commission recommends that

3.6.8

Federal, provincial and territorial governments recognize promptly that determining Aboriginal language status and use is a core power in Aboriginal self-government, and that these governments affirm and support Aboriginal nations and their communities in using and promoting their languages and declaring them official languages within their nations, territories and communities where they choose to do so.

3.6.9

Each Aboriginal nation in the various stages of nation building, capacity building, negotiating and implementing self-government consult with its constituent communities to establish priorities and policies with respect to Aboriginal language conservation, revitalization and documentation, including

- (a) assessing the current state of Aboriginal language use and vitality;

- (b) determining priorities of communities for language conservation, revitalization and documentation;
- (c) consulting on the most effective means of implementing priorities;
- (d) facilitating initiatives to support Aboriginal language use in families and the broader community;
- (e) incorporating their Aboriginal language in education policies and programs;
- (f) enhancing co-operation among nations and communities of the same language group to promote research, curriculum development and language elaboration;
- (g) using their Aboriginal language in public forums and Aboriginal government business; and
- (h) declaring their Aboriginal language an official language on nation territory.

In Chapter 5 of this volume, we made recommendations to enhance the recognition of Aboriginal languages in school curricula and to encourage their use as a career path for teachers and researchers. These recommendations highlight the essential role of nations, communities and families in language conservation and revitalization. We are concerned, however, about the fragile state of many Aboriginal languages and the fact that a great many of the elders who constitute the fluent speakers are also fragile with age. This is an area where restorative justice cannot wait while negotiations for a new relationship progress at a deliberate pace. Aboriginal languages have been undermined by government action. They should be conserved, restored or documented for posterity with government support. Because churches have played a critical part in the destruction of languages, we consider that practical support for the restoration of the languages would be a highly appropriate reconciliatory gesture. We are therefore proposing the establishment of an Aboriginal Languages Foundation to be endowed jointly by the federal government and private donors, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

In 1988, the Assembly of First Nations put forward a proposal for a national language foundation, legislated and endowed by the federal government and residing at Canadian Heritage. The purpose of such a foundation would be to fund local and regional language-related projects, encourage the exchange of language information, and promote Aboriginal languages. The proposal noted that a foundation would require only a small staff and that it would not be a large centralized operation. It would focus its efforts on funding community-based projects, including such initiatives as

- developing Aboriginal languages curriculum and materials;
- developing programs for training and certifying Aboriginal language teachers, linguists, interpreters, translators, curriculum developers and researchers;

- conducting research in Aboriginal languages;
- promoting traditional approaches to language learning such as language/cultural camps; and
- organizing gatherings of particular language families or groups to share ideas and experiences and make overall decisions about their languages.

The establishment of the foundation should complement, not diminish, the efforts and funding of existing cultural education centres, language institutes, language programs and curriculum projects. Support of the language foundation should be co-ordinated with provincial and territorial programs to identify gaps and ensure that all programs enhance local initiatives rather than compete with them.

As we have noted, there will be different conservation objectives for different languages depending on their state of vitality. It will not be possible to make renewal efforts on the same scale for all languages and dialects in Canada. Aboriginal nations and communities need to set priorities to determine which languages can be maintained or revitalized and which should be documented immediately because they are unlikely to be restored to regular use. As the history of western civilization has demonstrated, rich cultural knowledge need not be lost because a particular language ceases to be a vehicle for current communication.

An endowment fund — with the interest made available for annual distribution — would provide much-needed support for Aboriginal languages, and, unlike a specific program, it would be sustained over time. It will take a long-term commitment to revitalize Aboriginal languages. A fund of \$100 million could provide an annual budget of four to seven million dollars for distribution and administration. In addition to federal government support and contributions from churches, an Aboriginal languages foundation could also provide a focus for corporate and other voluntary support for the revitalization of Aboriginal cultures. We propose that the Aboriginal languages foundation be capitalized at the level of \$100 million, with the federal government contributing \$10 million a year for five years, beginning in fiscal year 1997-98, and matching private contributions at the rate of two federal dollars for each privately donated dollar. The fund should be governed by a board of First Nations, Métis and Inuit representatives from different linguistic communities.

Recommendation

The Commission recommends that

3.6.10

The federal government make a commitment to endow an Aboriginal Languages Foundation for the purpose of supporting Aboriginal initiatives in the conservation, revitalization and documentation of Aboriginal languages, the foundation to be

- (a) capitalized by an annual federal grant of \$10 million for five years, beginning in 1997;
- (b) eligible to receive charitable contributions, to be matched by the federal government in a ratio of two dollars for each dollar contributed;
- (c) established to support language initiatives undertaken or endorsed by Aboriginal nations and their communities;
- (d) developed by a federally funded planning body, with a majority of First Nations, Inuit and Métis representatives and a two-year mandate; and
- (e) directed in its operation by a board with a majority of First Nations, Inuit and Métis members.

3. Communications

Portrayals of Indians as noble and savage, victim and villain are threaded throughout the narratives of Canadian culture. But the images of Aboriginal people etched in Canadian cultural narratives are largely fictional.³¹ With confrontations from Oka to Ipperwash to Gustafson Lake, the events of recent history place new emphasis on improving understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. They bring into focus the need for accurate information and realistic representations of Aboriginal peoples and create a new demand to recognize the central role of communications in building community cohesiveness within Aboriginal nations and fostering relationships between cultures.

Technology is central to Canada's social history. Like the transcontinental railroad of an earlier era, communications technologies and the cultural industries they generate shape the Canadian experience and identity. For Aboriginal people, however, the image and identity forged by the media all too often bear the traits of exclusion, stereotypical inclusion and misappropriation.

Communication is much more than a cultural glue holding a geographically vast country together. Through identifying with the images and cultural narratives that dominate our ways of seeing and representing the world, we actually construct who we are. Aboriginal perspectives in mainstream and Aboriginal media should be central factors in the formation of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal culture, identity and community.

Particularly in the north, Canada has begun to respond to the need for Aboriginal broadcasting and newspapers. In fact, the programs and policies developed over the last two decades have served as models for indigenous communications elsewhere. Ironically, Aboriginal communications programs in Canada are now being cut back; service is far from extensive, especially in the south, and the voices of Aboriginal people are still largely absent from mainstream broadcasting and journalism. A re-examination of the role and meaning of communications media in the maintenance of Aboriginal culture, identity and community is clearly long overdue, as is a fundamental shift in the way

mainstream media address and portray Aboriginal issues, culture and identity to Canadians in general.

3.1 Stereotypes and Self-Portrayal

Beverly Slapin, a non-Aboriginal person who co-wrote *Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children*, has written of her childhood perception of Aboriginal people:

Like many others outside the Native world, I grew up with the prevailing stereotypes of the people. I learned that “Indians” whoop and holler and run around in little more than war paint and feathers, brandishing tomahawks and dancing on one leg; they scalp, torture and menace innocent settlers; they beat on tom-toms and live in “teepees”; their language consists of raising one hand shoulder high and grunting “how” or “ugh!”; and they are not women, men and babies, but “squaws”, “braves” and “papooses.” Then, as now, Indians jumped out from comic books, greeting cards, games and toys, food packages, advertisements, movies and TV. I can still see, in my mind’s eye, images of “Indians” attacking stagecoaches and covered wagons (and in my childhood nightmares, attacking *me*). The only “Indians” I remember fondly were Princess Summerfall Winterspring, whom I dearly loved, and Chief Thunderthud (“How! Kowabunga!”), both of whom hung out with Howdy Doody and Buffalo Bob Smith....Little has changed...since my childhood. Some children who go back on their promises are called “Indian givers”. “Ten Little Indians” is still a popular counting song. Non-Native children still dress as “Indians” for Halloween....And books about Native peoples are still written, published and promoted, by outsiders.³²

Since the earliest days of contact with non-Aboriginal people, the stories of Aboriginal peoples have been constructed and disseminated by outsiders, for outsiders. The stories are told in ethnographic studies, paintings and photographs, movies, novels, in newspapers and on radio and television.³³ Aboriginal people are portrayed in a historical past reconstructed in present stereotypes: the noble Red Man roaming free in the forest; the bloodthirsty savage attacking the colony or the wagon train; the drunken Indian; the Aboriginal environmentalist; and, most recently, the warrior in para-military dress, wielding a gun.

