TEENAGERS OF THE TUNDRA: THE TEENAGE EXPERIENCE AMONG THE NASKAPI OF KAWAWACHIKAMACH, QUEBEC

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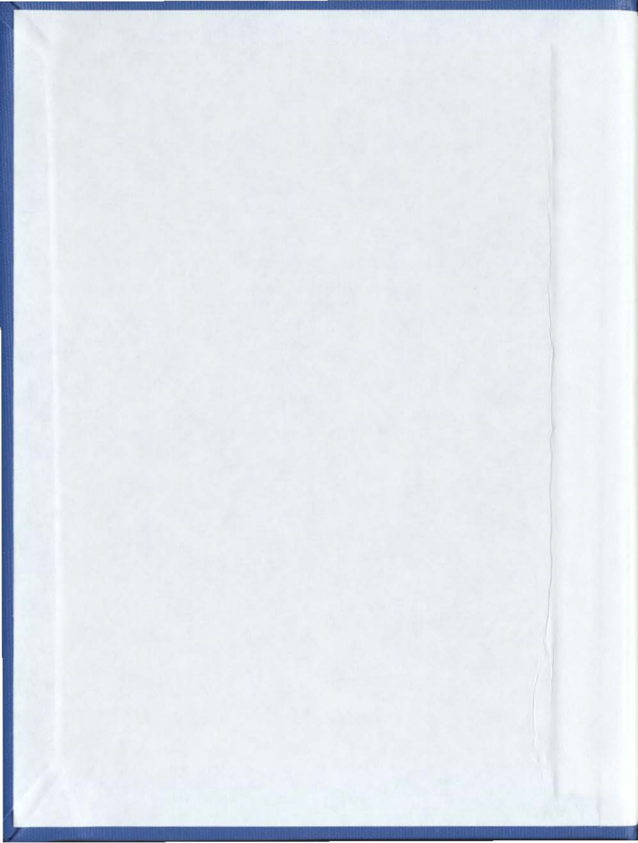

TEENAGERS OF THE TUNDRA: THE TEENAGE EXPERIENCE AMONG THE NASKAPI OF KAWAWACHIKAMACH, QUEBEC

by

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ABSTRACT

The teenage years. This period of physiological and social change is perhaps one of the most fascinating and misunderstood phases in our life cycle. It is even more complex when we consider the effects of the introduction of this stage into a culture which previously had its own unique category of youth. This thesis examines such a development as it exists among the Naskapi people of Kawawachikamach, Quebec.

Many studies dealing with aboriginal teens contend that these young people are currently experiencing an "identity crisis", or that they are "between two worlds" (i.e. Native and White), ideas which are couched within Western theoretical perspectives of the adolescent identity. However, the situation among the Naskapi involves more than two competing cultural influences or individual struggles for identity. The phase of Naskapi adolescence itself has changed, as witnessed by the introduction of the 'teenage' stage. However, there are culturally specific factors at play which can account for how adolescence is experienced among the Naskapi, and why they do not go through an identity crisis as the adolescent is seen to do in Western models. As I will show, it is the complex interplay between the newly emerging social category of the 'teenager' and the challenge it represents to traditional Naskapi age-grade systems and social roles which act to produce the cultural tensions which exist among this group.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I have come to the group of people upon which this thesis is based, the teenagers of Kawawachikamach. They taught me more than they will ever know. These teens were, and are, an inspiration to me and it is to them that I dedicate this work. Akua tuta.

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

The problem

This thesis explores the lives of the Naskapi[1] teenagers of Kawawachikamach[2], Quebec. More specifically, it looks at how the Naskapi are adapting to and incorporating the new social category of 'the teenager'. Before the advent of European contact the Naskapi lived as mobile hunter-gatherers, travelling the interior of what is now the Quebec-Labrador peninsula. In traditional times youth began learning and practising the life skills they would need to know to be adults at a very early age, and during this period adolescence was not a socially distinct phase with a different set of characteristics. However, for young Naskapi growing up today the experience of living in the settlement virtually year round, schooling, the emergence of the peer group as a powerful agent of socialization, and the influx of Euro-Canadian culture, especially the teen-specific pop culture, have introduced them to new types of social roles and ways of living. In the contemporary context, contrary to the past, adolescence is now associated with a specific socially recognized phase, that of the 'teenage' stage.

[1]The Naskapi are Northern Algonquian-speaking peoples living in the eastern and northern parts of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula. Historically the people in this area were referred to as the 'Montagnais-Naskapi'. However, in recent years the groups living in Labrador, and in some parts of Quebec, have adopted the indigenous name 'Innu'. Although the term 'Naskapi' has previously been used in a broader but ambiguous sense (Mailhot 1986), it is now only used for this local grouping, and will be so used in this thesis.

[2]Hereafter referred to as Kawawa.

The most puzzling thing about this development within the Naskapi life cycle is that there has been no anthropological research done on this issue. A general assessment of Naskapi teenagers (and other Native teens like the Innu of Labrador) which has been made in newspapers and the media is that these teenagers are experiencing an "identity crisis". In conducting research for this thesis I found this term coming up again and again in much of the sociological and psychological literature on youth. I questioned the validity of the supposed universality of this identity crisis and wondered if there was another way to examine adolescence. However, when I looked to the anthropological treatment of this subject for some answers, because our discipline rarely deals with adolescence, there was very little data to be found.

In this thesis I attempt to close the gap which exists between the literature on Naskapi teenagers and the anthropological study of adolescence. I will provide evidence to show that, contrary to Western models of adolescence, in which the "identity crisis" is purported to be a universal feature, in Kawawa there is a different kind of adolescent experience. Although Naskapi teenagers are confronted with many problems and sometimes find that being a teenager is difficult, as will be illustrated in the upcoming chapters, there are specific cultural factors at play which help to explain why the Naskapi teenage experience is not characterised by an identity crisis.

Fieldwork and methodology

My fieldwork was conducted from May 9 to September 1 of 1997. Aside from

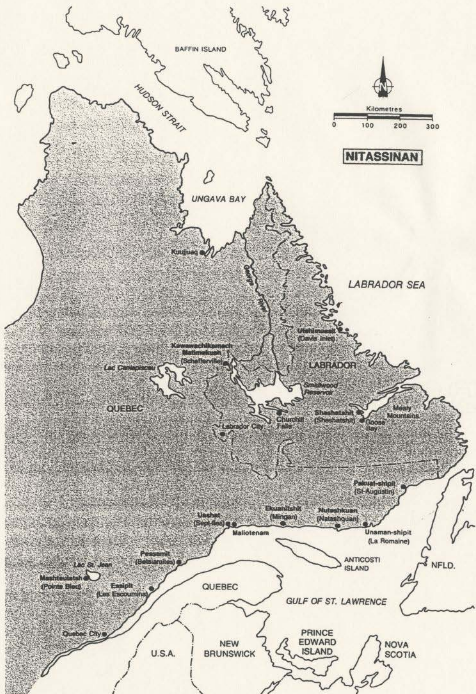

Figure 1. Map of the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula

Source: Wadden 1991:2 (Reprinted by permission of the author.)

several one-day or week-end excursions into the bush, I remained in the community for virtually all of my stay. The methodologies I utilized while in the field were varied and depended upon the particular setting I was in or the purpose of my investigation. They included participant observation, formal and informal interviews (most of which were tape recorded), and I examined a number of files from the Band Council and the Naskapi Development Corporation. I also kept a journal, made daily notes in numerous jottings' books, and more complete descriptions of my observations were recorded in my fieldnotes.

Since I did not want the Naskapi to see me as just another researcher who asks questions, and because I wanted to allow them the opportunity to get to know *why* I was living in their community, for the first few weeks of my stay in Kawawa I did not ask many questions. Instead, I assumed the role of research subject, answering their many inquiries about my family, place of origin, purpose for being there, and marital status. During the beginning of my stay I also took nightly walks around the reserve, which made me more visible and allowed the Naskapi to become used to my presence. These walks, especially those taken late at night, were also opportune times to see and meet with the teenagers, who always seemed to be walking around.

Participating in as many local events as often as possible was another way for me to observe and interact with the teens. I helped organize the Summer Youth Program, I supervised the evening activities at the school gym, went on a number of fishing trips,

attended community feasts, weddings, a funeral, and the high school graduation. Through this kind of involvement I was able to get a more complete picture of how the teens behaved and thought about a range of activities. It also enabled me to show my genuine concern for life in Kawawa as a member of the community and not just as "the anthropologist".

Initially through members of my family, and then later on my own, I began to "hang out" with the teenagers. We would walk around the community, go to the gym after supper to watch floor hockey or some other sporting activity, I would give some of them cigarettes, and in general we would just talk. These first experiences with the teens were important because I began to get an idea of what was important to them and how they expressed themselves. This allowed me to think about what kinds of topics I should ask them about, both in our daily conversations, and later on in my interviews.

The interviews I conducted with the teenagers took place during the last two months of my stay in Kawawa. In each case a written consent form was given to the teens and I gave them the option to sign it or to give me a verbal acknowledgement that they agreed to participate. While I tried to let our discussions follow the flow of the teenagers' comments and answers as much as possible, I did have three main subjects of interest that I focused on in my interviews. These topics were: (1) goals for and aspirations for the future; (2) dating, sexuality, and gender relations; and (3) the bush and Naskapi history. In total I interviewed fifteen teenagers, eight girls and seven boys. The duration of the

interviews varied from under half an hour to over an hour and a half. Although some were relatively short, after our interviews many of the teenagers would often hang around in my room, looking at my pictures, compact disks, or other things I brought from home. These post-interview discussions were very important to my understanding of the teens because during this time they usually elaborated on topics we had touched on in our interviews, while also filling me in on more mundane, yet equally important, details of their daily routines.

Along with the teenagers, I also interviewed eleven adults (people who were between 20-50 years of age) and three elders. The majority of the individuals in this second interview group were tape recorded, but some felt more comfortable when I wrote out notes of our conversation by hand. As I was interested to understand how the older members of Naskapi society felt about the teenagers, during these interviews I would often ask my informants about their own adolescence, as well as their opinions about the current group of teenagers. Within this group I talked to a number of people who had direct contact with youth in the community. These included the police chief, the youth outreach worker, social workers, and addiction counsellors. My understanding of teens and their place within the community and their families was also informed through casual conversations with the school principals[3], teachers, the local Anglican minister, people who were employed at the Dispensary, and many parents.

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[3]During the summer I was in Kawawa the gentleman who had been the principal for almost twenty years left the community and another local man assumed the responsibility. It was very useful to talk to have the opportunity to talk to these men and to compare the teenagers' interpretations of the two principals.

I was given permission by people in the band office and the Naskapi Development Corporation to go through their files of past research, archival material, minutes of council meetings, and a host of other information. This proved to be a useful research method because from looking at these documents I was able to get a sense of the important events, problems, and developments which have shaped the local history of Kawawa over the past few years. During the long hours I spent sifting through these boxes and files I paid careful attention to note, photocopy, and when possible discuss with the employees or parents who were present, any important data pertaining to the teenagers.

Chapter outline

This thesis is divided into seven separate chapters. In the introductory chapter I have presented the central research 'problem' and discussed the fieldwork methodology I used while in the field.

Chapter two, which deals with the theoretical issues pertaining to the present study, begins with a presentation of the Western theory of the adolescent identity, and is followed by a review of the anthropological literature on adolescence. We conclude with a discussion of the Naskapi model of adolescence, in which data is provided to help explain why Naskapi teens do not go through an identity crisis, as the adolescent is seen to

experience in the Western models.

Chapter three introduces us to the setting and provides an historical overview, as well as a description of community life and social organization among the Naskapi today. Here I give an account of life during the pre-settlement period, the fur trade era, and I outline the events which led to the move to settled life for the Naskapi. We also look at the influence of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (c.1975) and the North Eastern Quebec Agreement (c.1978) for the Naskapi, primarily as it relates to the establishment of Kawawachikamach. The second portion of the chapter presents the community of Kawawa and the contemporary forms of social organization which exists among the Naskapi today.

The differences between traditional and modern processes of maturation and family life are discussed in the fourth chapter of this thesis. The teenagers' ideas about coming of age and adulthood, as well as society's "use" of the term 'teenager' are also looked at. Following this, the example of teenage motherhood is used as a vehicle through which some of the major changes in familial structure are illustrated.

In chapter five the complex subjects of sexuality, gender issues, and the Naskapi form of what we might term "dating", '*wiichaawaaw*', are discussed. The opening section covers the traditional forms of these social relations. I then describe the teenage system of '*wiichaawaaw*' and attempt to explain the function of the variables that are at play in these

relationships with the opposite sex. Two vignettes are then presented, in which we see how these three subjects are dealt with in daily life by the teens and their families.

The final ethnographic chapter deals with the role of the bush in teenage life. Chapter six begins with a brief discussion of the impact of the North Eastern Quebec Agreement on bush activity. Next, I look at what constitutes the teenage experience of the bush, the pattern of decreased time spent in the bush by teens, and how the teenagers express the importance of the bush way of life. I also examine some of the connections my young informants make between the hunting camp way of life, the settlement, and their culture. Then, in the last section, entitled "waiting to learn", I show how the teenagers figure within the contemporary Naskapi system of acquiring bush knowledge and experience.

Chapter seven is my conclusion. Here I refamiliarize the reader with the theoretical issues which were brought to light through my thesis.

CHAPTER II-IS THERE AN IDENTITY CRISIS?: A THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

Introduction

As mentioned in the previous chapter, adolescence has been, and to a certain degree still is, an much neglected area of study within anthropological discourse. For most of this century the fields of sociology and psychology have dominated the analysis. Perhaps the most influential figure in the history of adolescent studies is psychologist G. Stanley Hall (1904), who is credited with "discovering" adolescence. He maintained that the *sturm und drang* associated with this period was rooted in biology, and as such adolescence was said to be a universal human condition. Fellow psychologist Erik Erikson's infamous notion of the adolescent "identity crisis" perpetuated Hall's "storm and stress" model. Over time, owing to the influence of Erikson and Hall's models, the emotional turmoil and personal searching for one's identity which was said to define the adolescent experience became adopted as universal features of the phase.

The application of these universal characteristics to societies which are culturally distinct from the Western world is problematic because different cultures have their own unique forms of adolescence and identity formation. Yet, because anthropology has not given much attention to local or folk models of adolescence, those wishing to study the phenomenon cross-culturally are often forced to rely on the Western models put forth by

scholars like Erikson and Hall. In this chapter I wish to redress the gap which exists between, on the one hand, the anthropological study of adolescence and local processes of identity formation, and on the other hand, the Western or universal notions of adolescent identity, specifically Erikson's theory of the identity crisis.

We begin with a discussion of Erikson's model of the adolescent identity formation, which is followed by a review of anthropology's contribution to the study of adolescence. The final section of the chapter presents the cultural factors which influence the process of identity formation among Naskapi teens and create the conditions for an adolescent identity which, contrary to Erikson's paradigm, is not characterized by an identity crisis.

Erikson and identity formation

Working from a Freudian psychoanalytical perspective, Erikson argues that the process of identity formation is a universal phenomenon which is marked by a series of stages. These "Eight Ages of Man" [4] represent the different periods of psycho-social development one encounters throughout his/her life cycle. The stages are sequential, each one building on the previous one, moving the individual closer to identity achievement. Accompanying each developmental phase is the identity crisis, one for each stage. During the identity crisis, which Erikson holds to be a normative element of identity formation,

[4] Interestingly, Erikson's "Eight Ages of Man" are somewhat similar to models of development espoused in the middle ages (see Aries 1962:21-22 for a comparison).

the individual is involved in a process of personal exploration and commitment to one's changing social role and psychological state (Erikson 1968:22-23). In making his claim of universality Erikson incorporates all of these key ingredients; arguing that each successive stage and crisis have a relation to one of the basic elements of society, and it is for this reason that the human life cycle and man's institutions have evolved together (Erikson 1950:250)[5].

For Erikson the adolescent phase is the most pivotal time of identity formation because it is when an individual develops an integrated image of his/herself as a unique person. He writes:

> "In no other stage of the life cycle are the promise of finding oneself and the threat of losing oneself so closely allied" (1963:10).

Adolescence is a particularly dangerous period because the crisis associated with this phase involves the deepest levels of personal exploration. The more one explores the more one is in jeopardy of developing psychological symptoms associated with low levels of ego strength, such as mood swings, uncertainty, and rebelliousness (Kidwell et. al.1995:785-786). This crisis is also somewhat risky because it has long term significance. The sequential nature of the stages involved in identity formation implies that passage to the next phase is dependent on one's achievement in the previous level, thus a successful

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[5]In fact, writing of the eighth psycho-social crisis, that of 'integrity vs. despair' Erikson says "that a wise Indian, a true gentleman, and a mature peasant share and recognize in one another the final stage of integrity even though the 'particular style of integrity' may vary according to 'historical place'" (cited in O'Donnell 1985:14).

resolution of the adolescent identity crisis is also imperative to the completion of all stages.

Erikson's model of adolescent identity formation may suit Western cultures, particularly the industrial world, in which the complex division of labour places great pressure on adolescents to choose a 'career' in order to begin the preparation for adulthood. However, in non-industrial societies, these kinds of choices about future identity may not be required. Such is the case with the Naskapi, and as our later discussion will illustrate, this difference in the maturation process lends itself to an adolescent identity that may not fit into Erikson's supposedly universal paradigm.

Anthropology and adolescence

While anthropologists have always been interested in how people go through the various stages of the life cycle, in general, our discipline has not focused much attention on the adolescent phase as an important time in and of itself. Margaret Mead's nine month study of adolescent girls in Samoa in the late 1920's was one of the first attempts made by an anthropologist to understand the nature of adolescence and how the phenomenon varies cross-culturally. In *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), Mead sought to test the "storm and stress" model put forth by Hall. She wanted to see if the emotional and psychological turmoil which was said to be experienced by America's youth was due to the nature of adolescence, or because they were adolescents in America (ibid.:6-7). Her

results, which were to be mirrored in her later study in New Guinea[6] were as follows:

> "With the exception of the few cases to be discussed in the next chapter, adolescence represented no period of crisis or stress, but was instead an orderly developing of a set of slowly maturing interests and activities. The girls' minds were perplexed by no conflicts, troubled by no philosophical queries, beset by no remote ambitions..." (1928:87).

As important as her findings are to the anthropological study of adolescence, her Samoan work has been widely scrutinized. Her most notable critic is fellow anthropologist Derek Freeman, who argues that not only was Mead duped by her female informants, but her "special investigation" of the sexual behaviour of adolescent girls was never undertaken (1996:xii). Nevertheless, her research on adolescent identity represents a victory for the power of culture over biology in determining the nature of this period. As such, Mead's work is very pertinent to my aim in this chapter, which is to illustrate the differences between Erikson's model of the adolescent identity and that of the Naskapi.

In the years following her work in Samoa Mead continued to have a keen interest in maturation, socialization, and the powerful role played by culture in shaping these areas of life, yet very few anthropologists followed her lead in taking on new adolescent studies.

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[6] Referring again to adolescent girls, Mead wrote : "Except for the unusual intrusion of a brief, penalty-ridden sex affair, these years are not years of storm and stress, nor are they years of placid unfolding of the personality..." (1942:111).

Until the culture and personality or psychological anthropology school began looking at adolescence many decades later, it was the British and American sociologists who took up the cause. Research during this era (1930's-1960's), generally focused on issues of class, delinquency, sub cultures, the education system, and pop culture. Terms such as "youth culture" and "teenager" were just beginning to be widespread. The phenomenon of youth culture was being described as an alternative to the norms prescribed by the adult world. Teenagers, through their large numerical presence and new found roles as consumers, were seen as having a hand in creating their own image or style. Although this work did much to open our eyes to some of the conditions of adolescent life, teenagers were still generally perceived as a marginal group, and there was little emphasis placed on their importance to, and within, society.

