CONTINUITY AND CHANGE:
MOOSE CREE RELATIONSHIPS WITH GEESE

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Continuity and Change: Moose Cree Relationships with Geese

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the continuity that exists within an Aboriginal hunting tradition when confronted with changing social, economic, and cultural conditions. Through a study of the goose hunting practices of the Moose Cree First Nation of Moose Factory, Ontario I argue that Aboriginal hunting practices can change materially but still remain culturally important and consistent with traditional beliefs. Through an analysis of data collected through interviews with goose hunters and participant observation, I show that members of the MCFN have a 'logic of engagement' with geese premised upon an ideology of respect for geese as non-human persons. Changes that affect goose hunting are incorporated into hunting practice in ways that allow the MCFN to maintain respectful relationships with geese. This logic of engagement is learned by children through a process of apprenticeship on the land where they learn and come to enbody the cosmologies and environmental philosophies of the MCFN.

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Introduction

1.1 Differing Perspectives of the Land

The James Bay region of Ontario has been both home and frontier for the last several centuries. Archaeological evidence suggests that people may have moved into the area that is now the James Bay/Hudson Bay Lowlands as the Tyrrell Sea receded nearly 7000 years ago (Lytwyn 2002:36). For the Aboriginal peoples whose ancestors have occupied these lands since the retreat of the Tyrrell Sea, the forests and marshes of the James Bay lowlands are the home where they raise their children and attempt to live their lives according to the values and relationships that are most important to themselves. The Europeans who came to North America viewed this area differently. They saw it, and many continue to see it, as an area with abundant natural resources to be exploited. With the arrival of Europeans a frontier was created in the James Bay lowlands. Frontiers are "an imaginative project capable of moulding both places and processes" (Tsing 2005:32) that "create wildness so that some–and not others–may reap its awards" (Tsing 2005:27). Hugh Brody writes that the transformation of the North into a frontier rested in the creation and perpetuation of stereotypes about the North and the people who live there:

> Hunters of the North were judged to have no real or viable economy of their own. This self-serving opinion removed, at an ideological stroke, any prospect for legal or moral opposition to European economic expansion into places where hunters lived (1981:55).

Within Euro-canadian society, one of relationships that exists between humans and their environments is based upon ideas of human domination over the non-human world (White Jr. 1970:20-21). Within this framework nature is to be controlled and subjugated by humans – nature is the "raw material to human projects of construction" (Ingold 2000:63). Thus for Europeans, an important aspect of humanity is the domestication of nature – of imprinting human intentionality upon it. This relationship legitimizes certain types of productive activity on the land and delegitimizes others.

Europeans looking at Cree hunters would have seen people who were not utilizing the land for anything productive and thus felt justified in expropriating the land for their own use. Implicit in these ideas about the proper human relationship to the non-human world is that people who do not exploit the non-human world are not fulfilling a societal obligation. Thus the thought developed that Europeans had the "right if not the duty to give to savage and barbaric societies some share in our spiritual and material achievements" (Brody 1981:51). These concurrent ideas about the proper human use of the land and European superiority led to the James Bay/Hudson Bay Lowlands being perceived as a frontier and justified European subordination of Aboriginal interests and appropriation of their lands for the benefit of Europeans.

In the context of northern Ontario, many resource based industries, including mining, hydro-electricity generation, and forestry, have been developed

over the last several decades without allowing Aboriginal communities to have input on the operation of these industries. However, there is growing awareness of the imbalance in power between government/industry, which tend to reap the benefits of industrial resource development, and Aboriginal communities, which gain little or no benefit from resource development and often experience deleterious effects. In response to this the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has proposed the Northern Boreal Initiative which has a stated goal "to provide several northern First Nation communities with opportunities to take a leading role in the development of new, sustainable commercial forestry opportunities" (2001:i). This leading role entails conducting community-centred land use planning in which Aboriginal communities will develop a land use plan that synthesizes traditional and industrial uses of the land and bring Aboriginal perspectives into larger scale land use planning.

Anthropologists have been adept at revealing the difficulties faced in systems that attempt to integrate Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian perspectives (Spaeder and Feit 2005). Often Aboriginal peoples' values, knowledge, economy, society, and culture are reduced into small "facts" that can be measured against other "facts". This is referred to by Paul Nadasdy (1999:6-7) as compartmentalization and distillation in which a holistic view of the environment is broken apart to fit into categories that are amenable to the understandings of Euro-Canadian resource managers. These categories are

based upon Western ideas of secularism and rationality, which are assumed to be universal. Elements of people's lives that do not conform to Western categorizations are thus deemed irrational and unimportant (Chakrabarty 2000). Often, elements of Aboriginal knowledge that do not correspond with any of these categories are excluded and those that are kept are removed from their original context which gives them meaning.

In this thesis I will not attempt to find a solution to the problems of compartmentalization and distillation; rather I show that the members of the Moose Cree First Nation (MCFN) relate to their environment differently than how Euro-Canadians relate to their environment. I will utilize the term 'logic of engagement' (Langdon 2005) in this thesis to refer to the culturally meaningful and appropriate ways in which people interact with their environment. This term has utility when examining the relationship that members of the MCFN have with elements of their environment because it allows us to consider both the ontological conceptions of the non-human world and how these conceptions result in real world everyday behaviour.

To limit the scope of this project I focus on the relationship that members of the MCFN have with geese and the harvesting practices associated with the goose hunt. Geese have traditionally been an important part of the Cree diet. They were hunted in the fall as they migrated south and supplemented the fresh meat that was hunted in the winter. Geese were hunted again in the spring as

they migrated north and were an important food source because they often provided the first fresh meat after the winter. Geese continue to be hunted and are still an important part of the diet of many members of the MCFN. However, the role of geese in the diet of MCFN members has changed in the last several decades. Hunting today is expensive and food can easily bought at the Northern Store, the supermarket, in Moose Factory (even though it is expensive by southern standards). Today goose hunting is as much about getting on the land, maintaining valued relationships with geese, reinforcing relationships with community members, obtaining a culturally significant food and practicing an important tradition as it is about feeding oneself and one's family.

In this thesis I demonstrate that some members of the MCFN desire to maintain their relationship with geese. Traditional ways of thinking about geese and the proper human relationship still prevail among many members of the MCFN and hunting practices, which maintain this relationship, are still followed. However, goose hunting is not a static activity. Change has been occurring in the James Bay region for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Throughout this time members of the MCFN have responded to the challenges that they encountered and have incorporated new ideas and tools into their lives while maintaining important beliefs.

While the resource and land use of the Quebec Cree has received considerable academic attention (e.g., Feit 1973; Niezen 1998; Preston 2002;

Richardson 1976; Scott 1989; 1996; Tanner 1979), there has been much less written on the harvesting practices of the Cree living to the west of James Bay. Honigmann (1961) describes the economy of the Attawapiskat Cree in the 1940s. Cummings later (1999) shows that despite decades of intrusion by the state, missionaries, and fur traders, the Attawapiskat Cree continue to hunt and trap. Quantitative studies done in the mid-1990s (Berkes et al. 1994; Berkes et al. 1995; George et al. 1995) demonstrate that hunting continued to be an important part of the economy of the Ontario Cree and that the lands occupied by the Cree were extensively utilized for harvesting activities. Past works on goose hunting in this region (Hanson and Currie 1957; Prevett et al. 1983) generally examine the number of Aboriginal waterfowl hunters and the size of their kills or provide descriptive accounts of goose hunting practice (Smith 1984). Recent studies examine how traditional land use patterns and social institutions can be used to facilitate economic activity through resource development that is consistent with the values of the MCFN membership (Berkes et al. 2009; Tanner 2009).

However, these studies do not address the importance of goose hunting to members of the MCFN from a cultural perspective nor do they examine changes in hunting practice. This research places emphasis on the relationships that members of the MCFN have with geese and how traditional beliefs about proper human interactions with geese persist despite changes in how geese are hunted.

This research is important because I show that Aboriginal hunting can change but still remain culturally important and consistent with traditional beliefs. This is important because too often people have a view that Aboriginal traditions are, or should be, ossified. When people observe contemporary Aboriginal people hunting differently from past accounts the assumption is made that this activity is not traditional and there has been culture loss[1]. Although I focus this research on the relationship that some members of the MCFN have with geese, the results of this research can be expanded to provide a general statement regarding contemporary values about MCFN land use held by members of the MCFN. This will be invaluable to the MCFN as land and resource management strategies are developed and implemented within their traditional territory. By knowing the contemporary values held by their membership, the MCFN will be in a better position to make informed decisions that best reflects their culture.

1.2 Overview of Thesis

Chapter two of this thesis provides background on Moose Factory and the MCFN and contextualizes what is presented in further chapters. I show that change has constantly been occurring in the James Bay region and that the MCFN have adapted to and incorporated many of these changes into their lives. I also provide a biophysical description of the James Bay lowlands and descriptions of goose populations that are of importance to the MCFN.

[1] For an example of this reasoning applied to the MCFN goose hunt see Tsuji and Nieboer 1999.

In chapter three I outline the research methods used during this project. I provide a summary of the events I attended and participated in while doing this research. Finally I discuss the ethical concerns which were crucial in the completion of this project.

In chapter four I examine the 'logic of engagement' that defines the interactions that members of the MCFN have with geese. This is done by first examining the ontological conception that members of the MCFN have of geese as persons who actively participate in the goose hunt. Second, I outline the hunting practices and guidelines that are utilized by members of the MCFN to show respect to geese.

In chapter five I describe the process in which children come to learn how to be goose hunters who are respectful to geese. I argue that goose hunting is a learned technique for engaging with the environment in a culturally meaningful way. However, not all MCFN members' children have equal opportunities to learn to be goose hunters and I describe the impediments to becoming hunters faced by many children.

In chapter six I look at how goose hunting has changed historically and is changing contemporarily. Observers to the MCFN goose hunt could point to changes, such as the use of new tools and modern technology, to the goose hunt and suggest that this is evidence that the hunt is no longer traditional. However, this argument assumes that goose hunting for members of the MCFN should be

static and unchanging despite the social, political, economic and environmental changes faced by the MCFN. I suggest that the observable material changes reflected in the hunting practices of the MCFN membership should not define their engagement with geese. Rather the changes that have been incorporated into the goose hunting technique of the MCFN goose hunters have enabled them to continue to hunt geese according to ongoing beliefs of geese as non-human persons who deserve respect.

I conclude this thesis by arguing that goose hunting continues to be an important subsistence activity for members of the MCFN. Goose may not be as critical a food source as it was in the past, but the harvest of geese continues to be an extremely important cultural activity in which knowledge is shared between people, social bonds are reinforced, people find rest and relaxation, and a highly valued food is obtained.

Chapter 2
Moose Factory and the Moose Cree First Nation

2.1 Research Setting

Moose Factory refers to both the community of Moose Factory and the island of Moose Factory. The island is located approximately 21 kilometers from the mouth of the Moose River and measures roughly 4.5 kilometers long and 3.2 kilometers wide and covers an area of about 1,600 acres. Moosonee is the closest community to Moose Factory and is located on the mainland to the west of Moose Factory (see Figure 1). The island is traveled to from Moosonee by water taxi when the river is free of ice, by snowmobile or automobile when the river is frozen over, or by helicopter while the river is freezing or breaking up.

Moose Factory lies in the Hudson Plains generalized terrestrial ecozone (Wiken 1986:14), which is the largest wetland in Canada, and the James Bay Lowland ecoregion (Environment Canada 2005). The James Bay Lowland is a transitional area between the forested areas to the south and the tundra to the north and covers an area that reaches from Quebec, in the east, to the Attawapiskat River in northern Ontario. Much of the region slopes gently towards James Bay and is poorly drained, with wetlands covering 75 percent of the ecoregion in the north and 50 percent of the ecoregion in the south (Environment Canada 2005).

The Hudson Plains have a cold continental climate influenced by factors such as a high water table, permafrost, the flat coastal plain, James and

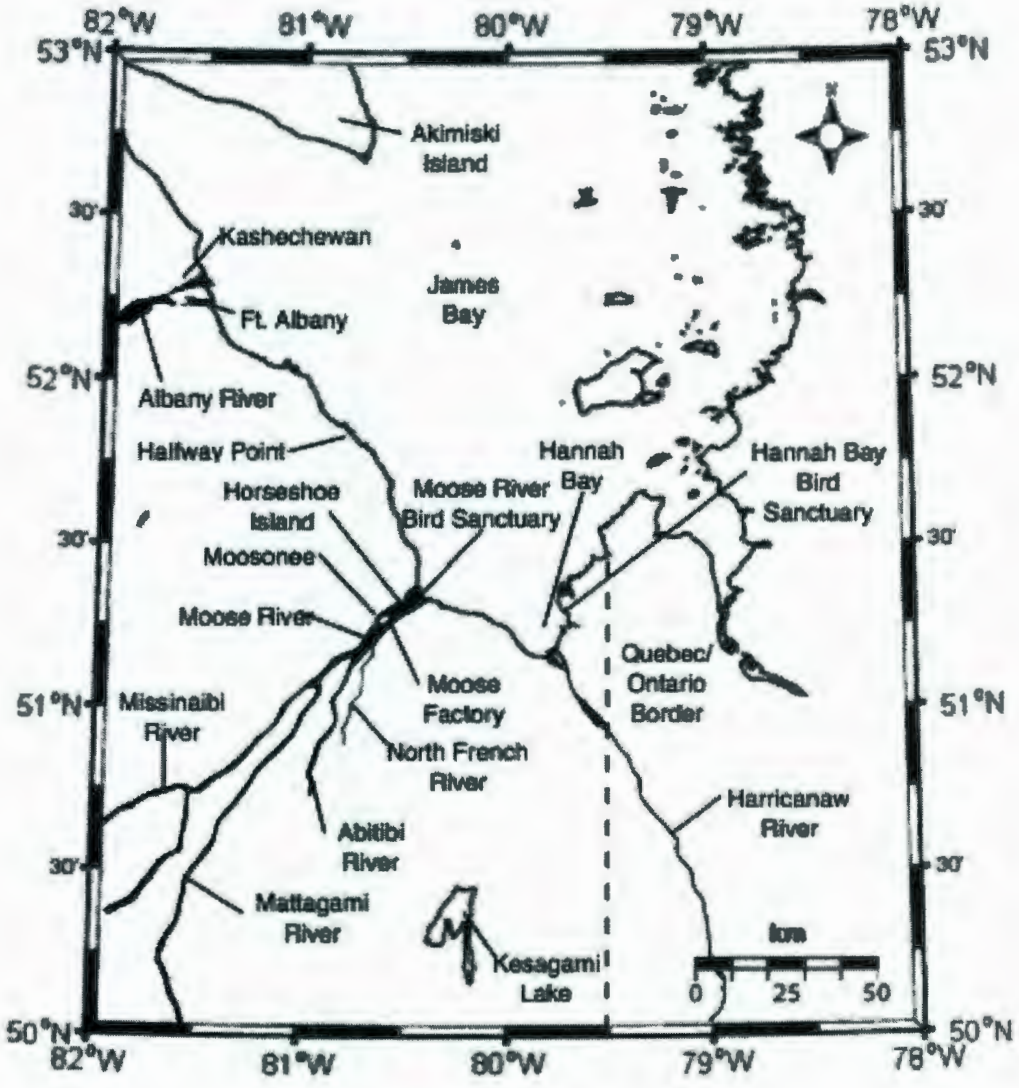

Figure 1: Location of Moose Factory, Ontario and surrounding areas

Hudson Bays, and the Hudson Bay-low and Polar-high air masses (Wiken 1986:14). The average daily temperature ranges from a high of 15.4 °C in July to a low of -20.7 °C in January (Environment Canada n.d.).

The wetlands of the Hudson Plains are productive waterfowl areas and the area around Moose Factory has several species of geese, ducks, and loons, in addition to other migratory birds (Berkes 1982:26). Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*) from the Southern James Bay population migrate past Moose Factory and the areas utilized by the MCFN membership in the spring as they head to nest on Akimiski Island or areas to the south and west of James Bay. These geese again pass through this region as they migrate to their wintering areas which extend from southern Ontario to Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. Recent surveys indicate that there are approximately 77,500 geese in this population with 69,200 breeding geese (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2009:41).

Mid-continent Population geese also migrate through the area used by the members of the MCFN. This population consists mostly of lesser snow geese (*Chen caerulescens caerulescens*) with growing numbers of Ross' geese (*Chen rossii*). The geese from this population primarily nest on Baffin and Southampton Islands with some geese nesting to the west of Hudson Bay. These geese winter in eastern Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2009:49). Population estimates suggest that this population increased by 12

percent between 2008 and 2009 to 2,753,400 geese (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2009:49). Although the survey done by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service suggests that the population is increasing, goose hunters in Moose Factory are noticing that there are now fewer snow geese flying through their hunting areas. Many of the MCFN members who spoke of this did not think that there are fewer geese, rather they suggest that the geese have changed their migration path and were flying to the west or that they were flying at night.

The Mississippi Flyway Giant Population is a third goose population that utilizes the James Bay lowlands. This population is comprised of Giant Canada geese (*Branta canadensis maxima*) and is numbered at 1,906,600 (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2009:42). These geese migrate to the James Bay Lowlands to molt in the late spring (Prevett et al. 1983:190) and are often referred to by the members of the MCFN as popcorn geese.