The promulgation of negative stereotypes is offensive to Aboriginal people, and even apparently positive stereotypes can distort relationships. As with all stereotypes, there is a kernel of truth in the images, which assume a dramatic profile and become etched in the popular consciousness. But stereotypes block out complexity of context and diversity of personality and perspective. Media images that focus predominantly on conflict and confrontation make communication more difficult and reconciliation more elusive. Too often, media treatment of Aboriginal people and issues reinforces old and deeply imbedded notions of ‘Indians’ as alien, unknowable and ultimately a threat to civil order. Exaggerated and one-dimensional images also create problems of self-identification and cohesion within Aboriginal communities.

In the mainstream media, stories may seem to speak for Aboriginal people when the voice actually originates in the consciousness and experience of non-Aboriginal writers. The voice is 'appropriated'. Aboriginal people listen to these stories, too, and the stories confirm their dominant experience — that there is no room for authentic expression of who they are, that the choices are limited to exclusion, stereotypical inclusion or appropriation. Aboriginal media and Aboriginal participation in mainstream media offer an alternative, as one northern Aboriginal broadcaster declared:

Many of the myths and misperceptions that persist among non-Aboriginal people are perpetuated by no communication, poor communication, or one-sided communication....The depth and diversity of the Aboriginal perspectives must be communicated through both First Nations and mainstream news media, to as broad a public as possible....

Bud White Eye
Native News Network
Toronto, Ontario, 3 November 1992

Two examples of media treatment of Aboriginal experience demonstrate the effects of stereotyping and, conversely, authentic self-portrayal.

Stereotyping in the media

The common role of the media in constructing and representing Aboriginal identity, community and culture is illustrated in what some media outlets called the 'Indian summer' and others called the 'Oka crisis' or the 'Mohawk crisis' of 1990.³⁴

That year, Mohawk assertions of neglected land rights led to the erection of barricades at Kanesatake and Kahnawake. Confrontations between townspeople, police, army and First Nations people focused on the immediate, local frustrations of the bridge blockade, the death of an officer of the Sûreté du Québec, and Canadian Armed Forces occupation of the area surrounding Kanesatake. The historical and national issues of Mohawk autonomy, heritage and land rights tended to be noticed only as a backdrop. When Mohawk 'warriors' barricaded themselves in the alcohol treatment centre at Kanesatake, a stand-off ensued that lasted 78 days and resulted in the deployment of 4,000 Canadian soldiers to support police at the barricades.

The events at Oka are remembered for startling media images of rock-throwing residents and scuffling Indians, staring soldiers and crying children. But in all the television, radio and newspaper coverage, one image was repeated again and again: that of the 'warriors' — bandanna-masked, khaki-clad, gun-toting Indians.³⁵ The image bore a remarkable resemblance to the war-bonneted warrior — the dominant film and media image of Aboriginal men in the last century.³⁶ As journalist Lynda Powless stated in her testimony before the Commission,

Non-Native reporters showed us through their spotty and dismal understanding of the issues that led to and provoked Oka and subsequent coverage, that they are not as well-versed in Native issues as they pretend to be.

Lynda Powless
Native Journalists Association
London, Ontario, 11 May 1993

When the barricades came down on 26 September 1990, 63 people left the treatment centre at Kanasatake: 27 Aboriginal men of various nations; one non-Aboriginal 16-year-old; 16 Aboriginal women; 6 children; and 10 reporters. This was the group that elicited such a powerful show of force by the Canadian state.

For many Aboriginal people, the warriors depicted by the non-Aboriginal media blurred the distinction between actively promoting Aboriginal land and treaty rights and initiating armed confrontation. For young Aboriginal men who are seeking meaning in their lives and who are impatient with the slowness of negotiated change, the role of armed defender of lands, culture and a nation's dignity has a powerful appeal.

The ideology underlying violent confrontation is not shared by all or even many in the Aboriginal community. The intensity and importance of the issues easily transforms differences into conflict, which is heightened by a lack of information addressing the complexities that Aboriginal people need to sort out:

When you don't have an informed public, you have the kind of chaos that exists in Native communities, the kind of social rifting that is occurring and isn't being closed because people don't know what is going on. They hear the myths and the misunderstandings and misinterpretations that build, and they create problems when you don't have a free press.

Lynda Powless
Native Journalists Association
London, Ontario, 11 May 1993

In the aftermath of Oka, books, magazine articles, and radio and television programs about Aboriginal peoples have proliferated.³⁷ But most of this material continues to be written and produced by non-Aboriginal people. As long as other Canadians appropriate the stories, experience, culture and spirituality of Aboriginal peoples, Aboriginal people will remain stereotyped, misunderstood and ultimately unheard. There is an urgent need therefore for Aboriginal media to assume the role that story-tellers used to fulfil, fostering the discovery and rediscovery of Aboriginal identity and community:

There is no end to the stories that need to be told out there, and they are not being told. I think they are being told from a perspective that does not reflect Native reality. In order for Native people to achieve those goals, they have to begin to share their stories with one another and share their experiences and achievements and successes and failures, and whatever else, with one another. Along with everything else that was undermined and destroyed or wiped out were our communication methods, and our ways of speaking and

telling were undermined as well. I feel that the Native media play a role in rediscovering or re-inventing those things.

Miles Morrisseau
Editor, *Native Beat*
London, Ontario, 11 May 1993

The potential of Aboriginal media to reinforce identity and community while providing a bridge to participating in the larger society is demonstrated in the history of broadcasting in the north.

Self-portrayal in the media

We might liken the onslaught of southern television and the absence of native television to the neutron bomb....Neutron bomb television is the kind of television that destroys the soul of a people but leaves the shell of a people walking around. This is television in which the tradition, the skills, the culture, the language count for nothing. The pressure, especially on our children, to join the invading culture and language and leave behind a language and culture that count for nothing is explosively powerful.³⁸

The extension of television broadcasting into the Arctic in the 1960s was quickly perceived by Inuit as a threat to their culture, vastly accelerating the process of cultural displacement that had gained momentum in the post-war period and prompting Inuit efforts to regain control of communications within their territories.

Mainstream Canadian technology and communication techniques have played a critical role in the social history of the Indigenous peoples of the north.³⁹ Technology, trade in goods, and communication techniques reinforced non-Aboriginal authority, commercialized and restricted Aboriginal access to information, and promoted cultural replacement. At the same time, story-telling lost much of its function and legitimacy in Inuit society as cultural information became marginalized by the social and economic force of non-Aboriginal society. As southern institutions moved north, they established an English or French language 'monopoly of knowledge'.

Although radio was available in the north by the 1930s, it provided little information for Inuit; the first Inuktitut program was not broadcast until 1960. Television followed a similar exclusionary pattern. In 1967, television programming was introduced to a number of Western Arctic communities, but there was no Aboriginal language programming until well into the 1970s. In 1972, at a time when few Inuit spoke English, Canada began operating the world's first domestic satellite communications system, established largely to bring southern information to the north. In 1974, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation received funding for an accelerated coverage plan for communities of more than 500, but no money was allocated to programming. The result was of little relevance to northern Aboriginal people. As pointed out in a 1983 federal discussion paper on communications in the north, "Viewers in Baker Lake, N.w.T. receive the volleyball scores from the Avalon Peninsula...and viewers in Old Crow in the Yukon watch the crocuses blooming in Vancouver in mid-winter".⁴⁰

But the real impact of television was far more pernicious:

The arrival of television in the region in the 1970s presented the greatest danger to culture and language....[A]mong the Inuvialuit, everybody visited one another. Younger people like myself, years ago, would go round and visit with the elders and sit down and listen to them talk about how they used to hunt, what sort of traps they used before the leghold traps were introduced to us here in the north. [Now,] homes in the area are bombarded with information and entertainment from the consumer-driven south, material that has little relevance to this land-based culture.

Billy Day
Inuvialuit Communications Society
Inuvik, Northwest Territories, 6 May 1992

Over the two decades following the advent of television in the north, Aboriginal people became increasingly aware of the medium's role in expanding southern cultural values and the social and economic dominance first established by earlier communications technologies.

There is evidence to indicate that oral tradition, including storytelling, has remained a basic element of Inuit culture despite its neglect in non-Aboriginal communication systems. Oral cultures tend to foster links to the past and the authority of tradition. They build consensus based on shared attitudes and values that have been affirmed by the telling and retelling of stories. Although younger Inuit who know their own language are increasingly literate in English or French, they have never completely lost the cultural features of shared information, consensus and kinship rooted in the oral tradition. It is the sharing of knowledge rooted in cultural and spiritual experience that allows Aboriginal people to adapt to a changing, often alien environment. While the pressures of cultural change may emphasize the cultural distance between younger and older Inuit and their isolation, they also increase the importance of sharing information, knowledge and values about both modern and traditional life. The oral tradition helps younger Inuit maintain a connection to the land, and it reinforces their identity and self-esteem, easily injured by the realization that they are less adept at hunting and trapping and less knowledgeable about life on the land than their elders and forebears. Television is ideally suited to either sustaining or displacing these oral traditions:

Over 90 per cent of the homes in the northern communities have a television set. As a Native journalist, I know this can definitely be one way to maintain a strong sense of Aboriginal identity in our changing environment.

