BUFFALO BURGERS WITH CAPPUCCINO: URBAN INDIANS IN VANCOUVER

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A brief historical overview

It is impossible to understand contemporary Native people who live in Canada's cities unless one has some knowledge of what they and their relatives experienced prior to the 1960s and 1970s. Until that time, most Aboriginal people in Canada were unheard and invisible - securely confined by their colonizers to remote rural Indian reserves, or incarcerated in government - run Indian residential schools, in prisons, skid rows and other places of suspended animation. Generations of Native people had been silenced by Indian Agents from the Department of Indian Affairs, by Christian missionaries, by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and by various other official bodies: all agents of the State. The old people tell stories of how they lived their lives in fear, never knowing when a decision by one white man would mean no rations-ticket, no status card, no travel pass, no land, no children.

Much has changed between Then and Now. Various human rights movements swept across North America in the 1960s, bringing Black Power and then Red Power. The American Indian Movement made the abuses of Native people international news in 1973 at Wounded Knee, Lakota territory (in the United States) during a bloody standoff of Aboriginal people against agents of America's Federal Bureau of Investigations. Partly as a result of the growing militancy of North American Native groups, the Canadian Government was forced to close down its infamous residential schools, places where Native children had been, for decades, subjected to an

array of physical, emotional, psychological and sexual abuse by many of the white priests, nuns, and supervisors of various Christian denominations who operated these schools on behalf of the government (Flynn 1993*b*; Haig-Brown 1988).

The telling about residential schools has been the main device by which Native people have expressed to me their explanations of how they, personally, and/or all of their Nations have come to need healing. Stories about those schools intertwined with stories of the theft of their cultures and traditional spiritual ways by white people and have been a major impetus for the contemporary healing and empowerment process currently underway in Native communities across Canada (Flynn 1993*b*).

Derek G. Smith (1992: 12-14), drawing on the work of Michel Foucault (1979) on prisons, suggests that:

> the conviction that Indians are children, either individually, or collectively as a "race", rationalizes [for whites] the need for them to be "civilized" on the one hand, and also the need for this civilization to be viewed as a problem of guidance, training, direction, "schooling", - a problem of pedagogy, and of being disciplined in the sense meant by Foucault. Residential schools are a very powerful instrument of intense surveillance of a population, and a very powerful instrument for transforming it, of disciplining it to be other than it now is. It is indeed an "aggressive" form of intercultural domination... justified as being for the essential good of the people being dominated as well as for the good of the state, made respectable and acceptable by placing the task of "civilizing aggressively" in the hands of religious agents who are thereby *de facto* collaborators of the state ... My conviction is that the missionaries did as they did because this was their commission from the state in the "policy of aggressive civilization".

Government policies kept Native people in Canada under "intense surveillance" for generations. Mainstream Canadians played their parts by thinking of Native people as in need of "civilizing" and "assimilation." One of the prime objectives of colonialism is to render the colonized invisible - but Native people in Canada are invisible no more. They are making themselves "seen" by making themselves "heard."

In 1995, the Nuu-Chah-Nulth (corrective of Nootka)(1) Tribal Council on Vancouver Island has instigated a British Columbia-wide Royal Canadian Mounted Police investigation of the abuses which took place at the Alberni Indian Residential School run for years by the United Church (closed down in 1972). One white male supervisor, Arthur Plint, has «pleaded guilty to 18 counts of indecent assault of boys as young as six years old - the abuses taking place - over two decades, from 1948 to 1968» (Hall 1995: A1). The investigation and testimony by Aboriginal people in this case is ongoing. Some of it has been presented in televised and printed public news reports (in example: von Specht 1995*a*:1, 10-12; 1995*b*: 5).

Other actions of empowerment by Native people with regard to residential schools are continuing in Canada. The James Bay Cree of Attawapiskat Reserve in northern Ontario have asked the Ontario Provincial Police to investigate the Holy See responsible for the Oblate Catholic priests, some of whom they accuse of having sexually abused their people for years at St. Ann's Indian Residential School at Fort Albany, Ontario. Native people from there say that they were also subjected to physical abuse such as being forced to endure electric shocks from electric chairs constructed by staff and then used regularly to «discipline» Cree and Ojibwé students at the school (Flynn 1993*b*: 137-145).