There are two primary goose hunting seasons for MCFN goose hunters. Canada geese are hunted in the spring as they migrate north; snow geese are hunted in the autumn as they migrate south. The spring hunt is more productive than the fall hunt and has more people participate in it. Giant Canada geese are not hunted extensively in the late spring and summer when they are around Moose Factory although some people will take the opportunity to hunt them. The spring goose hunt, which has been described as having "religious significance for the Cree" (Prevett et al. 1983:190), is the most significant for the MCFN

membership and many people get 'goose fever' as they await the northward migration of the Canada geese.

2.2 Notes on Nomenclature

The coastal area to the west of James and Hudson Bays is home to other Aboriginal groups; these groups are commonly collectively referred to as the Lowland Cree (Lytwyn 2002:6), Omushkego (Berkes et al. 1994), Swampy Cree (Honigmann 1981), the West Main Cree (Honigmann 1981), or Mushkegowuk. The Aboriginal people within this larger grouping traditionally identified themselves with the river system where they hunted and resided and this identification was important in defining group identities (Lytwyn 2002:8-9).

In this thesis, when I refer to all the Aboriginal inhabitants of the James Bay/Hudson Bay Lowlands I will refer to them as the Mushkegowuk.

When I refer to the Aboriginal peoples who occupied the Moose River drainage before the signing of Treaty 9 I will refer to them as the Moose River Cree. However, this group was not a homogenous population. Past research shows that there were several different groups of Cree people who occupied the area around the Moose River: west of the French Creek lived the Moose Factory families, east of the creek lived the Kesagami Lake families, and the Hannah Bay families lived at the south edge of James Bay along the Harricanaw River

(Flannery and Chambers 1986:115)[2]. The Moose Cree First Nation (MCFN) was established when the Moose River Cree signed Treaty 9.

2.3 Cree Perception and Use of the Land

The forest, in the past, was the home for the Moose River Cree. This was the place where most of a person's time was spent and where the activities that were most important took place (Flannery 1995:51-52). Families had designated hunting territories which were centered on drainage systems of major rivers. There were no firm borders of these territories but the edges of them were loosely based upon features of the landscape. The boundaries of these hunting groups were flexible and could change based upon factors such as marriage, hunting partnerships, kin-connections, hunting skill, and landscape disturbance (i.e., wildfire, flooding) (Chambers and Flannery 1986:127-128).

The ideal social grouping was the extended nuclear family. During the winter two or more of these domestic units would establish a winter camp which was generally composed of extended family members. The winter group's composition was flexible and varied from year to year and with the life cycle of the individual families that composed it. The oldest man was considered to be the leader, or *okimah*, of the group and was responsible for making land use

[2] The Hannah Bay families may have been closely related to the Kesagami families because the both spoke the "r" dialect of Cree. The Moose Factory families spoke the "l" dialect of Cree (Flannery and Chambers 1986:115).

decisions. His leadership depended on his knowledge of the land and animals, his skill as a hunter, and his spiritual insight.

The Mushkegowuk followed a seasonal cycle determined by the availability of wildlife at certain times (Bishop 1994:280-81; Flannery 1995; Lytwyn 2002:81-114). In the late fall and winter they lived at inland winter camps. During this time they hunted moose, caribou, and small game such as grouse, ptarmigan, and hare. Furbearing animals were trapped for their pelts in the winter, but were harvested year round. These were always eaten – even the species that were not considered to be good food. During the winter when several men hunted together, the animals killed were distributed based upon the size of each man's household. The wives of these men were then be responsible for distributing the meat of the animals to those who needed it.

In the spring the Mushkegowuk left their winter camps and moved towards the coast. During this season the Omushgeto hunted migratory waterfowl and fished. Several winter groups often gathered at a fishing spot for up to six weeks if the fishing was good. During this time the large group built large fish traps and the fish caught were shared.

The summer was a time of socialization. Large numbers of families gathered on the coast and alliances were renewed. Once built, fur trading posts became summer gathering spots for the Mushkegowuk and trading would occur. Some fishing would be done during the summer, although it was not as

productive as in the spring. This season was also a time for picking berries which were dried for later consumption.

Women played an important role in providing food for their families. They hunted animals that they encountered, trapped, fished, and picked berries (Flannery 1995:13-14, 22). While there were jobs that men tended to do and jobs that women tended to do, there was no strict division of labour because life in the bush demanded flexibility (Flannery 1995:35). Women who were competent at the jobs that men did were admired (Flannery 1995:26, 53) and men often learned the skills needed to do many of the jobs that women did (Flannery 1995:36).

2.4 Trade

Before Europeans arrived in James Bay, the Mushkegowuk were involved in well established trade networks with other Aboriginal peoples who lived as far away as the St. Lawrence River (Lytwyn 2002:116), the Ottawa River (Lytwyn 2002:116), the upper Great Lakes (Lytwyn 2002:116), and Mexico (Cummins 1999:165). Furs, hides, precious stones, and other products were traded for items such as copper, pottery, obsidian, and silica. These trade networks linked the Moose River Cree to the fur trade and allowed them to receive European goods long before European traders came to James Bay (Bishop 1984:25; Cummins 1999:165; Lytwyn 2002:115-17).

By the 1640s the Mushkegowuk were trading beaver pelts to Europeans through Aboriginal middlemen or by traveling south to trade directly with the Europeans. By 1670 the English were sending traders to the mouth of the Moose River to trade. The Hudson's Bay Company built a trading post at the mouth of the Moose River in 1673. The French captured this first Moose Fort in 1686; the British reclaimed it in 1693 and later abandoned it (Bishop 1984:30-32; 1994:282-83, 285). After the Moose Fort was abandoned many of Moose River Cree who had previously traded there traveled to Ft. Albany to trade with the English. They brought mostly small furs to Ft. Albany because beaver were not prevalent around the area in which they resided (Bishop 1984:42).

Traveling from their territories in the Moose River basin to Ft. Albany was dangerous for the Moose River Cree. After they threatened to take their trade to the French traders, the Hudson's Bay Company built a second fort along the Moose River in 1730 (Judd 1984:82; Bishop 1994:285).

The Mushkegowuk were important participants in the fur trade and did not give in to the wishes of the fur companies. For example, the HBC traders encouraged the Mushkegowuk near Attawapiskat to hunt caribou in the late fall and early winter when the fur of the caribou was at its best. However, for the Mushkegowuk acquiring good food was more important than trading prime furs so they hunted Caribou early in the fall when the animals were the fattest (Lytwyn 2002:103). The Mushkegowuk attempted to incorporate European traders as

allies and partners in relationships of reciprocity and would often supply European traders with food. In return, the Mushkegowuk expected the traders to provide the same treatment to them and their families when needed. However, this ideal was difficult to satisfy because while the Mushkegowuk expected the trading relationship between them and the European traders to be based on balanced reciprocity, the Europeans expected to make a profit from the fur trade (Cummins 1992:81).

Some Mushkegowuk, called Homeguard Cree, had closer relationships with the trading posts and remained near them year round because their hunting territories were close to the fort. They hunted geese and other game to provide food and other provisions to the traders (Bishop 1994:283; Lytwyn 2002:15-20). The Homeguard were better hunters than the Europeans and played a vital role in provisioning the traders (Lytwyn 2002:136-137, 145). The Mushkegowuk, however, were reluctant to hunt migratory waterfowl for the fur traders but the Hudson's Bay Company eventually induced hunters to hunt by offering emergency provisions, feasts, and gifts (Lytwyn 2002:137-139), and through appeals to the Homeguard captains[3] who had considerable influence over other goose hunters (Lytwyn 2002:142).

[3] Homeguard captains are the expert goose hunters who hunted for the Hudson's Bay Company. These men often received gifts from the HBC, signifying their important rank, which they distributed to their followers. Some captains continued to receive gifts long after they had retired from hunting and some retained the title of "captain" until their death (Lytwyn 2002:142).

2.5 Missionaries

The Mushkegowuk were exposed to Christian beliefs from their contacts with European traders. Early records show that some of these beliefs were adopted but it was not until the mid-19th century that there was a concerted effort to bring Christianity to the Moose River Cree. The Anglican missionary John Horden arrived in Moose Factory in 1851. He translated and published various religious works for the Cree and was later ordained as the first bishop of the Diocese of Moosonee in 1872. In addition to Horden, George Blarney, a Methodist missionary, resided in Moose Factory from 1840-1847 (Rogers 1994:327-333). Wesleyan missionaries also worked to convert the Moose River Cree to Christianity and Roman Catholic Oblates began proselytizing at Moose Factory in 1847 (Honigmann 1981:218).

2.6 Moose Factory in the 20th Century

Treaty 9 was signed by the Cree who traded at Moose Factory on August 9, 1905. Throughout the fur trade the residence of Cree families came to be defined by where they traded (Bishop 1994:283; Lytwyn 2002:15; Rogers 1994:323). This identification was institutionalized when treaties were signed and administrative bands were created. The Cree in northern Ontario were interested in signing a treaty with Canada in order to protect the traditional way of life that was being threatened by industrial activity, settlers, and white trappers

(Long 1978). However, after signing Treaty 9 these processes continued and led to competing claims over how the land should be used (Macklem 1997).

Two reserves were established for the MCFN under Treaty 9. Indian Reserve #1 is located on the northern part of Moose Factory Island and covers an area of 3.08 km^2 square kilometers. Indian Reserve #68 is located approximately 10 kilometers upstream of Moose Factory Island and covers an area of 168.38 km^2. Signatories to Treaty 9 ostensibly had the right to choose where their reserves would be located; in practice they were limited to locations that were deemed to have no economic potential for the Crown. For example, an agreement reached between the province of Ontario and the Dominion of Canada, in June 1905, stipulated that reserves were prohibited along waterways where there was the potential for 500 horsepower or more of hydro-electric power (Macklem 1997:125-126; Morrison 1986).

2.7 Contemporary Moose Factory

Moose Factory Island is today divided into three parts: Indian Reserve #1, provincial lands, and non-reserve federal lands. The reserve lies on the northern portion of the island and covers about two-thirds of the island. The provincial lands cover the majority of the remainder of the island. The non-reserve federal lands consists of a small area at the southern end of the island where the Weeneebayko hospital is located.

The latest population statistics available put the population of the Moose Cree First Nation at 3,716. Of this total population, 1,856 are male and 1,860 are female. Over half of the membership (2,136 people) of the MCFN lives off reserve (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs 2008). These statistics do not indicate where these off reserve members of the MCFN reside. However, many of these members would live on the non-reserve parts of Moose Factory Island, in Moosonee, in other communities in northern Ontario (e.g. Timmins, Cochrane), or in Toronto. The population of the MCFN is very young with 35.1 percent of the population being younger than 14 years old (1999 Wakenagun Communities Futures Development Corporation).

There are two primary schools on Moose Factory Island. Ministik School is operated by the Ontario provincial government and the Moose Factory Island District Area School Board. The Moose Factory Academy of Christian Education is a private school. After completing primary school children who live on reserve may attend the Delores E. Echum Composite School for high school. Members of the MCFN who reside off reserve attend high school in Moosonee or another community. The Bishop Horden Memorial School was the residential school that operated in Moose Factory as part of government sponsored Aboriginal reform. It operated between 1907 and 1963.

Religion is important for many members of the MCFN. There are four active churches in Moose Factory: St. Thomas Anglican church, Moose Factory New

Life Fellowship, Moose Factory Pentecostal Church, and the Cree Gospel Church. Although suppressed by missionaries and the State, several people told me that traditional Cree spirituality continues to be important to some members of the MCFN. These religious practices continued in the bush away from the government and religious officials who were stationed in Moose Factory and sought to suppress them. There is current interest amongst some members of the MCFN to rediscover religious traditions and practices that may have have been lost in the last several generations.

There are five main sectors of the MCFN economy: public service jobs, tourism[4], construction, hunting and trapping, and the private sector. Employment for many members of the MCFN is seasonal with the employment rate being higher in the summer months. In September 2006 there were 195 on-reserve members[5] of the MCFN who were unemployed and on social assistance (Moose Cree First Nation n.d.). A demographic study conducted in March and April 1999 found that there was 42.5 percent unemployment for the MCFN (1999 Wakenagun Communities Futures Demographic Corporation).

The MCFN membership has undergone considerable change and hardship since settling into life on the reserve and having the trapline system

[4] The MCFN's tourism unit is involved in the operation of several tourism initiatives. Other individuals cater to the tourism industry by providing accommodations or selling handicrafts.
[5] This does not include members of the MCFN who live off reserve.

imposed[6]. Despite these changes, many MCFN members still consider hunting to be a preferred and important activity, both economically and culturally. In 1995 94 percent of MCFN membership defined themselves as hunters (George et al. 1995:79). Studies done in the 1990s revealed the total weight of meat harvested by MCFN hunters was about 130,000 kilograms. The replacement cost of this meat was estimated to be 1.3 million dollars (Berkes et al. 1994:255) and the replacement cost for all foods harvested by MCFN members was estimated to be 1.5 million dollars (George et al. 1995:84).

2.8 Relevant Legal Frameworks Governing Goose Hunting

Geese are protected under Article I of Canada's Migratory Birds Convention Act (Minister of Justice 1994[1917]). This Act prohibits hunting geese between March 10 and September 1 and further restricts the annual hunting season to a period of no more than three and a half months. The Act was amended in 1994 to "ensure conformity with the Aboriginal and treaty rights

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[6] As fur prices rose in the 1920s, non-aboriginal hunters entered into northern Ontario and, ignoring Aboriginal land tenure, began to harvest beaver indiscriminately. In response to this, it has been suggested, aboriginal peoples began intensively harvesting beaver without regard to their own systems which limited the number of beavers killed. To protect declining beaver populations the Government of Canada and the Hudson's Bay Company established several beaver sanctuaries (Cummins 1999:44). The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources implemented the registered trapline system in 1948 (Cummins 1999: 45; George et al. 1995:72) and took control of the beaver sanctuaries, which were converted to traplines, in 1952 (Cummins 1999:45).

The trapline system was implemented to prohibit non-Aboriginal trappers from trapping in the area north of Cochrane and to protect Native trappers against members of their own community who may encroach onto their hunting territory (Honigmann 1961:119). However, it brought Aboriginal land use under state control by stipulating the conditions of holding a trapline (i.e. when to trap, how many animals to trap) (Cummins 1999:45-46).

of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada" (Minister of Justice 1994[1917]:32).

Paragraph four of Article II of the Act now states that:

> Notwithstanding the close season provisions in paragraph 1 and the prohibition on the taking of eggs in Article V, and respecting aboriginal and indigenous knowledge and institutions:
>
> (a) In the case of Canada, subject to existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, and the regulatory and conservation regimes defined in the relevant treaties, land claims agreements, self-government agreements, and co-management agreements with Aboriginal peoples of Canada:
>
> (i) Migratory birds and their eggs may be harvested throughout the year by Aboriginal peoples of Canada having aboriginal or treaty rights, and down and inedible by-products may be sold, but the birds and eggs so taken shall be offered for barter, exchange, trade or sale only within or between Aboriginal communities as provided for in the relevant treaties, land claims agreements, self-government agreements, or co-management agreements made with Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Two migratory bird sanctuaries have been established in the area surrounding Moose Factory. The Hannah Bay sanctuary was established in 1939 and covers an area of 29,500 hectares along the Ontario-Quebec border. The Moose River sanctuary, created in 1958, lies at the mouth of the Moose River and covers an area of 1,457 hectares (Canadian Wildlife Service n.d.). These sanctuaries are governed through Canada's Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations (Minister of Justice n.d.). Paragraph 3(2) of the Regulations states that:

> No person shall, in a migratory bird sanctuary,
> (a) hunt migratory birds,
> (b) disturb, destroy or take the nests of migratory birds, or

(c) have in his possession a live migratory bird, or a carcass, skin, nest or egg of a migratory bird, except under authority of a permit therefor.

These regulations do not exempt MCFN hunters from the prohibition on hunting within the sanctuaries. Some hunters believe that providing geese with a sanctuary is beneficial to the geese and abide by these regulations while others ignore this prohibition and hunt in the sanctuaries.

2.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I described some of the changes that occuried in the historical period which affected how the Aboriginal inhabitants of the areas surrounding what is now Moose Factory were able to live their lives. In the past the Mushkegowuk occupied family hunting territories and moved across the land in a seasonal cycle determined by the availability of wildlife. This way of life began to change as the Mushkegowuk were drawn into the fur trade and some of them began living year round near the trading posts.

As settlers and industrial activity moved northwards in Ontario, Aboriginal peoples petitioned the government of Canada to provide them with a treaty in order to protect their traditional ways of life. Treaty 9 was signed the by Cree who traded at Moose Factory on August 9, 1905. The signing of the Treaty did little to inhibit the processes which threatened Aboriginal livelihoods and instead contributed to Aboriginal peoples being settled onto reserves and encouraged the deterioration of past ways of life.

Despite the changes and hardships that the membership of the MCFN have experienced, hunting and trapping continues to be an important and preferred way of life for many of them. However, hunting and trapping is now partially regulated through the state defined trapline system; Aboriginal goose hunting is not prohibited under the terms of Canada's Migratory Bird's Convention Act, but goose hunting is prohibited for members of the MCFN in the two bird sanctuaries that have been established around Moose Factory.