With the rise of the influential Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (C.C.C.S.) at Birmingham University, however, came more concerted efforts by social scientists to analyze the place of young people within society and their own peer groups. While the themes were similar to those focused on in the earlier sociological studies, there was a move away from viewing young people merely in terms of their purchasing power as consumers or as conforming to peer group styles, behaviour, and the images of popular culture. As many of the C.C.C.S. members were working within Marxist and semiological frameworks, youth became seen as creating their own cultural identities through the active resistance of dominant societal trends (ex. Willis 1977; Brake 1980,1988; Cohen 1972; Hall and Jefferson 1976).

Perhaps the most representative example of this body of work is Paul Willis' (1977) celebrated *Learning to Labour*, in which the contradictions of the educational system among working class youth are exposed. Willis shows that on the one hand, the youth are able to use their social backgrounds to confront school officials and apparently have a great deal of control over the course of their school experiences. However, the irony of the situation is that those same life conditions used in their confrontation (i.e. values, labour, class) are channelled through the education system in such a way that young people are actually participating in the reproduction of the inequities present in the British socio-economic system.

While the C.C.C.S. studies such as Willis' were important contributions to understanding the situation of youth in society, due to the limited applicability of much of the work and the tendency of its members to exclude the topics of ethnicity and gender, the group came under considerable criticism. More recently, however, in her book *Feminism and Youth Culture-From 'Jackie' to 'Just Seventeen'*, former contributor to the centre, Angela McRobbie attempts a more critical study of the formerly downplayed issues of subcultures and identity among young women (also see Willis 1990).

Although not a part of the C.C.C.S., *The Myth of Delinquency* (1979) by anthropologist Elliot Leyton deserves mention in this context. Concerned with the misunderstood nature of so-called "delinquent" youth living in reform schools in Atlantic

Canada, Leyton provides a penetrating look at the meaning in, and function of, delinquency. He finds that while the intervening factors of social class and familial neglect affect the experience of these youth, it is basically society who ought to be held responsible. Society creates conditions which are ripe for destructive behaviour, but we offer no solution or compassion for the troubled youth. Leyton's sensitive analysis is not only convincing, it is also one of the first anthropological works to take adolescents seriously, as a group to be studied in their own right.

Generally speaking, it has only been in the last two decades or so that adolescence and the teenage years have become more prominent topics of research within anthropology. In 1981 one of the first projects on the teenage experience among Canada's Aboriginal peoples was produced, Sally Cooper Cole's *Bored in The Arctic: The Modern Experience of Inuit Youth*. Working out of the Resolute Bay area in the North West Territories (NWT), Cole explores teenage values, behaviour, and aspirations within the context of Inuit adaptation to modernization and industrialization in the Canadian Arctic (1981:iii).

Perhaps the most interesting correlation between Cole's work and my own is the issue of the social position of youth. She looks at Inuit youth in the broad socio-political context of modernization, and finds that their marginal status is directly related to the marginal position of Inuit within Canadian society. In my own study of Naskapi teens I too found that they are, to a certain degree, marginalized. However, as discussed later on in

this chapter, among the teens of Kawawa, their marginality is, in large part, due to the negative perception held of them by members of their *own* society.

Another important addition to the study of teenagers among Canadian Native people is Catherine James' 1992 work in the Cree community of Mistissini, Quebec. James, who focuses on the rising number of premarital teen pregnancies, argues that teenage pregnancy is a product of both culture change and continuity. In order to explain this phenomenon she looks at the decreased pressure to marry, the decline in early marriages, and she also recognizes the importance of the new adolescent phase in this context.

Some of James' findings which have a direct bearing on the present account revolve around the intergenerational attitudes toward the adolescent phase. From interviews with Mistissini women of various ages and life experiences, she documents how the cultural conceptualization of the 'teenage' category has evolved. The older women criticize the younger females for not knowing enough and not maturing at an early enough age. However, as she notes, their comments do not reveal an acknowledgement of a new phase of life, the girls are simply not as prepared as they would have been in the past. The middle aged women on the other hand, those who had been teenagers during the transitional time when residential schools, welfare, and the cash economy were introduced into Cree life, clearly identified with a teenage stage and saw it as a time of personal growth and excitement. The group of young women and older teens also distinguish and

associate themselves with the teenage experience; they are indeed living it.

In her discussion of the social maturation among Cree teens, James finds that although they must deal with a number of conflicting issues, the teens do not appear to experience high degrees of psychological stress or emotional imbalance, which could be attributed to an identity crisis. She writes:

> "the passage into adulthood involves more than resolving a clash between two cultures. Cree adolescents are equally engaged in managing two sometimes conflicting sets of social relations and in interpreting and responding to significant aspects of Cree culture : the social ethics of group harmony and behaviour, valuation of parenting and family, and the ethics and practices of bush life" (ibid.:95).

Thus, as James makes clear, as Cree teens come of age and are involved in the process of interpreting their world, they are attempting to manage and make sense out of the diversities within larger Cree identity, a process which is not synonymous with not knowing one's own personal identity.

Perhaps the most significant anthropological contribution to the study of adolescence is that of the Harvard Adolescent Project. In the early 1980's, under the direction of esteemed anthropologists John and Beatrice Whiting, a number of field sites around the world were chosen and a cross-cultural study of adolescence was conducted, usually by researchers who were familiar with each respective area. The preferred field

locales were bounded microcommunities, such as a band, hamlet, or neighbourhood, and typically consisted of between 30-40 households. The destinations of ethnographic investigations are varied and include: Holman Island in the Canadian arctic; northern Australia; an island in south west Thailand; a central province in Kenya; southern Nigeria; the Romanian foothills; and central Morocco.

The treatment of adolescence found among the diverse range of cultures was quite varied, and for the sake of empirical accuracy the researchers decided to select the age of the females' first menarche as the starting point of adolescence. As boys tend to mature approximately two years later than girls, to calculate the onset of male adolescence two years were added to the female ages in each respective setting. In their efforts to operationalize a definition of adolescence the team decided on a very general description: "the transitional period between the end of childhood and the attainment of adult social status" (Whiting and Whiting 1987:xii, in Condon 1987). Upon conclusion of fieldwork and data analysis, a series of ethnographies were published, entitled *Adolescents In A Changing World*.

Of all works included in the Harvard series, the two most useful to the present discussion are Richard Condon's (1987) study of the Inuit youth of Holman Island, and the work on female adolescents in northern Australia by Victoria Burbank (1988). Condon's work is significant because he discusses the changes which have occurred in the phase of adolescence among the Inuit from more traditional times. However, while noting the many

new and often difficult pressures Inuit youth are subjected to, Condon finds the Holman teenagers to be quite well-adjusted, resilient individuals. As was the case with James' work among Cree teenagers, the Inuit youth of Holman island appear to go through their own culturally specific process of maturation, one which does not feature some of the supposedly universal features of adolescence.

Burbank's research is especially pertinent to my work because while focusing primarily on the issues of sexuality and marriage, she also looks at the introduction of a new social phase in the Aborigine culture, that of "maidenhood". Maidenhood is defined as the period between the beginning of fertility and motherhood (1988:4). As with the Naskapi, prior to resettlement and a host of other cultural changes associated with modernization, the northern Australians did not have a distinct adolescent phase. Although she only covers the female adolescent experience, her work stands as a valuable contribution to the field.

Many of Burbank's findings are similar to what I observed among the Naskapi, especially those pertaining to intergenerational interpretations of courtship and changing familial relations. For instance, given that contemporary marriage patterns and dating practices are different from the traditional ways (i.e. girls are marrying later and dating for a much longer period of time than in the past), adolescent sexuality cannot be sanctioned by the same social controls and cultural customs as they were in the past. In both Kawawa and Burbank's Mangrove, this creates much strain between family members and parents,

although they may admit to having similar experiences when they were young, often distance themselves from the apparently different 'maidens' or teenagers (ibid.:60-61,81-82). Burbank also says that many of the new innovations which are fast becoming a part of adolescence at Mangrove "appear to be inventions of the young" (ibid.:40). Hence the 'maidens' are active participants in the creation of their social experience as adolescents. This is an important observation because it coincides with some of the emerging trends in anthropology which acknowledge the role of young peoples' agency and their participation in the creation of their own cultural experience.

In their comprehensive study of adolescence in 138 preindustrial societies, Schlegel and Barry (1991) use a cross-cultural method similar to that of the Harvard project. Unlike Aries' (1962) assertion that adolescence is a very new occurrence, these authors treat it as a universal social and cultural phenomenon. Working within the life-course and life-span tradition Schlegel and Barry focus on reproduction, seeing it as the key to both the emergence of social adolescence, as well as societal recognition of this development (ibid.:207-208). Although the cases in this sample represent "a world that has vanished" (ibid.:200), the writers do offer some comment on adolescence in modernizing societies or those experiencing rapid culture change, which will be touched on below.

As with many studies dealing with the effects of culture change Schlegel and Barry make note of the widespread impact of schooling, the influence of western culture, and the interrelated decrease in parental authority. Perhaps even more interesting are their findings

related to adolescent identity, when they note that the researchers involved in their study:

> "have failed to find the *Sturm und Drang* that supposedly characterizes adolescence in Western society, nor does it generally seem to characterize adolescence in modernizing societies either" (ibid.:205).

The authors then cite Davis and Davis (1989), two members of the Harvard Adolescent Project who worked with Moroccan youth. Their work is included here because it represents ethnographic evidence which illustrates the how inappropriate the application of Western models of identity formation to non-western societies can be. Davis and Davis (1989:182) write:

> "Erikson's account of an adolescent beleaguered by contradictory role expectations sounds like it would work well in the rapidly changing Moroccan setting, but we in fact have not seen much of the "role confusion" of which Erikson writes. Zawiya youth seem to us surprisingly good at negotiating the twists and turns of daily life".

Hence in these two works, the Harvard Project and Schlegel and Barry's *Adolescence-An Anthropological Inquiry*, we see data which supports the study of adolescent identity and experience through local contexts and indigenous models. Moreover, when discussing the merits of the anthropological approach to the study of

adolescence (namely our belief that adolescents not only preparation for adult roles, it is also a time during which young people are often making important contributions to their society), Schlegel and Barry also say that adolescence *can* be studied as a stage sui generis rather than as simply a marginal or transitional period (1991:6 emphasis added). The importance of such statements must be underscored. Not only are they some of the few examples within anthropological discourse, but they also represent ethnographic proof which supports our assertion that we must go beyond well worn Western paradigms to uncover the underlying local or folk features and structures of such phenomenon.

One of the most recent additions to the anthropological study of adolescence is the 1995 publication *Youth Cultures-A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, edited by Vered Amit-Talai and Helena Wulff. In this collection of ethnographic studies from Canada, Britain, the Netherlands, Nepal, Algeria, and the Solomon Islands the authors challenge the traditional notions of youth as liminal or deviant. Wulff outlines their approach by saying "There is above all a consistent theoretical concern to show how young people are active agents-in different ways and with varying force-in the construction of the meanings and symbolic forms which make up their cultures" (Wulff 1995:1). This volume is very useful because, along with the Harvard Project, it is one of only a handful of studies which focus on youth in modernizing societies, in which we are just beginning to see the effects of the changing "adolescent" category. Also, as they write about issues of globalization, creolization, and cultural production, all of which play an important part in the lives of the ethnically diverse youth included in this book, the authors also contribute to the wider

trend within anthropology, that of "rewriting culture" (ibid.:2).

The Naskapi model of adolescent identity

As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, the particular demands placed on young people in Western society to decide their futures during adolescence may engender a process of identity formation similar to the one outlined by Erikson. However, due to a number of intervening factors, the development of Naskapi adolescent identity, both in the past and today, does not depend on those same kinds of pressures. In this section, I will draw upon some ethnographic data from my research to elucidate some of the most important cultural factors which help explain the unique process of identity formation among Naskapi teens today.

First, there is the issue of the adolescent phase itself. Before the advent of European contact, social organization among the Naskapi was defined by, and depended on, interdependence between group members. No one individual could survive on his own and the group relied on each individual for the survival of all (Henriksen 1973:42-43). At an early age children were taught and began practising the skills they would need to know to be functioning members of society. Since the division of labour was simply along gender lines children were basically born into their social roles. If you were a boy you were a hunter, if a girl you were a mother and provider (Levesque et. al. 1996(b):25,27). Although young people became adults at an early age, they had important social and

economic responsibilities which had to be mastered before they could obtain full adult status. Hence, while adolescence was not a time of searching for one's social role and sense of identity, it was an important time of growth and learning.

Much has now changed and there clearly is a new 'teenage' stage. However, with regard to the absence of a personal search for one's social role, there exists a parallel between the youth of the past and the teens of today. In traditional times one did not need to plan for the future because there were few options available. Yet today, although there are more options, as we will see, there are other factors at play which affect why the teenagers do not prepare for their adult roles during this period.

The teens' ideas about the future and the fact that they do not appear to realize their aspirations or goals are the second points we need to consider as we assess Naskapi teenage identity. When asked about the future, most teens say they do not know what they want to do, some mention having a job, going to college, and others just want to graduate high school. Although they cite these things as possibilities for the future, the reality of the situation is quite different. Only a small percentage of teens graduate high school each year and those that do are at least two years older than the national average graduating age. Similarly, given the large numbers of teens and their general lack of incentive to participate in the job creation strategies that are available in Kawawa, when the current generation of teens reach employable age, it is probable that few will actually seek or maintain jobs. Going to college is another thing some spoke of as a possibility for the

future, but given the high drop out rate, this goal is rarely achieved. When these factors are combined with the general dislike of the pressures they see as defining adulthood, the teens have no desire to move beyond their current stage.[7]

There are additional features of the Naskapi value system and familial organization which affect the teenagers' attitudes about the future. The strong value that continues to be placed by the Naskapi on the personal autonomy of others, which results in the distinctly non-authoritarian Naskapi form of parental guidance, also helps account for why the teens do not appear to make preparations for their prospective social roles. Although parents want their teens to do well for themselves, and often criticize them when they do not do so, many do not interfere or push their children to be successful. Also, similar to the first vignette described at the end of chapter five, because many parents are not familiar with the different kinds of socio-economic or academic options available today, they are at a loss as to how to instruct their teens to succeed in these new roles.

Another element at play which helps to explain the teens' reluctance to make future plans is the fact that there is, as yet, no approved social role for the teenagers which is validated by the rest of society. We know that in the past one's social role was basically defined at birth. Yet today, because of mandatory schooling, living virtually year-round in the settlement, which leads to a group of teens who are now a major source of

[7]There is a possible explanation for this situation however, and one which makes sense for the teens. Given that among adults there are high rates of unemployment, problem drinking, housing shortages, and spousal conflict, the strategy of remaining teenagers as long as possible may actually be in their best interest, because they are delaying the onset of the welfare economy they see around them

socialization, and access to Euro-Canadian culture, specifically pop culture, there are many new features of adolescence. There are now many more diverse social roles to choose from and to define oneself against. Contrary to Erikson's model, however, this variety of possible social roles does not necessarily imply that the teens are unsure of what their identities are. Rather, it is the older generation of Naskapi who see the status of this group as problematic, not the teens themselves.

The adults and elders in Kawawa generally view the teenagers as immature, as incapable of doing what youth in the past did, and they are often seen as not "doing anything" with their lives. In particular, they are criticized for not going to the bush enough, for not going to church, for not getting married before having children and for not helping out with community projects or activities. However, the underlying components of this criticism-economics, spirituality, marriage and the family, and communal betterment-mark difficult changes that are being experienced by the *whole* of Naskapi society, not just the teenagers. Adults in general, find themselves disillusioned with the effects of socio-economic change, and are unable to conceptualize a new social role for teenagers, and as explained more fully in chapter four, they perceive the present teen role as unfulfilling.

The final point to be made about the difference between Naskapi teenage identity and Erikson's model of adolescent identity involves an issue which is rarely given much serious consideration by writers of adolescence in general, that of the "fun" aspect of being a teenager. From the description of teenage life in the chapter which deals with coming of

age and changing family dynamics, we know that Naskapi teens generally see this time of life as fun. However, here I am referring to the fact that drinking, trying drugs, and experimenting with sex are enjoyable and exciting activities in and of themselves, and they are not always, as Erikson might argue, indicators of psychological maladjustment. This point ought to be kept in mind because, as Beauvais notes (1992:62), it can prevent us from single-mindedly placing teenagers, even those like the Naskapi who have been greatly affected by socio-cultural change, in the catch-all category of adolescents who are devoid of a sense of identity.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the Western model of adolescent identity and discussed the anthropological contribution to the area of adolescence. In the section dealing with the Naskapi model of adolescence, I have attempted to show that although the teens do not make serious attempts to prepare for their future adult roles, as they would be seen to do in Erikson's theory, this does not necessarily imply that they are experiencing an identity crisis or that they do not have a sense of who they are. Instead, there are specific cultural factors at play which help explain this situation. Since Naskapi adolescence was traditionally not a time of searching for one's social role, and because there is no definite social role for the teenager today, as there is in modern industrial societies, there is not the same kind of cultural precedent for the teens to plan for their future. There is also the relative lack of authoritarian guidance from the parents. These

factors create a situation in which the teens are reluctant to prepare for adulthood.

This outline of Naskapi adolescence represents an alternative model which, contrary to Erikson's theory, is not defined by an identity crisis. In the ensuing chapters we will be presented with data which will help to contextualize the points raised in the Naskapi model, and we will see that this is a much more satisfactory explanation of the process of coming of age among the Naskapi than that of the Western or universal paradigms.

CHAPTER III- HISTORICAL OVERVIEW & THE SETTING

Introduction

In this chapter we look at the various social, economic, and historical conditions which have shaped the cultural development of the Naskapi. Locating the Naskapi in time and space helps to create a data baseline from which we can relate certain circumstances of the past with those seen in the present to better understand not only how the two relate, but also to trace any cultural patterns which may exist. This section opens with a historical overview, including a discussion of pre-settlement times, a brief sketch of the development and usage of the term 'Naskapi', the difficult and somewhat tragic Naskapi involvement in the fur trade, and the events leading up to the establishment of their own community. The second part of the chapter deals with social organization among the Naskapi today, as well as a description of Kawawachikamach itself.

Historical overview

the presettlement era and the term 'Naskapi'

The Naskapi, as Algonkian speaking hunters and gatherers, have inhabited the

north-easterly portions of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula for thousands of years. Their territory covers two ecological zones, the upper subarctic and mid arctic, and is characterized by a mixture of black spruce, various lichens, stretches of alpine tundra, and many interior lakes and rivers. This terrain provided the nomadic Naskapi with large game, primarily caribou, which they pursued in the winter and fall seasons. During the spring and summer various species of fish were caught, along with smaller fur-bearing animals and water fowl.

Prior to settlement the basic social, political, and economic unit for the Naskapi was the family (Cooke 1976:5). At this time their social activities essentially mirrored the wider pattern inherent in their subsistence cycle of seasonal transhumance. In the summer several families would gather together at choice harvesting spots and it was a time of communal celebrations, courting, and a chance for families to be reacquainted with relatives. Life during the winter and fall was quite different. At this time of year people dispersed into groupings of 1-3 families and travelled by foot to places like Indian House Lake on the George River to await the caribou (Van Stone 1984:2; Tanner 1944:669).

However, Naskapi dependence on the caribou stemmed beyond developing an extremely specialized adaptation to what was essentially a single resource economy, the caribou was also at the heart of Naskapi cosmology and cultural values and belief systems. As such, great respect was shown to the caribou and other animal spirits through the ritual practices of the *mokoshan* and the shaking tent ceremony, which were performed to pay

homage to the spirits and to ensure amicable relations between man and the spirit worlds (Speck 1935). Hunting divination rites were often done by scapulamancy and the drum was another vehicle through which man could communicate with the animals. Dreams were also very powerful mediums of sacred expression because through the process of dreaming a hunting spot was often revealed (ibid.1935; Armitage 1991:80).