Shirley Cook
Native Communications Society of the Western Arctic
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, 8 December 1992

The establishment of an Inuit presence in northern broadcasting proceeded along both political and technological paths, as described in an essay on social change:

Throughout the 1970s ITC [Inuit Tapirisat of Canada] and other Native organizations mounted criticism of the policies and impact of public television broadcasting in the North. In 1980 the national broadcast licensing body, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) established a committee to investigate the extension of satellite television services in northern and remote regions of Canada. At the committee hearings ITC presented a proposal calling for the establishment of an Inuit broadcasting system. The CRTC supported the proposal and in 1981 the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC), serving central and eastern Arctic communities, became a reality. A federal government grant of \$3.9 million provided the initial funding base for television production by several northern Native communications societies including IBC. Satellite facilities were shared with the CBC. The first IBC program was aired on January 11, 1982, reaching twenty-six northern communities.

Acquisition of the technical capability to assume responsibility for Inuit-controlled broadcasting had been proceeding in parallel with political action. Beginning in 1971 the CBC had sponsored experimental projects in community television production in northern Native communities. These typically involved training of Native personnel in the use of hand-held cameras and videotaping equipment, and providing access to community transmitters for broadcast of community events, and exchange of videotapes between communities. Another federal agency, the National Film Board, had also conducted training workshops in media techniques and equipment usage in two Inuit communities, and several other communities had been involved throughout the 1970s in projects sponsored by the federal Department of Communications, testing the use of technology to link communities interactively via satellite radio signals, rebroadcasting signals for community viewing, and producing Inuktitut language programming for broadcast by the CBC.⁴¹

Within a decade Inuit moved from the simplest forms of story-telling to producing television news, dramas, documentaries and children's programs. These new 'northern stories' reflect Inuit understanding of the role of contemporary media in cultural and social formation and awareness of the part played by oral tradition in constructing and confirming Inuit culture. They give Inuit the opportunity to see and hear the past they share with their elders. Although television is primarily a visual medium, it has been adapted to reflect the style and cadences of an oral tradition. The following description is typical of the network's cultural programs.

The story is told almost totally through visual elements shot in combination of subjective and objective camera perspective, predominantly through primary movement. None of the pieces has narration. Dialogue is minimal.... Synchronous natural sound predominates.... The pace of the programs is slow by U.S. and southern Canadian standards.⁴²

As with cultural programs, IBC's information and public service broadcasts and children's and entertainment programs reflect oral tradition through their association with Inuit history, myth and experience. Inuit television reinforces Inuit identity and cultural stability and Inuit capacity to direct social and political change in northern territories.

3.2 Aboriginal Media

Broadcasting

The modern era of Aboriginal communications began when Aboriginal peoples, uniting against the assimilative implications of the federal government's 1969 White Paper on Indian Policy, realized that they lacked channels to inform their people and to receive feedback from them. Several provincial Aboriginal organizations began communications units, which eventually formed the basis for independent Aboriginal communication societies when a core-funding program (the Native Communications Program) was established by the Secretary of State (now Canadian Heritage) in 1972. A three-year community radio pilot project, sponsored by the federal department of communications in Big Trout Lake, Ontario, and the Keewatin community of Baker Lake, was the forerunner of the Wawatay Native Communications Society. The National Film Board's Cape Dorset film workshop evolved into the Nunatsiakmiut Native Communication Society in the 1970s. By the mid-1970s, the players in the development of Aboriginal broadcasting were in place: politicized Aboriginal organizations; Aboriginal communications societies, with framework funding; government-sponsored local media projects; and initial northern broadcasting policies. The communication societies continued to increase in number and developed radio programming and newspapers in response to community and regional needs. Throughout the 1970s, they were also involved in technological innovation, particularly experimental satellite projects. At the same time, however, Aboriginal people were contending with an ever-increasing array of mainstream media bombarding their communities.

In 1980, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) issued a report on the extension of service (known as the Therrien committee report).⁴³ Canadian regulatory policy explicitly recognized the relationship between broadcasting and cultural and linguistic integrity, particularly with regard to Aboriginal people. The report asserted that government has a responsibility to assure the provision of broadcasting that supports Aboriginal languages and cultures and set out as principles the widespread participation of northern Aboriginal people in all aspects of media programming, in regulatory decision making, and in broadcasting distribution based on 'fair access' and 'consultation'.

Implementation of these principles led to the establishment of the Secretary of State's Northern Native Broadcast Access Program in 1983. It originally complemented the Native Communications Program, providing an additional \$13.4 million per year to assist production, distribution and broadcasting by northern Aboriginal communications societies.

Another phase began in 1990. The Northern Broadcasting Policy was restructured as the Native Broadcasting Policy, with wider application of the Therrien committee principles. The federal government also approved \$10 million to establish Television Northern Canada (TVNC), a satellite channel that provides television distribution for most of the northern Aboriginal communications societies. But there were two severe setbacks: the

budget for the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program was drastically reduced, and the Native Communications Program was terminated. Funding for communications societies providing Aboriginal newspapers and radio in southern communities south of the 55th parallel (known as the 'Hamelin line') and for the National Aboriginal Communications Society was thus completely eliminated.⁴⁴ The impact was predictable: eight of the 21 societies were forced to close their doors. Aboriginal media, however, have established a toehold in the north:

From early beginnings as newsletters or local radio initiatives, [Aboriginal communications] has grown to be comprised of several hundred local radio stations, 11 regional radio networks, the beginnings of a national Aboriginal radio network, six television production outlets, a pan-northern Aboriginal television network called Television Northern Canada, and numerous newspapers.

Catherine MacQuarrie
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
9 December 1992

Some of the Aboriginal communications initiatives over the years were just temporary, and others have somehow died along the way, but they all gave birth to a rather vibrant network of professionals who have become a unique element of the Canadian public communication landscape, albeit poorly paid and in some cases unemployed....I represent a dozen communications societies spanning most of the land mass of Canada and about 200 print, radio and television professionals. I also represent Aboriginal mass media designed and developed by Aboriginal peoples, run by Aboriginal peoples and used by Aboriginal peoples. These societies are all located north of what they call the Hamelin line.

Ray Fox
National Aboriginal Communications Society
Vancouver, British Columbia, 15 November 1993

Aboriginal media today consist of a wide range of loosely knit services and resources.⁴⁵ However, they remain uneven, relatively limited, and largely restricted to regions of the north.

Biennial audience surveys indicate that Aboriginal language programming is vitally important, especially for older people who often speak neither English nor French. As a result, the percentage of respondents who watch or listen to Aboriginal programming when it is available is very high.⁴⁶ The surveys also suggest that Aboriginal audiences have acquired new knowledge and skills related to their languages, traditions and contemporary environment through Aboriginal media. There is strong interest in extending Aboriginal-language programming and in providing programs for youth, who make up the majority of the population in most communities. By increasing the presence and legitimacy of Aboriginal languages, broadcasting reinforces the interest and language competence of younger Aboriginal community members and helps slow the growing linguistic and generation gap between them and older unilingual members.

The original production guidelines for the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program set a weekly target of five hours of television and 20 hours of radio. These targets were drawn from an Irish study on the maintenance of less-used languages of the European Community. Aboriginal-language broadcasting is a clear priority for Aboriginal communications societies, and most have gone well beyond this target, especially in radio. IBC broadcasts exclusively in Inuktitut.

Language is intimately associated with culture but is not its only element. The 1990 Native Broadcasting Policy recognized this by defining an Aboriginal undertaking not only in relation to the preservation of languages and cultures but also in relation to ownership and control, target audience and programming. Shared experience is also a key element of identity, and Aboriginal media play a vital role in providing information and reflecting Aboriginal perspectives on community life and activities.

Newspapers

Five of the 13 surviving Aboriginal communications societies publish weekly, biweekly or quarterly newspapers. Others are published by Aboriginal publishers and organizations, entrepreneurs and volunteers. They range from the quarterly *Kinatuinamot Illengajuk*, an inflight magazine for Air Labrador (no longer published), to the nationally circulated *Windspeaker*. Their publication diffuses and legitimizes Aboriginal languages, provides outlets for Aboriginal voices and talents, and distributes information that facilitates Aboriginal people's participation in their own cultural, economic and political development.