During the 1960s and early 1970s, as residential schools finally shut their doors, Native children were sent back to reserves where often there was nothing and no-one left for them. It must be remembered that for one hundred years, thousands of Native children had been taken from their parents at about the age of five years old. Usually, they were apprehended by the Indian Agent, a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and/or a priest. Once children were locked into a residential school, often located hundreds of miles from their home reserves, they were kept isolated from their families as much as possible, and for many years at a time, sometimes not allowed access even to their own relatives in the same school. To promote its policies of "assimilating, civilizing and Christianizing the Indian," the government did its best to tear Native families apart.

Parents on reserves, some suffering great emotional strain from their own previous experiences in these schools, as well as the anguish of losing their children to them, had often disintegrated into alcoholism and other forms of abusive behaviours. Many had left their reserves, «disappeared» as one man told me, unable to cope after losing their children.

Many children who were returned to reserves found themselves in a state of culture shock, having never learned their own cultural ways: to hunt, trap, fish, tan hides - now coming from a whiteman's institution back to reserves in which they felt alien and disoriented. Gilbert Oskaboose, Ojibwe author/journalist and survivor of ten years in a Jesuite-run Indian residential school at Spanish, Ontario, writes (1992: 9):

> When the residential schools were finished with their "education" thousands of children returned to hundreds of different villages [reserves] minus their language, ignorant of their cultures ... lost between two different worlds.

Many of those "returned children" fled from the reserves to urban areas. Their stories sound poignantly similar to those of Wally Awasis (Plains Cree), now age 38, who was returned to Thunderchild Reserve in Saskatchewan in 1969. After six years at the Anglican and Catholic "All Saints Indian Residential School" in the city of Prince Albert, 300 miles away from his home reserve, he arrived back on the reserve to find his mother gone. Some people thought she had died (2). His father had become an alcoholic, and the reserve, Wally says, was in a state of chaos (Flynn 1993*a*: 2):

> Well, when I left Thunderchild at six years old, people there were friends - like, neighbours, you know? Like you could borrow a cup of sugar from each other, or visit - stuff like that - like a family kind of thing. But when I came back, everything was different. People were lots more violent, like with guns and booze [alcohol]; there was lots more drinking and abuse of women and fights and everything. That kind of stuff. Only six years, but it was all changed.

Years of institutionalization had left Wally feeling, he explains (Flynn 1991, 1993*a*, 1993*b*), like «an apple» («red on

the outside, but on the inside, I had those values of a whiteman»). And sadly, he could no longer speak Cree. He says:

> And the language ... there was a language barrier.
> I couldn't understand what they were saying.
> And they couldn't understand what I was saying...
> I couldn't hack it [take it] no more. At 13, I took off...
> And I was on my own since I was 13 years old.
> I ran away from home, I ran away from all the places
> they tried to place me in, because I couldn't -
> well what happened was I thought,
> I can't belong in the Indian reserve,
> so I ran away to the big city, THINKIN'
> this is probably where I belong, but lo and behold -
> it was different in the city, too.
> Like, they [whitepeople] didn't LIKE Indians.
> There was a lot of prejudice, man -
> I couldn't believe it.

The 1960s and 1970s was, as well, the time when Native children were apprehended by white government social workers in numbers so great and circumstances so bizarre that this phenomenon has now been termed "The Big Scoop". Most of these Native children were "scooped up" from reserves all over Canada and then placed in a series of urban white foster homes, or adopted out to urban whites, sometimes even accross provincial and canadian borders. Such legal kidnappings further fractured Aboriginal families and cultural continuity.