Archaeological data suggests that the interior of the peninsula has been occupied by Indians since the beginning of what is known as the Recent Prehistoric Period, or approximately the last 5,500 years. (Wilkinson and Geoffrey 1989:21). Scholars writing about Native groups in this region have tended to group the Naskapi together with, and describe them in relation to, the closely related neighbouring groups the Montagnais and East Cree. Rogers and Leacock (1981:169) for example, present these peoples in relation to three drainage patterns in the region-the North Atlantic and Ungava Bay to the north (the Naskapi), the Saint Lawrence River and Gulf in the south (the Montagnais), and James and Hudson Bays to the east (the Cree). However, as Cooke points out, we must remember that the differences among these three groups are a result of different European cultural and economic differences during the past three centuries, not because there were any essential prehistoric differences among them (1976:9).

In her examination of the complex usages and often unclear meanings attributed to the term 'Naskapi' Mailhot (1986:388) makes the same point:

"In the writings on the *Naskapi* there is a striking element: [...] the *Naskapi*

> are always systematically contrasted with the *Montagnais*. Regardless of the time period concerned, however, there are flagrant contradictions as to the territory occupied by these *Naskapi* and these *Montagnais*, and as to the criteria which form the basis for the contrast between the two groups. For some writers, it is founded on the *tundra vs. forest* dichotomy (Tanner 1944:588-90); [...] Still others see it as equivalent to *group hunting vs. individual hunting.* " (Speck and Eiseley 1942:219)[8].

Through her detailed analysis of the origin of the word Naskapi, Mailhot succeeds in demonstrating that the Montagnais vs. Naskapi dialectic is a relatively recent development, and that this division is not due to cultural, territorial, or linguistic factors; it is instead, a problem of semantics (ibid.:388).

While the thrust of the present discussion is not linguistic, given the somewhat confusing usage of the word Naskapi, a brief explanation may prove useful. The term, connoting "primitive Indians", first appeared in the written documents of the Quebec-Labrador region in 1643, as "*Ounachkapiouek*", which was a Montagnais term borrowed by the French (ibid,:390). In 1733 the term *Naskapi* is first seen, francicized and in its modern spelling in the place name "lake of the Naskapis", at which time the group was said to number approximately forty families and to have an important camp at Lake

[8]In her article Mailhot makes a distinction between what the italicised terms are to mean in relation to her discussion. The words Naskapi and Montagnais appear in italics when they are used in reference to categories to be analyzed. I believe that the dichotomized terms included in this passage which are also italicized are done so to simply emphasize the meaning of the words.

Achouanipi (ibid.:391; Wilkinson and Geoffrey 1989:22). Its first derivative in English dates to 1740, where the word "*Annes=carps*" is understood to be a clumsy form of the term *Naskapi* (Mailhot 1986:393).

As Mailhot says, given the ambiguous treatment of the word, deducing the exact identity of these *Naskapi* is quite difficult. Through time, and different colonial powers, their territory ranged from Richmond Gulf, located along the mid-section of Hudson Bay, to Sandwich Bay, around the south eastern coast of Labrador; and Cartwright (in 1778) used the terms *Montagnais* and *Naskapi* interchangeably (ibid.396). It was around 1800 that the first clear distinction was made between the two groups, which is seen in a comparative lexicon of the "Skoffie, Micmac, and Mountaineer dialects" (ibid.:396). The nineteenth century, which Mailhot terms a "*Naskapi* boom" sees still further variations and contexts in which the term is used.

Perhaps most important to this discussion is the fact that the term today is only used to refer to "those Indians in the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula who are direct descendants of the former caribou hunters of the tundra" (ibid.:407). Also, the "Naskapi" dialect is spoken solely in the communities of Davis Inlet and Kawawachikamach; which sets them apart from those to the west, where Cree is spoken, and from those farther south, where the language is Montagnais (MacKenzie 1980 and 1982).

However, there may be some lingering confusion in our discussion of the Naskapi

when we include the term 'Innu'. For some native inhabitants of the Quebec-Labrador region, primarily those residing in Labrador, the word 'Innu' (meaning 'the people' in their language, *Innu-aimun*) has replaced the earlier classification 'Montagnais-Naskapi'. For some Innu adopting this self-ascribed name is an assertion of their ethnic identity and is part of their larger socio-political movement toward self-determination. The two provincial groups are, as Tanner makes clear:

> [...] socially and culturally, a single people. But each has its own distinct political organization, and each with its own ideological viewpoint. Even the use of the indigenous term 'Innu' when using English or French separates them, since it has been promoted by the Labrador group, while the Quebec group continues to use the term 'Montagnais' [and 'Naskapi'] (Tanner 1993:94).

While Mailhot makes mention that there has been a transformation in the attitude taken toward the name 'Naskapi' by the Naskapi themselves (i.e. its move from a pejorative term to something which is embraced as a symbol of cultural pride), as we will see in the second half of this chapter, the young Naskapi males in Kawawa use the term "savages" (which is what the majority of them interpret as the original meaning of the word 'Naskapi') in a similar way, as a form of in-group identification and ethnic exclusiveness.

European contact and the fur trade

Now that the early pre-settlement socio-cultural conditions have been presented and the diffuse meanings of the term Naskapi have been clarified, we can turn to the next phase in their history, that of European contact and the fur trade. This stage in Naskapi cultural development is extremely important because here we see the first example of how they are "forced" to change their traditional hunting activities - from predominantly large game hunters to part time hunters and trappers - and the devastating effects this has on Naskapi social and cultural life. Yet, despite the hardships encountered during this rather dark period, we can also see evidence of their fierce sense of identity and strength. It is this tenacity, especially with respect to the bush, and their ability to allude the acculturative forces that surrounded them which sets the Naskapi apart from many other native groups in the region (Tanner 1998, personal communication). In many ways, we could say that this inherent tenaciousness also contributes to the special place the bush continues to hold for most Naskapi, which is discussed in chapter six.

As Georg Henriksen says, "The Naskapi or *Moshwaw Inno* were, and are, perhaps the least known of the Indians on the [Quebec-] Labrador Peninsula" (1973:11). This is, in large part, because the French and English who first took part in the fur trade (16th century), along with the missionaries who penetrated the area (as early as 1633), did so on the southern shores of the Peninsula, primarily among the Montagnais, and gradually moved northwards into Hudson Bay and along the Labrador coast (ibid.:11). This meant

that the Naskapi residing mainly in the interior were basically left alone. Although they were not involved in regular trading relations with the Europeans at this time, throughout the ensuing decades the Naskapi did procure some of the imported material goods (including food, tobacco, and various knickknacks), either by direct trading or through native middlemen (ibid.:11).

In 1819, when the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) began to make more concerted explorations into the northern interior for the purpose of setting up trading posts, relations between the Naskapi and the Europeans began to change (ibid.:11-12; Cooke 1976:10). In 1830, under the direction of Nicol Finlayson and Erland Erlandson Fort Chimo, the first of numerous inland trading posts to be established in the region, was opened (Cooke:11). Over the course of the next 126 years (1830-1956), until they were settled in the mining town of Schefferville, Quebec, the Naskapi endured five different trading post re-locations (see Figure 2). Alan Cooke, the first chronicler of Naskapi history, provides a thorough discussion of each movement and the local variables which affected the social conditions of the Naskapi (see Cooke 1976). He introduces the notion of "attachment" to describe the increased Naskapi dependency on the various posts. Cooke also details the cruel trade off made by the fur traders to ensure the Naskapi would have no choice but to trap for the HBC. He tells of many instances throughout their involvement in the fur trade when, in order to secure their close proximity to the posts while trapping, the Naskapi were not provided with enough ammunition nor "time off" during the proper time in the seasonal cycle to complete a successful caribou hunt-which led to incredible loss of life (ibid.:31).

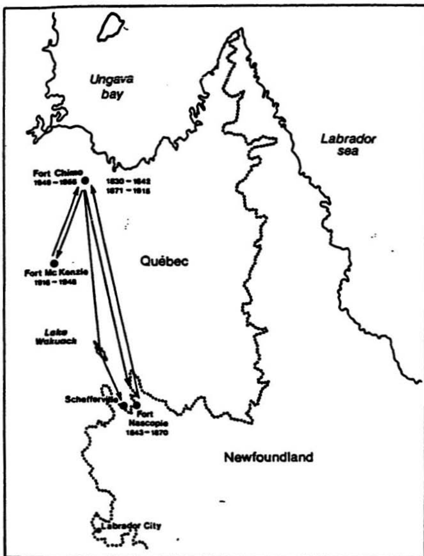

Figure 2. Relocation pattern of the Naskapi from 1830-1956.
Source: Peat, Marwick et. al 1979:19.

Table 1. SOME PAST NASKAPI POPULATION FIGURES, 1833 - 1911.

Date	Population	Deaths By Starvation
1833	250-300	
1843	276	
1843-44		20
1846-47		36
1848-49	166	54
1856	200	
1857		ca.50
1883	350	
1886	ca.400	
1889	350-360	
1892-93	150	200
1896	150	
1911	ca.240 (about 60 hunters)	

Source : A History of the Naskapi of Schefferville. Alan Cooke 1976:51.

This period is a very sad one for the Naskapi. Not only did they suffer through periods of starvation (see Table 1), but as their cultural values were so closely intertwined with the pattern of life they enjoyed as nomadic caribou hunters, through the forced transition of hunting practices, these related cultural systems became unbalanced and there was less opportunity for them to be as meaningful as they once were.

However, there were other reasons beyond the culturally debilitating situation of "attachment" and complete ignorance of Naskapi cultural integrity on the part of the fur traders which made this time so difficult. In the fall of 1916, the large caribou herds which had annually passed through Indian House Lake failed to appear (Van Stone 1984:4; Henriksen 1973:13;). This caused mass fear and hunger among the Naskapi and in an effort to better ensure their survival they split up, one group travelled to the coast (the Davis Inlet 'Innu' of today) and the other went to Fort McKenzie (the Naskapi of Kawawa), where they remained until 1948.

While the change in caribou migration patterns in 1916 was devastating, it was not an isolated occurrence. In the late 1940's there was another severe shortage of caribou in the George River Herd (Wilkinson and Geoffrey 1989:30). With the "virtual disappearance" of caribou, pressures of the fur trade and high rates of mortality and sickness from diseases communicated by the Europeans, the survival of the Naskapi was at stake (ibid.:30). They were receiving welfare from the federal government (which began in 1949), and had made attempts to re-establish themselves at Fort McKenzie by combining

hunting and fishing with commercial trapping, but the costs of resupplying them along with the high rates of tuberculosis meant they could not be fully self-sufficient, so the Naskapi returned once again to Fort Chimo (ibid.:30).

As mentioned at the outset of this section, despite this unbelievably difficult period of socio-cultural transition, the Naskapi resisted acculturation to the best of their ability and they were intent on staying in the interior. This independence was a trait recognized early on in their relationship with the Europeans. Cooke cites John MacLean, the successor to Finlayson during the early days of Fort Chimo, in 1838 as saying that the "roving about" of the Naskapi:

> "[...] encourages a spirit of independence, which prevents the Gentlemen in this Quarter from introducing regulations that might tend to make them more industrious, a result which it is now sufficiently well known kind treatment alone can never produce. Fear and a thorough conviction of their dependence on us, in conjunction with kind treatment judiciously applied might have some effect in producing a change for the better" (1976:15).

This tenacity deserve mention because it was, and I would argue *is,* a key to Naskapi cultural and physical survival. An example through which we can see their "proud and independent" nature in more recent events is the visit of the Regional Supervisor of Indian

Agencies at Fort Chimo in 1953. He found that many of them had tuberculosis and at first many of them refused to be evacuated, and only later did most concede to leave for treatment (ibid.:72). This high regard for the bush and personal and group autonomy is also seen in the work of Henriksen (1973; 1993), who discusses how autonomy and respect for individuality is a valued trait and continues to affect social organization and behaviour among the Naskapi today. An even more recent example of this can be seen in the name change of the Naskapi in Kawawa. In April of 1996 the band council approved a motion to change the name from 'the Naskapi band of Quebec' to 'the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach', a move which emphasises with pride their position as a nation.

the monumental move: Schefferville and settlement life (1956-1982)

While each move from trading post to trading post had its own set of difficult conditions for the Naskapi, because they remained in the interior they were able to maintain some semblance of their traditional hunting way of life. However with the move to Schefferville in 1956 the very context through which Naskapi socio-economic identity had been expressed and made meaningful, the bush, was suddenly replaced with houses, a permanent settlement, interaction with strangers, and for some, wage labour. Regretfully, this monumental transition was not simply the beginning of a different way of life, it was also part of a whole new series of moves and irreproachable treatment by provincial and federal powers.

The circumstances surrounding the move to Schefferville is a case in point. Supposedly, the officials at Indian and Northern Affairs gave the Naskapi a choice between two different spots for re-location, Sept-Isles or Knob Lake (the original name of Schefferville), with the former being preferred (Cooke 1976:78). However, despite the fact that the government officials were aware of their selection, it was "discountenanced from on high" (ibid.:78), and agreements were made for the Naskapi to go to Lake Wakuach, about 60 miles north of Knob Lake. As little was done to prepare Knob Lake nor Lake Wakuach for their arrival, coupled with the difficulties the Naskapi had with their overland trip (some were transported by air, but most walked the 400 mile journey), when they finally arrived "most of them were in a pitiable state, exhausted, ill, and close to starvation" (Wilkinson and Geoffrey 1989:32).

This inhospitable introduction to settled life was just the beginning, for they had to endure a remarkable three additional moves before establishing their own community. In 1956 shacks around Knob Lake, which the Naskapi built themselves from scavenged and donated materials, were their first "homes" (ibid.:32). A year later they were transplanted to nearby John Lake with a number of Montagnais who, like the Naskapi had been brought to the area to be employed in the newly opened iron ore mine. At John Lake, where the two groups lived from 1957-1971, there was no running water, electricity, or sanitation facilities, and this location did not even gain reserve status until 1960 (Peat, Marwick, et. al 1979:18). [9] Matimekosh, a few miles away, was the next home for the

[9] While John Lake gained reserve status in 1960, we should note that the Naskapi only received band status in 1971, as The Naskapis de Schefferville Indian Band, fifteen years after being re-located (ibid.:32).

Naskapi, and they lived here, again with the Montagnais, until 1982.

It is unfortunate that so little information is available for this period in Naskapi history. Robbins (1975,1988,1989), Peat, Marwick et al (1979), and the impressive *A Parcel of Fools* document prepared by Wilkinson and Geoffrey (1989) are a few exceptions. However, there is virtually no data in which we hear the voices of the Naskapi themselves. I was able to gather some insight into this period, through casual conversation and taped interviews with Naskapi of various ages. One of the most fascinating things I heard several times about John Lake for instance, is that although the living conditions were rather difficult when compared to Euro-Canadian standards (i.e. no running water, electricity or sewage facilities), this location was spoken of favourably by most people I talked to. Upon leaving the interior John Lake was the closest the Naskapi ever came to bush life as they knew it. Hence, it is logical for them to view it, not against what it did not represent in western standards, instead John Lake was related to and associated with the way of life the Naskapi knew and valued.

Similarly, although statistics and local knowledge tell us of the astounding rate of alcoholism in Matimekosh, the unfair treatment of some Naskapi by the IOC, and the rivalry which was said to exist between themselves and the Montagnais, I also heard of the positive side to life at this time. Many women were very proud of being able to have their own houses, the young people enjoyed the recreational facilities in Schefferville, and some men felt very proud to be employed and to contribute to their familial and community well

being. This extremely important side to the story must be more fully explored. However, additional research is needed before we can fairly and accurately represent this period.

the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the North Eastern Quebec Agreement: towards Kawawachikamach

Two crucial events in this chapter of Naskapi history which have been written about are the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (J.B.N.Q.A.) and the Northeastern Quebec Agreement (N.E.Q.A.), which took place in 1978. While these political landmarks are discussed quite extensively elsewhere (see Wilkinson and Geoffrey 1989:36-41 and chapter 12), I will make brief mention of them here, given the large role they played and continue to play in shaping Naskapi social, cultural, and economic life.

In early 1975 the Naskapi entered into a contract with the Northern Quebec Inuit Association (N.Q.I.A), who, along with the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec (G.C.C.Q), were negotiating the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. The J.B.N.Q.A. was essentially a deal between the native peoples of the region and the federal and provincial government, wherein the signatories received monetary and logistical support in exchange for ceding their aboriginal rights to lands stipulated in the agreement. However, these negotiations proved futile for the Naskapi because the Agreement was signed on Nov. 11, 1975 without them (ibid.:36). Not only were they ousted from the

agreement, but Paragraph 7.2.1 of the J.B.N.Q.A.[10], effectively extinguished Naskapi aboriginal rights in the said area without their receipt of any benefits or compensation (ibid.:37).

So, in September of 1975 the Naskapi took action and began the process of creating their own agreement. On many levels the procedure they went through en route to the N.E.Q.A. was quite different from that of 1975. Seeing as the J.B.N.Q.A. acted to divide Northern Quebec between the Cree and the Inuit as though the Naskapi did not exist, the first task for the Naskapi was to negotiate with the Cree and Inuit, with the aim of securing a "return" of lands and rights from the latter (because the Naskapi entered the 1975 talks under the same contract as the Inuit)(ibid.:39). This was a rather difficult undertaking because the Cree and Inuit leaders had to convince their respective constituents to give up certain rights and benefits they had just gained.

The negotiating parties ran into additional problems, as reflected in several provisions of the N.E.Q.A. for example,: the "Naskapi area of primary interest", defined at Paragraph 24.13.3A of the J.B.N.Q.A., leaves Fort McKenzie in the Inuit area of primary interest, even though Fort McKenzie had been the home-base for the Naskapi from 1916-1948 and had rarely or never been used or even visited by the Inuit; similarly, Paragraph 24.13.7A of the J.B.N.Q.A. imposes severe restrictions upon the exercise of the right to

[10]Which stated that "Category II lands will comprise 35,000 square miles in the Territory north of the 55th parallel of latitude (of which 1 600 square miles shall not form part of the present regime and shall not be selected by the Inuit. *These lands may*, in the event of an agreement, *be used by the Naskapi after having been selected by agreement with Quebec)...*" Emphasis added.

harvest by the Naskapis near the Caniapiscau Reservoir, reflecting the fact that, although the Crees and the Naskapis had traditionally used that area as equals, the Crees' rights there had been confirmed by the J.B.N.Q.A. to the exclusion of those of the Naskapis (ibid.:40). Despite these and other difficulties, however, the N.E.Q.A. was signed on January 31, 1978.

The N.E.Q.A. is incredibly important to the Naskapi for many reasons. It established who is eligible as a band member and confirmed the rights of the beneficiaries to hunt, fish, and trap virtually without restriction, it created three categories of land for the Naskapis and established their rights over each category[11], granted $9,000,000 in financial compensation to the Naskapi, and provided for the creation of a non-profit, Naskapi corporation to receive and administer that compensation (ibid.:41). The agreement also signalled a turning point for the Naskapi, in terms of realizing greater control and direction over their lives. For example, through Section 7 of the N.E.Q.A. and the Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act, the Naskapi were given the ability to exercise a degree of local self-government, which is unique among the First Nations of Canada. Also, when this act was enacted in 1984 it replaced the former "Naskapis de Schefferville Band" with "the Naskapi Band of Quebec".