Although Aboriginal newspapers and journalists play some part in providing non-Aboriginal Canadians with accurate information in its correct context, much remains unreported or grossly misrepresented:

The depth and diversity of the Aboriginal perspective must be communicated, through both First Nations and mainstream news media, to as broad a public as possible. Current efforts to remedy inaccuracies in mainstream news coverage of Aboriginal issues are an important beginning, but they are far from enough [The] stories that are coming out that are not from a Native perspective, coming from the mainstream media, are still causing us harm.

Bud White Eye
Native News Network
Toronto, Ontario, 3 November 1992

Aboriginal newspapers have always struggled to survive, facing problems of staffing, journalism training and funding. Before 1990, the Native Communications Program provided \$3.2 million of annual funding for 11 Aboriginal newspapers; only four have survived the program's elimination.

Regional Disparities

[W]hen the government drew that invisible line across the country and said that these communities north of this line need communication societies to preserve their languages, to preserve their songs, they gave them money for satellite networks, radio, printers for the newspapers and in the south we didn't get that. So when we started our radio station at Six Nations, we used that against the CRTC and told them that it was a form of genocide because they didn't give us the opportunity in the south to access those kinds of money so we could preserve our languages as well.

Elaine Bomberry
Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts
Toronto, Ontario, 2 June 1993

However justified by the particular needs of northern Aboriginal peoples, different communications policies on either side of the Hamelin line and elimination of the Native Communications Program in 1990 have fostered inequities. Although more than half of Aboriginal people live in the south, Aboriginal communications in that part of the country received 75 per cent less funding than those in the north.⁴⁷ This has engendered understandable bitterness among southern Aboriginal media.

Aboriginal media have nevertheless developed in the south on a local level through the efforts of community volunteers and support from band councils and Aboriginal organizations. But it remains demoralizing for Aboriginal communications enterprises to operate with outdated equipment and inadequate resources alongside public broadcasters and cable operators with state-of-the-art equipment:

For us to get access to that money and produce and distribute the programs for which the money was intended in the first place, we have to stop being broadcasters and become bureaucrats.... You have to wonder how often Mansbridge and Gzowski have to go argue with Treasury Board to get a new microphone for their studio.

Ray Fox
National Aboriginal Communications Society
Vancouver, British Columbia, 15 November 1993

The CRTC has been involved throughout the 1990s in licensing specialty broadcasting services directed to specific market segments. Seven new cable television networks began broadcasting in 1995. Still, Aboriginal programming on southern English and French networks has been sparse. On English networks, the popular CBC drama *North of 60* is one of the most visible programs featuring Aboriginal people and Aboriginal issues. A series called *The Rez* had a limited run in 1996. Current affairs programming is limited to Vision TV's *Aboriginal Voices* and rebroadcasts of *NEDAA*, the Aboriginal current affairs show produced by Northern Native Broadcasting (Yukon) on CBC Newsworld. CBC Newsworld rebroadcast *NEDAA* in marginal weekend time-slots from 1989 to 1994. *Our Native Land*, a weekly CBC radio program, was cancelled in the 1980s when the CBC

reinforced regional radio programming. On the French side, with the exception of Radio-Québec's weekly television programs *Matinées autochtones* and *Nations*, most Aboriginal programming is done on an ad hoc basis.

3.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

During the past 24 years, satellites have become a driving force in Canadian communications, with fibre optics for telephone and data transmission added more recently. These will be key elements in the continuing strength of the Canadian cable industry and in trends toward competition, privatization and integration of telecommunications services. The information highway now reaches across the country, and satellites that broadcast directly to individual homes are on the horizon. Debate continues over the definition, mandate and role of public broadcasting and narrowcast, or specialty, services. And as advances in technology encourage shifts in interaction, control and culture, Aboriginal broadcasting and print media are increasingly vulnerable and increasingly important to the social and cultural well-being of Aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal broadcasting in the north has demonstrated its effectiveness as a first service for Aboriginal audiences and its ability to operate as a full partner in the Canadian broadcasting system. The communications services Aboriginal media have begun to provide are fundamental to Aboriginal access to and participation in the cultural, social, economic and political realities of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal life in the north and the south.

Commissioners heard many concerns from Aboriginal people regarding broadcasting and other means of communications. The most persistent and pressing related to four key issues: policy and legislative frameworks, access, training and funding.

Policy and legislation

The 1983 Northern Broadcasting Policy, rewritten as the Native Broadcasting Policy in 1990, was a vital step toward the creation of media institutions that recognize Aboriginal peoples. As a statement of principle, it established a framework to support northern Aboriginal access and representation in broadcast media. But although both policies led to legislation that recognizes Aboriginal broadcasting, current policies and legislation do not meet the requirements of Aboriginal-language broadcasting or address the needs of all Aboriginal people.

The 1986 Caplan-Sauvageau report on broadcasting policy recommended that Aboriginal-language broadcasting be entrenched in the *Broadcasting Act*: "The broadcasting act should affirm the right of native peoples to broadcasting services in aboriginal languages considered to be representative where numbers warrant and to the extent public funds permit".⁴⁸

Aboriginal broadcasters have repeatedly requested, without success, that this recommendation be acted upon. While the new *Broadcasting Act* passed in 1991 refers to

the right of Aboriginal peoples to broadcast in Aboriginal languages, the principle of fair access to Aboriginal-language programming is not included.⁴⁹ This means that the regulatory process cannot deal with access to Aboriginal-language broadcasting.

The special status of Aboriginal-language broadcasting should be recognized in legislation. Aboriginal-language broadcasting needs should be reflected in the terms of licences granted by the

CRTC to public and commercial broadcasters in regions where there are significant Aboriginal populations. In addition to guaranteeing fair access, the CRTC should consider simplifying the application process for community radio, holding regular hearings in Aboriginal communities, and employing more Aboriginal people. Aboriginal broadcasters look to the CRTC to create a supportive environment for the development of Aboriginal broadcasting.

Recommendations

The Commission recommends that

3.6.11

The government of Canada recognize the special status of Aboriginal-language broadcasting explicitly in federal legislation.

3.6.12

The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission include in licence conditions for public and commercial broadcasters, in regions with significant Aboriginal population concentrations, requirements for fair representation and distribution of Aboriginal programming, including Aboriginal language requirements.

Access

Aboriginal people's access to the media is closely associated with issues of policy, legislation and, ultimately, funding. The major concerns expressed to Commissioners by Aboriginal broadcast and print journalists focused on four related areas: access to mainstream media; broader access to media networks in regions of the north that do not receive TVNC; Aboriginal media for Aboriginal people living south of the Hamelin line; and assurance of access to information and media independence.

Access to mainstream media is critical to achieving wider understanding of Aboriginal identity and realities:

The country's large newspapers, TV and radio news shows often contain misinformation, sweeping generalizations, and galling stereotypes about Natives and Native affairs. Their stories are usually presented by journalists with little background knowledge or

understanding of Aboriginals and their communities. The large media outlets include shamefully few Aboriginals either on their staff or among their freelance journalists. As well, very few so-called mainstream media consider Aboriginal affairs to be a subject worthy of regular attention....The result is that most Canadians have little real knowledge of the country's Native peoples or of the issues that affect them.

Charles Bury
Canadian Association of Journalists
Ottawa, Ontario, 15 November 1993

The Aboriginal voice will be heard only if it is included as a regular part of the Canadian media landscape. This also requires Aboriginal employees in production and management positions in southern and northern media institutions. But as the 1992 report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Communications and Culture noted, "Employment equity is not currently afforded to Canada's aboriginal peoples...by many of our cultural industries".⁵⁰

The past 25 years have produced many trained and experienced Aboriginal journalists and broadcasters whose talents are wasted by unemployment or under-utilized by part-time, occasional work. The media industry, including private broadcasters, must increase the number of Aboriginal people at all levels. If this is not accomplished voluntarily, the CRTC should monitor employment equity plans and, if necessary, incorporate them in licensing conditions. Moreover, those responsible for appointments should ensure Aboriginal representation on management boards and other policy agencies of Canadian public cultural industries, including the CBC and the CRTC.

Essential to countering the perpetuation of media stereotypes of Aboriginal people and neglect of Aboriginal issues and concerns is the inclusion and distribution of Aboriginal media products on a regional and national basis south of the Hamelin line. There is currently no national Aboriginal radio programming and only one television program.