Chapter 3
Methodology

3.1 Field Work

Considerable preparatory work for this project was completed by myself and others before I began field work in Moose Factory. As part of the Memorial University anthropology program requirements I wrote and defended a research proposal and acquired approval to do this research from Memorial University's Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR). I conducted a literature review of previous ethnographic work on the Cree and aboriginal land use and scientific literature on geese. In addition I reviewed transcripts of previous interviews conducted with members of the MCFN. Dr. David Natcher and Dr. Adrian Tanner also did preparatory work for this project. They secured funding, made invaluable contacts with the MCFN membership, and provided me direction in developing the project.

While creating this project I worked with the Moose Cree Lands and Resources Secretariat, which served as a steering committee. One of the Secretariat's mandates is to ensure that research conducted within the Moose Cree Traditional Territory reflects the interests and values of the MCFN. The leadership of the MCFN expressed interest in participating in this research since the results of this research will be able to inform their ongoing efforts at land use and management planning within their territory. During my fieldwork the

Secretariat provided direction and advice on methodology and were a point of contact for me and community members who expressed interest in this project and its objectives. As Davidson-Hunt and O'Flaherty (2007) suggest, this type of collaboration is imperative in order to create opportunities where research not only avoids harming participants, but rather the processes and results of research benefit them.

Fieldwork was carried out in the fall of 2007 when I resided in Moose Factory, for a period of two-and-a-half months. During this time I conducted semi-structured interviews with members of the MCFN who were involved in goose hunting. The Lands and Resources Secretariat provided me with a list of active goose hunters who had participated in previous goose harvest surveys. With the assistance of Lands and Resources office employees, I selected and contacted several key informants from this list to interview. After identifying this first set of interview participants, a snowball sampling method was used to select subsequent participants from contacts I had made and from their recommendations. Interviews were recorded onto cassette unless otherwise requested by participant. In these instances I would take written notes during and immediately following the interview. Interviews were conducted in English which was either the first language or second language of all of my interview participants. Most of my interview participants were comfortable communicating in English; the one exception to this was an elderly man who needed to talk to his

daughter in Cree several times before finding the words to express himself in English.

By the time I left Moose Factory I had interviewed 12 men, six women, and three children. Those interviewed represented a wide range of ages, education level attained, employment statuses, and hunting experience (see Appendix A). I intended to interview an equal number of men and women who participated in goose hunting; however, when I began seeking interview participants I found that women were reluctant to agree to be interviewed. While developing this project I initially intended to only interview adults. However, I was asked to include children in the project by the Lands and Resources Secretariat. After obtaining approval from ICEHR I modified my research plan to include children.

Despite interviewing a number of people with a range of backgrounds the sample of goose hunters on which this thesis is based is a very small proportion of the MCFN population. The group of people that I interviewed generally identified themselves as good goose hunters or people who are very interested in goose hunting. Being a good goose hunter meant hunting in a way consistent with a MCFN tradition in which geese are shown respect (chapter 4). An effect of this small sample size is that the results of this project may not accurately represent those members of the MCFN who do not have an interest in hunting geese or those who may hunt in ways that are not deemed to be 'good', or reflective of Cree hunting values.

The interviews done in Moose Factory covered four areas relating to geese and goose hunting. First, general information about the interviewee, such as family history, age, hunting location, and hunting partners was collected. Second, questions were asked about the hunting prescriptions that people followed in order to show respect to geese. The questions asked during this part of the interview also gathered information on the intergenerational transmission of these prescriptions and the cultural understandings that make them socially relevant to the Cree. Third, a set of questions was asked to determine if the MCFN membership were observing changes in the way that people were hunting geese today. These questions were intended to discover whether or not they felt that their customary laws were still being followed and by whom. This set of questions also dealt with how recently introduced elements of Cree life such as wage labour and new technologies such as snowmobiles and freezers have resulted in changing hunting practice. Finally, questions were asked about the importance of geese and goose hunting to members of the MCFN. An interview schedule was used as a guide during my interviews but was not strictly followed (see Appendix B).

While preparing this project I intended to conduct interviews outside the confines of homes and offices in Moose Factory because it has been noted that experience in the bush confirms the existence of relationships between human and non-human persons (Berkes et al. 1994:358; Feit 1994:186). However, this

did not work out as hoped. I had to schedule interviews at times and places that were convenient for the people who agreed to be interviewed. Many of these people were interviewed during the evening due to jobs or other commitments that made them unavailable during the day. Also, the interviews were conducted during a period from late October to early December when the weather was not conducive to 'in-field' interviews. Despite wanting to conduct interviews outside of peoples' homes and offices, these factors contributed to the interviews taking place in peoples' homes, offices, or in my residence at Moose Factory.

While in Moose Factory I conducted research on behalf of the MCFN Land and Resources Office with the purpose of creating fact sheets on areas of concern to the MCFN (Community-based land use planning, customary land use, contemporary land use, mining, forestry, waterways, tourism and recreation, settlement and trade, energy, waterways, and infrastructure). The information compiled outlines how the ancestors of MCFN members dealt with each of these issues in the pre-contact period, after contact, and how these issues currently affect the MCFN today.

A second phase of field work was conducted when I returned to Moose Factory in April 2007 for two weeks for the spring goose hunt. During this time I had the opportunity to reacquaint myself with the community and many of the people I had met the previous fall. I had the privilege of being invited to a goose camp for five days. For this time I lived with the "owner" of the camp and his

wife, his friend who he hunts with and his wife, and one of his sons who was also hunting there. This experience was invaluable as it allowed me the opportunity to observe the goose hunting practices of the people I was staying with. I was also able to observe the way that they interacted with the geese and with one another. This experience allowed me to compare personal observations with what I learned during the interview process and from the literature on aboriginal hunting.

3.2 Events Attended

Through out this project I had the opportunity to attend several events that had significance for my work. In September 2006 I travelled to Winnipeg for a Sustainable Forestry Management Network workshop on the Whitefeather Forest Initiative being undertaken by the Pikangikum First Nation. This workshop was attended by members of the MVFN, the Pikangikum First Nation, and academics involved in forestry and aboriginal land use.

I travelled to Moose Factory in early 2007 to attend a workshop on the MCFN's land use planning process. This workshop featured presentations on possible uses of MCFN lands that would provide economic opportunities for the First Nation as well as protecting their traditional harvesting practices.

Another Sustainable Forestry Management Network workshop was held in Winnipeg in August 2007. This workshop was again attended by representatives of the MCFN, the Pikangikum First Nation, and academics with backgrounds in aboriginal land tenure. Discussion at this workshop centred on the land use

practices of the two First Nations involved and how they maintained their customary land tenure regimes despite the imposition of state management regimes. A report entitled "Historical Aspects and Continuity of FN Land Use: Implications for Sustainable Forest Management" (Natural Resources Institute 2007) was produced out of this workshop.

I visited Moose Factory again in May 2009 to attend a workshop held for community members who were interested in the research being done around James Bay lowlands. This event brought researchers from various backgrounds and academic disciplines back to Moose Factory to present their research to the community. During this workshop I presented the work I had completed on my thesis to date.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

This project was conducted in accordance with the ethics standards set out in the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2005) "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans."

During this project written consent was obtained from the leadership of the Moose Cree First Nation to conduct research with the Moose Cree. The Research Ethics Statement (Appendix C) that was agreed to by myself and the MCFN gave me permission to analyze the knowledge held by members of the

MCFN for this thesis and outlined the ethical principles[7] that would guide me through this research.

Written consent was obtained from all interview participants. This was done prior to beginning the interview when I explained to the participant the goals of the research project. I ensured them that they would come to no harm through their participation and that their identities would be protected. I also informed them of their right to withdraw from the project at any time.

Oral consent was obtained for the participant observation phase of my fieldwork. I was invited out to a goose camp and I viewed this invitation as partial consent to conduct participant observation. However, to ensure full informed consent I talked to the people I would be staying with and provided the same information as I did to interview participants.

The maintenance of the privacy of those who participated in this project is of utmost concern. To ensure the privacy of the participants no names are used in this thesis. As part of the agreement to do research between me and the Moose Cree First Nation I agreed to allow the Moose Cree Lands and Resources Secretariat to house copies of the interview transcripts once this project is completed. However, these transcripts will be edited to ensure the privacy of the interview participants.

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[7] These principles are to obtain informed consent from research participants, the right of individuals to non-participation in this research, on-going consultation between the researcher, the First Nation, and individual participants, respect for the MCFN, confidentiality of the data, anonymity of research participants, publications and intellectual property rights, and access to project data.

Chapter 4
Moose Cree Logic of Engagement With Geese

4.1 Introduction

Langdon (2007), in discussing Tlingit salmon harvesting practice, refers to the 'logic of engagement' that the Tlingit have towards salmon. He suggests that in order to understand the Tlinglit engagement with salmon from the Tlingit perspective:

> one must dismiss ideas about harvesting strategies or efficiency-oriented techniques. Instead it must be seen as a set of specific ways of behaving toward another person, a person in another form. The logic of engagement with salmon is premised on the logic of engagement with humans: What is required of me in my behaviour toward other humans to sustain a positive, fulfilling relationship (2007:237-238)?

Langdon's findings on the Tlingit logic of engagement with salmon are relevant to this discussion of MCFN goose hunting practices because previous work done with the Cree peoples of the Canadian subarctic suggests that the Cree have a similar logic of engagement with important game and fur-bearing species. Feit (1973) argues that ecological relationships are of utmost importance to the Waswanipi Cree and that they manage game resources in accordance with ideas of reciprocal exchanges between animals and humans. Tanner (1979) examines the religious ideology and ritualized hunting activities of the Mistassini Cree and how these contribute to Mistassini hunting productivity. Brightman (1993) explains Rock Cree hunting practices through their conception

of game animals as social animals and Preston (2002) analyzes Waskaganish Cree narratives to describe the personal relationships they have with animals.

In this chapter I follow from this previous work with the Cree to describe a logic of engagement with geese that is held by some members of the MCFN. This logic of engagement is premised on the understanding that geese are persons who participate in the goose hunt and who are able to determine the hunter's success. In detailing the logic of engagement that the Moose Cree have with geese I first examine the "logic" entailed in the logic of engagement by describing how geese are constructed as persons, the role of the goose in the hunt, and the resultant importance of treating geese with respect. I will then discuss goose hunting practices followed by the members of the MCFN that participated in this research, which emerge from this perspective and are intended to show respect to geese and maintain an amicable relationship with them.

4.2 Geese as Persons

Members of the MCFN often emphasize the role that geese have in the hunt. Geese are not viewed as passive participants there to be killed; rather, geese are viewed as actively engaging with the hunters and playing a vital role in the success of the hunt. Geese are said to sacrifice themselves to hunters in order for them to have food. During an interview a hunter told me:

> I think the way I look at it is that the Canada goose has given its life to you ... I mean anybody that gives their life so another person can live is,

> that's one of the biggest sacrifices that can be made. It doesn't matter if it be a human or an animal cause animals do that too.

This statement points to two important ideas that the members of the MCFN who I talked to have about geese: geese are persons who engage in human-like behaviour and they sacrifice themselves to humans for human benefit.

The attribution of personhood to geese is also extended to other species that members of the MCFN are familiar with. For example, during an interview a woman explained that "the only person that is very disrespectful at camps is the bear and they come and steal". The attribution of personhood to non-human species is a feature of Cree culture that has been noted by other anthropologists (Brightman 1993:76; Feit 1994:185; Scott 1996:73, 76; Tanner 1979:114, 130). In this Cree worldview it is assumed that there are common connections between humans and non-human persons – the supposition of "the unity of spirit and the diversity of bodies" (Viveiros de Castro 2005:37). Humans and non-humans, which include animals, spirits, and geophysical features, all share the fundamental similarity of being alive and being alive is what grants the status of personhood (Scott 1996:72-73).

In order to elucidate this way in which the my research participants view animals as existing within the world, and their possibilities for interacting with them, I feel that it is best to contrast this Cree perspective with anotther perspective that is drawn from Euro-Canadian industrial society. It should be noted at the outset that both of these perspectives on how humans should exist

in relation to their non-human environments are ideal ideological types and, as a result, there will be contradictions between them and how people actually live their lives and engage within an environment. I do not wish to suggest that these ideological types are the only ways in which human-environment relationships are envisioned by members of the MCFN or by people from Euro-Canadian society[8]. Ideologies of human-environment relationships are characterized by "a number of attitudes, notions and orientations [which] invariably coexist in often messy contradiction" (Coates 1998:12) and which fluctuate in prominance and importance according to historical conditions. Additionally, the juxtaposition of these two environmental philosophies is not an attempt to compare an environmentally "harmonious" aboriginal concept with an environmentally "destructive" western industrial concept[9], but rather to help illustrate the possibilities for personal and social relationships between humans and geese in this MCFN perspective that cannot exist within a mechanistic view of the non-human world.

Within this Euro-Canadian ideology exists the metaphor of "impersonal causal forces that oppose 'nature' to 'mind,' 'spirit,' and 'culture'" (Scott 1996:69). Humans are exceptional amongst species because we are believed to

[8] Western ideas about human-environment relationships also include, for example, deep ecology, eco-feminism, animal rights, and the green movement.

[9] Some members of the MCFN do believe that their beliefs and activities are inherently more environmentally benign than those of people from a western Euro-Canadian background, although one scholar has concluded that these kinds of claims are questionable (Krech III 1999). Their observations of non-Aboriginal hunters (from television programs and their own experiences guiding non-Aboriginal hunters) are used to reinforce essentialized views of their own and other peoples' environmental ideologies.

have transcended nature and added these qualities (mind and culture) to our biological makeup (Ingold 2000:48, 63). Personhood, and the ability to be an active subject, is attributed to possession of these human qualities; other species, which do not possess these exceptional characteristics, are deemed to be part of an objective, external (to humans) nature. As a result, interactions of consciousness can only take place between persons, and the interactions that occur between non-humans are characterized by mechanical causality (Scott 1996:72).

The distinction between nature and environment is relevant to this discussion of Cree and Euro-Canadian perceptions of the place of humans and non-humans in the world. Ingold succinctly defines the difference as "the difference in perspective between seeing ourselves as beings within a world and as beings without it" (2000:20). While nature is that which is believed to be the objective reality that is external to humanity, the environment is a relative term that refers to the place of an organism (human or non-human) within the world. While nature is considered to be ahistorical, an environment is in a continual process of creation and re-creation as the subject, for whom the particular environment belongs to, engages with the world (Ingold 2000:20).

The members of the MCFN who participated in this research, however, do not assume an objectified nature from which humans have transcended and thus are exceptional. All species possess the characteristics that allow them to

be persons and as such causality "is personal, not mechanical or biological" (Feit 1973:116). Common personhood allows humans and non-humans persons to engage in relationships in which there is an expectation that each of their unique interests will be considered. During an interview a hunter explained to me that:

> during the time when the people hunt there is a time you'll see geese come and all of a sudden [they] just stop. I wondered why do they stop and another person explained it to me. What the geese are doing is having their own ceremony where what they do is they groom themselves to prepare themselves. They know that some of them might die. So for them that would be the greatest honour for them. Knowing they gave their life so we can be here. And that goes back to respect cause this is what the goose has done so that's why we give him that respect.

This example also points to the idea that geese are persons who act consciously with humans in mind. The geese prepare themselves for a ceremony in which they will sacrifice themselves to humans and achieve a great honour.

Anthropologists have noted that Cree people have mythological beliefs that animals, when living within the confines of their own societies, look and act like humans (Brightman 1993:159-185; Tanner 1979:136-37). In these myths, humans who observe animals in this setting are often unable to differentiate between animal society and human society and in some instances marry an animal who appears to be human. Animals, likewise may have differing perceptions on interactions between themselves and humans; for example,

beavers who are trapped in their lodges may view this act as being hospitable to humans who are visiting (Brightman 1993:165).

During my time spent living with the Moose Cree it was rare to have people discuss animal ceremonialism and mythic elements with me. It is difficult to conclude whether this was because of my position as a researcher from outside the community, or if people do not consider the mythology surrounding animals to be important today. However, mentioning some of the mythic elements identified in past ethnographies has utility in providing insights into peoples' contemporary understandings of their relationships to animals and how they should act towards them (Langdon 2007:238; Tanner 1979:137) as well as further emphasizing the "unity of spirit and diversity of bodies" that allows non-human species to be considered as people.

4.3 Perspectivism

Viveiros de Castro (2005:36) presents the idea that the world is "inhabited by different sorts of subjects or persons, human and non-human, which apprehend reality from distinct points of view". In this world occupied by differing types of subjects:

> animals are people, or see themselves as people. Such a notion is virtually always associated with the idea that the visible form of every species is an envelope ... concealing an internal human form which is normally only visible to the eyes of the particular species ... This internal form is the spirit of the animal: an intentionality or subjectivity which is formally identical with human consciousness (Viveiros de Castro 2005:38).

Although a goose possesses consciousness, to a human the goose still appears to be a goose and does not have the physical appearance of a human; however, to a goose another goose will look like a human while humans (i.e. *Homo sapiens*) would appear to be non-human.