The 1970s and 1980s were a time of great adjustment and turmoil for these many new "urban Indians" (3) such as Wally Awasis, who himself moved from Native teenage gangs in the City of North Battleford, Saskatchewan; to Prince Albert Penitentiary, Saskatchewan; to Alberta jails; to Vancouver's skid row. Finally, in 1985, addicted to both alcohol and drugs, Wally voluntarily entered the Round Lake Native Treatment Centre near Vernon, British Columbia, and a healing process which completely changed his life. Native elders at Round Lake taught him how to be proud of his own culture. They introduced him to sacred sweat lodge ceremonies and other Native traditions which had secretly been kept alive over the decades in which

Indian Agents and missionaries had attempted to obliterate them. Those ceremonies and the pride Wally regained in his own identity and culture are, he says, what saved his life.

But Wally's is the story of so many Native people in Canada who experienced the same events over the same period of time - the past 20 or 30 years. Though many have committed suicide, many have died, and many are still on skid rows and "in the projects" (cheap government housing), there are thousands of Native people in urban areas who are successfully coping with their problems with culture shock, unemployment, alcoholism, drug addiction, loneliness and despair. Further, many Native people such as Wally Awasis are recovering from alcoholism and drug addiction and are now powerful cultural and spiritual leaders in their own communities, inspiring other Native people to empower themselves as they did.

The stereotypes

Since 1974, I have lived in Vancouver and spent a great deal of time with people from many Native cultures who now reside in that city (including Northwest Coast peoples, Plains Cree, northern or bush Cree, Dene, Inuit and Plateau groups). Over the past seven years, I have conducted extensive fieldwork in Vancouver and also in London, Ontario, with the mix of Iroquoian and Algonquian peoples who live in that area. And the story that Native people in both of those urban areas, as well as First Nations peoples I know from Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Toronto and other cities tell me over and over again is that although there are still a great many problems to overcome, they are tired of being stereotyped not only by the general public, but by writers, journalists and social scientists who ought to know better - stereotyped as urban Indians alcoholics, drug addicts, prostitutes, and recipients of never-ending government welfare subsidies.

The message that urban Native people have given me is that the following stereotypes are especially annoying to them. The first is that they are transients who are just passing through town on their way back to the reserve. There are estimated to be

65,000 Native people living in Toronto alone. Why is it, some of them have asked me, that white people constantly ask them when they are returning to their reserves? First off, they say, some of them have never lived on a reserve, but were born in the city. Others are foster children or adopted children who have lived in those white homes that social workers placed them in years ago. For many of them, now trying to heal as they find their own identity as Native people, going home to a reserve and their real families was never an option to begin with.

And, for those who are government-sanctioned band members of a reserve, there are other considerations. Jobs are scarce on reserves and many Native people have been forced onto state welfare. Native women were instrumental in forcing the government in 1985 to introduce and pass Bill C-31, which made it possible for many thousands of Native people to reclaim Aboriginal status, previously disallowed because of colonialist government policy. The result of the passing of Bill C-31 brought with it a tremendous upsurge in population on reserves as Native people moved back to places where they had previously not been legally entitled to live. In addition, there has been a baby boom over the past 20 years and overcrowding on reserves is becoming commonplace.

Some Native people cannot live on reserves because there is no access there to higher education. Others have told me that many younger Indians resent the pervasiveness of Christianity on certain reserves which continue to be run by an older generation of Native people who have been unwilling, but often unable, to extricate themselves from the power and control of Christian missionaries and priests, especially on northern reserves. These younger Native people have pointed out to me that Native spiritual traditionalists (4) are not always on reserves, as in the stereotype, but in the cities, where they are meeting the needs of a younger Native generation as well as older urban Indians, both groups having rejected Christianity on their "personal healing journeys". In my own fieldwork, I have documented a determined surge of militant spiritual neo-traditionalism taking place in urban areas across Canada as part of the current healing and empowerment process created *by* and *for* Native people over the past 20 or 30 years (Flynn 1993b). This includes a return to Native spiritual practices such as Plains

sweat lodge ceremonies and Northwest Coast spirit dances. On many reserves, however, such as the Six Nations Reserve in southern Ontario, Christians live side-by-side with traditionalists (in this case, people of the Haudenosonee, or Iroquoian, Longhouse tradition). Summing up, if you ask 100 Native people why they cannot or will not live on a reserve, you are bound to get 100 different answers.