The Caplan-Sauvageau report recommended creating a third national broadcasting network, an autonomous Aboriginal-language service similar to the CBC and Radio-Canada networks.⁵¹ This would be an ideal answer to the question of southern access. But given the cost and the current economic environment, it does not seem realistic. There are, however, other options. In particular, for the relatively modest price of a satellite downlink, cable networks could carry TVNC and independent Aboriginal programming. The cost, including English or French sub-titles for Aboriginal-language productions, management, technology and distribution, could be recovered through designated fees or as part of a joint venture arrangement with public and commercial broadcasters. In addition, CBC and Radio-Canada should be mandated to purchase and broadcast Aboriginal programming, both regionally and nationally.

In many regions, Aboriginal broadcasting distribution agreements depend upon the goodwill of station or network broadcasters. CBC and commercial media that have Aboriginal broadcasting agreements almost always operate in an environment of conflicting audience and commercial interests. This has led to marginal broadcast time

and limited agreements. Unless Aboriginal broadcasting and Aboriginal-language programs are given priority in regions with Aboriginal audiences, this will not change. In view of commercial pressures and perceptions of competitive disadvantage, this can probably be accomplished only by licence conditions. While the actual amount of programming time will vary from region to region, public and private broadcasters alike should be required to carry a specific quantity of Aboriginal radio and television programming that realistically reflects Aboriginal perspectives. Equally important, Aboriginal programming should receive a fair share of time slots that are attractive to Aboriginal audiences.

Finally, Aboriginal broadcasters and journalists, like their non-Aboriginal counterparts, are concerned about access to information, independence and freedom of expression. At times, they may be at odds with political leaders in communities:

What all these stories amount to is that there is no such thing as freedom of the press in Indian country....Unfortunately, in many of our communities, our political leaders are not ready for Native journalists....Instead of seeing an article questioning a certain policy, they view that journalist's questioning as a personal attack upon themselves.

Lynda Powless
Native Journalists Association
London, Ontario, 11 May 1993

The relationship of an Aboriginal press to new institutions of self-government will require clarification to address such concerns.

Recommendations

The Commission recommends that

3.6.13

Public and private media outlets, in particular the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, provide access to Aboriginal media products for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians by

(a) purchasing and broadcasting Aboriginal programming from independent Aboriginal producers; and

(b) producing English and French versions of original Aboriginal programs for regional and national redistribution.

3.6.14

Public and private media outlets address the need for training and better representation of Aboriginal people in public communications by developing and implementing employment equity plans.

3.6.15

Governments, including Aboriginal governments, recognize the critical role that independent Aboriginal print and broadcast media have in the pursuit of Aboriginal self-determination and self-government, and that they support freedom of expression through

- (a) policies on open access to information; and
- (b) dedicated funding at arm's length from political bodies.

Training

Journalism and broadcasting training is a long-standing concern of Aboriginal people involved in media. With the exception of a communication arts program at the University of Regina, attempts to establish Aboriginal training programs have been short-lived. The Aboriginal journalism program at the University of Western Ontario has closed, and a program planned for Arctic College has failed to materialize. A small number of Aboriginal students attend general communications, film and journalism programs at Canadian universities and colleges, but most Aboriginal journalists and broadcasters are trained on the job. Media training is an important part of the work of Aboriginal communications societies, but the Northern Native Broadcasting Access Program does not fund training. It therefore takes place on an ad hoc, in-house basis.

There is a clear need to establish stable and accessible training for Aboriginal broadcasters and journalists (see also Recommendation 3.6.14).

Recommendation

The Commission recommends that

3.6.16

Colleges and universities with programs in communications, journalism and film cooperate to support access for Aboriginal students by providing transition courses, scholarships and counselling services.

Funding

Commissioners heard from those involved in Aboriginal communications and media activities that the establishment of an adequate, stable financial base is critical for Aboriginal communications societies and newspapers, radio and television:

We view ourselves as Native broadcasters in Canada. We view ourselves as part, a very critical part, of the public broadcasting system in Canada....[W]e are part and parcel of the public broadcasting system, and we feel that the resources are not adequate. They

have never been adequate from whatever program that's been available, and in order for us to maintain our audience, our languages, our culture, it is critical that those resources be made available to us.

Ron Nadeau
Native Communications Incorporated
Thompson, Manitoba, 1 June 1993

Evaluations of the Northern Native Broadcasting Access Program, carried out in 1986 and 1993, found that inadequate funding, the absence of funds for training and equipment renewal, and a greater need for independence on the part of the broadcasters constituted basic flaws in the program structure.⁵²

The extent and timing of the 1990 and 1993 cutbacks left the communications societies and Aboriginal newspapers unprepared for the necessary financial adjustments and all but eliminated the development of new Aboriginal initiatives, especially in the south. In 1990, \$2.2 million was cut from the Northern Native Broadcasting Access Program (NNBAP), a \$3.45 million cut eliminated the Native Communications Program, and another cut of \$800,000 eliminated the Native Distribution Fund, which helped societies pay TVNC access fees. A disproportionate share of the cuts to Secretary of State's annual budget thus came at the expense of Aboriginal communications programs.

Although Aboriginal journalists and broadcasters recognize the economic pressures on governments to control spending, the financial compression experienced by the journalists is particularly debilitating for a number of reasons. First, broadcasters who are members of TVNC must balance production and distribution expenditures with those in other areas; the 1990 funding cuts require that a greater proportion of their budgets be allocated to TVNC access, reducing the resources available for production. Second, decreased funding has meant that a higher proportion of funds from the NNBAP are used for administration and less goes to the communications societies. Third, the impact of the cuts was heightened by the societies' lack of infrastructure for revenue generation. In addition, advertising has limited revenue-raising potential in the north because of monopolies and the small market. Fourth, aging equipment, limited and over-extended staff, and increasing media demands were a challenge before the cuts were announced. Finally, although northern Aboriginal broadcasters are constantly pressured to expand their services, they have never received sufficient funding.

The elimination of funding for Aboriginal communications societies and media south of the Hamelin line has posed even greater difficulties for many Aboriginal communities. As noted earlier, only four of the 11 newspapers funded by the program have survived. Funding is not available to establish or even maintain Aboriginal radio stations, television programming or media resources in southern reserve or urban areas.

Solutions for funding Aboriginal communications must address the need for long-term, stable support of the current communications system and the development of initiatives in both southern and northern Canada. Funding strategies must reflect the central role of Aboriginal media in addressing issues of concern to all Aboriginal people and the service

goals that Canada's unique system of public and private broadcasting is designed to meet. At the same time, solutions must respond to the current financial constraints on governments and Aboriginal communities and the limits of alternative sources of revenue, such as advertising.

During its deliberations, the Therrien committee discussed requiring pay-television enterprises to allocate a small percentage of the fees they collect to supporting Aboriginal broadcasting. The proposal was ultimately discarded because of the unstable nature of the pay-TV market in 1980; however, cable networks have flourished in the intervening years, and the time has come for the CRTC

to re-examine supporting the broadcasting initiatives of Canada's First Peoples through the cable television fee structure. The CRTC should also examine the establishment of licensing conditions and a regulatory climate that favour production and distribution joint ventures between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal enterprises.

Recommendations

The Commission recommends that

3.6.17

The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission be mandated to establish fee structures and provisions for joint ventures as part of licensing conditions to ensure a stable financial base for the production and distribution of Aboriginal broadcast media products, particularly in southern Canada.

3.6.18

Federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments provide core funding for Aboriginal media that

- (a) is accessible to all Aboriginal nations and communities;
- (b) builds upon existing government programs and Aboriginal media organizations;
- (c) results in long-term funding agreements that realistically reflect Aboriginal media requirements and promote self-financing; and
- (d) encourages private and corporate support through tax incentives.

4. Publishing

Aboriginal peoples' oral traditions — transmitting cultural knowledge, history, values and world views through storytelling — can be documented in dramatic productions, dance performances, petroglyphs and artifacts such as birch bark scrolls, totem poles,

wampum belts and masks. More recently, Canada has begun to see a new form of expression of the Aboriginal voice in the emergence of Aboriginal literature.

In the early years of this century, Pauline Johnson became the first Aboriginal author published in Canada. After her death in 1913, almost six decades passed before Aboriginal authors reappeared on the Canadian literary scene. In the late 1960s and early '70s, an explosion of Aboriginal literature coincided with a surge in Aboriginal political awareness and organization. Many of the books published in this period were political in content and angry in tone. Driven by social activism and written in many cases by authors who, freed from the residential school system, had successfully pursued college and university educations, these works were often marked by the presentation of distinctly Aboriginal ideas in a typically mainstream literary style.