An important aspect of perspectivism is that while "all beings see ('represent') the world in the *same* manner – what changes is the *world* that they see. Animals use the same categories and values as humans" (Viveiros de Castro 2005:53). Thus when a predatory animal sees a human (*Homo sapiens*) it does not see this individual as other humans see it (only other humans see humans). Rather the animal will see one of its prey species such as a wild boar or deer.

Thus when trying to understand Moose Cree goose hunting, we need to acknowledge that, for members of the MCFN, geese are subjects who represent the goose hunt in different ways than humans do. While a human observes the goose as sacrificing itself, the goose will see its participation in the hunt, and the hunt itself, in very much different terms (the goose hunt is a ceremony and the goose is a participant, for example). From this perspective, the geese will also view humans as participants in this interaction who have their own roles, expectations, and duties.

4.4 Role of Geese in Goose Hunting

Geese act with humans in mind when they sacrifice themselves to the goose hunter and provide the hunter with food. The members of the MCFN who participated in this research believe that goose hunters must also consider the needs of geese when hunting them by respecting the goose which has sacrificed itself[10]. By respecting the geese for the sacrifice they make, goose hunters trust that geese will continue to make this sacrifice. Trust entails a combination of dependency and autonomy: you depend on another to make a decision that is favourable for you, but at the same time this decision must be made on the other's own volition (Ingold 2000:69-70). The belief that geese voluntarily give their lives to the hunters is shown when the hunters talk about sacrifice. An example from my fieldwork illustrates the active role that geese perform in the goose hunt.

> I had just been dropped off at the camp where I was going to be observing a goose hunt. The helicopter had only left us several minutes earlier and we were still moving our belongings towards the cabins when a couple of geese flew over us. The people I was with saw them and immediately began calling to the geese. The geese circled the camp and then flew down to an area that was about 150 - 200 metres away from us. As they got close to the ground there was a gun shot and one fell to the ground. As the other started to fly upwards there was another blast and the second goose fell to the ground. At seeing this I thought that this is what my time in the blind was going to be like. However, going out to the blind later that afternoon proved my initial conceptions of goose hunting were wrong. That afternoon we saw no more geese. The next day, several geese flew over us but most of them continued to fly high above us and did not change their flight paths and move towards the blind

[10] The ways in which the Moose Cree show respect to the geese are discussed later in this chapter.

> despite the hunters calling out to them; other geese would fly towards the blind but would not come close enough to be shot at; others would approach the decoys set out but then, at seemingly the last possible moment, would fly away from the blind and out of shotgun range.

This example shows that despite the best efforts of the hunter, geese have an important role in the successful outcome of the hunt by choosing to fly close to the blind where the hunter is waiting or by choosing to avoid the blind. The role that the geese play in the hunt was emphasized during an interview when a goose hunter explained to me: "We would probably average about 80 geese in our area in the springtime. Sometimes more and sometimes less it all depends on what the geese were doing".

Successful goose hunting depends not only upon the actions of the hunter, but also on the actions of the geese. The hunters do not control the actions of the geese, but rather the geese need to make the decision to sacrifice themselves because they trust that the hunters will treat them with respect. Similarly, the hunters treat the geese with respect with the expectation that geese will continue to return to the Moose Cree each year. In this way the relationship between geese and humans is one of reciprocity. However, there is apprehension about whether or not the geese will return each year:

> Well you're hoping they will come back again next year. I mean they gave their lives to you so you could eat and that's just I think something that you don't think about. That's what I think anyway and hopefully they will come back again next year. I hope that they do.

When the geese are heard returning to Moose Factory in the spring there is much excitement around Moose Factory. A woman told me that she is happy when the geese return and so she gives thanks that they came back. When the geese leave in the fall she bids them goodbye.

During my research, I was often told that the geese are "there to help you" by allowing themselves to be killed for food. For the MCFN hunters who participated in this research an important part of being a goose hunter is maintaining amicable relationships with geese by keeping their needs in mind while on the land and by showing them respect. By doing so the geese will continue to allow themselves to be hunted.

4.5 Ideological Contradictions

Despite the belief that geese are sacrificing themselves some hunters told me that they feel sorry for the geese they kill; especially in the spring when they kill females with eggs in them. I was also told that if there is a mating pair of geese and one is killed, the other sometimes may commit suicide by flying back towards the blind. This again suggests the personhood and consciousness of geese in Cree ideology. For other Cree groups contradictory ideologies have been identified alongside the ideology that game animals and humans exist in reciprocal, friendly relationships (Brightman 1993:189-94; Tanner 1979:138-39). Brightman suggests "reciprocity itself possesses . . . coercive and exploitative modalities that may be inimical to the creation of friendly feelings (1993:189). In

this contradictory ideology, "animals [are] opponents or reluctant victims and killings [are seen] as domination rather than reciprocity" (Brightman 1993:190). The animals do not want to be killed, but for humans to survive this is a necessity. From this perspective the actions that hunters take to show respect to the geese take on coercive forms in order to allow humans to overcome an adversary (Brightman 1993:190; Tanner 1979:138).

Despite these apparent contradictions in this ideology of reciprocity held by these members of the MCFN, this perspective should not be dismissed. Ideological ambiguity reflects "the pan-human condition that no individual has perfect grasp of his behavioural environment" (Preston 2002:239). In his analysis of the Waskaganish Cree, Preston writes that Cree intellectual patterning "is not simply an uncritical (prelogical) hodgepodge of unconscious patterning, but rather a mixture of partially understood, partially related events, narratives, beliefs, and suspicions ... [that] is not a matter for critical analysis and generalization" (Preston 2002:172).

4.6 Micro-traditions

The beliefs that the Moose Cree hold towards geese do not form a canon of belief to which each member of the MCFN subscribes. Rather the beliefs that the Moose Cree have towards geese, and other elements of their environments, are individually held and are developed through interactions with these elements on the land and through the teachings that they receive from family members

and elders. Thus, each member of the MCFN has varying understandings of geese and human responsibilities towards geese based upon differing experiences and teachings. Louis Bird[11], talking about the Mushkegowuk, explains that:

> there was a spiritual practice and beliefs that were practiced by our grandfathers and our great-grandfathers and on and on. They have this individual gain by living in the wilderness – not by living in a community. All these individual spiritual beliefs and values and practices of each individual came from living in the wilderness. It gave them more knowledge about how to live in harmony with nature. And each person has his own belief, definitely (Bird 2007:63).

These differing beliefs can be seen in the practices that members of the MCFN perform while on the land. Each family has its own micro-tradition which makes their hunting practices unique. These micro-traditions are based not only on varying beliefs amongst the Moose Cree, but also on differences in hunting areas which necessitate differing hunting practices (Berkes et al. 1994:358). For example, a goose hunter who hunts along the coast needs to be aware of the tides and how geese behave during low tide and high tide. Geese feed in the inter-tidal zone during low tide and then leave during high tide (Peloquin and Berkes 2009:537). When establishing blinds to hunt from, the hunter along the coast must take into account the tides in his location and how these affect where geese feed and when geese feed.

[11] Louis Bird is an Mushkegowuk story teller from Winisk, Ontario who is working to preserve his peoples' stories and traditions.

Despite the acknowledgement of variation in hunting practice and belief between the families and members of the MCFN, this variation should not be over-emphasized. MCFN members recognize and respect that other people will hunt differently to a certain degree. While I was in Moose Factory a goose hunter told me "I guess certain people have yeah they would have different ways of respect and of showing that in their customs". If a goose hunter hunts in a way that is deemed to be respectful to geese, his or her hunting practices are accepted as being reflective of the cultural practices of the MCFN; if someone hunts in a way that is considered to be disrespectful to geese, these practices are viewed as not representative of the way that MCFN members are expected to act towards geese.

4.7 Respecting Geese

The Cree relationship with the environment has been described as a combination of "good practices" and "appropriate ethics" (Berkes et al. 1992:12; Tanner 1979:13). If the ethical standards upon which the relationship between humans and geese are met by each side, the reciprocal relationship between humans and geese will continue. Thus, the logic of engagement for geese, held by members of the MCFN, is predicated upon the continuation of a respectful relationship with geese. The hunter has the responsibility to show respect to geese and this is fulfilled through the observation of a set of rules that govern how the hunter should act towards geese, to the the land, and to other people.

These rules are derived in large part from a detailed knowledge system that has been passed from generation to generation (Berkes 1988; Berkes et al. 1992; Brightman 1993; Feit 1973, 1994; Scott 1989, 1996; Tanner 1979).

In the following sections I outline the rules that the MCFN goose hunters I talked to identified. It is important to remember that since each family has their own micro-tradition, all MCFN goose hunters may not follow each of these prescriptions. In describing these hunting rules I use the actual words of the my interview participants as much as possible.

4.8 Do Not Waste

Every MCFN goose hunter I talked to emphasized the importance of not wasting the goose. There are several practices that they follow to reduce wasting geese.

4.8.1 Use as Much of the Goose as Possible

Using as much of the goose as possible is a sign of respect for the goose and the sacrifice that it made for the hunter. Also, if as much of the goose is used as possible then not as many geese need to sacrifice themselves to humans. Much of the discussion about not wasting the goose centred around using as much of the goose as possible as a food source:

> Way back then when we did harvest geese the lungs were cooked and in the spring the wings were prepared. The intestines and pretty well everything was cooked way back when. I can remember my mother preparing it and she would not waste anything. You know she would cook everything that was in the goose and prepare the intestines. There was a

certain way to prepare them in the fall; again the same thing they would prepare the intestines.

Using as much of the goose as possible also includes using non-edible parts of the bird:

> You know I save feathers when I do the plucking. I save feathers. I separate the downs and the heavy feathers ... I use the downs for pillows and I usually save everything from a whole goose. You can use everything from the whole goose.

While in the past emphasis was placed on using all the parts of the goose, today many of the MCFN members have changing ideas about what it means to use the entire goose. In an interview I was told[12]:

> P1: I guess my parents' way, parents' and grandparents' way is not to waste, to eat everything, cause I remember my mom cooking feet and wings and stuff like that but we don't do that. We give the wings to her sister and that's about it I guess not the ...
> P2: [interrupts] Yeah the head, wings, and the feet we give to [my sister].
> P1: Yeah she eats all of those. Of course she's the oldest sister too so she's more into eating that stuff like we're really not into much. Wings we eat. It's it's not that they're no good it's just that it takes a lot more work to prepare them and to eat them they're gone just like that.

In another conversation a hunter and his wife revealed:

> P1: I haven't tasted the intestines. They fry them up like a crispy; clean them out first. My parents still eat them.
> BK: That's not something you eat?
> P1: I never tried it. I've seen how it's done.
> P2: I've never tried it either.

[12] When including material from interview transcripts with multiple speakers I will use the following notation: comments made by myself will be marked by "BK"; each individual I am interviewing will be denoted using "P1", "P2", etc. To best preserve the anonymity of my interview participants I am not assigning pseudonyms or any other marker to identify research participants throughout this thesis.

Despite these changes that are placing less value on eating the internal organs and difficult to prepare parts, there is still a strong ethic about not wasting the parts of the goose that are valued for their food quality. This hunter who had never eaten goose intestines told me about an experience he had with tourist hunters who had a narrower view of the good parts of the goose to eat:

> A lot of people just shoot geese and what I didn't like is that they cut the breast out. Like I took a group of hunters there and that's what they did ... and I told them "no you are going to take the wing parts too and the legs" I told them. So I skinned it all out and went and cut the legs off ... I don't like that what you're doing. I told them you're wasting. "Oh ok like we'll take it all". That's a lot of meat there I told them. The legs. They just wanted to take the breast that's all.

4.8.2 Take Only What You Need

I was frequently told that people should limit the number of geese to what they will use until they have the opportunity to hunt more geese. A goose hunter explained his perspective to me as: "when you get your limit then you say that's enough you know. I have what I want and that's it you know." Ideally each family should plan how many geese they need to take before going out to their goose hunting camp: "I figure like if we eat a goose a week that's good and like that's good for 10 weeks; it's almost into the fall again".

This prescription to take only what you need does not only refer to the number of geese that are needed to feed yourself and your family. It also refers to taking enough geese to meet one's obligations to give geese to other people in the community. One hunter explained that "we've been told to take what you

need and if you need more than what you need then you need some more to share with other families. Take some extra you know like". Another hunter is more explicit in linking the number of geese that he wants to take with those needed for his family's personal use and those needed for sharing: "usually we have a limit of 20 and the reason we have 20 is we try to keep 10 for ourselves and then we try to give 10 away just to the elder ladies, like widows that are my friends".

This prescription is closely related to the ideal of not wasting goose meat. If one overestimates how many geese are needed, or does not limit the number of geese that are killed, then future wastage of meat becomes possible as the meat becomes inedible or is thrown away to make space in the freezer for fresh geese. This is becoming a concern to some of the people I talked to in Moose Factory:

> People out hunting will take more than what they need. Like I can understand a person hunting [and] taking lots of geese but sharing it. You know you can give away: you get 100, give away 75 of them. I have no problem with that but some people fill up their freezer and next thing you know they are all freezer burnt and they end up throwing it away.

4.8.3 Do Not Hunt if You Do Not Want to Eat the Meat

Since some of the members of the MCFN believe that geese sacrifice themselves to the hunters as part of a series of reciprocal exchanges it is important to eat the meat that is obtained through hunting. Similarly, hunting should not be done unless it is with the intent of getting and eating food:

> Don't shoot what you don't want to eat. That's how I hunt. Or eat what you kill. That's what my grandfather would tell me. Don't shoot it if you don't want to eat it. That's a way of showing respect to that bird also.

Today however, some members of the MCFN are becoming concerned that some of their members are hunting without the intent of getting food. During my time in Moose Factory I was told that some people who do not like bush meat are nevertheless still hunting. This raises questions about what they are doing with the meat once they kill and animal:

> Another thing that I find too is if you're going to go hunting then you should eat it. And you have people who go hunting that don't even eat [wild meat]. You got to eat it even if that doesn't taste good ... I mean if you're going to kill something you want to eat it ... kill something and eat it you should like it you know. But we hear of people who go hunting just to go hunting; they don't even eat the meat. I don't know what they do with the meat but it doesn't seem respectful.

4.8.4 Find the Geese That You Kill

When hunting geese, a goose that is shot often does not fall immediately. Depending on the injuries that the goose sustained, they can glide away for a distance before they hit the ground and even then they may be able to walk further away from the hunter; if the goose lands in water they may begin swimming away from the hunter. In these instances the hunter must make every effort to retrieve the goose. A hunter explained that "if you knock down a goose and it lands a quarter of a mile away you make every effort to go get it. The only time you don't bring it back is if you've been out there like half an hour looking for it". Not searching for a goose that is knocked down is seen by some

members of the MCFN as wasteful because the goose is not being eaten by humans. Other hunters feel that not finding a goose is not really wasteful as it will be eaten by another animal.

4.8.5 Clean and Gut Your Geese as Soon as Possible

During my interviews, several people mentioned the importance of removing the internal organs from the geese as soon as possible after killing them. Not taking care of the geese once they are killed can lead to the goose spoiling and being wasted. An elderly woman explained:

> You got to clean your birds. Don't let them sit until they're rotten. I know some people they let them sit too long. Like even if they're shot in the gut area they'll be rotting inside and you won't notice until you clean it.

4.8.6 Share Meat

Some MCFN members view sharing goose meat with other people in the community as showing respect to geese.

> Then you have the other people and talking to some of them you know they are good hunters cause they share what they kill. So that's the same respect they have for having respect for that bird too.

Distributing meat to those who are unable to hunt for themselves allows everyone to share in the gift from the goose.

Sharing meat also provides a mechanism for MCFN members to ensure that as much of the goose is utilized as possible. Parts of the bird that may not be eaten by a hunter or his family can be given to a relative or an elder who eats

these parts: "usually we don't eat the wings or the legs or the heads but some people do so we will give them out to people that do eat them".

4.9 Do Not Disturb Geese

Members of the MCFN also have a series of hunting prescriptions that are intended to limit disturbance of the geese by humans[13].

4.9.1 Do Not Shoot at Feeding Geese

The proper way to hunt geese, as explained by members of the MCFN, is never to shoot at feeding geese. If a flock of geese is seen feeding the hunter should wait for the flock to fly away and then move into the area and set up a blind. When the geese return to feed then they can be shot at. One hunter explained that humans should not "sneak up to geese when they're feeding - scares them away and they won't come back". Hunters also were "not to shoot from the boat, not to chase them around by boat and to leave them alone where they're sitting. Go make your blind somewhere and just wait for them to come instead of chasing them around". Another hunter explained that "when you're hunting geese you stay back away from them you let them do what they would normally do like you know when they're eating and feeding".

These hunters' statements suggest that geese are active participants in the hunt. The geese are allowed to feed and move around as they want without

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[13] Disturbing geese as little as possible is a crucial element of successful goose hunting. Colin Scott explains that scientists are now learning what Cree hunters have long known: that animals are able to respond to and learn from environmental disturbances. Thus, if geese experience disturbance in an area, they are unlikely to return in the future (1996:76-81).

being disturbed. They are only hunted when they come to the hunters as they are called towards the blind. Shooting at birds that are in flight also gives the bird a chance to escape from the hunter if they choose.