[11] Category I-N Lands : IA-N lands are set aside for the exclusive use and benefit of the Naskapi; IB-N lands-of which the mineral and subsurface rights remain within the exclusive control of the Quebec Government (however, ownership of these lands was granted to the Naskapi Land Holding Corporation of Schefferville). Category II-N Lands : which are owned by the Quebec Government and are designated for the exclusive use of the hunting, fishing, and trapping activities of the Naskapi. Category III-N Lands : are lands opened to the public in accordance with legislation and regulations concerning public lands (Government. of Quebec 1984; cited by Lopez-Gonzalez 1993:15).

However, perhaps the most crucial element of the agreement was Section 20, which granted the Naskapi the opportunity to re-locate at either their former John Lake residence, the spot which was then known as Block Matemace, or they could upgrade the conditions of Matimekosh. In 1979 Peat, Marwick et. al. conducted an extensive survey of each possible location, which included gathering the points of view of the Naskapi. When the vote to decide upon the location for their new community was held Block Matemace, with over 75% of the popular support, clearly emerged as the preferred site (Robbins 1988:20). It was the best choice for some obvious structural and economic reasons : it was the largest in area, it was located a substantial distance away from Schefferville (15 km. north), and there were four times as many jobs available. However, there are a number of reasons behind their selection that seem to reflect the social, cultural, and ideological standpoint of the Naskapi as a whole[12]. They were ready for change and for the first time since being moved from the bush they were in a position to do it their way.

Soon thereafter there was a community-wide contest held to find an appropriate name for their new home. The winner was Knottie Sandy who suggested '*Kawawachikamach*', which roughly translates as 'where the winding waters meet' (which is very accurate because Kawawa is located at the juncture of Lakes Matemace and Peter).

[12] It is interesting that the isolation of Block Matemace (also known as Site 3 and 4) from the Montagnais is often viewed as the main advantage of the location. Social conflict and the practice of outmarrying (of Naskapi women to Montagnais men) were two problems the Naskapi hoped to alleviate through separation. The re-establishment of hunting and related practices, as well as celebrations were also aspects of their culture that they felt should be maintained in a distinctly *Naskapi* way, apart from the Montagnais.

The Naskapi Relocation Corporation was established to supervise the designing and building of the village, which was carried out by the Naskapi Construction Corporation and with an almost exclusively Naskapi work force, and the pivotal transition was underway. However, as was becoming almost characteristic, the Naskapi suffered yet another devastating blow. In November of 1982 the closure of the Iron Ore Company (of Canada) in Schefferville was announced. While the Naskapi have created a viable economy, largely due to the benefits secured through the N.E.Q.A., at the time the I.O.C. was their main employer and this news had many serious implications. Some of these included the loss of many vital services and facilities, and the virtual social and economic collapse of the town of Schefferville. As the authors of A Parcel of Fools aptly summarize: "While their traditional economy had succeeded in sustaining them for over 4,000 years, the economy of Schefferville failed to sustain them for twenty years" (p.11).

The Naskapi and their community today

Kawawachikamach is one of 13 Innu communities located in the provinces of Quebec and Labrador. These villages support a total population of some 13,000 people, while Kawawachikamach is home to just under 550 Naskapi (See Table 2). Pursuant to Section 20 of the N.E.Q.A., the community was built between 1981 and 1984 and covers approximately 40 acres on 16 square miles of Category IA-N lands. The village is situated in what are known as the Labrador Hills, in the southern portion of the Naskapi territory. This region is characterized by a series of valleys and hills, the summits of which can

"Up The Hill"

"Down The Hill"

KEY

1. Telebec sub station
2. Manikin general store
3. St. John's Anglican church
4. Naskapi Development Corporation
5. Naskapi Daycare
6. Naskapi Radio
7. Naskapi Band Office
8. The Dispensary
9. Jimmy Sandy Memorial School
10. Naskapi Police
11. Naskapi Garage
12. The pump house

* Apartment blocks

Figure 3. Map of the Community of Kawawachikamach. Reprinted with permission of The Naskapi Band of Quebec.

exceed 700 meters (Wilkinson and Geoffrey 1989:189), and they line virtually every horizon around Kawawa. In this area lake ice begins to form before November 1 and breaks up between June 10-20. Rivers conform to a slightly different pattern, freezing before November 20 and thawing between May 20 - June 1. In terms of climate, the average annual temperature is about -3 to -4 degrees Celsius. Summers are relatively cool, ranging from 7 to 18 degrees C; and during the winter temperatures oscillate from just under -20 degrees to over -30. In the vicinity of Kawawa 700mm of precipitation falls each year and there is an annual snowfall of roughly 320 cm.

Table 2. POPULATION OF KAWAWACHIKAMACH BY AGE AND GENDER

AGE[13]	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	% OF POP.
0-4	42	47	89	16.6
5-9	48	38	86	16.0
10-14	35	21	56	10.4
15-19	21	14	35	6.5
20-24	21	17	38	7.0
25-29	25	26	51	9.5
30-34	34	20	54	10.0
35-39	18	20	38	7.0
40-44	8	11	19	3.5
45-49	4	4	8	1.4
50-54	6	9	15	2.7
55-59	7	9	16	2.9
60-64	7	6	13	2.4
65-69	3	5	8	1.4
70-74	4	2	6	1.1
75-80	4		4	.7
TOTAL	287	249	536	

Source: The Naskapi Band Council Household listings, August, 1997.

[13] In a few cases the peoples' dates of birth were uncertain because they had moved away from Kawawa, or their records were incomplete for other reasons. Hence, the total number of people listed here is slightly less than the entire population of Kawawa.

The layout of the village conforms to the geography of the area and houses are situated along the shores of Lakes Matemace and Peter, as well as in the central and outlying areas. Interestingly, the community has spread out in such a way that it is divided into areas known locally as "up the hill" and "down the hill". This division is not merely a way to distinguish the new sector of the village from the old, it also corresponds to the particular social character of each, with "down the hill" being seen as the more exciting or dynamic of the two. Currently there are 109 single family homes (typically consisting of three to four bedrooms, and sometimes more if the basement is finished) and three blocks of five apartments. However, with the birth rate rising at roughly 4 % annually, housing is a major concern for the Naskapi and at least 5 new houses are constructed each year to accommodate the growing population (Naskapi Band of Quebec 1996-1997 Annual Report:13).

With respect to basic community living, Kawawa operates on a sound infrastructure and offers a range of basic services. A 32-foot-wide, all season gravel surface road links Kawawa to Schefferville, located 15 km to the south (Lopez 1993:21). Schefferville offers the only available air and train facilities. The local airline, 'Air Schefferville', flies to Wabush and Sept-Isles five days a week and offers charter services on a year round basis (ibid.:21). The rail link to Wabush/Labrador City and Sept-Isles is serviced by the Quebec North Shore and Labrador Railroad once a week; leaving on Friday mornings and arriving back in Schefferville usually on Thursday evenings. Although sewage and garbage services are under the management of the band, hydro services are in

the process of being run with the Montagnais. In 1996 the two groups joined forces to create "Hydro Naskapi/ Montagnais" Incorporated ("HNM"), which is stationed in Kawawa. While not yet fully operational, representatives of HNM have negotiated with Hydro-Quebec and Newfoundland & Labrador Hydro, along with a partner in Newfoundland, in their efforts to purchase and operate the Manihek Generating Station (which is currently run by the Schefferville Power Company). The Telebec network in Schefferville connects the community with telephone services. Police services in Kawawa are provided by the Naskapi's own police force, which receives training and administrative support from the Surete du Quebec.

There are several public buildings in Kawawa these include: the St. John's Anglican Church, the band office, the Naskapi radio station, Jimmy Sandy Memorial School, the dispensary, the old dispensary, the police station, the Naskapi Development Corporation, the Naskapi Day-care centre, the municipal garage, the pump house, the Manikin Centre, which includes a post office and restaurant, and the gas bar. In Schefferville there is a Naskapi craft store which sells a variety of items (from slippers, jewellery, and woven hats to tool for cleaning hides) and is open seasonally. The Naskapi share their cemetery with the Montagnais and it is located atop a hill just outside of Schefferville.

During the summer that I was in the community (1997), the band council finally passed a motion to begin the first stage of construction of a recreation centre. As decided by the band and the youth council, the swimming pool and changing rooms are slated to

be built first. Eventually the centre will include a bowling alley, a games room (with pool tables, video games, ping pong tables), a snack bar, and meeting rooms. There was a Youth Centre in the community but the building was deemed unsafe and following some vandalism the centre was closed a couple of years ago, and it was demolished in 1996. Hence, establishing the recreation centre is viewed by many as a success. It will serve youth, who are often seen as doing little constructively with their time, as well as providing the rest of the population with a venue for communal activities and enjoyment.

The structural organization of the Naskapi band provides some insight into not only the technical infrastructure of the band, it also reflects community concerns and adds more to our general picture of what life is like in Kawawa. Virtually every facet and social group are included in a committee or program of some sort. It is also worth noting that many Naskapi sit on external committees and projects, such as the Committee of First Nations for Management of the George River Herd, the Quebec Native Women's Association, and the Labrador Environmental Institute on Low-level Military Flights. It is of interest that one Naskapi is in the process of creating a patent for a fishing device he has designed, called the *ecosaver*. These various levels of involvement are important to note because they illustrate that not only are the Naskapi concerned for the welfare of their entire population, it also shows how widely they participate in other aboriginal, regional, national, and even international spheres of socio-economic activity.

Although they are not living in isolation, the community of Kawawa is not entirely

self-contained and the Naskapi do rely on certain services offered only in Schefferville or in larger urban centres. The Northern Store in Schefferville provides a wider selection of food at a lower cost than the Manikin, and the store is stocked with many items not available in Kawawa (e.g. clothes, craft products, stereo equipment and compact discs, and movie rentals). As there is no banking service in Kawawa or in Schefferville (aside from an automated bank machine), many Naskapi, Montagnais, and non-native residents alike conduct their banking in Sept-Isles. Kawawa also is not equipped with a hotel, of which there are two in Schefferville. Another service or establishment which is not seen in Kawawa are bars. In fact, in 1986 the Naskapi attempted to pass a by-law making their community dry, which was overturned and later reinstated in a modified form. In town, however, there are three main bars, four with the inclusion of the lounge in the Royal Motel.

Naskapi involvement in local projects and activities is varied and widespread. On the economic front, for example, the Naskapi Local Management Board (NLMB) has begun to study the feasibility of caribou commercialization, primarily for sale to other aboriginal or European nations. In terms of education and training, a series of Biblical books are in the process of being translated into Naskapi and translation training provides summer employment for students. There were four such books completed in 1995, which were published with colour illustrations. These are extremely important because they represent the first general publication of literature in the Naskapi language and they are the beginning of "recreational reading" in Naskapi (Naskapi Development Corporation,

Annual Report 1996:7).

In the cultural sector, a number of exciting things are taking place. Naskapi legends, as well as lexicon and grammar, are being translated from spoken Naskapi to written Naskapi, English, and French. There is also a toponomy project underway, which is being conducted with the help and experience of local elders in conjunction with a geography professor from the University of Sherbrooke. A valuable period in the Naskapi history, the Fort McKenzie era (1916-1948) is also being researched. There has been great community involvement in the interviewing process, along with the implementation of a public display of old photographs and material culture from the period.

Social organization in Kawawachikamach

We know that in traditional times the basic social, economic, and cultural unit for the Naskapi was the family. In many respects life in Kawawa continues to be dominated by the family and related concerns. However, the introduction of social institutions such as school and wage employment, along with making the adjustment to a non-nomadic lifestyle, have altered the way in which families and society in general are organized. Furthermore, as a result of the many and drastic changes experienced by the Naskapi, which are discussed throughout this thesis, the variables of social organization (i.e. family structure and individual roles) themselves have gone through transition. This is especially evident in the creation of the new social category of 'teenager' and their teen peer group.

As will be discussed more fully in the next chapter, these twin developments have affected the image of young people as held by older populations, intergenerational relationships, as well as the overall flow of communal activity.

In this section the modes of organization among the Naskapi are described and some conclusions are drawn about the changes that have occurred in this domain of cultural life.

As mentioned, the family unit continues to be the nucleus around which the community functions and is organized. While the many changes occurring within the familial framework are discussed more fully in chapter four, one of the key developments to be mentioned here is the transition from living in small, mobile, kin-related social groups to life in a large, settled social environment. This change meant moving from tents, between which people moved freely and whose composition changed frequently to suit the given conditions, to permanent houses. Housing has had many problematic social, cultural and health-related effects on the Naskapi and many argue that this move has acted to nucleate and break down the traditional extended family structure (see Wadden 1991:70-72; Degnen 1996:51-2,57)

While these observations are generally true, the links among kin, both real and fictive, still act as the social glue which holds the community and families together. If we look at the mutable and oscillating composition of households in Kawawa today, it is clear

that people organize themselves around more than a set of static household members. Children come and go between their parents' and grandparents' houses (which may or may not be near to one another, a clear pattern of house arrangements is not easily discernible), living at either one from time to time, and it is the situational ebb and flow of peoples' lives, in combination with the strong ties of extended family kin systems which continue to dictate who lives where. It is not uncommon to see as many as three different surnames listed in a single house, which further attests to the fluidity and movement among people and between residences. I also know many people who did not live with their biological parents and have changed houses and living arrangements several times throughout their life. Similarly, as was the case in the past, children are still commonly given to grandparents or other relatives (usually on the mother's side) to be raised, and when describing a 'surrogate mother' for instance, the woman is often referred to as "the woman who raised me up".

As the paragraphs above indicate, social relations among the Naskapi are very flexible and within their system room is made for member and household exchanges, which occur frequently. The movement and activities of individuals are equally dynamic. However, for the adult population, this observation is often rooted in a somewhat negative context. Adults (25-50) tend to move frequently between various social circles because, as many told me, not all people are to be trusted[14]; which in turn leads them to form even closer bonds with family members who then serve as friends. Adult relations are by no

[14]In this situation, the role played by gossip is pervasive. It is one of the strongest forces of social control in community life. Although extremely fascinating in itself, given the complexity of gossip and the limited scope of this section I will only make note of its importance.

means riddled with constant tension and mistrust. There is much private and public interaction among people of this age group, through such activities as visiting, bingo games, and community feasts.

At the other end of the spectrum, young children also have their own unique systems of relating with one another. Children under the age of 10 years old constitute approximately 30% of the total population and they are without a doubt the most visible social group in Kawawa. When not in school the young kids spend endless amounts of time doing what their older counter parts, the teenagers, also do; they walk around the community. Their group composition can take many forms, from 2 girls walking together, a gang of boys clustered around the front steps of the school, or they can also travel in huge fleets of both sexes, often taking up the entire width of the roads. These young children, contrary to most teenagers, still spend a considerable amount of time with their parents. In many respects they are like children everywhere, full of energy and ready for conversation. However, when several young girls (age 5-9) called on me to "visit", an activity which is virtually engrained in the social fabric of Naskapi life, I realized that some of their behaviour also definitely mirrors that of the older generations and is quite different when compared to Euro-Canadian kids of that age.

Naskapi elders (age 55-80) make up a small percentage of the community, roughly 10%. Although they are few in numbers and in general do not contribute to society's survival in economic terms, as they did more often in the past (through hunting and the

making of clothes and tools for example), elders are revered for their knowledge and experience. They are often spoken of in symbolic terms, as being lifelines to the past. Most of their time is spent with family and many elders are involved in church activities. Despite the fact that the topic of intergenerational misunderstandings is touched upon throughout my thesis, it is very important to note that while elders may not understand the teenagers specifically (and some of them speak openly in disdain of their behaviour), they almost always appear to be involved in the teens' lives to some degree. This is contrary to what is seen in similar situations in Labrador for example, where old people sometimes accuse the youth of "not being Innu" (Wadden 1991; Armitage 1997, personal communication).

It is without a doubt that one of the most dramatic changes that is occurring in the realm of social organization is the introduction of the new category, and life stage, of the 'teenager'. As this development is dealt with extensively throughout this work, I will only touch on some of the main points here. Essentially, in the past an individual learned skills he/she would need to become a functioning member of society during childhood and one became an adult at an early age. In the modern context, however, conditions such as living for almost the entire year in a settled community, attending school, and the increasing Euro-Canadian influence, have led to a disjunction in the maturation process in the form of this new phase of life: the teenage years. Today young Naskapi are influenced by more than their traditional way of life and values, they are also involved with many aspects of North American 'teenage' culture (i.e. technology, television, music, clothes, food). Also, due to the variety of possible roles and occupations now open to young people, compared

to the relatively quick passage of the past, the attainment of adult status is markedly prolonged.

Accompanying this new phase of development is the emergence of a new agent of socialization, the peer group. Having large groups of young people of roughly the same age living together is a very new phenomenon[15], for in the past when the Naskapi moved in small nomadic groups larger gatherings occurred seasonally, usually during the summer months. Given the newness of the peer group, any conclusions as to its effect on maturation and overall social organization are to be taken as preliminary. However, from observations and conversations with Naskapi of all ages, we can make some generalizations. For the older generations, peer groups are generally taken to be somewhat of a challenge to parental and elder authority, teenagers are depicted as being entirely different from themselves at the same age, and older people often say they do not "understand" the young people today. Whereas, for the teens their peer groups are both social mediums through which they can have fun and express shared feelings and experiences; and they are places which also call for a certain degree of conformity, via peer pressure[16].

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[15]In Kawawa today 50% of the total population are under 20 years old, with approximately 20% falling between the ages 10-19.

[16]In her work on teenage pregnancy in the Cree community of Mistassini, Catherine James provides an interesting perspective on why peer group conformity may be compounded in this cultural context. Citing the Cree values of social egalitarianism and on the avoidance of ostracising people, she argues that in an effort to uphold these values peer pressure may be felt more strongly among these teenagers (1992:74). Given that these two values are also important for Naskapi, a similar feeling may be present among the teens in Kawawa.

Despite the ups and downs which typically accompany the teenage years, Naskapi teens are generally quite satisfied with their lives and all expressed a very close attachment to family, friends, and their community. As touched upon earlier in the description of children's activity patterns, the teens spend most of their waking hours walking around the community. These endless "laps" can be done in small same sex groups, either in small clusters or in a succession of short, single-file rows, which is usually the case during the day time. During the evening is when the larger, usually mixed sex, groups appear. Despite the confident attitude displayed by some of the teens they are not unaware of the role played by other social groups (even those younger then them), who influence their behaviour. This is seen in one of the rules teens who are dating or seeing someone follow when they walk around. When the little kids are around a couple walks apart from each other, on opposite sides of the road. Whereas when the kids are out of sight the pair are safe to walk together.

While the presence of teenagers and peer groups appear to dissolve the formerly united cycle of maturation and social organization, this is not always the case. It is undeniable that teenagers spend the majority of their time, or the time they seem to value the most, is among their peers. Yet despite the many apparent and actual differences between teens today and young people in the past, throughout the present work we will see data which reveals that most of the underlying values and goals which motivate teenagers are remarkably similar to traditional values and ideals (i.e. the value of children, the way they structure relationship, sharing, listening to elders, hunting). Hence, while

peer groups may be vehicles for new, creative, and sometimes destructive avenues of expression, the picture which emerges is that these teenage spheres of social activity, far from being underground generators of counter cultural ideals, actually act to reproduce many of the larger society's beliefs and practices.