Although the number of publications fell during the late 1970s and early '80s, an identifiably Aboriginal form of literature began to appear. While aspects of traditional story-telling had been present in earlier work, these years saw the Aboriginal voice expressed in new modes. Although this voice is certainly not monolithic, certain elements tend to recur in the new literature. It gives authority to the voices of all people in the story, rather than a principal narrator. It gives authority to the voices of animals and messages conveyed by spirits and natural phenomena. And it spans large periods of time, illustrating the Aboriginal notion that all time is closely connected and actions can transcend time.⁵³

Among the literature from this period, Lee Maracle's novel *Sundogs* is written in a style that she calls "contemporary Aboriginal voice". It is not divided into chapters, and the story-line often digresses along apparent tangents whose relevance is not immediately apparent, recalling the oratorical style of elders in storytelling or ceremonial settings. Jeanette Armstrong shocked some of those preoccupied with gender politics by writing *Slash* from a first-person male perspective. She explained that this was based partly on the cultural belief that each sex is capable of assuming the characteristics of the other.⁵⁴ Tomson Highway's plays are remarkable for their ability to move from the metaphysical domain to ordinary reality, and they include characters who transcend these domains. There are many more examples.

The emergence of a distinct Aboriginal literature has not, unfortunately, been met with much openness by Canadian publishing houses and bookstores. While the major publishers have published numerous books *about* Aboriginal people, Aboriginal authors, almost without exception, have been published by small, independent presses. In major bookstores, creative works by Aboriginal authors are usually found in the Aboriginal studies section, not the literature section, leading Kim Blaeser to remark, "No, I'm not a poet, I just write Indian stuff."⁵⁵

There are about 20 Aboriginal publishers in Canada.⁵⁶ Most are in a precarious financial situation and have had little success in obtaining funding from government programs. While almost all Canada's established non-Aboriginal publishers obtain Canada Council block grants, only two Aboriginal presses do so. In 1992, the federal department of

communications established the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP) to provide substantial annual block funding to eligible publishers, and the Publishing Distribution Assistance Program (PDAP), which provides more modest funding to help meet the costs of mailing and distribution. These are now administered by Canadian Heritage, which also offers publication project funding through its Heritage Cultures and Languages Program. According to reports from Aboriginal publishers, only one Aboriginal publisher received BPIDP and PDAP funding; in 1993-94, it lost the more substantial BPIDP grant. No funding from the Heritage Cultures and Languages Program has ever gone to an Aboriginal publisher, although an average of 12 publishers receive funding each year. Most provinces also have modest block and project funding programs, but the story is no different; only two Aboriginal presses have ever received funding.⁵⁷

In March 1995, the Canada Council acknowledged the need to improve its support for Aboriginal arts and literature by establishing a First Peoples Secretariat and a First Peoples Committee to advise the council. It also adopted a series of objectives and initiatives intended to assist Aboriginal artists in new and traditional forms of expression. In particular, it undertook to ensure that its programs are relevant and inclusive and that Aboriginal perspectives are better reflected in the council's program guidelines and criteria and through the appointment of Aboriginal people to juries, advisory committees and staff.⁵⁸

While the Canada Council's initiative is certainly welcome, much more needs to be done to provide an adequate and fair level of support for Aboriginal writers and publishers. Although Aboriginal languages and culture remain deeply rooted in the oral tradition, literary expression of the Aboriginal voice is vital to affirming the identities of Aboriginal peoples: first, because literature presents an authentic voice to the majority population in a medium with which it is familiar; and second, because it presents that same authentic voice and mirror for their identity to Aboriginal people themselves. To survive in the dominant culture, Aboriginal people are becoming more and more conversant with the literary tradition and the Aboriginal stereotypes with which it is replete. The dissemination of authentic Aboriginal voices is essential to educate Canadians about the rich heritage, knowledge and culture of Aboriginal peoples and to expose misrepresentation and misappropriation of Aboriginal identities.

5. Visual and Performing Arts

Art is both the reflection and the extension of history, myth and spirituality. The arts are a bridge between traditional Aboriginal values and world views and contemporary Aboriginal lives. Whether they explore traditional forms, modern forms, or both, Aboriginal arts and artists are part of the evolving cultures of Aboriginal peoples. Their art not only defines distinct Aboriginal cultures but contributes greatly to the cultural definition and identity of Canada, as evidenced, for example, in the recent installation of a sculpture by Aboriginal artist Bill Reid as a focal point of the Canadian embassy in Washington, D.C.

Like Aboriginal writers, Aboriginal visual and performing artists strengthen and affirm Aboriginal identities and cultures in the eyes of Canadian society and the world at large. Their art can play an important role in destroying stereotypes. But at the same time, they must be free to explore the limits of creativity and bring its social and cultural fruits to their home communities:

Inuit and Native settlers' arts and crafts are a functional and living expression of our cultural identity and tradition....They must be promoted and encouraged as a source of pride in our own self-reliance, skills, imagery, creativity, and as a focal point for our cultural history, our economy and our creative activities.

Henoch Obed
Labrador Inuit Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program
Nain, Newfoundland and Labrador, 30 November 1992

The work of Aboriginal artists has not generally been represented in public galleries. Joan Vastokas observes:

Because both traditional Native art and contemporary art by living artists of Native ancestry are stored and exhibited, not in the National Gallery as so many of us had hoped, but in the Canadian Museum of Civilization in an archaeological and ethnological context, the old debate as to where Native art more properly belongs — in the sphere of art or ethnological artifact — has been brought to a most pronounced head....By not incorporating Native art in the planning of the new National Gallery, a loud and clear statement has been made to the world that art produced by Native persons belongs not to the history of Canadian art but to ethnology.⁵⁹

This kind of categorizing betrays an expectation that Aboriginal artists should produce traditional, or recognizably 'Aboriginal' art forms. It is yet another example of how, in most areas of their heritage and culture, Aboriginal people have often been unable to control or even influence significantly the way their artistic expressions are presented to the non-Aboriginal public. They have seldom had representatives on national or provincial arts bodies or on the boards or staff of national arts institutions.

As with most aspects of Aboriginal peoples' heritage and culture, funding is also a problem. In the performing arts, for example, grant structures and criteria have tended to favour established, mainstream companies and productions. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) provides a reasonable level of support for the promotion of Inuit art and training in Aboriginal performing and visual arts, but little support for performing arts productions.⁶⁰ The major source of funding for the performing arts in Canada is the Canada Council. The council does not keep statistics on the ethno-cultural origins of artists it funds, but there is a widespread perception among Aboriginal artists that grant allocations to Aboriginal productions are disproportionately low. A task force on professional training for the cultural sector noted in 1991 that "Native groups often have difficulty breaking through cultural barriers to obtain grants from mainstream agencies".⁶¹ Low Levels of grant support have a ripple effect, making private fundraising more difficult.

Historically, the Canadian arts community has had the support of individual patrons, private charitable foundations, and a variety of small, medium and large corporations. Although Canadian corporations do purchase Aboriginal visual art, their support for the performing arts is generally directed to non-Aboriginal forms of expression such as performances by symphony orchestras and ballet and opera companies. The impetus to do so is twofold. First, more and more corporations link their support to marketing of their products and services. Aboriginal people tend to be ignored as a potential market because they are a widely dispersed and economically disadvantaged minority. Second, the lack of support for Aboriginal arts from public agencies means that a corporation must make a far larger contribution to achieve the same ends. The National Ballet of Canada, for example, receives core funding from the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, and local arts councils. When it produces a new ballet, it may require corporate sponsorship only for discrete items such as new sets and the choreographer's fee. It also has a substantial subscription list from which a sponsor may benefit. The ballet company and sponsor can readily agree on the value of the ballet and the level of sponsorship; in fact, market prices already exist for a variety of mainstream productions. Aboriginal companies have none of these advantages. When the Canadian Native Arts Foundation produced its major dance production, *In the Land of Spirits*, in 1988, it had to raise the entire \$1 million needed to stage it.

Other barriers to recognizing and affirming the role of Aboriginal arts in defining the cultural identities of Aboriginal peoples and Canada generally are systemic. Art education, for example, should be an important part of elementary, secondary and adult education in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. But many experienced Aboriginal artists have been excluded from teaching because they lack formal academic credentials. The artists' talents should be recognized as valuable, not wasted. One successful model to which other provincial governments might look is Alberta's Artists in Schools program.⁶²

Aboriginal artists also need access to better training in an environment that nurtures and celebrates their distinct cultural endeavour. The Institute for American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, was often suggested to the Commission as a model by Aboriginal artists.⁶³

Addressing these issues requires the support of governments, cultural agencies and institutions, and the private sector. But although the creative process needs their support, its integrity demands that patrons remain at arm's length and respect the cultural and artistic autonomy of the artists and performers. This is especially true of Aboriginal arts, which must overcome marginalization and stereotyping to become a mirror for their own peoples and an expression and affirmation of identity for Aboriginal people relative to the larger society. In other words, those who assume the role of patron also assume a responsibility to listen carefully as Aboriginal artists and performers express their experience, dreams and aspirations in their unique voices.