This discussion leads into a second stereotype of Native people who live off-reserve. This time it is the one that says, «Well, if they live in the city, why do they need a reserve anyway?» First, allow me to jump over all the explanations and simply state: «It's their birthright. It's their home. It's their land». Then, let's discuss this a little further. Although many reserve Native people now live in an urban environment, they wish that not-Natives would understand that psychologically it is extremely important for them to know that they *can* return home - to visit, to live, to retire, or to find peace when they need to feel close to their land, but that this need does not mean that they must excuse themselves for having had the audacity to pack up and move to the city.

Also, there are misconceptions regarding the fact that reserve Indians and urban Indians are two separate entities. This is simply not the case. Over many years of my own research, I have come to understand how very closely urban and reserve Indians are linked. First, they are relatives. Secondly, they are resource people for one another. Reserves are places where many urban Native people go for advice from elders, and to hunt, trap, fish, celebrate events, or bury their dead. But reserve Indians call on their urban brothers and sisters for a myriad of reasons, too - even simply to have them come in as translators of that outside city culture with which they often have to deal at tribal council meetings and such.

In 1993, in London, Ontario, Mr. Ray John, Bear Clan sub-Chief from the nearby Onyota':a:ka (corrective of Oneida) Settlement, regularly travelled into that city's N'Amerind (London) [Native] Friendship Centre to co-ordinate "L'il Beavers" [Little Beavers] children's programs and to teach cultural songs and language to First Nations children in town. Native people in Vancouver are welcome to hold Plains-style sweat lodge ceremonies on some Northwest Coast reserves, as

does neo-traditionalist elder, Kenny Awasis every week on the Burrard Reserve, Squamish Nation (in North Vancouver). Pow-wows and Native family nights initiated in 1985 by Awasis brothers Wally, Kenny, Dale and Duncan and their drumming and singing group, "Arrows To Freedom," continue to be held in various downtown Vancouver locations and are well attended by all ages of Aboriginal people from both the city and outlying reserves. Several Ojibwé people I know in London, Ontario, are active members in friendship centres, universities and other institutions in town, but also attend events as diverse as golf tournaments and spiritual gatherings on various Ontario reserves, as well as visit relatives there. Paul Hogan, an Ojibwé man who was pursuing a degree in anthropology at the University of Western Ontario while I was in London, could just as easily be found celebrating traditional ceremonies on nearby reserves or at family reunions on his home nation (reserve) of Hiawatha.

Another stereotype which urban Native people resent is the one where not-Natives often perceive them as having no "real Indian culture", as being "not really Indian" or "as Indian" as they would be if they lived on a reserve. This one is especially infuriating to urban Indians as most of them come from reserves, and, in fact, as I have stated above, still visit and/or associate with their home (and/or other) reserves regularly.

Changing the discourse on urban Indians

Edward Said writes (1979: 6) that colonialist powers perpetrate and perpetuate a discourse which becomes a «corporate institution» for «dealing with» THE OTHER:

> dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it; in short ... as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over [it].

In the ten years (1983 to 1993) in which I attended classes in anthropology in three different post-secondary institutions in Canada, I never heard one complete lecture on the subject of urban Indians. And the half-one I did hear was laced with facts and figures on alcohol abuse and crime statistics. At conferences, and on many other occasions, I have had anthropologists who work on remote reserves "in the bush," "up North," or "on the Coast," refer to me aloud as someone who works with "those city Indians" or even as someone who works with those "pow-wow Indians" (5). Their tone and the way in which they somehow dismiss the Native people with whom I work indicates to me that they think their own work is with people much more "authentic" (6). I have, I think, somehow felt it necessary over the past few years, to speak up on the subject of urban Indians, mostly because I have spent so much time with them - watching them set up language programs, Native education centres, Plains-style sweat lodges, ceremonials, Northwest Coast button-blanket making revival workshops in British Columbia, art shows, literature conferences, healing circles, Iroquois social dances in Ontario, rock concerts, bingos, drum-making workshops, women's shelters, and recently, initiatives toward urban Indian self-government (for example, by the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto in 1992).