4.9.2 Do Not Shoot at Night

The members of the MCFN I talked to about their hunting practices almost all told me that hunting should not be done at night. The general rule that is followed is that hunting should be stopped about a half an hour before sunset and should not resume until about a half an hour after sunrise. There were two reasons given for this practice. The first is to limit the disturbance to geese:

> The thing about it if you shoot at night, especially on the Shoal, then they won't come back again for maybe two, three, four days. They won't come back. So that's what scares them. Like the elders always said that they see the flash from your shotgun but I don't think it's the flash from the shotgun. It's just being shot at at night like it's probably pretty nerve racking for them to be shot at in the night you know not seeing anything and hearing all these loud noises so close.

The second reason given for not hunting at night is to reduce the chances of losing a goose in the dark and wasting the meat:

> Shooting geese when it gets too dark. I wonder why they would be shooting geese when it's like dark. How could you find the goose ... it's like wasted food.

The prescriptions against hunting at night and shooting at feeding geese are both practical strategies for the management of geese and ethical strategies for maintaining amicable relationship with the geese. Frightening geese through

unsuitable hunting practices will result in them not returning to the area. This would be an obvious example to the goose hunters that had humans acted in ways that geese considered "disrespectful".

4.9.3 Do Not Hunt in a Sanctuary

Some of the MCFN members that I talked to believe that hunting geese in the sanctuary is disrespectful to the geese. A hunter explained to me that:

> Many many years ago I guess some of the elders in the area said there's not going to be geese around here unless you have a sanctuary. Someplace where they can sit and rest and feed and you know just to have a safe haven.

This comment suggests some MCFN members believe that it is important for geese to have an area to be protected from hunters. While some people feel that it is important not to disturb the geese in the sanctuaries, it was often commented that people are hunting in the sanctuaries with more frequency:

> and now more and more people are going in it now that MNR [Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources] doesn't patrol them or check them and they go in there and that really burns my butt when I see them in there.

However, not all of the people I talked to agreed that hunting in a sanctuary is disrespectful. For example, one hunter told me that the sanctuary is "one of the best places to hunt for ducks". Another hunter explicitly told me that he hunted geese in the sanctuary.

4.9.4 Give Something Back

In my conversations with members of the MCFN it was common for them to talk about giving something back to the land in return for taking something from the land. However, the recipient of the offering was not geese; rather the offerings were made to the Creator in thanks for providing geese[14]. This is expressed very succinctly when I was told: "anything that you take from the earth you give something back. That's what that means and you thank the Creator for it. That's showing respect to the Creator". Offerings took one of two forms: either an offering of tobacco was given to the Creator or goose meat would be placed in a fire. Brightman (1993:116) suggests that these offerings are a sacrifice that the Cree make in order to receive luck in the future. The role of luck in the success of a goose hunt was often emphasized by members of the MCFN (see pages 63-64) and thus this practice may be a way of showing respect to the Creator in order for future hunting success.

4.9.5 Do Not Be Cruel to Geese

Members of the MCFN believe that wounded geese should be killed quickly. The proper way to kill a wounded goose is to "just kneel on their backs

[14] Past anthropological literature (i.e. Brightman 1993:90) has suggested that in the past Cree peoples held beliefs about "game rulers." Each individual species of economic importance would have a spirit that would control the individuals of the species and was responsible for the distribution of the animals on the land and their movements. The MCFN members I talked to did not refer to any of these game rulers but instead referred to a single Creator which is responsible for providing geese to them. The use of a single Creator to describe the origins of geese may be a recent innovation for the Cree as they attempt to assimilate Christian theology with traditional beliefs (Adrian Tanner, personal communication, March 2009).

until they suffocate". The goose hunters that I talked to were emphatic that this is the proper way to kill a wounded goose. A hunter who had formerly guided non-Aboriginal tourist hunters explained his distaste at their methods for killing wounded geese:

> When I was guiding the white hunters when a wounded goose was walking away they would shoot it. Shoot the head off. That's what I didn't like. Like you know they don't have to shoot them. They are only like 20 feet, 30 feet away and they would shoot it. That really bothered me. I told the guy you shouldn't be doing that. You don't have to do that. Like that you just go chase them or grab them and just kneel on their backs. And another thing that they'd do is twist their heads and their heads will snap off. Always used to see that in the hunting videos but I don't know we were never brought up like that to kill like that. You just kneel on their back until all the air is out and it won't take that long. It's more humane too I think.

While catching a wounded goose and kneeling on its back is the ideal, it is not always possibly to conform to this ideal during the hunt. While visiting a blind during the spring hunt I observed wounded geese being caught and kneeled upon but I also observed wounded geese being shot again or geese being allowed to lie in the water for several minutes before being gathered and killed. This perplexed me until I became more aware of what was happening. The geese that were being shot a second time were swimming away and would likely have been lost had the hunter not shot the bird. The wounded geese were left in the water because other geese were approaching the blind and retrieving the wounded birds would have alerted the incoming geese to our presence and hindered the hunters' hunting success.

4.9.6 Cleanliness at Camp

The condition that one's camp is kept is also believed to show respect or disrespect to geese. A woman that I interviewed said about her son-in-law:

> He does have a lot of respect for the Canada geese and the land. Sitting in the blind he fixes up his blind really nice I understand and it's almost like a very comfortable place. You could probably almost live in there or sleep in there you know and that's how that's how nice his blind is you know. Their blinds they fix it up really well.

It is important to keep your camp organized and nothing should be left lying around. This extends to geese and goose meat:

> My grandmothers always taught me that you're not leaving your geese laying around and so that animals are getting at them and you are actually preparing these birds right away for the preserving process.

A similar sentiment is expressed by a woman in another interview:

> When you're preparing it nothing is left laying around and everything is always put in its [place] always. Everything is always like organized and you're always keeping your geese separated from other things like; it's just like other meats keeping everything away from each other. That's one thing we always did.

Cleanliness of camps is becoming an important issue for the MCFN as more consumer goods are taken to camp which creates much garbage. A hunter provided some guidelines that he believes people who are on the land should follow: "pick up your garbage, don't leave your garbage laying around there, bring it back to the camp and burn whatever [you] need to burn and bring back what [you] can't burn out there".

MCFN members consider garbage from materials brought into the camp and goose remains to be different and have a different understanding of how goose remains can be disposed of. I was told that "your carcasses you can throw away, it decomposes. Like bones whatever those are not really garbage those are part of the land". Another hunter expressed a similar idea when during an interview the following dialogue took place:

> BK: What do you do with the parts that you don't eat – the head and the feet?
> P1: What we have done is put them up in the land. I don't like the idea of throwing it in the dump so what I do is put it someplace clean to show respect to the bird too.

4.9.7 Talk Respectfully About Geese

In an interview I was told of the importance of proper speech and attitude towards geese. When in the blind it is important to always talk respectfully about geese. Even when after a goose is killed it can hear what is being said about it and can tell if humans are being disrespectful towards it[15].

4.9.8 Women Should Not Step Over Geese

During one interview a hunter explained that "ladies could not step over the goose ... they don't do that stepping over geese ... it was very uncourteous to everybody to do that". The interview participant does not explain why women stepping over geese is uncourteous to everyone but Brightman (1993:124-132)

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[15] Brightman (1993:76) notes that some Cree believe that an animals' soul remains after its death and is able to observe human actions towards its body. None of the MCFN members who I talked to explicitly stated this, but the comment from this interview suggests that some members of the MCFN may believe this.

writes that some of the Rock Cree still follow similar prohibitions and believe that a hunter whose furs or meat are stepped over by a woman or a girl will have bad luck and not have future success at hunting. He suggests that women stepping over the remains of an animal may in some way inhibit the perceived regeneration of the animal after it has been killed.

4.10 What Goes Around Comes Around

Since geese are active participants in the goose hunt with humans, they have considerable influence on the outcome of the hunt. If humans are disrespectful to geese they will become unsuccessful in goose hunting. A hunter told me about an exchange he once had between himself and some unsuccessful hunters who were walking around looking for geese:

> They do that [scaring away feeding geese] then you can see them walking away disappointed. That's not the way to do that kind of thing. What do we do? I don't know, like you get more geese if you are sitting in your blind. You know get in your blind and don't wander around and that type of thing. We bumped into a few guys like you know "get in your blinds or we're going to get your geese". They are "oh where did you get your geese?" Well we're sitting in our blind. That type of thing.

Another hunter told me:

> There's a term we use in Cree ... which translates as what goes around comes around. One year you know you could be killing 30-40 geese next year nothing and it's because you were disrespectful.

The same hunter later explained to me that hunters who do not follow the proper ethics while on the land not only will be unsuccessful in their hunting efforts,

they may also have undesirable things happen to them while they are on the land:

> Like what I said before: bad things will come your way. Accidents might start happening to you or bad luck. I believe myself one of the big things is that things might not might not always go your way because of disrespect.

Following the prescriptive hunting practices to show geese respect ensures that a respectful relationship is maintained by MCFN hunters and geese. To reciprocate for being treated respectfully the geese allow themselves to be hunted. If a hunter does not follow the proper technique for hunting geese, the hunter will begin to experience "bad luck" while hunting as the geese will not come to the hunter.

4.11 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have utilized the term 'logic of engagement' in explaining the understandings that some members of the MCFN have about the ways in which geese are to be hunted. Geese are considered to be non-human persons who possess intentionality or subjectivity similar to human-like consciousness. This internal subjectivity is masked by the external physical body of the goose which is the form seen by humans. The possession of consciousness by humans and geese allow them to enter into personal and social reciprocal relationships. However, although geese and humans are both considered persons and possess subjectivity, the goose hunt is represented differently by humans and by geese.

The strength of the relationship between human goose hunters and geese is observed during the goose hunt. If the relationship is amicable geese will make the decision to sacrifice themselves to the hunters to provide them and their families with food. Hunters respond to this gesture by following a number of prescriptive actions that are meant to show respect to the geese. These prescriptive activities are both ethical practices, in that they are meant to maintain a harmonius relationship with geese, and ecologically sound practices in that they limit wastage of the goose and minimize disturbance of the geese that are being hunted. These prescriptive hunting practices should not be considered as law however, but rather guidelines which individual hunters utilize at their discretion as hunting encounters occur. A hunter who does not follow these hunting practices risks the chance of displeasing geese and then experiencing bad luck while hunting because geese will not choose to sacrifice themselves to the hunter.

Within this belief of geese sacrificing themselves to hunters exists an ideological uncertainty and complexity in which some hunters may feel remorse or confusion about the apparent willingness of geese to be killed. However, this should not result in a repudiation of these philosophical concepts held by some members of the MCFN; rather it should result in a recognition of the complexities of human beliefs about our proper relationships to our

environments, which not only occur for these members of the MCFN but for people in all societies.

Chapter 5
Learning to Become a Goose Hunter

5.1 Introduction

Many of the MCFN members who I talked to feel that some members of the First Nation are hunting in ways that are not respectful to geese. A hunter explained that:

> hunting styles have changed. You know there are certain things that you are not supposed to do. Like when you're hunting geese you stay back away from them; you let them do what they would normally do. Like you know when they're eating and feeding and they fly and now a lot of people just walk up to them. Like our hunting practices have changed a lot and it's not good for the birds. You know the ones that we hunt.

When questioned why some people are beginning to be disrespectful to geese I was told it is because there is a growing number of MCFN members who are hunting geese but who have never had the proper instruction on how to hunt properly.

In this chapter I will describe the process through which MCFN children learn to become goose hunters and the impediments that some of these children today face when wanting to learn about hunting geese. Learning to become a goose hunter in Moose Factory is more than just learning the activities needed to shoot geese; learning to hunt geese is a process in which children (and adults who did not have the chance to learn as children) acquire a body of knowledge about geese and the environment that they can utilize to become good hunters. Goose hunting is a technique based upon this

knowledge in which hunters are aware of their responsibilities towards geese and act to fulfill those responsibilities. When referring to this learned body of knowledge, I will eschew the use of the term traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). TEK is problematic because of implicit assumptions that are present within the concepts of 'traditional' and 'ecological' (Nadasdy 1999:4-5).[16] Rather, I will utilize the term local knowledge which "refers to tacit knowledge embodied in life experience and reproduced in everyday behaviour and speech" (Cruikshank 2005:10). Local knowledge is produced through the interactions that humans have with other humans and their environments and is complex and changing (Cruikshank 2005:4).

5.2 The Teachers

Children ideally learn the skills needed to participate in goose harvesting activities from the experts in goose hunting – other members of the Moose Cree First Nation. Preston writes that "children grow into apprenticeship relationships with older people, watching how they do something, and then imitatively playing at it, or as they grow up, learning by watching, followed by more serious 'play' in repeated trials" (1982:301). For a child to become a goose hunter who hunts in accordance with the traditional values held by members of the, having a relationship with an experienced goose hunter is vital. A young man explained the reason why he and his friends are good hunters: "I guess all of my friends

[16] The term 'traditional' implies that TEK is archaic, static, unable to adapt to change, and not relevant in the modern world; 'ecological' reflects a Euro-Canadian perspective in which what is ecological is limited to what is considered to be natural (Nadasdy 1999:4-5).

grew up with their parents and their grandparents so we've always been taught the right way".

Generally the parents assume the role of teacher to their children and are responsible for passing on their knowledge of geese and related goose hunting activities to their children. However, when parents are unable to take their children hunting members of the child's extended family often take the place of parents as educators. A mother explained to me that while she and her husband took their children goose hunting in the spring they did not participate in the fall hunt. In this case, her son would go with his aunt and uncle to hunt geese in the fall. In other instances, grandparents could take their grandchildren with them and teach them how to hunt.

Educating children to be goose hunters also extends to non-family members as well. Goose camps may contain several families in close proximity and thus people may teach children from other families. A man talking about teaching his son how to hunt geese explained that he and his wife would "try to teach him as much as we can and not only him but all the kids that come out to the blinds." Similarly an elderly woman talked about her role in teaching children at a camp:

> Oh yeah we do teach them. There are also other families that camp with us and they have little children with them so these kids come and spend some time in my tent, you know, and we talk and do things together. There's a little girl there that came around this spring and the spring before there were two other little girls from another family. So we all get together and talk and do little things and teach them. They sit there and

> help me pluck, or try to pluck you know, ducks and geese - whatever we have there. You know they're so willing to do things.

5.3 What Boys and Girls Learn

Members of the MCFN have generalized ideas of the labour that men and women are supposed to do while goose hunting. These are summed up by an interview informant who told me that "there are certain jobs that women do compared to men eh. Like the women would clean the geese, the men would hunt only" – men are responsible for killing geese, women are responsible for cleaning and preparing geese. However, in reality there are no strict rules governing gendered division of labour and who has responsibility for doing each of the tasks required at a goose camp differ from family to family. A family from Moose Factory that I got to know provides an example of this. Plucking geese is generally considered to be "women's" work and is done by women away from the blinds at the camp. However, in this family the men would pluck the geese in the blind shortly after being killed. Two reasons were given for this. Firstly, geese are easier to pluck when they are still warm. By plucking them at the blind it saved their wives effort later on. Additionally, plucking the geese at the blind gave the men something to do while they were waiting for geese to fly by.

Many of the MCFN members that I had the opportunity to speak with were trained in many, if not all, of the jobs that needed to be done while hunting geese. This allows for greater self-reliance and independence in their activities.

Knowing how to accomplish all tasks was an obvious source of pride for a young man who explained to me that:

> I was hunting for myself and my family so I was always taught to do things myself. Now when I do go out in the bush I don't have to rely on my mother to do my own geese for me. I can do everything myself.

5.4 Learning to Hunt Geese

MCFN children ideally learn to hunt geese through interactions with experienced goose hunters. Preston notes that Cree children learn through what he terms action-models and word-models (1982:200). Action-models refers to the observations children make of their experiences and the actions of others which provide examples of proper or improper ways to act. Word-models are the shared experiences of others which grant the child access to another's experiences and teaches the child moral lessons, important cultural categorizations, and how to perceive and understand events that occur around them.

The education of MCFN children begins at a young age when they are taken to goose camps in the spring or fall. Initial training is comprised of children being around people involved with goose hunting and observing them to learn the proper ways of behavior. This is also a time for children to be introduced to, and learn about, the non-human elements which are present in their environment. These elements in the education of children are explained clearly by a boy's parents discussing the early education of their son:

BK: How old were your children when they started going to the blinds to hunt?

P1: [Our son] was probably about five years old. Like that's when you start taking them to the blind but they don't hunt or anything. They just watch.

P2: Learning everything. Learning you know. Like you don't actually shoot you'd just observe, but have fun you know. Like he'd be outside the blind playing looking at the little birds and all the other birds that will come around you know. He'd be watching and learning and he'd know when to come running into the blind like when there were geese coming or look we'd try to get him to see them or we'd try to teach him as much as we can ... not necessarily starting off with shooting a gun you know kind of thing. That comes a little later when they're ready and when they're able to do that kind of thing but I think there's a lot of learning that goes on when they come to the blinds

When learning to do something, whether it is goose hunting, sewing, driving a snowmobile, cooking, gathering wood, or other necessities of camp life, once the child becomes comfortable and familiarized with what is expected he or she will then make attempts at the activity. However, the adults exercise discretion and determine if the child is ready for that task. In an interview parents related the problems that occurred when their sons went to the blind when they were too young:

P1: Well first I'd tell them stories like how I was hunting when they were younger. Like too young to hunt. But when they [parents] start them [children] too young like they [children] don't really realize what they're hunting for or know what they're doing, but I believe that maybe eight years old is a good age to start. Nine years old that's when I started these kids. My boys they wanted to come out and I kept telling them they're too small. I tried taking them out to the blind when they were six or seven.