Conclusion

Much has changed in the way of social organization from the time when Georg Henriksen wrote of the Naskapi as being "on the edge of the white man's world" (1973). No longer do the Naskapi travel between two worlds. With their participation in the "technological age", through things such as the world wide web, faxes, and the extensive travelling that is enjoyed by many Naskapi, they are now very much a part of the global village. Despite the magnitude of change they have experienced since being settled in 1956, they continue to live in a social system which is bound by the ties of family, cultural history, and the pride of being Naskapi. Their yearly cycle, while not characterized by territorial mobility as it once was, is still punctuated by events which are directly related to the animals and special cultural events. For example, school is closed and people leave their jobs for at least a week during goose break (end of April-March), when most of the community goes camping at Iron Arm Lake. There is also great anticipation for the July 26 celebratory pilgrimage to St. Anne de Beaupre; and Innu Nikamu, the Innu music festival that is held each August in the Maliotenam reserve near Sept-Isles (see Mailhot 1997:35-36).

"I'm proud to be a savage" one 16 year old teenager told me. As mentioned earlier, many male teenagers and young men of Kawawa refer to each other as "savages", which is what they interpret as the original meaning of the term Naskapi. From their explanations to me (one teenager likened their usage to the oft-cited example of how Black people call each other "niggers"), it seems that when they call each other "savage" it creates some kind of solidarity, and their ethnic identity as Naskapi is reinforced. To extend the observation made by Henriksen (1973:xi), who, in referring to their society as a whole said "The Naskapi are still hunters at heart", the teenagers too are still directly linked to their heritage and are a unique part of this group in their own right; as teenagers of the tundra.

CHAPTER IV-COMING OF AGE & CHANGING FAMILY DYNAMICS

Introduction

The transformation from life as nomadic hunting and gathering people to living in the community year round has brought innumerable changes to Naskapi social organization. As I have emphasized throughout this thesis, one of the most important of these changes is the creation of a new social group, the teenagers. In this chapter I examine one important aspect of this development, how the teenage social role figures within current Naskapi social and familial organization. After a description of the family and becoming an adult in traditional times, I will move on to a discussion of the contemporary process of maturation and family life. The chapter concludes with an analysis of one of the most important features of social life, affecting both teenagers and the structure of the family, that of teenage motherhood.

When the Naskapi lived in accordance with the annual cycle and the movement of the caribou, families were composed of extended kin, such that the size of the units living together at any time was shaped by the seasonal round itself. During the winter three or four families of roughly 15-20 people lived together or near one another within specific areas that have been called "hunting territories" (Rogers and Leacock 1981:179-180). Summer, on the other hand, as we saw in chapter three, brought many families together,

and this was thus a time of communal activity.

With the coming of Europeans and the establishment of trading posts, the social and economic flow of life for the Naskapi was altered. Involvement in, and later dependence on, the fur trade meant that they could no longer follow only their ancestral trek through the interior in pursuit of caribou. Trading and trapping demanded more individualistic hunting practices. These pursuits also tied, or "attached", people to the vicinity of the posts and the outlying areas (Cooke 1976:44). Despite these changes, however, the family remained largely intact as a tightly-knit unit of extended kin.

In this context young people began learning life skills early, at approximately age 10-12, and by the time they were 20 they would know everything they needed to know to survive in the bush (Levesque et al. 1996(b):23). Although the Naskapi did not have a formalized rite of passage to mark the transition from childhood to adulthood (Robbins 1989:10)[17], through the gradual acquisition of skills taught to them by older people the youth were not only aware of what their roles would be as adults, they were actually practising them. Finding a mate and starting a family were two especially important markers of full adult status (Henriksen 1973:9; Graburn 1975:60). Thus, it was a combination of physical maturation and gender-related skill attainment, along with the establishment of marriage which served to denote young peoples' entry into the adult

[17] While there were no culturally institutionalized rituals to mark this passage, there were ways of recognizing an individual's growing capacities. For example, with a boy's first kill in a new animal species there was usually a kind of celebration held, either among family or in a larger social setting. Here the boy's expanding knowledge was praised and he was brought closer to the adult world of hunting (Bill Jancewicz 1998, personal communication).

realm.

When the Naskapi practiced seasonal transhumance, with the groups' survival being dependent upon the skills of each eligible member of the camp, the process of enculturation and role attainment described above functioned well. However, with the move to settled life, the symbiotic relationship between personal ability and contribution to the societal whole changed drastically. As the Naskapi are no longer nomadic, the social roles for which youth are trained are no longer as clear cut as they were in the context of the hunting camp. Instead, for young Naskapi growing up today the experience of schooling and the influx of Euro-Canadian culture, especially the teen-specific pop culture, have introduced them to new types of social roles and ways of living. Hence, role attainment is no longer a pre-determined social fact, based largely on gender and one's productive relationship to the group. Instead, for Naskapi teens today coming of age has become a more ambiguous passage.

The process of adjustment to these shifts in social organization and role attainment is made more complex by the introduction of what is a relatively new phase, adolescence. Speaking of Amerindian groups in Quebec, Levesque et. al write:

> "Until the early 1950's, the period that we now call adolescence did not exist as such in many Aboriginal groups. People went through several stages in their lifetime: childhood, adult life, old age. But there was not,

strictly speaking, a period of adolescence. As they left childhood behind, people were already becoming parents " (1996a:32).

As Levesque says, adolescence as *we* know it did not exist among Native groups like the Naskapi until very recently. However, young Naskapi did go through a phase in which they gradually reached physical and sexual maturity. The significant difference between traditional and contemporary Naskapi adolescence is that in the past this period was not associated with a specific socially recognized stage of life, whereas today there is a definite 'teenage' stage.

Becoming an adult in the past

The process of maturation is an integral component in the life cycle of not only the young individuals involved, but also for the rest of society in which they live. As we know, during the past 3-4 decades the social and cultural stages which define adulthood for the Naskapi have undergone significant change. This section first looks at how the maturation process has changed from more traditional times, then what constitutes being a teenager and an adult today, and finally what these variations in the life cycle mean in relation to the social role of teenagers and the structure of the family.

"naapaas" to "naapaaw"

As implied by the above terms, "naapaas" meaning boy, and "naapaaw" meaning man, the paragraphs below describe the traditional process of maturation for Naskapi males. As hunting and trapping were the main spheres of male activity, it was in these domains that young boys were first taught the skills needed to become contributing members of their society. Long before they actually began to practice hunting abilities or hunted with the men, however, young children (both boys and girls) went through what is known the "walking out ceremony". Held soon after children are able to walk, "walking out" marks the time when they are able to move outside the tent on their own. During the celebration the boys are given tools, like miniature bows and arrows (the girls receive such things as axes), and they perform a task that is associated with their particular ceremonial item. For the Naskapi, "walking out" is a symbolic acknowledgement of the boys' independence and the beginning of their hunting career (Jancewicz 1998, personal communication). As an elder in Kawawa noted, two of the most important aspects of the ceremony were the naming of the child and the way in which the child was dressed (ibid.).

While boys were generally taught by their fathers or other men in the camp, they could also learn a great deal from the female members of the group[18]. However, as mentioned, it was from watching and eventually accompanying the men on a hunt, where the boys would accumulate and practice most of their skills and knowledge. They often

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[18] By helping their mothers or other women around the camp (i.e. by gathering spruce boughs, collecting water, cleaning meat) boys learned many skills which would enable them to provide for the group and survive on their own.

began learning to hunt with a bow and arrow and then moved to a rifle:

> "The first thing I hunted was partridge, I used a bow and arrows. It was my grandfather who taught me all that. Then came the time when I was shown how to use a rifle. My grand-father was proud of me when he thought I knew how to use a rifle. He must have been thinking that I would help him when he went hunting." (Levesque et al. 1996(b):26).

Of equal importance was knowing how to make the materials of the hunt, such as a canoe or sled, and learning to read the environment and weather patterns (ibid:27). Upon acquiring these skills and proving his worth as a hunter, all that was left for the young man to be brought fully within the adult fold was a wife, "...he is then a man" (Davies 1963:222-223, cited in Henriksen 1973:9).

"iskwaas" to "iskwaaw"

In this paragraph we look at the traditional progression from girl, "iskwaas", to woman, "iskwaaw". From a very early age girls were responsible for helping to maintain the camp and raise siblings or other children. Their activities could also overlap into the domain of hunting, as they would often assist their mothers when fishing or setting snares (Levesque et. al. 1996(b):25). Additional tasks which were central to any young woman's

upbringing included learning to prepare meat, cook, cleaning and making clothes, and sewing. However, long before young girls were able to fulfil these duties they too went through the "walking out ceremony". For girls, as was the case with male children, the celebration marked their first independent steps out of the tent. In the same way that the ceremony was an acknowledgement of the boys' entry into the male-oriented world of hunting, for young girls "walking out" was a recognition of the beginning of their training for tasks and skills they would be responsible for as women. As girls got older they would also help the mid-wives during labour, thereby becoming familiar with the process of childbirth and the various practices that were a part of pregnancy and childcare (ibid.). However, perhaps the most defining attribute of womanhood was that of having a child, and, as with the men, being married, which occurred between the ages of 12-15 (Tanner 1944:685).

Coming of age today

For young Naskapi today, the process of becoming an adult is a different and more prolonged experience from that of the past. Living in the settlement essentially year-round means that young people spend less time on the land, which was once the primary source for learning and role attainment for youth in the past. School is now the main educational influence. In fact, the attainment of a high school diploma has become an important marker of maturity and achievement for young Naskapi. Yet, because obtaining their diploma can take between 10-15 years, contrary to the past, when becoming an adult was

a relatively rapid progression, the advent of this new aspect of the maturation process can take quite long. The substantial rise in age at marriage (now usually occurring between the early to late 20's), coupled with the shortage of housing in Kawawa means that it takes longer for young couples to establish their own household independent of their parents. This also makes achieving adulthood a more gradual process than was the case in the past.

Accompanying these changes are new expectations of roles that must be filled as Naskapi teenagers become fully mature. They are now expected to achieve and compete for educational opportunities, jobs, and even their own households, before they are treated as bonafide "adults". However, contrary to ideas put forth by other authors writing on Naskapi youth (Robbins 1989; Lopez-Gonzalez 1993), these new features of the achievement of adulthood, such as education and wage employment, ought not to be treated as abstract variables which can simply cancel out the traditional requirements for maturity (such as hunting or knowing how to cook bush foods). While these bush-oriented activities do not represent much in the way of economic returns and hunting is no longer the main avenue through which young men, for example, achieve full adult status, there are other ways of valuing these activities (in more symbolic terms for example). From my observations, many parents and grandparents are actively teaching their children and relatives about the bush and the cultural values of these activities. The culturally sensitive curriculum at school also plays a role in ensuring that Naskapi history and the knowledge of traditional ways of living is passed on to young people. Moreover, several of the young men I know, along with members of the community, clearly see bush skills and hunting

abilities as an important part of their maturing status. As explained more fully in chapter six, these pursuits also continue to have great communal significance, as seen in the practice of community or family-wide sharing of a large kill; in the expected contribution of game to a feast or celebration; and in the community-wide participation in annual hunts, such as caribou hunting or goose break.

being a teenager

Through their adoption of items of popular Western culture, such as dress, music, and fun-oriented activities, Naskapi teens may superficially be no different than their non-aboriginal North American counterparts. Moreover, because there is no indigenous word for 'teenager', when speaking of people who are roughly between 10-20 years old the Naskapi often use the English word "teenager". Although the word "teenager" is used frequently by Naskapi speakers there is a local term for people who are in between childhood and adulthood. This word, which is heard as often as "teenager", means 'young person' and has two forms: "uschiniischisuw" for boys and "uschiniichiskwaaw" for girls. It is not surprising that two different terms are used to refer to the same social group. However, what is significant is the Naskapi usage and application of the word 'teenager'. As will be illustrated below, the Naskapi treatment of this term reveals much about society's perception of not only teenagers, but also of certain individuals who seem to defy any kind of traditional age classification.

As mentioned, despite the newness of the 'teenage' category among the Naskapi, this word is used as often as the local term for 'young person'. However, there are instances when the word "teenager" is used to express something rather different than merely denoting the age or behaviour of people who are called by either the English or Naskapi term. For example, when asked for their opinions of teens, the older generations generally describe them as not doing anything with their lives and as being very different from youth in the past. Yet, as I indicated in chapter two, this derogatory reference signals their disillusionment with changes that are occurring for the *whole* of Naskapi society, not just among the teenagers. In this instance then, the concept of 'teenager' is "used" as a vehicle of expression, through which the older members of society can channel and re-direct some of the problems and discontinuities they associate with current socio-cultural change.

This use of the 'teenager' concept as a negative characterization can also be applied to people who are in their 30's or 40's, to denote immature behaviour. On numerous occasions I heard people, usually unattached men with reputations for being irresponsible, referred to as being "just like a teenager". Similarly, during my fieldwork several people said that although I was an adult (I was 24 at the time) sometimes I "act[ed] like a teenager". The Naskapi application of the word "teenager" seems to embody a set of characteristics, one which the Naskapi see as being specific to the teenage social group, and one which incorporates a host of behaviour, attitudes, and appearances which are outside of the experience of most Naskapi. From my point of view this is interesting for

two reasons. On the one hand, although the term 'teenager' is very new for the Naskapi, as the data has illustrated, they often use this word in much the same way that we do. Secondly, through their use of this word, people (or their behaviour) who no longer seem to fit into traditional Naskapi age classification systems are rationalized and made sense of. Thus, although they are often spoken of in a negative way, the teenage social group is a type of signpost, marking the interpretations of socio-cultural change within their own society[19].

Now that the Naskapi classification of teenagers and the term itself has been explained, we can move to some of the basic features which define this phase. For girls, the commencement of menarche, which occurs around age 12-13, is part of their teenage experience. In general, this physiological change is seen as an irritating inconvenience, both in terms of physical discomfort and because once their periods begin they can become pregnant. Perhaps the most significant marker of the onset of the teenage phase for both sexes is when they begin spending less and less time with their family and more with their peers. This leads to the creation of a new set of teen-specific activities, such as "hanging out", the establishment of romantic or casual relationships with the opposite sex, and experimenting with smoking, alcohol, drugs, and sex. For many, becoming a parent is also a fact of teenage life. In most cases, unlike North American societies where teen parents are almost always deprived of their status as teenagers, because of the support of the extended family system among the Naskapi, teen parents in Kawawa are usually able to

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[19]For a similar discussion of the treatment of teenagers within the context of modernization and social change today, see Mark Liechty's (1995) work among the teenagers of Nepal.

retain their place as teenagers. However, as discussed later on in the chapter, when there is an absence of this type of familial support the teens and their families face new and often difficult challenges as they attempt to raise their growing households.

Aside from the general characteristics of teenagers, as described above, there are some more specific meanings of this period which need to be elucidated. The two central and intertwined characteristics of being a teenager are being involved in casual or more serious sexual relationships, which will be looked at in greater detail in the next chapter, and having fun[20]. These two features of teen life are exemplified at activities like parties, drinking, going camping, and walking around in groups. Going to town (Schefferville) is a particularly enjoyable activity because they can hang out with friends in a different environment, they can do things they may not be permitted to do at home (i.e. drink, smoke, be with a boy/girlfriend), and they can interact with Montagnais and non-native teenagers who live in town and the nearby Matimekosh reserve. Although my informants told me that these things are fun, they also recognize that drinking or doing drugs in excess or for the wrong reasons can lead to problems like substance addiction or suicide attempts. In fact, seeing as many of the teens and their families have been affected by violence, problem drinking, drug addictions, or spousal abuse, they are very aware of what they term the "craziness" of present day life.

[20]Although the Naskapi teens listed things which appear similar to Western or North American notions of fun, fun itself is not a universal category, is culturally defined. As such, although these activities may seem recognizable according to our standards, it is important to keep in mind the Naskapi meaning of fun.

While Naskapi teenagers spend the majority of their time in the pursuit of fun, some individuals go through feelings of emotional turmoil. For example, in Kawawa during the 1980's and early'90's there was a suicide epidemic and at least five young men killed themselves (Robbins 1989:2). Although their rates of suicidal behaviour are relatively consistent with those of other Native groups in Canada, the phenomenon is a very recent one for the Naskapi (ibid.). According to Robbins, the emergence of suicide in this context is directly related to the socio-cultural upheaval associated with the move to settled life, which, in turn, made for an absence of a defined social role for young people entering adulthood (ibid.:22).

Compared to the period covered in Robbins' report, the number of suicides has now decreased substantially. However, some Naskapi teens still experience suicidal feelings today. I know both male and female teenagers who have tried to take their lives on several occasions. In the cases that I am familiar with suicide was attempted because of family problems or over a break up with a girl/boyfriend, and the teens were usually under the influence of drugs and or alcohol.

being an adult

Turning to the teenagers ideas about adulthood, when I asked them what makes someone an adult, their responses included: listening, taking responsibilities for yourself

(includes acting responsibly), helping the community, accomplishing goals you set for yourself, being able to go to the bar, and going to the bush on your own. It is interesting to note that although the teens recognize the responsibilities of being a parent, they do not see having a child as automatically making a person an adult. This observation is directly related to our earlier discussion of the teens' conceptions of age, where we saw how important one's behaviour, not merely chronological age, is to assessing the particular category an individual belongs in.

Additional comments about this topic reveal much about how the category of 'teenager' figures within their ideas of maturity and age. Warren[21], who is 23, says that he is not an adult yet, "over 30's and I'll be an adult". He went on to say that "most people when they're 16 or 18 think 'I'm a man', but they're not". When I asked Warren if he thought that I was an adult he said the following "yes, in your system they say 18 years old you're on your own". What these answers seem to imply is that, contrary to the Western notions of the function of the teenage stage, that it serves to mould young people into the adults they almost automatically become once out of these years, the traditional double requirements for maturity-those of age and skill together-remain essential to the young peoples' conceptions of becoming adults.

Brent, who is 17, provides us with another example of what one needs to be a functioning adult, or to "be set" as he put it. When discussing what he requires to be set he said that he has his own snowmobile, snowshoes, leggings to wear in the snowshoes,

traps, bags for his traps, moccasins, and his own gun. The only things left for him to obtain are a 4-wheeler, a truck, a house, his high school diploma, and a woman. It is interesting that the things he presently has are essentially the same as they would have been in the past for a young man his age, and what he needs to become established, on the other hand (excluding a woman and to a certain degree a house), are generally items from the White world. The significant thing about the description of Brent's adult "tool kit" is that he does not seem to express any ambivalence about selecting items from two different cultural contexts. On the contrary, he appears to be used to living in tandem with both the traditional Naskapi and the contemporary Euro-Canadian lifestyle.

Although the topics of hunting and the bush are discussed more fully in a later chapter, it is worth noting here that some male teens continue to view hunting as an important part of adulthood. For example, when asked "what is good about being an adult?" Brent replied "hunting, that's it". For the girls, although hunting is not necessarily part of being an adult, for many of them knowing how to prepare bush foods is an important skill to learn. We can see a parallel here, between the attitudes girls have toward cooking bush food and the contemporary cycle of learning about bush skills, as discussed in chapter six. In that, a certain activity does not have to be mastered by a given age, instead, the important thing is that the particular skill or task *is* learned.

As the data has shown, although the traditional route to adulthood for the teens of Kawawa is blocked in various ways (Robbins 1989:10), traditional values pertaining to

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[21]To protect the anonymity of my informants I have used pseudonyms throughout this text.

maturity and role attainment appear to be intact among the teenagers, providing them with the underlying structure and guidance needed to create new routes to adulthood. However, as the teens envision their future they are not relying solely on traditional values or examples from the past. As we saw in the case of Brent, some teenagers are actively creating and using different blends of traditional Naskapi and Euro-Canadian cultural influences to construct their own models of adulthood.

Changing family dynamics

As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, the traditional Naskapi family structure consisted of a wide network of kin relations, operating along bilateral lines of descent. Although many people could be involved in the upbringing of children, individuals were generally raised by a group of relatives (real or fictive) within which there was a 'mother' and 'father'. However, with the recent decline in marriages, the high turnover of partners among couples, and the rise in single[22] and teenage mothers, the anatomy of Naskapi family life is undergoing significant change.