I have become friends and colleagues with urban Indians who are healing themselves and others from the abuses of residential schools and alcohol and drugs and violence (the legacy of colonialism). I enjoy time with them as they celebrate their traditions, care for their children, drum, sing, laugh, burn sweetgrass, sage, cedar, and yes - pow-wow - in front of grey concrete highrises and inside gymnasiums and sports arenas. I have almost never been inside the home of an urban Indian that did not contain an abundance of Native artwork, videos, music cassettes, and newspapers. And behind those big-city or suburban facades, I have shared meals of venison, moose-meat, corn soup, bannock (Indian bread) and smoked salmon. I have attended big city pow-wows where I have ordered a buffalo burger at one food stand and a cappuccino or cafe latté at the beverage stand next to it. Buffalo (bison), traditionally a Plains Indian staple, are now raised domestically on the prairies and the meat is shipped out to various locations in Canada, some

consumed by Aboriginal people, but Native people have also adapted to the cappuccino bars which are popular in large Canadian cities.

Almost every urban Native person I know carries with him or her some sacred item such as a small "medicine bag" or a piece of Native jewellery. Over the past 30 years, I have noted the proliferation of urban Indian newspapers and friendship centres, and I have seen places such as the Native Earth Performing Arts Theatre in Toronto blossom under the guidance of people such as Cree playwright Tomson Highway. Tomson, I daresay, will not be returning, at least immediately, to "The Rez" (7) at Brochet, Manitoba. He has won international recognition, and chooses to live an urban life, but he says he still dreams in Cree.

Women such as Phyllis Starblanket (Métis/Cree Nation) age 30, have made concerted efforts to improve the lives of urban Indian women and families, as well as to promote a return to traditional skills. Phyllis (alcohol and drug free since 1986) has begun recently to create beautiful beadwork items which she sells at art shows and pow-wows. She is a wife and mother, and also works at Carnegie Hall (a downtown Vancouver community centre in the poorest section of town) where she constantly involves herself in counselling and acting as role model for the many urban Native people of all ages who come there seeking advice and direction in the city. Phyllis is one of thousands of Native women who are making a difference in the lives of their own people in communities across Canada.

Edward Said (1979: 20) writes - relying partly on Michel Foucault (1979) - that the dominator's discourse claims authority over THE OTHER, that power and authority become Cultural Knowledge, and that this Cultural Knowledge is then promoted by the dominator as Cultural Truth. None of this, claims Said, can be viewed as being outside the context of political will.

When we insist on thinking about urban Indians as transients, we make it possible for governments to ignore them and not provide them with the services they require as full-time residents. When we teach courses on Native people and never mention urban Indians, we make them invisible. When we think or speak of urban Native people as being perpetually down and

out on Skid Row, we do not acknowledge the impact of the current revitalization and healing movement which has been empowering Native people in this country, on and off reserves, over the past 20 to 30 years. When we say that Indians living in the city don't need their reserves any longer, we ignore the special ties that urban Native people have with their relatives and with their land, and we make it easier for the State to deny them self-government and autonomy while retaining their identity as Native. When we talk primarily about alcoholism, drug addiction, poverty and alienation, we perpetuate a discourse and a Cultural Knowledge, promoted as Truth, which freeze-frames urban Indians into a time more reminiscent of the late 1970s than of the 1990s. And, when we think of or speak about urban Indians as having no real cultures, we force our own ideas of authentic and in-authentic Native cultures upon them. We force static images upon them from which they are allowed no escape.

My purpose, in this paper, is not to trivialize or deny the existence of the obvious and deplorable conditions which are reality for the majority of urban Indians in Canada. Nor is it to infer that somehow these problems will magically disappear in the near future. My intention here is simply to ask the reader to consider learning about, talking about, and/or teaching what is *really* happening with the thousands of Aboriginal people in Canada who are not "down and out on Skid Row," and how they, in turn, are helping to heal and empower other urban Native people. My intention, as well, is to ask you to question the ways in which your own discourse and perhaps "unintentional" stereotypes create obstacles to this empowerment process. And, finally, I ask you to consider, before you even "unconsciously" decide that urban Indians aren't quite as "authentic" as the ones you know about, the following story by Sam Gill (1982: 33-34).