P2: Yeah they had to learn the hard way. Ok go with dad and then when they come back they say "oh it was so boring."

P1: And they're shooting all over the place, get all wet. Yeah you have to learn to sit in the blind all day. They couldn't do it when they were

> younger. That's one of the reasons why I think. Once they get the interest of actually shooting a goose they want to stay in the blind all day and get up early. So I just showed them each the way I was brought up and you know they all had to watch.

Another parent expressed the same concern with children undertaking tasks which they are not ready for and emphasized that a child should not be forced into doing something he or she is not ready to do:

> A parent has to know when they [the children] want to do it but they're not ready. You know you have to be the judge for that. Like there're too young or not safety conscious then they shouldn't be handling a gun or driving a skidoo. [My son] wouldn't drive a skidoo for a long time. Like kids younger than him were driving and I used to haul stuff and you know [I tell him] drive. He says "no" you know. So he drives the skidoo now but I guess he drove it when he was ready you know. Like you can't force them either and you can't let them go when they're too young. It's all judgement.

While the early education of MCFN children is gained by watching experienced practitioners, children must then attempt the techniques they observed once they are feel they are ready. A father related the way he teaches his children bush skills:

> You just let them watch and when they're ready they'll do it. When they go out by themselves they'll see how you've done it and then they'll try it. Anyways I think there's lots of visual learners when it comes to Aboriginals. They learn by watching then they try it themselves later.

Not surprisingly when children first attempt a task they are often unsuccessful since they have yet to master the required skills. Two of my interview participants recounted their children's early attempts at calling geese:

P1: When they were out there they always wanted to do things that they learned. They'd call geese but they didn't call them right at first but after awhile they got really good.
P2: Oh yeah they're really good yeah. Our daughter right now is really good at calling geese now.

Competence in goose hunting, like any other learned activity, is acquired through practice and development of the skills required to be successful goose hunters. Pálsson notes that "learning is not a purely cognitive or cerebral process, but is rather grounded in the contexts of practice, involvement, and personal engagement" (2000:37). Children often begin developing the techniques and skills required to be a goose hunter well before beginning to hunt through play. Children are given toy guns and then they mimic the adult hunters and pretend to shoot geese. While I was at a goose camp, I noticed that a snow shovel that was supposed to be there was missing. After a couple of days the shovel was found in a stand of trees behind the cabins. The young boys that had been at the camp prior to my arrival had taken the shovel and made a snow blind which they sat in and pretended to hunt the geese that flew over.

Children are encouraged in their efforts to learn the skills required to participate in harvesting activities. For example, a teenage boy recounted what happened after he killed his first goose: "[we] had a celebration that I killed my first goose. [There was] encouragement, lots of encouragement around the camp". When a novice hunter does something that is questionable however,

attention will be drawn to his technique so that he or she may make the necessary changes to become a better hunter. Criticism will come from the eldest hunter in the camp. A hunter explained how elders would rebuke someone for improper hunting practices:

> [They would] give you heck that's for sure haha. They'd probably start telling you about what they used to do and that you shouldn't be doing that. I used to get yelled at when I did something wrong from my grandfather. That's how I was brought up like. I learned. I won't do that again and get heck.

In my experience at a goose camp reprimands for uncertain hunting practices were less overt and would take place during conversations at night. In these instances the elder hunter at the camp would question his son on his hunting technique. He would ask questions such as "didn't you see those birds?", "were you sleeping?", "why didn't you shoot then?". Questioning of this sort allowed the younger hunter to reflect on how he hunted, to consider alternatives to what he had done, and, in general, to improve his hunting technique.

5.5 Impediments to Children Learning to be Goose Hunters

Being able to go to a goose camp and interact with and learn from expert goose hunters is critically important for MCFN children who wish to learn to hunt with the mindset that geese are persons that should be hunted with respect. However, many MCFN children do not have the opportunity to learn the necessary skills and attitudes required to be a successful goose hunter. The

members of the MCFN who I met while in Moose Factory were aware of this and provided several reasons why some MCFN children are not getting the education needed to become successful goose hunters.

The most frequently cited reason that children were not being taught how to hunt geese properly is their parents' unwillingness or inability to take them hunting. Some members of the Moose Cree First Nation never learned to hunt geese as children and thus goose hunting never became important to them. Other members went hunting as children but discontinued the practice as they became adults. In other instances parents are unable to take their children hunting because they are unable to finance the cost of hunting trips, they have a physical ailment which prevents them from taking their children hunting, or they are unable to find the time to fit hunting into their lives due to job or school concems.

These issues are sometimes resolved through children accompanying the families of friends or other relatives to goose camps. However, I was told that sometimes, even when these alternate means of having children participate in a goose hunt were available, parents would not allow their children to go hunting. A hunter explained this phenomena to me as "there's that pride. Like I can't take them so you can't go you know ... it's just that they're too proud you know. They don't want to admit that they can't afford it". This comment points to the importance of goose hunting as a cultural activity for members of the MCFN and

the value that some members of the MCFN place upon educating their children. Having another person teach one's children how to hunt geese is an admission to the community that the parent, or parents, is unable to participate in goose hunting and this injures their pride. This comment also suggests a growing inequality between members of the MCFN between those who are able to afford the growing costs associated with goose hunting and those who struggle with meeting these costs.

Some MCFN children are also uninterested in goose hunting and do not want to learn how to hunt. These children would rather spend time in Moose Factory than at a camp. An explanation given for this ambivalence towards hunting is that, for some, the modern conveniences that are available in Moose Factory are more important and relevant to their lives than life based upon traditional hunting practices. A hunter that I interviewed explained the difficulties he faced with his own son:

> I've noticed there are more people into electronics. My son was saying that more kids are into electronics. It's not like me it doesn't matter. Like I can leave my electronics, but for the children, like even [my son] we have a hard time to get him to go; but once he's there he's fine. Like he doesn't miss his games or TV or internet when he's out there.

While some children are reluctant to go hunting, once they are out in the bush they have the opportunity to learn how to hunt properly and to gain an appreciation of hunting.

Amongst the Chisasibi Cree young men are also often uninterested in hunting activities. However, their interest and expertise in bush skills increase once they mature and gain familial responsibilities (Ohmagari 1995:329). Predicting whether or not children who are are uninterested in goose hunting will ultimately grow up to be active goose hunters is impossible, but it seems probable that children who have the opportunity to learn to hunt geese as children are more likely to continue to hunt geese as they mature and to teach their own children how to hunt.

Amongst many of the goose hunters that I had the opportunity to meet there was a sense that the local knowledge associated with goose hunting is slowly being lost. A hunter offered his opinion on this loss to me:

> I think because as more and more younger generations are going out on their own, they're not going with somebody that knows the proper way to hunt and what to do, and what not to do, and what's going to happen if you do this you know. Like I say they shoot at night and they're [the geese] not going to be there tomorrow but some people don't really care.

This opinion is shared by another hunter who told me:

> I think slowly we're, like I was saying, losing it. At least keep on carrying on what was taught to them by parents or grandparents you know. Like some families I noticed used to go hunting when they were younger but as they grew up and become a parent they won't go out and then their kids won't go out. So you know the tradition isn't carried on ... the hunting tradition. You see a lot of that now.

5.6 School Programs

Many MCFN members are concerned that their children do not have adequate opportunities to go to the bush and to learn the skills necessary to participate in hunting and trapping. As a response to this, outdoor education programs have been implemented in the schools in which elders or experienced hunters take children into the bush and teach them simple skills like setting snares, catching fish, or building goose blinds. A resident of Moose Factory explained:

> The schools have these programs where the kids are taken out for a couple of days. It might even be one day in the fall where they actually go out and into a camp. Horseshoe is one of them for DDECS [Delores D. Echum Composite School]. They have another one, the winter curriculum, where they're taking them out I think for a couple of days ... the kids are out there every fall. It's usually one whole class that will go out and then come back. Next day another class will go out.

During my fieldwork I had the opportunity to interview a teenage girl and her parents about their hunting practices. The parents in this family (P2 is the father, P3 is the mother) are active hunters and take their children with them when they go to their camp. While conducting this interview the discussion turned to the girl's experiences with her classmates during a school camping trip:

> P1: What I notice is that there are only five kids in my class that go hunting out of 23. I could see that my teachers could teach us some more of our culture but see that kids are not really into it.
> BK: Do you go out on those trips that the school puts on?
> P1: Yeah. It's fun because our whole class goes and it's a good thing cause the class gets along and has fun outside.

P2: That's where they go camping where we went about 12 miles upriver. I guide there too. We went on our trip there. So I think some of the kids that had never stayed out in the bush.
P3: Even on your fishing trip there the class went fishing. She was the only one that...
P1: [interrupts] Caught fish.
P3: ...caught fish. And you knew what to do. She baited it and cleaned her fish and out of the whole class.
P1: I caught five fish haha.
BK: And did anyone else catch anything?
P1: There was only one person who caught one fish, but it was a baby fish. So we couldn't eat it.
P2: Same with [my son]. They have a cultural day at DDECS there. A big feast and workshop and all that and [my son] started cutting up ducks and geese and the ladies were suprised that he knew how to do that. So they got him helping out there.
P3: Yeah he was putting on his own workshop.

This excerpt stresses several recurring issues that members of the MCFN are concerned about. In this girl's class many of the children do not have the opportunity to go camping and learn how to hunt and engage in harvesting activities. The programs offered through the formal educational institutions to MCFN children, such as outdoor education and cultural days, are often the only experiences that these children will have to spend time on the land. However, despite the good intentions that surround these programs some people expressed concerns about the efficacy of these programs in passing on the local knowledge of the MCFN to their younger members.

A hunter related his opinions of the fall camping trip his son went on:

> I'm not too sure what they teach them. Cause I asked my son, "what did they teach you?". He said "Oh we just got to set up a blind and we sat in the blind all day and we saw one goose". You know things like that. I just think that it should be more in depth where maybe it should be an

> overnight stay instead of just a day trip. It's a day trip they go on. Some of this stuff that, like for instance traditional knowledge and all that, as far as goose hunting is concerned is really ... I know the smaller youth are starting to lose it a little I guess. They're not taught correctly. You got to teach them correctly to pass on these traditions properly.

When questioned on the correct way to educate children about their local knowledge he replied:

> The correct way would probably be basically an explanation to them that that is why it is done. It's not just like showing them something: there you made a goose blind. This is why we're making a goose blind because we have to hide from the geese. It has to be more in-depth teaching method. The methods are there but it's not so intense. It should be more of a message to them. You get them interested and then after that it's easy to teach them but you have to tell them why.

5.7 Learning and Worldview

The previous quote concerning the education of children about traditional harvesting activities in the formal school system points to an important facet of MCFN goose hunting. Goose hunting, for the members of the MCFN, is more than just the activities needed to go onto the land and kill geese; rather, hunting geese is an "empowering system of knowledge that gives life to these people. This system informs their ... cosmologies and practices, as well as the reciprocity they practice with one another and with the environment" (Riddington 1994:273). Thus learning to hunt geese properly not only means learning how to interact with geese but also the attendant social responsibilities of being a goose hunter[17]. This system of knowledge also includes individually held

[17] For example, sharing with those who do not have the ability to hunt for themselves.

detailed environmental knowledge, which informs the hunter about the possible relationships held between the hunter and his environment and provides direction in making decisions about how to act while on the land (Riddington 1982:478, 1994:281).

Hunting is a way of engaging with one's environment that is learned through hunting with experienced hunters. Learning to hunt involves developing a body of knowledge that includes knowledge about the environment as well as cultural knowledge that informs how the hunter interacts with the environment. MCFN goose hunters must learn how to successfully and respectfully interact with non-human persons and must also learn how to comprehend these elements in a way that is consistent and meaningful to the members of the MCFN (see previous chapter). Concerned about the number of children not learning to hunt properly, one parent said to me:

> I think it's important like just to teach them to be on the land. Not only to goose hunt, but just to be there to see the geese and know they're there. They're there to help you.

Learning to be a goose hunter "means attending to the task at hand, being actively engaged with a social and natural environment. This suggests a notion of enskilment [*sic*] that emphasizes immersion in the practical world, being caught up in the incessant flow of everyday life – and not simply ... the mechanistic internalization and application of a mental script, a stock of knowledge or a 'cultural model'" (Pálsson 2000:26-27).

MCFN members are aware that traditional modes of training their children today are not sufficient as some parents lack the resources or the desire to take their children hunting and teach them. Knowledge is possessed by individuals and not institutions (Riddington 1994:273) and thus for the local knowledge which informs goose hunting practice to persist, children need to be taken to goose camps and immersed in a hunting lifestyle where a seasoned goose hunter can pass on this knowledge. The responsibility to these children rests with the entire community to ensure they have the opportunities to learn to hunt geese. This point is expressed by a hunter concerned with the number of young people not learning to hunt properly and the resultant effects on traditional MCFN hunting practices: "I think we need to be more careful with the younger generation. Teach them better. Even if they're not yours".

5.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have explained that becoming a goose hunter is a learned activity that is conducted under the tutelage of an experienced goose hunter. Children learn to hunt geese by observing and then imitating skilled hunters; thus having relationships with active and experienced goose hunters who are able to take them hunting is crucial for a child to develop the skills and attitudes needed to become a successful goose hunter. The mentor guides the novice hunter as he or she moves from observation, to play, to actually hunting and offers encouragement, advice, and, when necessary, reprimands. The child

is generally allowed to learn to hunt at his or her own pace and comfort level, although a child may be restricted in an activity if his or her instructor feels the child is not ready for the task.

Today many MCFN children are not receiving the opportunity to learn to become goose hunters. Reasons for this include their parents' reluctance or inability to take them hunting themselves, their parents' unwillingness to let another person teach them to hunt geese, or the child's own uninterest in hunting. To give children opportunities to experience some bush life outdoor education programs have been established in the Moose Factory schools in which an elder or an experienced hunter takes a group of children into the bush to learn simple bush skills.

However, these programs themselves may not be adequate to fully pass on the knowledge needed for them to become active and successful hunters. Becoming a goose hunter involves more than learning how to kill birds; becoming a goose hunter also means learning about the cosmologies and environmental philosophies held by members of the MCFN that give life and meaning to the relationships that exist between humans and geese. Learning to become a goose hunter means not just learning a set of activities, it involves learning how to recognize and exist within a social landscape in which the hunters have obligations to both other humans and to geese. To successfully come to embody the cosmological and philosophical traditions that have been articulated by the

MCFN members I talked to, a child must be immersed in a world in which these beliefs, and the practices which emerge from and reinforce these beliefs are prevalent.

Chapter 6
Continuity and Change

6.1 Introduction

Several members of the MCFN commented that contemporary goose hunting is not as traditional as it used to be. The changes that are easiest to see are the incorporation of new tools and technologies into goose hunting. Some of these include the use of satellite radio, cellular phones, travel by skidoo and helicopter, use of plastic decoys instead of their homemade ones, and provisioning camps with modern conveniences such as portable generators, radios, television, music players, video games, and DVD players. Many people, especially those in Euro-Canadian society, erroneously believe that Aboriginal hunting is an anachronism and should remain static if it is to remain "traditional" and to be protected as an aboriginal right. Those of this opinion focus on the material objects that people use while hunting rather than the beliefs that are held by the hunters and their understandings of what hunting is.

An important question to consider is whether the incorporation of these modern tools into goose hunting practice reflects a schism with past hunting practice. Marshall Sahlins (1999:ix-x) suggests a process of the indigenization of modernity is occurring whereby people assimilate elements of modernity into traditional practice. This allows people to continue to engage in culturally meaningful practices, while at the same time helping to keep the practice

meaningful in a world where local cultures are not isolated but rather connected to other local cultures, as well as national and global institutions.

In this chapter I intend to show that goose hunting has long been a dynamic activity, characterized by recurring change. I do so by examining how the adaption of firearms and participation in the fur trade affected the goose hunting practices of the Mushkegowuk. Secondly I will outline the changes that are currently affecting the ways in which MCFN members hunt geese. Finally, I will argue that despite these changes, the members of the MCFN continue to hunt geese in ways which are intended to maintain amicable relationships with geese.

6.2 Historical Goose Hunting Changes

Goose hunting has never never been static – it has long been dynamic and changing. This is reflective of sub-arctic hunting peoples who tend to be "flexible, adaptable, and ready to take advantage of variations in the resource potential of their environment" (Riddington 1994:286-87). An example that points to this is how goose hunting changed in the early fur trade along James Bay when guns were introduced and some of the Cree people began harvesting geese to provide European traders with food.