These developments are important because new kinds of social functions and responsibilities are being associated with formerly "fixed" roles; and they engender new demands on family members which cannot be easily absorbed into the formerly secure

[22]The rate of single motherhood is extremely high in Kawawa. In 1989, for example, 80% of all live births were born to single mothers (Geoffrey and Wilkinson 1989:390)

network of kin relations. Moreover, because these new duties cannot always be explained or rationalized through the 'traditional' values, which still define a portion of the new responsibilities, there exists a gap between the newly created familial role and the rules needed to define it. As the following example of teenage motherhood illustrates, the presence of such spaces between these contemporary roles and their defining characteristics put a great deal of pressure on the traditional family structure, pressure which in some cases make it very hard for those involved to adequately support the families in need.

teenage motherhood

In Kawawa teenage motherhood is very widespread[23] and within the family, and to a certain extent the community, it constitutes one of the most conflictive aspects of the newly emerging family structure. Angela, who lives with her daughter and her mother[24] Rosemary, is a case in point. Angela became a mother at age 17 and as with the majority of teenage pregnancies, she did not plan to have her child. The accidental nature of her pregnancy, along with Angela's inadequate mothering ability and immaturity, as perceived by Rosemary, are repeatedly thrown in her face when the two women argue, which occurs almost daily. Criticisms, such as "she always makes her cry" or conversely, "look how

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[23] In fact, one of my key informants told me that of all the young women who are roughly her age (late teens to early twenties), there is only one individual who does not have any children yet.

[24] It is significant to note that the mother of the teen mom in the following case study was herself a teenage mother. There has also never been a permanent father figure in this family and neither the teenage mom nor her own daughter are acquainted with their fathers.

good she is with me", also serve as Rosemary's arsenal as she competes for the role of mother to baby Patricia. In fact, Rosemary has even threatened to go to Social Services to get legal custody of her granddaughter because she thinks Angela is doing such a poor job as a mother.

In order to understand the complexities of this situation and to see how it is representative of some of the changes which are occurring within Naskapi family structure and teenage life, we need to take a closer look at Angela. She is a key figure because she is a teen mom, her mother was also a teenage mother, and her experience of growing up as a child of a single mother who endured considerable hardships as she raised her children, namely alcoholism, being a single parent, and physical abuse from various boyfriends, mirrors the difficulties faced by the majority of single Naskapi mothers and their families. As this example is explained in greater detail we will see how Angela's situation is illustrative of three things in particular: the experience of teenage motherhood in Kawawa today; some of the changes which are occurring in the family structure, namely the lack of stable relationships among the women and the absence of paternal influence within the family; and the effects of the generational repetition of teenage motherhood.

First, the category of "teenage mom" itself. In traditional times, we know that people were usually married and had children in their teens. Today, young women are still having children during their teen years. However, as will be elucidated below, there are a number of factors at play which affect how these teens become parents, establish families,

and also how they are seen by their families and in the eyes of the community as they adjust to these different parameters of family life.

Marriage practices, which began changing dramatically in the past few decades, play a large role in shaping the pattern of life for young Naskapi today. Contrary to the past, when people married in their early to late teens, today individuals are marrying much later, in their 20's or 30's, if at all. Another significant factor influencing the contemporary family structure is that, in contrast to the past, bearing children no longer guarantees a permanent relationship. The third point we need to consider is the presence of the relatively new prolonged period of courtship and sexual activity among teenagers. Since teenage courtship involves ever-changing and exhaustive searches for possible partners, which is discussed more fully in the next chapter, for Naskapi teens today finding a mate to establish a family with is a much more difficult process than it was in the past. If we also take into account the immature status that is often associated with teens by the older generations to this equation, we can see how all of these factors work together to produce an image of teen mothers as irresponsible and as not ready for the task of motherhood. Thus, Rosemary's criticisms, albeit rather harsh, do appear to be rooted within the currently changing context of Naskapi life.

While the changes in Naskapi family structure were described in the introduction to this section, the absence of a father figure(s), along with the lack of stable male-female relationships (i.e. dating, married, or civil unions) deserves additional mention here.

Obviously, neither Rosemary nor Angela needs a man to have a 'better life' and a husband, boyfriend, or father will not necessarily make their household run smoother. However, generally speaking, these male figures would contribute to the family's economic stability and through their network of extended kin they would be able to provide their families with additional social and emotional support. As it stands, this mother and daughter (along with a great majority of women in Kawawa, see footnote 22) have only the maternal side of the family to rely on for support. Moreover their family is often involved in helping other relatives. Thus at times, Angela and Rosemary are left with only each other to depend on. When we combine this with the tensions already present because Angela is a teen mom, some of the pieces of this shifting familial puzzle come together and we can see why the women sometimes turn on one another and end up competing for Patricia.

With respect to the issues of teenage motherhood and the family, the third factor which helps to illustrate the significance of this situation is the generational repetition of teenage motherhood. While I am not attempting to provide an complete account of why this occurs so often among the Naskapi, I include this phenomenon in our discussion for two reasons. The generational repetition of teen premarital motherhood is a prevalent characteristic of contemporary family life, as well as the teenage experience in Kawawa. Secondly, it helps to explain some of the reasons for the hostility and competition that exists between Rosemary and Angela.

That both mother and daughter have gone through the experience of being a

teenage mother is important in and of itself. Although it is something they share, as the data has shown, this does not necessarily imply that there exists a system of mutual support between the women. Rather, the very fact that it is repeated seems to symbolize the reproduction of some of the mistakes which appear to lead to teenage pregnancy; such as the irresponsible nature of the teenager or parental misguidance. For her part, as we saw, Rosemary focuses on Angela's irresponsibility as being the reason for her pregnancy. However, her daughter's situation is also a virtual image of her own as a teen mother and when this is incorporated with Rosemary's feelings of inadequacy about her performance as a mother, according to Angela, this makes Rosemary want to make amends for the past through Patricia, who represents for her a second chance at motherhood. For Angela, on the other hand, motherhood is what allowed her the power (in the form of a much adored child of her own) to confront her mother, albeit indirectly, about her dismal performance as a mom when she was young. However, there is a catch 22 element within her situation. For in Angela's efforts to redress some of Rosemary's mistakes she ends up repeating almost exactly what her mother did. Thus, while the reproduction of teen pregnancy represents a potential for positive change, because the women end up using the situation to alleviate or negate past mistakes, it seems to almost naturally repeat itself in a rather damaging way.

In this section I have drawn upon the specific example of teenage motherhood to illustrate some of the most significant changes which are taking place within teenage life and the contemporary Naskapi family structure. While the experience of having children

and being married during the teenage years is a traditional Naskapi practice, for "teenage" mothers (and fathers) today the situation is quite different. Teens are generally not married or involved in permanent relationships when they have children, in fact many of them may never be officially married. However, when they do become involved, because the composition and duration of these unions is rather uncertain the establishment of a family is becoming a much more difficult and prolonged process. The complex phenomenon of the generational repetition of teenage motherhood is another facet of teen life and the modern Naskapi family. Although mothers and daughters may attempt to amend their difficult situation through actions which are intended to counterbalance the mistakes of the past, as we saw, it seems that they end up repeating the cycle.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the changes which have occurred in the process of coming of age and the structure of the family since more traditional times. We saw how the introduction of the cultural category of 'teenager' has created social and familial tensions unseen before in Naskapi life. Factors such as schooling, living year round on the settlement, and the many new socio-economic roles and opportunities which influence Naskapi teens are making the achievement of adulthood a lengthier and more diverse experience than was the case in the past.

Related to this is the perception of this social group by the rest of society. As we

saw with the example of Rosemary and Angela, teenagers are generally perceived as being unable to take on the responsibilities of adulthood and because the attributes which formerly defined social maturity in the past (i.e. marriage, a stable relationship, and childbearing) no longer seem to apply, being a teenager comes to carry a certain degree of social stigma. The application of derogatory comments about "teenage behaviour" to older people reinforces this notion of immaturity or improper behaviour.

While the teenage experience produces conflicts which are essentially new, the teens are also a part of a larger cultural discontinuity that is being felt throughout the whole of Naskapi society, that of the changing structure of the family. As we noted, the decrease in marriage, the oscillating nature of relationships, and the fact that pregnancy no longer necessitates marriage or a permanent union have led to a rise in families which are headed by single women. While some women who are employed or collect social support enjoy the economic freedom and control they have over their families, more often than not they rely very heavily on their family to get by on their own. This in turn engenders a new kind pressure on certain family members, especially grandparents (like Rosemary) who, as we saw, are assuming the role of parents to their grandchildren through social situations which are different from those of the past. Despite these new tensions and complications within the institution of the family, it remains the most powerful and reflexive realm of Naskapi social organization.

CHAPTER V - '*WIICHAAWAAW*', SEXUALITY, AND GENDER RELATIONS

Introduction

During adolescence, as young people become sexually mature they begin to gain insight into the workings of sex and their own sexuality. In Kawawa, the most visible expression of teenage sexual identity is that of '*wiichaawaaw*', which means "he/she is going with (goes with) her/him". In this chapter I will show how these relations with the opposite sex operate and how they are representative of the teens' interpretations of sexuality and gender relations. We begin with an overview of traditional forms of male-female relations, marriage, and mate selection, followed by a description of '*wiichaawaaw*'. The two vignettes presented at the end of the chapter provide us with illustrations of how teenage sexuality, '*wiichaawaaw*', and the conflicts these issues often engender between teens and parents, are dealt with in everyday life.

Historically speaking, gender relations among the Naskapi were essentially egalitarian, and while there were significant differences between men and women, on the whole neither sex dominated the other (Leacock 1981:35). With respect to partner selection they practiced exogamy and bilateral cross-cousin marriages were preferred (Rogers and Leacock 1981:183).'Cross cousins' (which are defined as one's mother's brother's children or one's father's sister's children) were favoured as spouses because in a

small nomadic band like the Naskapi the political, social, and economic elements of life were intimately bound together by kin ties, and having an aunt or uncle as an in-law ensured that close familial ties were maintained (Leacock 1986:153). The term *'niwitimus'*, which was used to refer to a person's cross-cousin, also denoted one's 'sweetheart'. This word had humorous sexual connotations because not only can one marry one's cross-cousin, but cross-cousins were preferred marriage partners (ibid.:153).

During the pre-settlement time individuals were married very young, usually in their teen years (numerically speaking that is, because the socio-cultural category of 'teenager' had not yet been adopted), and the unions were often arranged (Tanner 1944:685). These marriages, often consisting of several couples, were typically organized by older relatives and took place in the summer. They were held at this time of the year because this was when the Naskapi came into contact with missionaries and other groups of people traveling through the Quebec-Labrador peninsula. Summer was also an opportune time to hold weddings because it was one of the few occasions when groups of families came together (Henriksen 1973:13).

While marriage was an important social event and an integral part of survival, due to accidental deaths or conflict between partners, the unions were not always life-long (Levesque et. al 1996(b):9). It was also not uncommon for people to be married several times throughout their life. The existence of polygyny has also been recorded among the Naskapi in traditional times. A particularly good hunter might have had, or needed, two

wives to process large amounts of meat and to help the hunter bring the products of the hunt back to camp (Henriksen 1973:51). However, as Henriksen points out, having two wives was perhaps more a result of hunting prowess than a marker of social status (ibid.).

With respect to finding a mate in traditional times, the Naskapi relied on their far-reaching kin networks and the personal connections they made on their travels through the Quebec-Labrador peninsula. Within their former system of social organization these two features acted in a remarkably efficient manner, allowing for great flexibility and a sense of inclusiveness in a time when life was less predictable than it is today. Mailhot uses the term "structured mobility" to describe this system among the Innu of Labrador (ibid.:133). Despite changes in social life and land use, she argues that structured mobility is a dynamic force which continues to shape Innu life today.

Structured mobility, and its two inherent features of territorial movement and horizontal lines of kinship provide the backdrop for Mailhot's numerous illustrations of the ways in which people from different regions and bands 'had access' to each other. The following passage encapsulates how structured mobility functioned:

> "One's residential opportunities were multiplied if one had numerous relatives, by blood or marriage, close or distant, who had contracted exogamous marriages within the Sheshatshit band. If circumstances had deprived someone of an adequate kinship network, then that person's

territorial experience was correspondingly limited" (1997:147).

While Mailhot provides convincing data to show that social organization and territorial movement continue to operate along essentially 'traditional' lines, she does not discuss how these components affect the *process* of 'having access' or how having access operates within the dating practices among Innu youth today. However, given the inextricably intimate ties the Naskapi have with the ways of life described by Mailhot, in my efforts to illustrate some of the principles at work in the Naskapi teen system of '*wiichaawaaw*', I will draw upon her idea of structured mobility. In the section which describes how the teens' relations with members of the opposite sex work I shall put forth the idea that although the social components that once characterized mate selection have changed, the teenagers have created their own "modern" variables which function in essentially the same way as in the past, to ensure one finds the best or most suitable partner.

'WIICHAAWAAW': an overview

Throughout my stay in Kawawa I was fascinated by the colourful and dynamic nature of Naskapi teenage sexuality. Two of the most interesting aspects of their relations with members of the opposite sex were the strong emphasis placed by the teens on having a '*niwitimus*' (boy/girlfriend) and the various terminology they used to explain these relationships. I was often perplexed by how people answered the seemingly simple

question "are you going out with her/him?". After much discussion with the teens about this issue, it seemed that a number of different kinds of relations fit under my category of "going out", anything from a one night stand, doing something with a platonic friend, or having a monogamous relationship. During the process of thesis writing, however, I received some additional information about the Naskapi terms for these kinds of social relations and things became much clearer.

I was informed that aside from the word "going out", which I had been using throughout my interviews and conversions with the teens, there are two local terms which are much more applicable: *'wiichaawaaw'*, meaning "he/she is going with her/him" and *'waapimaaw'*, "he/she sees her/him". It became obvious that my confusion about how the teens answered my question was due to my ignorance of the diversity of linguistic terms for, and social types of, these social interactions. For when I asked the teens "are you going out with her/him?" and they answered "yes" to something which did not seem like "going out", in the steady or monogamous sense, because I only offered them one broad description of their relations, the teens had no choice but to answer "yes".

Since the teens change *'niwitimus'* partners very frequently and because they are involved in a number of different activities when they spend time with their boy/girlfriends, learning which teenagers were boy/girlfriend and what constituted a "date" also proved challenging. Some of the standard activities which all boy/girlfriends partake in include walking around the community, going to one another's house, to a party, to Schefferville,

or to the bush together. The teens who are going with each other also spend time at one another's house, just hanging out, or baby-sitting the children in the house. Despite the fact that this is typical "couple" behaviour, it is sometimes difficult to discern whether or not these activities are indicative of *'wiichaawaaw'*. For example, when two platonic friends went to town together and I asked one of my teenage friends if they were going out, my informant told me that "he sees her". As with the case above, my confusion surrounding what constitutes a "date", and who are a "couple", is undoubtedly due to the different local terms for the number of equally different kinds of casual male-female friend and girl/boyfriend-related activities.

To comprehend *'wiichaawaaw'* more fully I asked the teenagers if it was both important and serious to be with someone, and whether or not the majority of teens had a *niwitimus*. The girls generally said that it was important to have someone, but not that serious, and they felt that most teens have a partner. The guys, one the other hand, told me that relationships are neither important nor serious. Contrary to what the girls said, the guys felt that most teenagers do not have someone. When I inquired why dating was not yet serious for both males and females a link was made between seriousness and sex. For the girls this connection was always explained in terms of becoming pregnant or the fear of this occurring. According to the guys, who usually said relationships would only become serious when they were much older, the sex-seriousness dichotomy was generally associated with the establishment of a family or more permanent pair-bond in the future.

When the teens explained the system of '*wiichaawaaw*' further, it became apparent that there is another set of variables at work, those of sex and love. Several of my female informants, usually older teens, told me that girls do not really care if a guy sleeps around, they are mostly concerned with love. This, along with the potential of becoming pregnant, may be one reason why "going with" someone is a more pressing issue for them. Guys, on the other hand, according to the girls, are more worried about their girlfriends sleeping with another guy and love is secondary. This could explain why they say having a partner is not serious or important. While girls say that sex, not love, is the guys' main interest, and male teens seem to substantiate this claim when they said that relationships are not very significant, additional conversations I had with the guys reveals a more complex situation. For although they initially told me that going with a girl is not serious, when I asked them to describe the most difficult experiences they have had, the majority of them said "when a girl breaks up with me". Hence, although the romantic ideology espoused by the girls may seem to fit their understanding of the aspirations of guys and girls within '*wiichaawaaw*', it is not always representative of how the guys feel about their relationships with girls.

Given their interpretations of '*wiichaawaaw*', it is clear that male and female teens experience, and express their feelings about, these relations in their own unique ways. Girls clearly invest a great deal of meaning in having someone and being in love. They also tend to express the significance of their relations in a more overt manner than the guys. For their part, the male teens tend to be concerned with immediate physical gratification

and 'steady' or serious relationships are something to be established in the future. However, although the guys are more reluctant to discuss their feelings about their relations with girls, they are meaningful to them.

While '*wiichaawaaw*' is one of the most exciting things in the teenagers' lives, the experiences they have in these relations also teach them about family and adult responsibilities. The majority of the teens, both male and female, told me that the hours of baby-sitting they do has prepared them for having their own children, and they view having children and raising a family in a confident and optimistic manner. The teens also learn how to handle conflicts within their families about their sexual activity and '*wiichaawaaw*'. For although some the sexual attitudes of the teens in Kawawa are consistent with those of North American adolescents in general, because the older generations grew up with different courtship practices, the conditions surrounding '*wiichaawaaw'* often create difficulties between parents (or grandparents) and teens. For girls such conflicts usually center around promiscuity and becoming pregnant. However, the latter issue is equally important for guys to avoid because "getting a girl pregnant" usually carries with it a certain degree of economic and social responsibility on the boy's side. Thus, '*wiichawwaaw*'is not only a time for sexual experimentation, it also provides them with the experience they will need to raise a family and to foster male-female relations in the future.

Inside '*wiichaawaaw*': how it works

As the data has shown, the teenage system of '*wiichaawaaw*' is a complex network of social interactions. While I cannot say that I fully understand the structure of these social relations, because we know so little about Naskapi teenage relationships, and since they are different from traditional courting practices, we need to look closer at the anatomy of, and variables within, these relations.

The cycle of '*wiichaawaaw*' follows a rhythm rooted in the local teenage experience. This system is perpetuated by many things, such as the desire for a partner, burgeoning sexuality, curiosity, and the need to belong. Yet, despite the dire importance placed on having a '*niwitimus*' by virtually every teen I talked to, they always seemed to be on a perpetual hunt for a new partner, often regardless of whether or not they already had one. Also, their relationships were ended and/or begun anew at a remarkable weekly or even daily rate. When I asked why these relations were ended, contrary to typical North American relationship models in which boredom or "not getting along" are often cited as reasons for breaking up with someone, in every case it was due to infidelity and/or jealousy. Upon witnessing the ebb and flow of these relations over a number of months two key variables surfaced as central to the operation of '*wiichaawaaw*': the number of different '*niwitimus*' partners the teens have and the fluidity of these relations (in terms of the length of the unions); both of which will be elaborated on below.