Gill writes that in Navajo hero stories «a tension is maintained between a static, balanced order that characterizes the state of perfect beauty and the necessary disruption of that order and beauty as a part of the life process ... The dynamic character of that tension is reflected», he says, «in the iconic motif of the broken circle, which is ubiquitous in Navajo culture». This broken circle, writes Gill, appears most commonly «as a circular enclosure with an opening or doorway, as in the

Navajo hogan and sweat lodge». The motif is also found in Navajo pottery, weavings and sandpaintings:

> ... we find [he says] that the Navajo people consider the break or opening as a pathway leading out of the enclosed space. It is always seen as "the road out", and this road is the road of life. Navajos say that to draw a closed circle around someone's house would cause sickness, perhaps even death. It would be a symbolic obstruction of the life road going out (*idem*: 34).

Urban Indians have had to keep circles open in order that they be able to find «the road out» - «the road of life». To draw a closed circle around them, or their cultures, would cause sickness and perhaps even death. «It would be a symbolic obstruction of the life road going out». For, as Wally Awasis, alcohol and drug free since 1985, now teaches urban Native youth (and others) in the city of Vancouver (Flynn 1991):

> You CAN succeed in modern-day society as a Native person.
> You don't have to lose your identity.
> You still can be proud of who you are
> and live in the whiteman's culture,
> side-by-side with your own culture
> and you can blend them together
> and take the good from the both, you know?
> And, and - know and understand that, like -
> Like me, I still practise drumming, singing, dancing -
> I'm a traditional dancer,
> But I also hold a good job.
> I work for the Vancouver School Board,
> I'm a [Native] Child Care Worker, and I get paid, y'know -
> A whiteman's job, y'know, I -
> I got ahold of both worlds.

Conclusion: the younger generation

Native people place a great deal of emphasis on the importance of their children, who represent for them the hope that their cultures will remain strong through "the future generations". For this reason, I will leave you with the words of Brian Dickey (Ojibwé Nation). Brian was 18 years old when I met him in 1993. He had always lived in the city of London, Ontario. You could say, then, that he was born an "urban Indian". In 1993, he attended the Wiingashk [Sweetgrass] Education Centre in London, where he received instruction not only in academics, but in Native cultures, as well. His teacher was Carolyn Ulch (Mohawk, of Six Nations reserve) (8). In June of 1993, Brian was chosen to participate in a cross-cultural exchange which entailed a stay in China! Brian has begun to express his thoughts about himself and his own Native culture through the medium of poetry. He has given me permission to share them with you here (Brian Dickey, 1993, London, Ontario):

1. Our ancestors
Everywhere around us
Speaking
But unheard
We, the people
Trying to listen to them
But we can't hear
For our spirit has died
But now
we are starting to hear them
And learning their ancient wisdom
For we are alive again

2. White society
A big fast-paced world
Where all our cultural teachings
Are forgotten
It is like a vampire
Sucking the life out of our very soul

Assimilating us
Killing us
The residential schools
Wiped away most of our elders' teachings
And turned most of our grandfathers
Into empty husks
Now we, their grandchildren
Are re-discovering the old ways
And re-learning them
And living.

Notes

1. Part of the empowerment process of Native people in Canada has been to take back their own names for themselves and to insist that non-Native people learn to use those names. In example, Eskimo is Inuit; Montagnais is Innu.

2. Wally did not find his mother, Caroline Awasis, until he was 20 years old. She had "disappeared" into Seattle, Washington's Skid Row (U.S.A.), and become an alcoholic. She is presently residing in Vancouver, B.C. with many of her children and grandchildren. Wally's father, James Awasis, passed away in 1979, an alcoholic. «The Government, [says Wally] took my family apart, and my dad never got over it».