Early European visitors observed that the Aboriginal people hunting waterfowl along James Bay were able to kill three ducks with one shot from a bow and arrow (Bird 2005:190; Lytwyn 2002:93). Guns made it easier to hunt

waterfowl because they kill quickly, are more accurate, and have greater range than the bow and arrow. The use of guns allowed Cree hunters the possibility of killing up to three times as many birds with one shot (Bird 2005:190). As well, the adoption of guns improved the lives of the Cree making it easier for them to bring in food, clothing, and other products obtained through hunting (Bird 2005:197). To gain the benefits of the gun however, the user must be skilled in its use. Commentary provided by the employees of the Hudson's Bay Company suggest that the Mushkegowuk quickly became proficient in the use of guns (Bird 2005:190-91; Lytwyn 2002:144-145). This indicates that the Cree realized the benefits of using guns in their harvesting activities and quickly adopted their use.

While adopting guns increased the productivity of Cree goose hunters, it also created situations where the use of guns hindered hunting success. The early guns used emitted a flash when fired. This scared the geese away and resulted in the Mushkegowuk creating a new hunting prescription. As Louis Bird explains: "it sort of added to their rule how to behave, how to respect animals. So they firmly say, do not fire the gun after sunset. And don't fire the gun also before sunrise" (Bird 2005:202). Changing how guns were used in order not to unnecessarily disturb geese was an important change in the Mushkegowuk's past goose hunting strategies. Cree hunters adapt their hunting practices to continue to be able to hunt successfully when they observe their environments

changing or their past hunting practices becoming ineffective (Peloquin and Berkes 2009:534-535; Scott 1996:79). In this manner, the hunting practices of the MCFN are effective hunting strategies. However, as discussed in chapter 4, they are also practices for maintaining amicable social relationships with geese.

While this aspect of the adoption of guns was remedied through the introduction of a new hunting prescription, there were other issues associated with the increased ease of goose hunting brought about by the use of guns. The fur trade period along the west coast of James Bay marked a partial commercialization of the goose hunt. The Hudson's Bay Company provided the Homeguard Cree with gunpowder and pellets with the expectation that the Cree would provide them with geese. The traders also rewarded the Cree hunters with an equivalent of one made beaver[18] in trade goods for providing them with a certain number of geese[19] (Lytwyn 2002:145-146). The commercialization of the goose hunt, along with the introduction of the gun, led to increased hunting of geese and killing more than what was needed for the hunter's own personal use. The Cree hunters began hunting in a way that maximized the number of geese that were killed with each shot in order to maximize the profit they would made off of each ounce of gunpowder provided by the Hudson's Bay

[18] A made beaver refers to a unit of trade used by the Hudson's Bay Company. It is the equivalent of "one prime, dressed beaver pelt" (Morantz 1984:75 n. 3).
[19] The number of geese that were needed to constitute one made beaver fluctuated over time and between trading posts.

Company.[20] This change in hunting behaviour led Louis Bird to lament "people just kill off everything and then they depleted the animals very quickly. We did. My grandparents did. They know they were doing something wrong, but trading for the goods with the other person was stronger" (2005:204).

6.3 Contemporary Goose Hunting Changes

Like in the past, contemporary members of the MCFN also face changes in their goose hunting practices. In the following section I outline the major changes that are affect how they hunt geese.

6.3.1 Travel

In the past members of the MCFN traveled by foot, dog sled, and canoes. MCFN members today rely on modem forms of transportation to move them to their goose camps. Snowmobiles are frequently relied upon when the land is covered by snow and the waterways are frozen. During warmer months when James Bay and the rivers and creeks of the James Bay lowlands are free of ice canoes powered by outboard motors are used. Finally, helicopters are utilized by members of the MCFN to travel to more remote goose camps. They recognize these new forms of travel are beneficial as they provide easy and "convenient ways for us to get out there and practice our traditional hunting".

[20] Louis Bird (2005:203-204) suggests that the HBC required five geese to be turned in to them for each ounce of gunpowder provided to the Cree hunters. The geese in excess of five would be kept by the hunter.

6.3.2 Time Spent Hunting Geese

The amount of time that many members of the MCFN can devote to goose hunting has also changed. This change is necessary for some MCFN members who have responsibilities in Moose Factory, such as work or their children's education, which limits the amount of time they can spend in the bush.

The pressure of town life on the time people are able to spend hunting geese is well illustrated in the amount of time that is devoted to the spring goose hunt. People used to travel to their camps while the rivers were still frozen to hunt Canada geese as they migrated north. After the spring migration was complete, people continued to live off the land as the rivers broke up and returned to Moose Factory once the rivers were free of ice and they were able to navigate them safely in their canoes. In all, people spent approximately four to six weeks on the land during the spring.

Currently many people are unable to spend this length of time on the land during the spring. Those with children are limited to the regularly scheduled breaks that the schools provide to accommodate the hunt: two weeks are provided for the spring hunt and one week is provided for the fall hunt. However, some people may prefer to spend more time than this in the bush and may make the decision to continue hunting at the expense of their responsibilities in Moose Factory. An interview informant told me: "with school I

haven't been out onto the land as much as I'd like to but as a young boy I spent a lot of time out there. Too much time. In my case because there's been times where I'd been expelled from school just for being out on the land too much".

A person's employment also affects the time that people can devote to hunting geese. Some people have jobs that allow time off specifically for hunting. Other people may have jobs in which they can take holidays when they want to travel to their camps. One hunter described how he planned to use his holiday time to accommodate his desire to hunt geese in the spring:

> What I usually try to do is to time it when the geese will come. So if I take two weeks hopefully they will come in the middle of the week or early in, and if they come before or when my holidays are coming then I'll call in and say I'm taking another week off.

Some people do not have the luxury of using holiday time to accommodate goose hunting. In these cases people who wish to hunt geese must hunt on the weekend:

> But having a job now you only have Saturdays and Sundays so we hunt on Sunday. I guess when I retire I won't hunt on Sundays. I probably won't hunt on weekends when I retire because there are too many hunters on the weekend. Everybody goes hunting on the weekend and there's nobody during the week so I'll probably hunt during the week and rest on Saturday and Sunday. You know just like stay around camp and do chores and stuff.

6.3.3 Distribution of People on Land

Goose hunting continues to be a popular activity and members of the MCFN believe that the number of people who hunt geese in the spring is increasing. While some people travel to camps that are relatively distant from

Moose Factory, other people choose to hunt close to town for several reasons: they wish to stay close to town, they cannot afford to set up a distant camp, or they do not have the time to travel to a distant camp.

Several of the people I talked with in Moose Factory feel that with the recent overall demographic increase in the MCFN there is a growing concentration of goose hunters along the Moose River and along the James Bay. While conflicts over access have thus far been minimal, some of my informants were concerned that in the future conflicts may arise as hunting areas become over-crowded. Nicholas Smith writes that:

> although the traditional hunting grounds are still recognized, there are no traditional claims to areas where blinds may be erected on the mudflats at the mouth of the Moose River. Whoever builds his blind first, controls that area. Many hunters select an area and plan to return each year, but if they find someone else's blind already there, he would have to find an unoccupied site (1984:88).

For the most part this is true today. During an interview I asked a hunter if people would set up their blinds in the same place every year. He responded by telling me that "a blind is not yours once you leave it. Like in the fall time once you leave to go hunt on that shoal if you don't get there first the next morning then it's not your blind". I inquired further and asked if the people using a blind could change day to day and he replied:

> If you're camped someplace and you have a blind someplace then you go sit in that blind. If they know you go sit in that blind everyday then they don't go and sit in it. But where you go just to hunt for the day then it's anyone's blind the next day.

This comment suggests that the MCFN membership have differing perspectives on occupancy of goose hunting areas based upon the length of time that a goose hunter plans to utilize an area. If a hunter stays in an area for a short time, another hunter may hunt there once the original occupant leaves. However, if a hunter occupies a goose hunting location for a length of time and establishes a semi-permanent camp[21], he is given priority of use for that area. During an interview a hunter told me of a time when he had another hunter set up a blind close to him:

> There was no problems that time when that happened to me. The guy didn't know I built a camp there and I was staying there for the spring. And he was on the other side and I heard him calling and I went to see him and they left after. They just they didn't know I was there.

If a camp is being established on a trapper's trapline, it is considered proper to ask for permission to build the camp. While hunting at a camp on another person's trapline people may hunt other game animals in addition to geese, but fur bearing animals are not killed as this is viewed as taking away the livelihood of the trapper. Several people I talked to about the establishment of new camps felt that the band council should also be informed before building a camp. A goose camp is not exclusively for the use of the hunter who establishes it. Other hunters may utilize a camp if it is not being used if permission from the owner of the camp is sought first.

[21] A goose hunting camp is composed of one or more cabins where people sleep and cook and one or more blinds, which are located away from the cabins, from which geese are hunted.

The use of current goose camps for some families may be a somewhat recent development that is linked to the increased ease that travel by helicopter offers people. During an interview the following dialogue took place:

> P: When I first started going it was '69. Just the men would go and the men would come back, we would come back before breakup by skidoo and then after awhile people started taking their families and building these bigger camps and then they started using helicopters to come back.
> BK: Did people start taking their families out to the camps because helicopters became available to easily move people around?
> P: Yeah and I guess probably what happened a long time ago people would go out with their families and that kind of stuff. It was only a few families that would only go out like I guess traditionally what they would do is go out in the winter time, in March or something like that, and stay out there right until June and then come back by boat. Then people stopped doing that and then the men started just going out by skidoo, hunting for a week or so and coming back by skidoo. And then there were still a few families that have always gone out you know in the end of March, something like that, and stayed right through and come back by boat in May or June. So I guess what happened was after awhile they started kind of going back to bringing their families out and going by helicopter so it would only be for about maybe three weeks at the most.

6.3.4 New Tools and Conveniences

In the past Cree peoples readily adopted new material goods which they felt would provide a benefit to themselves (Brightman 1993:250-251). For contemporary members of the MCFN, this statement continues to be true and thus, when traveling to camp, MCFN goose hunters take many possessions with them into the bush. Some of these are for practical purposes such as cooking utensils, bedding, packaged food, camp lights, and clothing. Cellular phones and satellite phones are taken into the bush and these enable a hunter and his

family to remain in contact with other people and to learn of inclement weather, goose migrations, or to get help if there is an emergency. Plastic goose decoys have replaced traditional decoys made of materials from the land and one hunter told me about moveable, reusable blinds that can be bought. Other items brought to camp provide luxury in the camp. These items may include radios, televisions, satellite dishes, video games, DVD players, and solar panels.

6.3.5 Hunting Costs

The costs associated with goose hunting are prohibitively high for some MCFN members and is the prime obstacle which prevents people from being able to hunt geese. Some of the necessary expenses that need to be addressed before engaging in goose hunting include gasoline, helicopter rentals, food, shotgun shells, buying a snowmobile or canoe, and camping equipment.

Some members of the Moose Cree First Nation have year round employment and are able to save up the money required to hunt geese. Some people have jobs in which they receive a northern allowance that they use to finance hunting. People who wish to hunt geese but do not have year round employment will often have to save money throughout the year to pay for the costs associated with hunting. Beginning in 2009, the Moose Cree First Nation implemented a program to provide financial assistance to the goose hunters who needed it. Eligibility for this program is contingent upon active goose

hunters participating in further research on goose hunting that is being conducted in the community.

6.3.6 Incorporating Change into Tradition

Like their ancestors during the fur trade period, MCFN members are adapting their hunting traditions in ways that are consistent with their ideology of respecting geese. Today people are becoming concerned with the effects that the new tools that are being used while hunting geese are having on the geese. For example, lights used at many camps cause light pollution at night and generators, televisions, and radios make noise in an otherwise generally tranquil area. People are considering the effects that this light and noise pollution has in scaring away and are making changes in the way that they use these tools in order to limit the disturbance of geese.

6.4 Continuities in Goose Hunting

One hunter explained that despite the changes that are occurring there are aspects of goose hunting that are remaining the same:

> I guess it's [goose hunting] not really traditional anymore. The way we get there and the way we stay, how we live out there. But we're still there and we're still practicing. Like when we're not in our tent you know you still have to harvest it the same way. Like you have to sit there all day and you have the patience to sit there.

This statement suggests that despite the changes that the members of the MCFN are experiencing and the concomitant changes in goose hunting, there is still an element of goose hunting that remains constant. Riddington argues that

for hunting and gathering peoples the possession of knowledge of how to perform an activity is more important than the material objects or tools that are needed to perform the activity. He argues that:

> physical objects have value only as the final material connection necessary for the deployment of a strategy which is held in the mind ... the essence of hunting technology is to retain, and be able to act upon, information about the possible relationships between people and the natural environment" (Riddington 1994:281).

Only emphasizing the material changes which are occurring in the goose hunting practices of MCFN members will give us an incomplete understanding of contemporary goose hunting. We need to consider the material changes that are occurring in conjunction with the beliefs and knowledge that members of the MCFN have about geese. Placing emphasis on the material aspects of goose hunting is a result of an "artifactual chauvinism" that exists within Euro-Canadian society which fetishizes material items (Riddington 1982:471). Pálsson argues that "as we become skilfil [*sic*] practitioners we assimilate technology as *a part* of our own body" (Pálsson 2000:33). For a person skilled in a task, the tools and technology that are used in the completion of the task becomes an extension of the person as he or she engages with the environment. It is the novice, who is unfamiliar with the activity who places emphasis on the tools that are being used (Pálsson 2000:33).

6.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have shown that the ways in which members of the MCFN, and the Moose River Cree before, hunt geese has a history of change. This is clearly seen when the goose hunters of the James Bay Lowland eagerly adopted firearms provided by European traders and changed their hunting practices to participate in a partially commercialized goose hunt. However, some of these changes resulted in overhunting and increased disturbance of geese. To compensate for this the Mushkegowuk again modified their hunting practice to reduce the impact their hunting had on geese.

The technique in which members of the MCFN hunt geese is again changing – modern forms of transportation are used, less time is spent on the land, people tend to hunt closer to Moose Factory, more material luxuries are taken to camps, and more money is spent on the hunt. Despite these changes there is still considerable continuity in hunting practice. To emphasize the material conditions which have characterized changes in MCFN goose hunting technique is to engage in 'artifactual chauvinism'. Knowledge of how to hunt is more important than the material objects used while hunting. This is seen when the individual hunters that participated in this project continue to stress the paramount importance that the ideology of respecting geese continues to have when they hunt geese.

Chapter 7
Conclusions

7.1 Goose Hunting in Contemporary Moose Cree Society

In the past geese served as a vital food source for the Mushkegowuk as they made their seasonal rounds. Geese hunted in the fall were preserved and eaten during the winter. The spring migration of Canada geese was especially critical for the Mushkegowuk as the return of the geese provided many families the first opportunity to procure fresh meat after the winter and in some instances was critical in warding off starvation. This was explained to me by a MCFN hunter who said:

> A long time ago the geese arrived in the spring when it was icy and it was the toughest time of the year to survive. February and March. With starvation. And the older people they remember when they would be out in the spring waiting for the geese. That was the first real hunting; that would be the first meat they had in a long time. They don't hunt geese but they would come to us first. Then they would eat those and then they would stay for the first goose; but a lot of the times when the first goose was killed it was the first fresh meat they had in a long time. Sometimes they would be on the verge of starving. So they really appreciated the geese for what they were doing. Nowadays we don't have to but still we should try to respect them for what they did.

Many of the goose hunters today can recall the importance that geese had as a food source for them and their families. A 50 year old hunter explained that:

> when I was young it was still real ... like we depended on the food; we depended on the meat. So it was a really important thing for people to get a lot of geese in the spring and in the fall. What I saw when I was very young was fall hunting. You know my dad and my brothers we had big piles of meat. Hundreds of them. We would live on those for the

> whole winter. And so I think everybody recognized that it was a real important part of life to do that.

However, the same hunter when asked about impediments that are faced by members of the MCFN who wish to hunt geese replied:

> I think mostly the cost I guess. Especially the equipment, the transportation, all your supplies. We spend about, I don't know, about $2000 I guess in the spring to go hunting. It doesn't even make any sense economically you know for the geese that you get. You know if you only get about 20 then that's about $100 each. It doesn't even make sense.

Others shared these sentiments and would talk about going out to goose camps, killing few geese, and returning to Moose Factory with a "thousand dollar goose." The members of the MCFN now have access to store bought food and with the rising costs associated with goose hunting and the variability in the number of geese killed season to season, these foods often are less expensive than the food obtained through hunting geese. If hunting geese "doesn't even make any sense economically" as my interview participant put it, then why does goose hunting remain an important activity for many members of the Moose Cree First Nation? In concluding this thesis, I would like to tie together the main points from previous chapters to argue that the continuing importance of goose hunting today lies in its position within MCFN society as a subsistence activity. The importance of goose hunting has shifted in some extent from being a critical food source to being an important cultural activity for

the MCFN that maintains cultural traditions and allows the MCFN to resist the homogenizing effects Euro-Canadian society.