From conversations with teenage girls in Kawawa, it is estimated that by the age of 15 a girl could have had between 10-15 different boyfriends (this number may be slightly less for boys). Given that the girls on average begin dating at age 12, this works out to roughly 3.3-5 boyfriends per year. When compared to their non-Native female counterparts, of whom only 7% had 4 or more partners by the time they are 14 or 15 (Besharov and Gardiner 1997:347), this ratio seems exceedingly high. Perhaps even more interesting is that by the time young women (and to a lesser degree young men) are in their early 20's, it is probable that they will have exhausted all of their potential prospects in Kawawa and other nearby communities (Schefferville and Matimekosh). Since I was told on several occasions that the number of boy/girlfriends had by an individual does not exact a measure of status, what is the purpose of going through such a high number of partners to the extent that their possibilities could be completely depleted? To properly comprehend the function of this variable and how it plays into the whole system of '*wiichaawaaw*' we need to look at in relation to the other variable, "fluidity".

While "fluidity" is a rather elusive term, it best encapsulates the perpetual motion and activity which affects the duration of teenage sexual relations in Kawawa. From my discussions with the teens I learned that "going with" someone could last anywhere from one day, a few weeks, or even several months (which was quite uncommon). Since going with someone seems to mean so much to the Naskapi teens, why would their relations change so frequently and be so short in length? Are they influenced by the North American image of Mr./Mrs. Right to the extent that they are on a perpetual search for that perfect

someone? Although Western ideals of romance do play a role in their attitudes and actions, especially for the girl teens (see p.86), their belief in these imported myths of love does not fully explain the "fluidity" of their relations. From my observations, the Naskapi teenagers' almost insatiable drive to be involved with someone almost all the time, for any given length of time, is not some kind of expression of unbridled sexuality, nor is it merely a replication of North American styles of romance. Instead, it seems to be a way for them to control the course of their relations and to ensure that they are either always involved in, or conversely, able to get out of, relations with the opposite sex.

Today, because Naskapi teenagers do not usually rely on the traditional practice of structured mobility[25] to find partners, they must create their own means through which they can accomplish this goal. In exchange for the territorial mobility and extended kinship lines of the past, the teens are relying on the two new variables of "fluidity" and a high turnover of partners. The relatively undetermined nature of their relations, along with dating virtually every available person, makes for a rather flexible system of social and sexual interaction. Hence, because the teens of Kawawa no longer use traditional methods to find a mate, they have created new variables, through which they are able to cast as wide a dating net as possible to better or increase their chances of finding suitable mates.

In this section I have introduced, and tried to make sense of, the Naskapi teenage system of '*wiichaawaaw*'. Sex emerges as an important link to other features within their

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[25] At least not to the same degree. While I do know of teens who are seeing people from other communities in Quebec and Labrador, this is by far a minority situation.

relations with the opposite sex, such as the seriousness of having someone and the issue of love. As we saw, these elements of '*wiichaawaaw*' are experienced differently by male and female teens. Girls tend to be concerned with love and they hold their relations to be quite important. Although male teens are generally interested in physical gratification and serious relationships are something for the future, their relations with girls are important to them. Not only is '*wiichaawaaw*' central to their everyday activity, these relations can also teach the teenagers about family life and male-female relations. Lastly, our discussion has shown that because Naskapi teens cannot depend on traditional methods of finding a mate, they are creating their own variables, those of fluidity and high partner numbers, through which they can maximize their prospects of finding a suitable partner.

The vignettes

The two vignettes below illustrate how the experiences of, and conflicts surrounding, teenage sexuality, gender relations, and '*wiichaawaaw*' are dealt with in everyday life. The first example describes the way in which a woman I knew reacted to the appearance of a hickey[26] on her 14 year old son's neck. In the second sketch we look at the balance between power and gender within teenage relations. Following the presentation of the two vignettes, I will provide a brief discussion of the central issues illustrated by the examples.

[26] A hickey is a purple-ish mark which appears on the skin as a result of being bitten or sucked excessively. Hickeys are commonly associated with adolescence and tend to symbolize immature forms of sexual expression.

Chris and the hickey

I visited the house where Chris and his family lived shortly after the hickey had appeared. The scene in the kitchen was one of tension, but from looking at certain members of the family, I also sensed an underlying current of sexual humour. Maggie, Chris' mother, was yelling things at her son in Naskapi, other relatives were talking quietly amongst themselves, and Chris was leaning against a wall with his arms folded, looking quite flustered and embarrassed.

For weeks after the appearance of the hickey Chris was subject to intense teasing and badgering from Maggie, and to a certain degree from others in the family. These remarks included derogatory comments about the girl who was rumoured to be the issuer of the hickey ("she's a slut") and her family ("her mom's an alcoholic and she can't take care of her kid"). However, within this battery of verbal reprimands are some very poignant illustrations of the fear this act represented to Maggie. To her the incident, no matter how minor it may have been, represented sex, more specifically, the potential for Chris to get a girl pregnant. Maggie was also concerned about how this, and similar incidents in the future, might affect her relationship with Chris. She seemed to view her son's first expression of sexuality (or the first to be seen) as a kind of rejection of all that she had given him as a child. Perhaps to ease her own anxiety, she spoke of him as if he were no longer her baby and thrust Chris into the adult world. At one point following the

appearance of the hickey Maggie told me that "he's not my baby any more...if he wants to act like an adult he should get treated like one".

There are a number of different factors at play in this situation. First, we should keep in mind that as this was the first time Maggie had seen evidence of her son's developing sexuality, it was natural for her to react so strongly. Secondly, while Maggie undoubtedly felt a certain loss of control over Chris, through her negative comments about the girl's family ("she [the girl's mother] can't control her kids") she re-worked her own feelings into a commentary on another parent's inability to control the very thing she too was losing a grip on. As a result, Chris almost escapes blame, and, to a certain extent, is still treated like a child. The third point to consider is that although Maggie saw the hickey as transforming Chris into an adult and is fearful of what this represents, she does not give him the guidance and support he requires to become a responsible adult in the world of sexuality.

In severing the protective ties which formerly bound Chris to her and by not providing him with the knowledge he will need to effectively handle his sexuality, Maggie seems to almost lay the groundwork for the creation of the very thing she fears, that Chris may get a girl pregnant (or get a sexually transmitted disease). Why does she not apply what she knows from personal experience to the present situation with her son, to ensure that these fears do not become a reality? Perhaps, it is because Maggie, who was a teen mother herself, does not want to confront her own feelings of guilt about the mistakes she

made in the past. Also, even though during a conversation I had with her about the incident she said that parents should talk to their children about sex, Maggie seemed to feel that if she has to talk about these issues with Chris somehow it is a bad reflection on her as a parent. For Chris, the key thing is that she does not treat sexual matters with the kind of support and understanding that is required to develop a healthy notion of sex, sexuality, and one's body.

The final point to be made about this vignette is that it may provide us with some clues about the sexual identity of male teens in Kawawa. If we remember, in the section dealing with the overview of *'wiichaawaaw'*, the boys said relationships were not important or serious. Yet when asked about the most troublesome things they have gone through, a majority said it was dealing with the aftermath of a failed relationship which was ended by a girl. As many of the boys interviewed repressed or felt guilty over their very normal sexual and emotional feelings, in the same way that Chris was made to feel by Maggie, perhaps what this sketch reveals is that there needs to be a new approach taken to sex education among the Naskapi. There is a course taught at school, but maybe this program could incorporate ideas and models which are more sensitive to Naskapi perceptions on, and traditions of, sexual education.

the power balance between genders within 'wiichaawaaw': the case of Maxine

On our way home from a night club in Schefferville one night I had the opportunity

to talk with the 14 yr. old daughter of the woman who was giving us a lift home. "I met three guys tonight" she informed me. I asked her if that meant she had slept with three different guys. "No, not slept with" she replied with a grin on her face, "just kissed". Apparently she had been eager to find a boyfriend and one of the guys ended up asking her out. Her final comment on the night is somewhat puzzling: "I can't wait to meet my boyfriend". I believe she was referring to the fact that her new beau resides in Schefferville (whereas she lives in Matimekosh) and because she does not always have an opportunity to visit in town, this made the match all the more exciting. I think that her comment could also refer to the higher status that is accorded to Montagnais, a complex topic which I do not have the data to fully explore here. Nevertheless, that was how she described the evening's events.

The first thing which struck me about this situation was that although Maxine conformed to the standard relationship model for Naskapi teens, in which the guy asks the girl out, it seems she, not the guy, wielded the most control. For it was through her own initiative, in the act of kissing three different guys, that she strengthened the odds of being asked out. However, she did not appear to view the situation as one in which she had the upper hand and actually exercised a certain degree of control in determining the outcome. Instead Maxine preferred to concentrate on the result of her actions, of being asked out, and how she was so lucky to have been chosen.

While she may not see herself as commanding a powerful role, it seems that her

behaviour, and her control over her actions, made it possible for her to achieve her goal. In fact, in some ways this vignette illustrates the inversion of the typical dating ideology or rules (i.e. the girl as waiting to be asked out). However, to be fair to all the variables that may be at work, we need to consider whether or not Maxine's success was a result of the guy's true feelings for her. Did he really like her or were his motives similar to her own- was he simply after a girlfriend? If the latter is the case then this is not so much an instance of Maxine's inversion of the typical Naskapi female position within their relations. Rather, each teen could be using the other and the given circumstances to maximize his and her respective position within the dating game. A proper analysis of this alternative explanation would require gathering information from this particular guy's point of view, which I did not have the opportunity to do.

discussion of the vignettes

> "Ours is a society that worries about adolescent sexuality, yet it does not train adolescents in social skills for dating or flirting. Adolescents are presented with the myth that they should find love with no problems, yet in reality romance and relationships must be worked on. Adolescents are expected to date, but they are not taught how to act on a date, how to communicate with a partner..." (Meehan and Astor-Stetson 1997:161).

While the above quotation refers to North American teenagers, it encapsulates the

paradoxical conditions faced by the Naskapi as they grapple with teenage sexuality, gender relations, and *'wiichaawaaw'*, as illustrated in the first vignette. The situation of Maggie and Chris showed how teenage expressions of sexuality often reminds parents of their own sexual experiences or mistakes. Although parents like Maggie do not want their teenagers to "follow in their footsteps"[27], many of them do not adequately inform their teens about the workings of sex. There are two possible explanations for why parents do not interfere in their teenagers' sexual lives. One of the reasons could be the non-authoritarian Naskapi from of parenting, which was discussed in chapter two. Secondly, in traditional times sexuality and finding a mate were more or less controlled by the older generations, but because this is no longer the case parents may be at a loss as how to handle the "free expression" of sex seen among teens.

Another reason which may account for why some parents are reluctant to inform their teens about sex and the ramifications of being sexually active is because the transfer of sexual knowledge, or as Bernstein puts it, *learning to love* (1995:44), is generally a difficult and sometimes embarrassing thing to talk about. However, like their North American non-Aboriginal counterparts, Naskapi teens can turn to other avenues for instruction about these issues. They can learn about sex and their own sexuality through the sex education program at school, through the images of Western media and pop culture, and perhaps most importantly, from each other. Yet, as the example of Chris and some of the other male teens showed, these avenues are not always guaranteed to leave

[27]Many parents used this phrase when they spoke of their past and how they do not want their children to go through what they did.

teenagers fully aware of the natural emotions and feelings surrounding their sexual identities.

The case of Maxine depicted another side of teenage gender relations, sexuality, and *'wiichaawaaw'*. Although it is uncertain whether or not her actions represented an inversion of the typical gender balance that exists within teenage relations, we saw that she had a certain degree of control over the outcome of the situation. This vignette also represented the fun aspect of being a teenager who is experimenting with sex and *'wiichaawaaw'*.

Conclusion

In this chapter our focus was on teenage sexuality, gender relations, and *'wiichaawaaw'*, which means "he/she is going with (goes with) her/him". "Going with" someone is not only of the most fun things in their life, but these relations also teach the teens about adult responsibilities, such as starting a family and relations between men and women. The different interpretations by male and female teens about sex and love, provided us with valuable insight into how each gender experiences these aspects of life. We learned that girls are generally concerned with being in love and having someone. It was revealed that male teens, who often said that "going with" someone was not very important, also place a significant amount of meaning on their relations.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of '*wiichaawaaw*' is how the teens have adapted to changing practices of courtship and mate selection. Through their use of the variables of fluidity and the frequent exchange of '*niwitimus*' partners, teenagers are assuming greater control over these aspects of life than was the case for Naskapi youth in the past. Finally, the vignettes provided us with two different illustrations of how teen sexuality, gender relations, and '*wiichaawaaw*' are treated by teens and their families. On the one hand, these issues are complicated and difficult to deal with, while, as the second sketch illustrated, these aspects of teen life can also be fun and exciting.

CHAPTER VI-THE ROLE OF THE BUSH IN TEENAGE LIFE

Introduction

For the Naskapi, the bush has always been one of the most meaningful contexts through which they define their cultural identity. However, with the decreased economic value of harvested animals and the move to settled life, leading to the introduction of wage labour, and the "culture collapse" (Armitage 1991:87) experienced by the Naskapi, many authors argue that bush skills and ideology have become increasingly less important, especially among the young (ibid.: 1991:53,; Schuurman 1994:147; Robbins 1989:10-11). Despite this, as I will show in this chapter, a significant percentage of teenagers in Kawawa place a high value on the bush the bush way of life, such that it is an important part of their identities. I begin by discussing the impact of the North Eastern Quebec Agreement (1978) on bush activity among the Naskapi. This is followed by a description of how teenagers generally experience the hunting camp way of life, and the pattern of decreased time spent in the bush by teens. I then look at the how the teenagers express the importance of this way of life, and how they relate the different contexts of the bush and the settlement to the issue of Naskapi culture. Finally, in the section entitled "waiting to learn" I illustrate how the teens fit within the contemporary process of the acquisition of bush knowledge and hunting skills among the Naskapi.

The impact of the North Eastern Quebec Agreement on bush activity

As mentioned, there has been a general decline in hunting and bush-related activities among the Naskapi since their move to settled life in 1956. However, this decline in the pursuit of the traditional hunting camp way of life is not a linear development, and it does not affect each sector of the population in the same way. Although the current generation of parents grew up during a time in which when they had few opportunities to practice bush-oriented skills, the situation for Naskapi teens today is different[28]. The signing of the North Eastern Quebec Agreement (1978), and the subsequent establishment of programs in which bush skills are taught, has made it possible for the teens to learn about and practice skills related to the bush in a way that was not available to their parents. As will be outlined below, the teenagers' participation in such bush-related programs and activities helps to account for the importance they place on the bush.

Seeing as I described the numerous benefits of the North Eastern Quebec Agreement for the Naskapi in chapter three, in the ensuing paragraphs I wish to focus on two particular programs that have been created through the Agreement, the Hunter's Support Programme (H.S.P.), and The Naskapi Curriculum Development Project. The Hunter's Support Programme, which is included in section 19 of the Northeastern Quebec Agreement, consists of a Hunter's Support Committee that is made up of four Naskapi

[28]With respect to competence in the bush, comments from my adult male friends illustrated the differences that exist between some adults and the current generation of teenagers. One man told me that "the younger generation knows more about the bush than we do". Another of my friends said "Dave and Steven [who were both under 20 years old at the time] are the best hunters around, they know more than me about it."

hunters who are selected by the band. One of the mandates of this committee is to provide monetary support for Naskapi beneficiaries who have low incomes (Naskapi Band of Quebec Annual Report 1996-97:36). However, perhaps the most important function of the H.S.P. is the organizing of communal hunts which take place several times throughout the year (i.e. the fall caribou hunting and the spring goose break). During these community-wide trips to the bush there are certain rules, albeit rather informal, which the Naskapi participants must follow. They are required to stay in the bush for the duration of the hunt, hunters are asked to shoot only what they need, and to donate a portion of their kill to a future community event or to those who are unable to hunt for themselves (primarily elders and single mothers). Since the Naskapi teens view these hunts as being integral to their bush experience, as we will see in upcoming sections, and because they are made possible through because of the North Eastern Quebec Agreement, the Agreement has had a direct influence on the degree to which the teens are able to practice, learn, and consequently value, the bush way of life.

Another equally important component of the North Eastern Quebec Agreement, and one which has a direct bearing on the teaching and learning of traditional knowledge for the teenagers, is that of education. The Naskapi Curriculum Development Project plays a central role in the establishment of a learning environment which is conducive to Naskapi culture and learning style (in fact, the Naskapi are currently taking steps to assume complete control over their education system). An example of the influence of this Project in the lives of young Naskapi is the establishment of a bilingual (Naskapi and

English) instruction program for all school children. Numerous workshops and training camps for youth have also been created where they are taught, usually by local Naskapi elders, about traditional skills and the hunting camp way of life. In their efforts to rekindle an interest in Naskapi culture among the teens, the Naskapi Curriculum Development Program also works in conjunction with the band office or the Naskapi Development Corporation[29]. In 1996 for example, these two organizations co-sponsored an exchange trip, which was carried out by skidoo, between teenagers and elders from Kawawa and the community of Kuujuuak[30]. The Naskapi constituents first travelled to Kuujuuak, and then teens and elders from that community visited Kawawa. Virtually everyone in Kawawa owns a T-shirt depicting this event, and they are worn with pride by Naskapi of all ages.

As shown through the examples of the Hunter's Support Programme and the Naskapi Curriculum Development Project, many initiatives are being taken by the Naskapi to ensure that the teenagers have the opportunity to learn about and practice skill related to the bush way of life. Not only do these programs exist, but from my observations in Kawawa, the teenagers widely participate in these activities and display a genuine interest in them. Hence, although there has been a general decline in the practice of the hunting

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[29]The Naskapi Development Corporation is also a product of the N.E.Q.A., and this agency is mainly responsible for cultural projects and programs which are aimed at preserving Naskapi history. They too have many of their own projects under way, such as translating the Bible and Naskapi legends, toponomy studies, as well as anthropological research into the Ft. McKenzie period of Naskapi history (1915-1956).

[30]Kuujuuak, which is now an Inuit community in northern Quebec, is located on the site of the former Hudson Bay Company trading post known as Fort Chimo. Fort Chimo was home to the Naskapi for many years (see figure two), and because most teenagers have not visited this Kuujuuak, this trip was seen by participants and members of the community as a way to introducing them to an important part of their history.

camp way of life among the Naskapi since their move from the bush to the settlement, there appears to be a resurgence of interest in bush-oriented activities among the Naskapi, including the teenagers.

The teenage bush experience

Our examination of bush life, or "camping", as it is also referred to by the Naskapi, is based on data acquired from a week-end trip I took with my Naskapi family, along with details of the teenagers' own experiences told to me by my young informants. It is somewhat unfortunate that my stay in Kawawa was only during the spring and summer months, because I was not able to gather information on half of the yearly bush cycle, and also because these months are the least favourite times of year for most people, including teens. Despite this disadvantage, what I offer as observations of bush life do represent an accurate, if rather basic, general description of teenage camping experiences (for a comparable situation of the fall hunting activities see Armitage 1991:56-75).

While some of the older male teenagers live in the bush for extended lengths of time, the majority of teens go camping for weekends, staying in cabins at Iron Arm Lake, or longer periods during the community hunts, which usually last ten days. At Iron Arm (or *Kaachikaayaahch*-literally 'at the place where it narrows'), which is roughly an hour away from Kawawa, there are approximately 40 cabins lining the shore of the lake[31]. All

[31]It is of interest that Iron Arm, which is considered a part of the Naskapi ancestral hunting territory, is actually located in Labrador. The border between Quebec and Labrador is an artificial one in the minds of the Naskapi, and because they continue to exercise their historical usufructuary rights in the

but two of these, which were formerly owned by white miners, belong to the Naskapi and are shared among various members of each family. When the teens go to the bush they are generally with their relatives, or sometimes they stay with the family of their friends.