3. I mean no disrespect to Native people when I use the terms "urban Indian" or "Indian." Although Native people in Canada are searching for new ways to define themselves (with terms such as "First Nations Peoples"), most Aboriginal people I know also continue to refer to themselves as "Indians."

4. This is not my term, but one used by those Native people determined to "go back to old ways" and " the old ceremonies" or what many Native people have described to me as "the Natural Way" of Native spirituality. These "traditionalists" reject foreign religions such as Christianity, which is not to employ that they do not respect the spiritual believes of other Native people who do not share their views. In my experience, Native people, while not always in agreement, traditionally respect the autonomy of the individual. I also note that although there are now highly conflicting views on Christianity in Native communities across Canada, many Native people who remain christian are attempting to work out new relationships with their churches and their priests. As well, many priests have apologyzed for the part Christian churches have played in the oppression of Native people since the time of european contact (regarding issues of colonialsm, terror and healing see Taussig 1987). Some Native people accept these apologies. Some do not. Others syncretize traditional spiritual thought with Christianity. An increasing number of aboriginal people in Canada are reviving all ceremonies and traditional Native philosophies and outrightly reject Christianity in any form. Current

conflicts such as those arising over religion and spiritual thought are, in my opinion, an inevitable and healthy part of the process of healing and empowerment as Native people take control over their own lives and attempt to extricate themselves from centuries of colonialism.

5. A pow-wow is a large gathering of Native people from many Native nations, held for the purposes of drumming and dancing in traditional Plains style. It is often referred to by Native people as a "Gathering of Nations". Some pow-wows attract thousands of Native visitors, some feature competition dancing and/or drumming events where contestants win cash and other prizes, some smaller pow-wows have no competitive aspects. I have heard the competition dancing described by one Assiniboine elder as being «like the Olympics» for Native people. In short, the pow-wow, which has diffused all over North America, is a special time of dance, celebration, socializing, trading, and the forming of marriage partnerships and political alliances, all functions of the typical Native summer gathering place, but now held at any time of the year and in either rural or urban settings. The pow-wow is an alcohol and drug free event which serves to promote cultural healing and Native pride (it is also just plain fun).

6. I conduct fieldwork with both urban and non-urban Native people.

7. Tomson Highway is best-known for his two plays, *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* and *The Rez Sisters*, "rez" being the way most Native people refer to their reserves.

8. Wiingashk Education Centre is affiliated with N'Amerind (London) [Native] Friendship Centre.

Fieldwork Consultants. Interviews with Wallace James (Wally) Awasis and with Phyllis Starblanket were conducted in 1991/92 in Vancouver, British Columbia and by telephone from London, Ontario to Vancouver in 1993. Interviews with Ray John, Paul Hogan, and Brian Dickey were conducted in 1992/93 in London, Ontario.

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Summary

Stereotypes of the "Urban Indian" depict him/her as displaced, marginal, unemployed, alcoholic and without power. While life for urban Native people in Canada is often harsh and sometimes grim the A. argues that, since the 1960s, and especially in the past ten years, there has been an accelerating movement towards healing and empowerment of urban Aborigenal people by and for themselves. Also, stereotypes of urban Indians are perpetuated not only by the non-Native general public, but by anthropologists themselves who often think of and unwittingly portray urban Native people as beeing without a legitimate culture and as somehow less "authentic" than their on-reserve brothers and sisters.

Sommario

Correnti stereotipi dipingono gli Indiani d'America come spostati, marginali, disoccupati, alcolisti e senza potere. Sebbene la vita per i Nativi inurbati in Canada sia spesso dura e difficile, l' A. mostra come dagli anni '60, e soprattutto negli ultimi 10 anni si sia verificato un veloce processo di miglioramento e di crescita degli Aborigeni inurbati ad opera e a beneficio dei Nativi stessi. *Cliché* fuorvianti sugli Indiani inurbati, inoltre vengono perpetuati non solo nell'ambito del medio pubblico non nativo ma anche nei circoli degli antropologi che spesso pensano e ritraggono i Nativi delle metropoli come privi di una cultura legittima e in qualche misura meno "autentici" di quelli residenti nelle riserve.