Because the fostering of Aboriginal artistic talent has been woefully neglected in Canadian institutions, and because the distinctive expression of Aboriginal voice, rooted

in a spiritual world view and ceremonial performance, has been actively suppressed, we see the need for active support of Aboriginal arts for at least a generation while Aboriginal arts, literature and performance are being revitalized. Such support should be over and above the recognition of Aboriginal arts by mainstream cultural granting agencies.

Recommendations

The Commission recommends that

3.6.19

Federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments co-operate to establish and fund an Aboriginal Arts Council, with a minimum 20-year life span and an annual budget equivalent to five per cent of the Canada Council budget, to foster the revitalization and development of Aboriginal arts and literature.

3.6.20

Governments, public agencies and private organizations that provide support for the visual and performing arts, in co-operation with Aboriginal artists and performers, review all aspects of their programs to ensure that

- (a) criteria for grants and awards are relevant to Aboriginal arts and artists; and
- (b) Aboriginal people and perspectives are adequately represented on decision-making bodies, juries, advisory committees and staff.

3.6.21

Federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments, in co-operation with Aboriginal artists, writers and performers, support and promote the revitalization and development of Aboriginal literary, visual and performing arts through

- (a) support of training programs in schools, cultural institutions and professional associations, and participation of Aboriginal students in professional studies in the arts; and
- (b) accommodating requirements for appropriate display and performance of Aboriginal arts in the design of public facilities in Aboriginal communities and the community at large.

Notes:

* Transcripts of the Commission's hearings are cited with the speaker's name and affiliation, if any, and the location and date of the hearing. See *A Note About Sources* at the beginning of this volume for information about transcripts and other Commission publications.

1 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), *Choosing Life: Special Report on Suicide Among Aboriginal People* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1995), p. 25.

2 Leroy Little Bear, "Relationship of Aboriginal People to the Land and the Aboriginal Perspective on Aboriginal Title", research study prepared for RCAP (1993). For information about research studies prepared for RCAP, see *A Note About Sources* at the beginning of this volume.

3 This topic is also explored in some detail in RCAP, *Treaty Making in the Spirit of Co-existence: An Alternative to Extinction* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1995).

4 Staff communication with Mark Douglas concerning the Mnjikaning Fish Fence Circle, 27 October 1995.

5 A response from the Peigan Nation by Chief Leonard Bastien and Mrs. Audrey Bastien, Brouk, Alberta, to Glenbow Museum, in "Contact Continues: Museums, First Nations and Their Changing Relationships", 25th Annual Chacmool Conference, University of Calgary, 12-15 November 1992.

6 Assembly of First Nations [AFN] and Canadian Museums Association [CMA], Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples, *Turning the Page: Forging New Partnerships Between Museums and First Peoples* (Ottawa: 1992).

7 *Cultural Property Export and Import Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. C-51.

8 For more information on friendship centres, see Volume 4, Chapter 7. We also set forth in that chapter recommendations to strengthen and enhance the role of friendship centres in promoting Aboriginal culture. See also National Association of Friendship Centres, brief submitted to RCAP (1993). For information about briefs submitted to RCAP, see *A Note About Sources* at the beginning of this volume.

9 Linda Jules, *Challenges and Choices: Federal Policy and Program Proposals for Canadian Museums* (Communications Canada: 1988).

10 See Deborah Doxtator, "Aboriginal People and Museum Policy in Canada", research study prepared for RCAP (1994).

11 AFN and CMA, *Turning the Page* (cited in note 6), p. 4.

12 Anne Noonan and Marc Denhez, “Native Arts, Crafts and Fakelore: Legal and Administrative Options and Recommendations”, research study prepared for RCAP (1994).

13 D. Soyini Madison, “Seeing Is Believing”, *New York Times Book Review* (28 February 1993), p. 23.

14 World Intellectual Property Organization, *Model Provisions for National Laws on the Protection and Expression of Folklore Against Illicit Exploitation and Other Prejudicial Actions* (WIPO and UNESCO, 1985). The provisions define four categories of folklore: verbal expression, musical expression, expressions “by action” (of the human body), and “tangible expressions” (material objects). By way of example, the last category includes “drawings, paintings, carvings, sculptures, pottery, terracotta, mosaic, woodwork, metalware, jewellery, basket weaving, needlework, textiles, carpets, costumes, musical instruments, architectural forms”.

15 Assembly of First Nations, “Reclaiming Our Nationhood: Strengthening Our Heritage”, brief submitted to RCAP (1993), pp. 143-144.

16 See, for example, the United States’ *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act*, Pub. L. 101-601, 104 Stat. 3048, 16 November 1990; and Australia’s *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Amendment Act 1987*, No. 39 of 1987.

17 Rita Joe, “Four Poems by Rita Joe”, *Canadian Woman Studies* 10/2&3 (Summer/Fall 1989), p. 28.

18 In Volume 1, Chapter 2, we identified 53 First Nation linguistic-cultural groupings. See Ruth Norton and Mark Fettes, “Taking Back the Talk: A Specialized Review on Aboriginal Languages and Literacy”, research study prepared for RCAP (1994). J.D. Kaye lists 54 ‘Indian’ languages to which the Aleut-Eskimo languages (Inuktitut) must be added: “The Indian Languages of Canada”, in *The Languages of Canada*, ed. J.K. Chambers (Montreal: Didier, 1979), pp. 15-19. Michael K. Foster identifies 53 distinct languages in “Canada’s First Languages”, *Language and Society* 7 (Winter/Spring 1982), p. 7; M. Dale Kinkade, “The Decline of Native Languages in Canada”, also provides a list of Canadian Aboriginal languages and indicates where they are spoken, in Robert H. Robins and Eugenius M. Uhlenbeck, eds., *Endangered Languages* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1991), pp. 157-176. Information on linguistic affiliation can be gathered from J. Chambers, ed., *The Languages of Canada* (cited earlier in this note); Foster, “Canada’s First Languages” (cited earlier in this note); and the *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. W. Sturtevant (Washington: Smithsonian Institution), Vol. 17 (forthcoming); L. Campbell and M. Mithun, eds., *The Languages of Native America: Historical and Comparative Assessment* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1979). See also Jacques Maurais, *Les langues autochtones du Québec* (Quebec City: Publications du Québec, 1992).

19 See Kinkade, “The Decline of Native Languages” (cited in note 18).

20 Note that the accuracy of census and Aboriginal Peoples Survey numbers is affected by under-reporting in some Aboriginal populations. See Volume 1, Chapter 2 for discussion of data sources and data used in this report.

21 Lynn Drapeau, “Perspectives on Aboriginal Language Conservation and Revitalization in Canada”, research study prepared for RCAP (1995).

22 On the basis of previous census data, Kinkade had already judged the following languages near extinction: Tagish (Athapaskan), Southern Tsimshian, Abenaki (Algonquian), Han (Athapaskan), Straits Salish, Nitinaht (Wakashan), Tahltan (Athapaskan), Squamish and Sechelt (Salish), and Sarcee (Athapaskan). See Kinkade, “The Decline of Native Languages” (cited in note 18), p. 161.

23 See Kinkade, “The Decline of Native Languages”; Norton and Fettes, “Taking Back the Talk”; and Maurais, *Les langues autochtones du Québec* (all cited in note 18), which contains data indicating that Mohawk is also declining rapidly.

24 See Robins and Uhlenbeck, *Endangered Languages* (cited in note 18).

25 See Jared Diamond, “Speaking with a Single Tongue”, *Discover* 14 (February 1993), p. 78.

26 Stephen A. Wurm, “Language Death and Disappearance: Causes and Circumstances”, in *Endangered Languages* (cited in note 18), p. 1.

27 Lynn Drapeau, “Issues in Language and Education for Aboriginal Populations in Quebec”, research study prepared for RCAP (1995). See also Peter Berliner, who noted the same attitude among Inuit in Greenland despite quite extensive development of Inuktitut literacy: “Cognitive Style and Attitudes in Bilingual Inuit”, in *Bilingualism and the Individual æ Copenhagen Studies on Bilingualism*, Volume 4, ed. A. Holmen et al. (Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1988), pp. 275-290.