In the bush the teenagers are often separated from their families. They travel in small same-sex groups, visiting from cabin to cabin. Teenage boys may gather on the lake, and travel around on snowmobiles or go ice fishing. At other times teens may walk around in a larger mixed-sex groups along the sides of the road. Much of this activity is similar to the kind of activities they follow while in the settlement. However, there is another side of their camping experience which is more 'traditional' and is more gender specific in nature. For the most part, more so than the teenage boys and young men, the female teens remain in the house (usually with the other women in the family or group) much more than the teenage boys, tending to the preparation of food, tidying up the cabin, or baby-sitting. The male teenagers, on the other hand, when not hanging out with other teens, spend the bulk of their time outdoors, sometimes by themselves or with the older men in the group. At these times they may help with the skinning and processing of game or tend to their fishing holes.

For the most part, the teenagers seem to enjoy camping and participating in bush-oriented activities. When asked what they enjoyed about being in the bush, the teenagers told me they liked the peace and quiet, visiting, eating and preparing bush food, hunting, spending time with their relatives, and being there with their friends. Some of the older

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area, several hunters have been charged and gone to court over provincial hunting "violations".

teenage boys also said that they liked how there is always something to do in the bush, which is in contrast to many descriptions of living in Kawawa. They rarely complained of being bored in the bush, and those that did were usually girls, who said this in reference to time spent alone with their families.

The pattern of decreased time spent in the bush by teenagers

During my interviews with both male and female teenagers, I found their pattern of going to the bush to be remarkably consistent. When they were children they went camping with their families at least a few times a month, depending on the season. Fall and winter were generally their favourite times because there were "no flies" and they all enjoyed eating caribou meat, which was fresh at that time of year.

For most of them, as they became teenagers, they began going to the bush less and less. The reasons given for no longer going on a regular basis were similar to those we would hear from North American teenagers describing family trips or outings. Typically the girls said they went less often because there were no showers, no television, the flies were bad, and they were bored with just their family. Also, they had an increased interest in boys, which was another major reason to stay behind in the settlement. Some of the boys expressed a similar boredom with going to the bush and also cited "girls" as a major deterrent to leaving the settlement. However, there were other young men who continued

to go to the bush regularly. They spoke highly of the bush, and of their feelings of social solidarity with other male friends and family members, and how this closeness was realized within the context of hunting.

The importance of the bush way of life to the teenagers

The various ways in which the teens expressed the importance of the bush reveals much about their perceptions of their traditions, and of their identity as Naskapi. Despite the fact that they all admitted to going to the bush less frequently as they reached their teenage years, they each told me how important it was for them to learn about the hunting camp way of life and they all said that they want to learn more. One girl, who hardly went to the bush at all, said that the most important thing she has been taught was to know about the bush, because the Naskapi could end up living there again. Another girl told me that she would rather be a boy "because they can hunt". A few of the boys told me that they enjoy hunting and that this enjoyment is something their parents see as important because through hunting, as one boy said "so I will remember them". Other teens preferred the periodic, communal sojourns to the bush, as opposed to the one or two family group excursions, because "it's more fun".

A fascinating example of the importance of the bush to teens is that of Jason, who is 13 years old and regarded as a maturing hunter. This teenager was first introduced to me by his 24 year old uncle (who is himself very well educated in bush skills), who said

that I should start my research with him "because he's a hunter". Soon thereafter I learned that Jason orients the bulk of his thoughts and conversations in relation to the specific animals that are associated with each time of year. In the summer he talks about fish, in the fall it is caribou, in the winter he is consumed with ptarmigan, and in the spring he focuses on geese. The interesting thing about this teenager is that while his extreme involvement with, and love of, the bush is widely recognized, he is only just at the turning point in the typical pattern of teens, when they begin to be reluctant about going to the bush. It remains to be seen whether or not he truly is an exception to the rule, or whether he too will become part of the teenage pattern of reduced time spent in the bush.

Teen culture contrast between hunting life and the settlement

In an attempt to gain additional insight into how the bush, living in the settlement, and their Naskapi culture is incorporated into the teenage worldview I asked them a series of questions in which they were to choose between a number of variables, both cultural and temporal (see Table 3). As the chart shows, the majority of the teens clearly expressed their desire to live in the present, in the settlement, and to have a job. Their answers pertaining to culture loss were quite varied. Some of the teenagers display an apparent ambivalence in answering the questions: for example, some wanted to live in the past, but chose to have a job; and one teen wanted to live full time in the bush, but she chose to have a job over being a hunter. The exact meaning of the teens' ambivalence is difficult to

discern. It may be symptomatic of the specific conditions which they face, or these seemingly contradictory answers could be representative of the more general issue that all Naskapi are dealing with, that of making the choice between life in the settlement and that of the bush.

While teenagers choose to live in present-day conditions over those of the bush or the past, it is interesting that their rationale does not necessarily lie in a definite preference for one way of life over another. Instead, their reasons are indicative of their awareness of what each way of life can offer, along with their abilities to achieve each lifestyle. A number of teens told me that they would rather have a job because they need to feed themselves, and they explained that because of the many conditions which affect hunting, a person is not always guaranteed a successful kill. Similarly, when speaking of the past they described that way of life as extremely difficult and some of them told me that their grandparents have said that they should consider themselves lucky because they did not have to live the way they did.

Judging from the chart we can see that although the majority of teenagers prefer life in the settlement over that of the bush, a significant number of those who said that they do want to live in the settlement also said that they would like to live in the past. While this response pattern may seem rather contradictory, when the teens explain their selections we can gain a better understanding of what the bush and life in the settlement mean to them. For example, those who said they would rather live in the bush or in the

past told me that there are too many "crazy things" (i.e. drinking, drugs, violence) in Kawawa, and because they envision life in the past as more peaceful they would have rather lived during that time. So while the bush is valued in its own right, when its importance is explained through an opposition to Kawawa, we see not only their support of bush life, but also some of their negative feelings about the settlement.

Table 3. RESPONSES BY NASKAPI TEENS ABOUT THE HUNTING WAY OF LIFE, THE SETTLEMENT, AND CULTURE

Name	Would you like to live in the past?	Would you live in the bush full-time?	Would you like to be a hunter or have a job?	Has there been any loss of culture?
Rebecca	yes	no, do both	both	yes
Joyce	no	yes	job	no
Toni	yes	no	job	yes
Rhonda	no	no	job	no
Sharon	no	no	job	sort of
Mary	no	no	job	yes
Mason	no	no	job	a bit
Derek	no-yes	--	job	--
Peter	no	no	both	don't know
Robert	yes	yes	-	--
Paul	--	no	--	no
Brent	yes-no	--	job	yes

One of the more complicating matters to analyse are those instances when an informant changes his answer about a particular question. A few days prior to our

interview I saw John, who was working at his summer job at the Naskapi Development Corporation, looking through some old photos of Naskapi people. I asked him if he would have rather lived during the past. He said yes because, "there were less girl problems". In saying yes, he was valuing the past against something he saw as negative about the present-day conditions. Yet, when I interviewed him, he said that he would not like to have lived in the past. When I brought to his attention the fact that he had changed his mind he shrugged his shoulders and proceeded to describe how hard life was then and that this was his reason for wanting to live now. From my observations, John's transition, from seeing the past as refuge to seeing the past as impossible was a way of explaining his feelings on these different time periods. This holding of two contrary ideas simultaneously may reveal something of the complications faced by teens living in the modern settlement. However, people often change their minds for reasons that are difficult to determine and the apparent inconsistency in John's answers cannot necessarily be attributed to an accompanying ambivalence about his identity. He may have just simply changed his mind.

Perhaps the most difficult category of answers to understand are those pertaining to culture loss.[32] Looking at the responses to the question "is any of your culture being lost?", we can see that four teens said yes, three said no, two said "a bit" or "sort of", and the remaining three were either undecided or did not know how they felt about the

[32]The teenagers' perceptions of culture loss is an especially interesting and complex issue to understand. Although the Naskapi teens use the word culture frequently, there is undoubtedly a distinctive way in which they conceptualize the phenomenon of culture. Understanding the difference between their concept of culture and how they express their ideas about their culture to me in English, is a matter of translation. Although this issue is too complex for me to fully explore, because it directly relates to the interview questions I asked the teens, I wish to make note of it.

question. As was mentioned earlier, those who responded 'yes' to this question tended to choose to live in the past, which was thought to represent a way of protecting, or expressing an affinity for, their culture. It would stand to reason then, that those who did not feel their culture was threatened would also not see the need to live in the past or in the bush, which was the case for all but one of the 'no' respondent. The teens who said "sort of", "a bit", and "don't know" are harder to assess, but one could say that they feel that there is some culture loss occurring.

These responses illustrate not only the variety of opinions held by the teens about the bush-oriented way of life, but to a certain degree it also shows that bush life and the related activities are still very important to this generation. Along with having their own ideas on this topic, they also have their own solutions to preventing culture loss. When asked what would happen if no one went to the bush anymore the teenagers (as well as all of the adults I discussed this issue with) all said that there would always be someone to go to for learning about the bush, either grandparents or relatives. The teenagers also said that the school system should take more responsibility for teaching them about their culture, through culturally appropriate text books and by bringing elders, commonly referred to as "resource people", into the classroom. Many of these initiatives are being implemented at Jimmy Sandy Memorial School, most notably the use of local elders and the introduction of the Naskapi Curriculum Development Project [33].

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[33]This program is designed to encourage the incorporation of Native history, learning styles, and language into the school curriculum. Included in the project are things such as promotion of Naskapi culture week, co-ordination of Native skills camping trips, supplementation of the introduction to technology course with Native skills, and cultural and bilingual instruction (Robinson 1993:17-18).

Waiting to learn

Our discussion has shown that the issue of culture loss, especially among youth, is a prevalent one for the people of Kawawa, along with those who write about the Naskapi. The pattern of decreased time spent in the bush by teenagers, seems to feed into this paradigm. Given these observations, is culture loss as inevitable as it seems? If so, what does this mean for future generations? A weekend fishing trip into the bush with several men and three male teenagers from the community shed a great deal of light onto the cyclical nature of the process of the acquisition of bush knowledge among the Naskapi. In the ensuing section I will describe how Naskapi involvement with the bush not only regenerates this form of knowledge across the generations, but that contemporary conditions are allowing for new ways of learning which blur the formerly rigid lines of age-related skill attainment and act to ensure that although some "wait to learn", they are still acquiring this essential cultural experience.

The fishing trip was one of the things I cherish most about my stay in Kawawa. It was late August and I was accompanying 7 men and three male teenagers into the bush for the weekend, hopefully to catch Brook trout (or "speckles" as they are called locally). We left on Friday after the men had finished work, and as we hurriedly picked up people and last minute supplies our levels of anticipation and excitement were running high. The situation was especially emotionally charged because there had been a plane crash earlier

that afternoon at the same location where we were leaving from, and two women who were cooks on their way to an outfitting camp died. Despite the slightly eerie feeling we had, each of us contributed our money for the return trip, said good-bye to the family members who were there to see us off, and we hopped on the bush planes.

From my position at the back of the plane I had a clear view of the men during our ride. They leaned close to the windows and eagerly discussed the spots below, debating whether or not they would be good for trapping, fishing, or other forms of hunting. As one of my friends told me on several occasions "we're always looking for new spots [for hunting]". The men were also very considerate of me, and because I could not understand much of what they said in Naskapi, they took the time to point out where they set their traps, places that are ideal for geese hunting, and the small areas of water which are good for fishing. As I sat there I remember thinking that they read the land as if it were a text. What I saw was beautiful. A multitude of bodies of water were scattered throughout the terrain and low rusty coloured ridges rose above the level of the land. What seemed like thousands of trees blanketed the surface below and patches of tundra stretched beyond my view. When we landed the sun was lowering, but it was still bright and the light blue sky was clear.

We glided onto the lake and used our canoe, which also served as a vessel for our gear, as a bridge between the plane and dry land. Once across a small section of one of the nearby fishing streams we erected our tents, organized the camp area, and a fire was

started. While much of our foodstuff and gear were store-bought products, our activities and the pattern of our daily life was similar to how the Naskapi lived in the bush in the past. In fact, one of the men, in a rather self-assured manner, commented that unlike some of the Montagnais people he knows, the Naskapi do not rely on modern technological instruments (i.e. televisions, radios) to ease the rigours of bush life, "we have no contact with the outside world" he said.

Over the next few days we followed the rhythm of bush living. We arose very early each morning and ate all of our meals (which ranged from hot dogs, white bread, and pop to tea, potatoes and the fish we caught) communally around the fire. Then the men prepared their fishing gear, packed small lunches of high calorie foods, and they advised me what to take along. We would then set off in single file through the bush, heading "upstream". As we travelled throughout the day people chose different spots to fish at or took alternate routes to a new area, and so there was a steady divergence and coming together of the group. Upon our return to the camp another flow of activities was automatically entered into. The men unpacked their gear, the fish were cleaned, wood was chopped, a meal was usually begun, clothes were hung to dry, and everyone busied themselves with tasks of their own.

In his discussion of the importance of the bush among the Innu, Armitage makes the point that some Innu only feel at home in the bush, and it is only in this context that this form of knowledge should be transmitted (1991:66). Looking back on my observations of when and how I was shown about the bush, the same point applies.

However, as Armitage notes, it was more than merely being told about the bush in the bush, there was a distinctly special kind of meaning that seemed to be attached to our actions and interactions. It may have been that they were as excited as I was to be out there, but I sensed that the whole experience, of being in the bush, of depending on one another to a certain degree, of talking about the bush, that they were able to realize and exercise, in the appropriate way, a part of themselves that is impossible to achieve in the settlement. As one of them said the first night when we were sitting around the fire, "this is part of being a Naskapi".

Perhaps the most significant thing about my fishing trip was the men themselves, all but the three teenagers fit within the middle generation of Naskapi (those age 20-45). This is important for two reasons. Firstly, from the scant literature available on Naskapi youth, I found that it mostly focuses on the decades of the late 60's-70's, when this group of men were growing up. This body of work, along with, and perhaps more importantly, accounts given by the men on this trip, describe the youth of that era as rarely going to the bush (Martin 1971:17; Robbins 1975:103). Secondly, when this fact is coupled with our knowledge that Naskapi teenagers also admit to going to the bush less frequently than they did as children, the following dilemma arises: how and when did these men learn enough to become competent bushmen? Also, how does the transmission of these skills to the younger generation work, especially when the teens admit to going to the bush less?

While this is a somewhat complex puzzle, when additional observations are

worked into the equation a clearer picture emerges. For instance, from the knowledge possessed by each member of the fishing trip, these men of the middle generation obviously learned bush skills from someone after their teen years.[34] Similarly, because the teenagers on the trip were confident and knowledgeable in their own right we can infer that the general teen pattern of bush interaction does not apply to all teens. Therefore, the cycle of teenage interaction with the bush should not alarm the Naskapi, there is not necessarily going to be a cultural vacuum of bush knowledge for the future. Hence, what this data reveals is that despite the socio-economic difficulties experienced by the Naskapi and the general decrease in the economic importance of hunting, there is a deep underlying value which continues to be placed on the acquisition and practice of bush skills.

From this example of the fishing trip, we can see that a shift in how and when people learn about the bush is occurring. As survival is no longer dependent upon hunting capabilities and because wage employment is occupying an increasingly prominent place in the Naskapi economic system, it is no longer important for a person to learn bush skills for survival purposes. Today, the important thing is learning these skills in general, and at one time or another, depending on personal situation and the eagerness of the learnee, to pass them on.

[34] Several of the men told me that when they became interested in learning more about the bush they went to older relatives or siblings for instruction. While a certain degree of social stigma may be associated with "waiting to learn", it seems that the basic acquisition of this form of knowledge is more important than when it is learned.

Conclusion

In the paragraphs above I have attempted to make sense of teenage involvement with the bush. What I have also tried to do is piece together bits of data which help to complete the picture of the contemporary pattern of hunting and how the teenagers will figure within this pattern. Through this analysis several important points have surfaced. Despite the somewhat pessimistic local (and academic) forecast for the gathering of traditional skills among the youth, our data shown that the teenagers possess a strong interest in the bush, both symbolically and in a more practical sense. Also, as the Naskapi have responded to changing socio-cultural conditions, a new stage in the acquisition of this knowledge has appeared, that which I have referred to as "waiting to learn". When the unique conditions which allowed for such a process to take place are also taken into consideration, namely the NEQA and related programs, what emerges is a new kind of cycle of bush involvement for Naskapi in general. The contemporary system of bush interaction works not necessarily to ensure that boys become men once they are eligible hunters, but to ensure that as either a boy or a man they can take their place within the cycle and begin to learn.

CHAPTER VII-CONCLUSION

The characterization of the period of adolescence as one of crisis has been ingrained in our social fabric to such a degree that it is often assumed to be a universal feature that can be found in all cultures. However, as I have argued, this theory is rooted in Western thought and is based on the adolescent experience in complex industrial societies. Through the use of ethnographic data on Naskapi teenagers I have shown that there are specific cultural factors at work that can help explain why these teens do not go through an identity crisis similar to that espoused in the Western models of adolescence. Another point which has been made in this thesis is that, contrary to the popular description of Naskapi teens, that they are "between two worlds", the teenagers of Kawawa appear to be capable individuals who take what they can, or need, from both traditional and modern forms of Naskapi cultural identity to create their own forms of expression and identity which are representative of their particular social group.

Although being a teenager involves considerable ups and downs, the reasons for the difficulties experienced during this time vary cross-culturally and are specific to a given group of people. In Western models, adolescence is seen as *the* defining period of life, during which one's future 'career' is decided upon and one's personal identity is achieved. However, until as recently as two generations age, for the Naskapi an individual's identity and social role was known at birth, depending on one's gender. Despite the fact that the

Naskapi are now participants in the same socially and technologically advanced world that we belong to, as we saw in chapter two, for the teens of Kawawa today, adolescence is still not a period of preparation for adult roles.

The Naskapi non-authoritarian form of parental guidance is another key factor which influences how the teenagers approach and deal with their future. The value which continues to be placed by the Naskapi on the personal autonomy of others makes it somewhat difficult for parents to push their teens to pursue career goals and to become successful. Since they are usually not pressured by their parents to choose and plan for a career during this period, and because many see adulthood as a more difficult time of life, the teens remain in their current group for as long as possible.

The way in which the Naskapi teenage social role is perceived by the rest of society also has an impact on the teens as they come of age. Given the diversity of social roles and cultural influences available to teenagers today, in contrast to the past, there is, as yet, no definite social role for this group. Seeing as the older generations generally view them as being immature when compared to youth in the past, the negative characteristics which they attribute to the 'teenage' stage, which are actually representative of changes occurring in the *whole* of Naskapi society, not just among the teens, are used by the adults and elders as a way to channel their disillusionment with the more general socio-cultural changes. That there is no teenage social role which is validated by the rest of society, while having some negative consequences for the teens (i.e. being "blamed" for things

which are beyond their control), also helps to account for some of the differences between Naskapi and Western forms of adolescence.

The final point about the inappropriate application of Western models of adolescence to Naskapi teens is that of the common perception of teenage behaviour and activities. Teenage behaviour is generally depicted as being wild, rebellious, and foolish. Yet, at times teens indulge in sex, alcohol, petty crime, or drugs for the pure hedonistic joy of the activity itself. Doing fun things and having fun is integral to being a teenager. Contrary to Erikson's theory, the pursuit of fun is often related to the enjoyment of the activities themselves, and is not always necessarily representative of their psychological maladjustment

Thus, the experience of being a Naskapi teen is both fun and difficult. However, as I have illustrated throughout this thesis, the reasons for why it can be a tumultuous period are somewhat different from those of Western adolescents. Theirs is a world informed by many different cultural influences and contrasting traditions, yet the Naskapi teenagers emerge as resilient creators of their own unique identity, as teenagers of the tundra.

Nikanish-My People

They walked like the caribou

They followed the caribou's path

And somewhere within ourselves

We are proud to be of those

Who walked for survival

(Kashtin, *'Innu'*, 1994).

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