28 Research conducted in Betsiamites, a Montagnais community in northern Quebec, has revealed that while the Aboriginal language is still flourishing there, an increasing number of people, mostly in the younger age groups, consider that speaking the Aboriginal language is not a necessary feature of their identity. In other words, it is conceivable for them to be ‘Indian’ without being able to speak an Aboriginal language. See Anne-Sophie Oudin and Lynn Drapeau, “Langue et identité ethnique dans une communauté montagnaise bilingue”, *Revue québécoise de linguistique* 22/2 (1993), pp. 75-92.

29 S. Clarke and M. MacKenzie, “Education in the Mother Tongue: Tokenism versus Cultural Autonomy in Canadian Indian Schools”, *Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 1/2 (Winter 1980), p. 205.

30 Statistics Canada, “1991 Census of Canada”, *The Daily*, 12 January 1993, catalogue no. 11-001E, p. 12.

31 See Sylvie Vincent and Bernard Arcand, “L’image de l’Amérindien dans les manuels scolaires du Québec, ou Comment les Québécois ne sont pas des sauvages”, in *Collection cultures amérindiennes* (Montreal: Éditions Hurtubise HMH, 1979); and Sylvie Vincent, “The Importance of Fences: Reflections on the Marginalisation of North American Indians”, *Anthropologie et sociétés* 10/2 (1986), pp. 75-83. See also Donald B. Smith, “Le Sauvage: The Native People in Québec in Historical Writings on the Heroic Period (1534-1663) of New France”, *National Museum of Man Mercury Series* (Ville Lasalle, Quebec: Éditions Hurtubise HMH, 1974).

32 Beverly Slapin and Doris Seale, *Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children* (Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers, 1992), p. 1.

33 For more on books for children and youth, see the following articles by Sylvie Vincent: “L’aventure et ses limites: les Amérindiens dans l’œuvre fantastique pour la jeunesse de Daniel Sernine”, *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 17/3 (1987), p. 79; and “Les livres pour enfants, terrains de jeux idéologiques”, *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 18/4 (1988), p. 87. Regarding films, see Martin Lefevre, “La représentation de l’Indien dans le cinéma américain”, *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 17/3 (1987), p. 65.

34 See Volume 1, Chapter 7 for detail on the historical context of these events; and Gail Valaskakis, “Rights and Warriors: First Nations, Media and Identity”, *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature* 25/1 (January 1994), p. 60. For a perspective presented by an Aboriginal film-maker, Alanis Obonsawin, see *Kanehsatake 270 Years of Resistance* (National Film Board, 1993).

35 “Rough Justice: Ottawa Buys Some of the Disputed Land, But the Mohawk Standoff at Oka Continues”, *Maclean’s*, 103/32 (6 August 1990), p. 18; “The Fury of Oka: The Crisis at the Barricades Lends Urgency to the Search for Solutions”, *Maclean’s*, 103/32 (6 August 1990), p. 16; “Mohawk Militancy”, *Ottawa Citizen*, 15 September 1990, p. B1; “The Mohawk Warriors: Heroes or Thugs?”, *Toronto Star*, 24 November 1990, p. D1; “The Making of a Warrior”, *Saturday Night* (April 1991), p. 30; Aislin, “Mafia Warrior” (editorial cartoon), *Montreal Gazette*, 30 April 1990, p. B2.

36 See Gail Valaskakis, “The Role, Development and Future of Aboriginal Communications”, research study prepared for RCAP (1995). See also Carmen Michaud, “De l’exotisme au réel: le racisme”, *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 21/1-2 (1991), p. 111.

37 Agnès Gruda, editorialist at *La Presse*, calculated that the number of articles written about Aboriginal issues in Quebec’s French-language newspapers jumped from 200 to more than 2,000 a year for three years following the events at Kanehsatake. See her editorial, “Oka, cinq ans après”, *La Presse*, 7 December 1995, p. B3.

38 Rosemarie Kuptana, former president of the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, now president of Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, cited in Debbie Brisebois, “The Inuit Broadcasting Corporation”, *Anthropologica* 25/1 (1983), p. 107.

39 See Gail Valaskakis, “A Communicational Analysis of Interaction Patters: Southern Baffin, Eastern Arctic”, PH.D dissertation, McGill University, 1979; and “Broadcasting and Native Northerners”, in Helen Holmes and David Taras, eds., *Seeing Ourselves: Media Power and Policy in Canada* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Canada Inc., 1992).

40 Communications Canada, DIAND, and Secretary of State, “Northern Broadcasting”, discussion paper on northern communications, Ottawa, 18 February 1983.

41 Marlene Brant Castellano, “Aboriginal Organizations in Canada: Integrating Participatory Research”, in *Voices of Change: Participatory Research in the United States and Canada*, ed. Peter Park et al. (Toronto: OISE Press, 1993), p. 148.

42 K. Madden, “The Inuit Broadcasting Corporation: Developing Video to Sustain Cultural Integrity”, presented to the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association, Dublin, Ireland, 1990.

43 Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, *The 1980s, A Decade of Diversity: Broadcasting, Satellites, and Pay-TV*, Report of the Committee on Extension of Service to Northern and Remote Communities (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1980).

44 The ‘Hamelin line’ is drawn at the 55th parallel and defines the Canadian North for purposes of policy. See Valaskakis, “The Role, Development and Future of Aboriginal Communications” (cited in note 36), as well as Volume 4, Chapter 6.

45 For a description of the activities of the 13 Aboriginal communications societies, which are core-funded by the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program, see Valaskakis, “The Role, Development and Future of Aboriginal Communications”.

46 See H. Hudson, *The Need for Native Broadcasting in Northern Canada: A Review of Research* (Ottawa: Department of Secretary of State, 1985). Native Communications Incorporated reported that 91 per cent of viewers watched its television programs and 84 per cent listened to its radio programs. Ron Nadeau, Native Communications Inc., transcripts of hearings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, The Pas, Manitoba, 19 May 1992.

47 Wolfwalker Communications, “Communication Policy and Aboriginal People”, research study prepared for RCAP (1994).

48 *Report of the Task Force on Broadcasting Policy* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1986), p. 519.

- 49** *Broadcasting Act*, S.C. 1991, c. 11, s. 3(1)(d)(iii).
- 50** House of Commons, Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, *Culture and Communications: The Ties that Bind* (April 1992), p. 46.
- 51** *Report of the Task Force on Broadcasting Policy* (cited in note 48).
- 52** Lougheed and Associates, *Report on the Native Communications Program and the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program* (Ottawa: Secretary of State, 1986); Austin Curley and Associates, *Evaluation Report: Northern Native Broadcast Access Program* (Ottawa: Secretary of State, 1993).
- 53** Kim Blaeser, "Papers from 'Returning the Gift': North American Native Writers' Conference", *All of US*/Akwe:kon 10/1 (Spring 1993), p. 35.
- 54** Hartmut Lutz, *Contemporary Challenges: Conversations with Canadian Native Authors* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1991).
- 55** Blaeser, "Returning the Gift" (cited in note 53).
- 56** Aboriginal publishers are profiled in Greg Young-Ing, "An Overview of Aboriginal Literature and Publishing in Canada", research study prepared for RCAP (1995).
- 57** Data collected through an Aboriginal publishing network that came together 17-20 August 1995 at Simon Fraser University for the National Aboriginal Publishers' Conference, organized by En'owkin Centre and Theytus Books Ltd.; see Young-Ing, "An Overview".
- 58** Canada Council, *A Design for the Future* (Ottawa: Canada Council, 1995).
- 59** Joan M. Vastokas, *Beyond the Artifact: Native Art as Performance*, The Fifth Robarts Lecture, 7 March 1990 (North York, Ontario: Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, 1992), pp. 13-15.
- 60** The Inuit Art Section, established in 1974, provides \$500,000 yearly to the Inuit Art Foundation. The Canadian Native Arts Foundation, funded partly by DIAND, disbursed over \$700,000 in training grants to the Aboriginal arts community in fiscal year 1994-95. DIAND also provides minimal support for promoting First Nations visual art through the Indian Art Section, created in 1967 to establish a collection. Its initial annual acquisitions budget of \$100,000 has never been increased.
- 61** *Art is Never A Given: Professional Training in the Arts in Canada*, Report of the Task Force on Professional Training in the Arts in Canada (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1991), p. 101.

62 Alberta Foundation for the Arts, *Artists in Schools Residency Program Guidelines*, 1994.

63 One proposal supported by a wide range of Aboriginal organizations and individuals would see a multi-purpose facility providing training and a variety of media, exhibition and performing space built on vacant land (the former Daly building site) in the heart of Ottawa, close to Parliament Hill.