7.2 Subsistence

Wenzel (1991:57-58) argues that within popular culture there are two characterizations of what subsistence is. The first of these is the understanding that subsistence is the minimal level at which human life is possibly maintained. The second understanding of subsistence refers to the idea of self-contained economies. This usage of subsistence refers to an idealized, romantic notion of a self-contained economy in which people's material needs are provided by themselves. However, the assertion that any economy or society is self-contained is not true due to the fact that there have always been interactions between groups of people (Wolf 1982). Within this conception of subsistence as self-contained production for one's own use is the implicit assumption that at one time there were groups of people who met the ideal of self-contained self-sufficiency. This conception of subsistence also has political implications for the continuing right of aboriginal peoples to continue their traditional hunts. Wenzel (1991:58) shows how this understanding of subsistence has been used to argue against Inuit rights to hunt seals. Anti-sealing proponents insist that the Inuit seal hunt should no longer be considered subsistence because the use of modern tools and technologies is evidence of that they have diverged from their traditional self-contained self-sufficient economies. However, as presented in

chapter 6, modern tools can be used to increase peoples' abilities to engage in activities that they consider to be important to themselves.

Both of these definitions of subsistence are inadequate in describing the qualities of MCFN goose hunting which make it a subsistence activity. Several anthropologists have noted that a key element of subsistence is not only production, but also the ideological and social elements of a group of people. Freeman suggests that subsistence is "the complex of activities associated with procuring, processing, distributing, and consuming locally obtained foods, and includes the social relations and beliefs required to support (and, in turn, be supported by) these activities" (1997:8). Wenzel (1991:61) calls for subsistence to be understood as a system that includes ecological and socioeconomic relationships and notes that "subsistence is more than a means of survival. It is a set of culturally established responsibilities, rights and obligations that affect every man, woman, and child each day" (1991:61). Additionally the goals of subsistence activities differ from the economic goals present in Euro-Canadian society:

> The objective of subsistence is neither individual self-sufficiency nor capital accumulation, but a continuous flow of goods and services. Not the least, this flow of products includes security, respect, and leisure for all its participants (Wenzel 1991:62).

The produts of subsistence economies are largely meant to be either used by the producers or to be exchanged through socially defined networks to family or friends. This is different from industrial production for example, where workers

relate to each other as co-workers, they work for wages, and they do not use what they produce (unless they buy it).

In order to characterize MCFN goose hunting as a subsistence activity we must look at how ecological, socio-economic, and ideological factors interconnect to create an activity for MCFN goose hunters that continues to have value for them despite the apparent lack of economic value.

7.3 Goose Hunting as Subsistence

Members of the MCFN believe that geese are non-human persons who make the decision to sacrifice themselves to a hunter in order to provide the hunter and his family food (see chapter 4). In return the hunter has the responsibility to act respectfully to geese by following a number of prescriptive activities that govern how he or she should act towards geese and to other people.

This ideology of respect with geese is reinforced by the observations that the hunters make while they are hunting geese. If geese are disturbed while feeding or shot at night they likely will not come back and the hunter will be unsuccessful. Similarly, MCFN goose hunters have considerable knowledge about goose behaviour and the environmental conditions which will contribute to geese flying towards the blind and the hunter being able to kill them. For example, while visiting a goose camp I inquired about how the decoys were being arranged. I was told that geese liked to land amongst other geese so the

decoys would be positioned so that there was an area between the decoys for the geese to come too. As well, geese look for open water to land but the water the decoys were set up in would be frozen in the morning. This resulted in considerable amounts of time taken each morning to break up the ice and push it away. Throughout the day as pieces of ice would float back around the decoys the process would have to be repeated. Breaking the ice up in this instance is a necessary practice that needs to be done in order for the goose hunters to have success at hunting geese. If it is not done the geese will not fly towards the blinds where they can be shot which would indicate, to the MCFN goose hunter, that there is a problem in the relationship between the hunter and the goose.

Goose hunting is a very social activity for the members of the MCFN. The goose hunting camp is often occupied by friends and family members of several generations. This allows for the exchange of ideas and knowledge and provides the most opportune venue to inculcate children with the ideology, knowledge, and technique required for them to become successful goose hunters (see chapter 5). The sociality of goose hunting also allows the people at a camp to maintain strong bonds between them. The distribution of goose products to community members also allows for social bonds to be strengthened between people and households.

7.4 Non-economic Importance of Geese

As previously mentioned subsistence activities may have goals that cannot be measured through the use of formal economic measures that tie value to income or accumulation of goods. This is especially true for MCFN goose hunting in which the costs associated with hunting may exceed the monetary value of the products of hunting. To understand the continuing importance of goose hunting to members of the MCFN, the value they place on goose hunting must be understood. During my fieldwork in Moose Factory several themes surrounding the continuing importance of goose hunting to the MCFN goose hunters emerged.

7.4.1 Food

While many of the MCFN members I talked to were quick to note that they killed fewer geese than in the past, they would also tell me that one of the reasons that goose hunting remains important to them is because it provides them with food. This suggests that the value of geese as a food source lies in the qualities of the meat rather than in the quantity consumed. There are two qualities to goose meat which make it a preferred food: the perceived quality of the goose meat vis-à-vis store bought food and the centrality of goose as a food for members of the MCFN.

Some of my interview participants would state that when compared to store bought food, goose is a healthier food for them. This conviction continues

despite ongoing concerns about pollution in both goose wintering areas and around Moose Factory, that may contaminate geese. During one interview a participant told me that despite "seeing some deformities I'll still eat a goose and it's good."

Goose continues to be an important food for members of the MCFN because it is a much loved food and is served at important events such as weddings, community feasts, and birthdays. During an interview a hunter explained how the perspective that the MCFN members had towards geese differed from people living down south:

> You talk to somebody in the south "oh there's a geese flying by there. Geese you mean those things that crap all over the park you know like those things". We look at a goose in a different way where it's roasted or smoked or boiled.

Children are said to develop a taste for goose as infants when they are given goose bones to chew on instead of plastic pacifiers. The desire to eat goose continues into adulthood and during interviews was referred to in terms as an addiction: "there's always that craving though. I got to have my next fix of goose or whatever." Similarly, during another interview a hunter told me:

> I crave for the wild meat. Like if you don't have it then you want it you know. Like I don't know if it's like that for non-aboriginals, like crave for a steak or whatever you know. But if you gave me a choice between a goose and a steak I would always choose the goose you know.

The craving that members of the MCFN have for goose is strong during the spring hunt when it is likely that they have not had goose to eat over the winter.

Some families will cook the first goose that is killed, even if it is not enough for a meal for everybody present, so that they can get a taste of goose.

7.4.2 Non-material Value of Goose Hunting

Goose hunting provides the members of the MCFN with more than access to a highly valued food. During an interview a hunter explained to me that "lot of people that we meet going out in the camp, most of them just like being out there. It's not really important how many geese they get and you know it could be lots." The sentiment was shared by another hunter who told me "if you don't kill a goose that's fine you know, like well it's not really fine but you know it's just being out there that's most important." These comments suggest that goose hunting also provides value to the members of the MCFN outside of the material products of the hunt. An interview participant explained that the reason hunting geese is important to her is:

> It's not so much the hunting geese I think it's just to be out there with your family. You know just to reconnect and all that kind of stuff. To reconnect with the land too like we don't have any worries when we're out there. Really you don't think about what's going on back home or whatever you don't have your job or anything. It's just relaxing to be with your family and getting geese is a bonus but that's what I think you know. People should still go out on the land even just it might not be for the geese but just to reconnect.

This reflection points to two recurring explanations for the continuing valuation of goose hunting: leisure and family time.

Time spent at the goose camp is seen as a respite from the stresses and pressures of life in Moose Factory. A hunter explained to me that while at camp:

> I just like to sit there and listen to the silence. It's not really silence like there's lots of stuff going on but the peacefulness of just being there. Even when you sit in your blind and you just sit here and listen you don't do nothing ... there's lots of days you just sit there and you know there's nothing but it's just nice to be there. There's no stress, there's no phones – well we have phones but there's none in the blind and you know there's no TV, you can't read a book if you want to watch [for geese] you know.

In another interview a mother and daughter talked about their favourite moments at the goose camp:

> P1: The best thing I like going out to the camp is after you have a good supper meal of geese, you go sit outside in the evening and it's calm and it's nice.
> P2: Yeah the sunsets are beautiful. It's so peaceful.
> P1: Yeah quiet.
> P2: We find it very different when we go to the city like when we go to Toronto and like all the pollution. It's just a big difference just breathing the air and from out in the camp it's just fresh.
> P1: Fresh air.

Time spent at goose camps are also known to be ideal times for developing bonds between the people living together at the camp. Without the distractions that are present while living in town family members and friends have time to talk, joke, and enjoy each other's company. A young girl I interviewed related that one of the reasons she liked going to her family's camp is that: "I learn more about my parents and it's just really interesting for me like going out there spending time with my family." Another hunter explains that this valued family time would be lost by not going to the goose camp:

> You know getting out on the land and just being out there with family and you're just there awhile you know doing stuff other than goose hunting you know. You go for walks kind of thing. Cause being together as a family is the communication without the distractions and that's what I

> noticed compared to now you know we have satellite radios, satellite phones, kids have TVs and we communicate a lot without cable TV out there. Coming back to the area here lot of distraction and and if we didn't go goose hunting with the families we'd loose that you know.

Goose hunting allows members of the MCFN to maintain an important cultural activity. A hunter noted that without being able to hunt geese "a lot of people would lose their traditional ways ... there's some skills that we have had today and we wouldn't be passing that on to the next generation." The hope of passing on the knowledge associated with goose hunting to one's children and being on the land with them in the future is a common theme amongst the members of the MCFN I had the opportunity to speak with. Passing on the knowledge of how to hunt geese to younger generations is deemed crucial by members of the MCFN in order to maintain their identity as aboriginal people and as hunters:

> I think that's the biggest part of who we are as as natives ... is that we keep this tradition up with passing it on to our children. I'd like to see my son with his own family out there in the future teaching his kids on what we'd learned from my grandfather and my father. So it's a knowledge that can't be lost. It's just like I believe our language it has to be there. It's who we are. It makes us. It makes who we are actually. It's people who live off the land, provides sustenance for ourselves and our families, and being able to do that is is is one big part of being natives is that we have always lived that way all our lives.

7.5 Conclusion

The MCFN has undergone significant change over the last several decades and in response to this there have been concomitant changes in their goose hunting practice. As the society of the MCFN changed, the importance

of goose hunting has also changed. Goose hunting was once an activity that provided an important food that was necessary to ward off starvation at certain times of the year. Goose hunting is now an activity that provides a culturally important food source and non-material benefits such as relaxation and time with one's family. The material goods and the tools that are used during goose hunting have also changed dramatically: from bows and arrows to shotguns, from dog sleds to helicopters, from mud or tamarack decoys to plastic decoys. To focus on these material changes it would appear that goose hunting has undergone a fundamental change.

However, to assume that there have been fundamental changes in MCFN goose hunting based upon these above changes is to miss the logic of engagement that continues to underpin their hunting practice and the ideology that the members of the MCFN who participated in this research continue to maintain. The members of the MCFN who I met and got to know during my fieldwork continue to engage with geese as though they are non-human persons who decide whether or not to sacrifice themselves to the hunter and therefore have direct control over outcome of the hunt. MCFN goose hunters improve their chances of successfully hunting by following a set of prescriptive practices, base upon their environmental observations and knowledge, that maintain a respectful relationship to geese.

The ideology of respect that some members of the MCFN have towards geese is founded upon a large body of environmental knowledge that is passed down from elder to child and then expanded as each individual then adds his or her own experience to this received knowledge. Learning this knowledge is to learn that geese are non-human persons and interacting with geese, the non-human persons, reinforces this body of knowledge as people's experiences are interpreted according to this worldview. Learning this knowledge and becoming a goose hunter means to learn a technique of engagement that maintains a respectful relationship with the geese.

Finally, MCFN members are aware of the challenges that they face in maintaining their own cultural identity and traditions within the dominant Euro-Canadian society. Already there are concerns that people are loosing the local knowledge that makes their goose hunting a marker of MCFN identity. During an interview when asked if it remains important for the members of the MCFN to continue to respect geese the participant replied:

> Oh yeah it's important. Not only for the geese but it's important for us. You know who we are. You know it's written in the Treaty that we can hunt geese. So what if there's no difference between a non-native and a native hunter? What if they're both the same? So why should that person have the right? Like is there some reason why native people have those rights like that? They're supposed to practice their respect you know.

Members of the MCFN readily talk about their traditions and their culture and goose hunting is an important part of these for them.

Members of the MCFN are full participants in the 21st century world. They now have jobs, drive cars, eat in restaurants, and work and travel around the world. However, this world threatens the local knowledge, beliefs, and practices that define an identity for MCFN because of dominant ethnocentric ideals that privilege Euro-Canadian knowledge and ways of living and subjugates other forms of knowledge and lifestyles (Scott 1996:69). This is being seen whenever somebody cannot afford to go hunt geese, or when a hunter cannot take time off work to hunt, or when a young person is uninterested in hunting geese, or when forests are cut down and the migration paths of geese change. In order to continue to be able hunt geese and maintain it as an important tradition that is consistent with their worldview and cultural beliefs, members of the MCFN are appropriating elements of modernity that may seem incompatible with traditional practice from a non-MCFN perspective. Goose hunting continues to remain an important part of the lives of many members of the MCFN because they have been able to incorporate change into their traditional practices. That they are able to make these changes challenges ideas about aboriginal tradition as being ossified and located in the past. Rather, the goose hunting practices of these members of the MCFN should be considered as a living tradition that allows them to maintain ties to their past and their ancestors while at the same time asserting their place in the contemporary world.

Members of the MCFN maintain goose hunting as an important tradition by simultaneously modifying aspects of it to allow it to remain a viable activity for them in the 21st century and perpetuating the logic of engagement that marks their goose hunting as an activity which is distinctly their own. Despite the easily observable material changes in the way that they hunt geese today, the relationship between members of the MCFN and geese continues to be defined according to the understanding that geese are persons who are deserving of respect. This is important for future land use planning that the MCFN conducts and for the use of their knowledge in co-management schemes. Differences in the ways that humans perceive their environments and the appropriate ways to interact with environments can lead to ontological misunderstandings about the uses to which land and resources should be put. This research does not attempt to show how to reconcile differing perspectives on land use, but rather presents a way of understanding human responsibilities and relationships to the environment that continues to exist today and would be unfamiliar to many people from Euro-Canadian society.

Appendix A
Select information about interview participants

Sex	Age	Number of Children	Bush Experience	Education	Employment
M	77	11	Hunt and trapped extensively. Now retired.	Unknown.	Hunted and trapped. Worked at HBC for awhile.
M	51	8	Has hunted and trapped his entire life.	Unknown.	Employed seasonally doing contract work.
M	Unknown	Unknown.	Has hunted and trapped his entire life.	Unknown.	Employed full time in Moose Factory.
M	28	2	Has hunted and trapped his entire life.	Taking post-secondary classes.	Guides tourists. Employed seasonally doing construction.
M	47	2	Has hunted and trapped his entire life.	Unknown.	Employed seasonally doing contract work.
F	69	9	Has gone camping her entire life.	Unknown.	Retired. Was employed full time in Moose Factory.
M	37	3	Has hunted and trapped his entire life.	Unknown.	Guides tourists and works in Moose Factory.
F	35	3	Has gone camping her entire life.	Unknown.	Employed full time in Moose Factory.

Sex	Age	Number of Children	Bush Experience	Education	Employment
F	14	0	Has gone to goose camps with her family her entire life.	Currently in school.	Student.
F	49	3	Began going camping when she was married.	Unknown.	Employed full time in Moose Factory.
F	53	4	Went camping with her parents but stopped when she went to residential school. Began camping again when she was married.	Post secondary.	Employed full time in Moose Factory.
M	14	0	Has gone to goose camps with his family his entire life.	Currently in school.	Student.
M	51	4	Has hunted and trapped his entire life.	Post secondary.	Employed full time in Moose Factory.
M	52	1	Has hunted and trapped his entire life. Began hunting geese once he was finished residential school.	Post secondary.	Employed full time in Moose Factory.

Sex	Age	Number of Children	Bush Experience	Education	Employment
M	48	2	Has hunted and trapped his entire life.	Post secondary.	Employed full time in Moose Factory.
M	47	2	Went into the bush with her family when she was a child. Did not begin going out regularly until she was married.	Post secondary.	Employed full time in Moose Factory.
M	15	0	Has gone to goose camps with his family his entire life.	Currently in school.	Student.
M	58	3	Has hunted and trapped his entire life.	Unknown.	Seasonal guiding.
F	30	4	Went camping when she was young. She hunted geese for the first time in 2007.	Unknown.	Employed full time in Moose Factory.
M	38	2	Has hunted and trapped his entire life.	Unknown.	Employed full time in Moose Factory.
M	50	3	Has hunted and trapped his entire life.	Unknown.	Works part time.

Appendix B
Interview schedule used during fieldwork

Section 1 - General

1. Can you tell me your name and age?
2. Are you married and what is your spouse's name?
3. Do you have any children? What are their names, how old are they?
4. Are your children married? Any grandchildren?
5. Do you have a job?
6. When do you usually go out to a goose camp?
7. Did you go to a goose camp this year?
8. Where is the goose hunting camp that you use at?
    a. How did you travel to get there?
    b. How long did it take you to get there?
    c. How long did you usually stay at your camp?
    d. How long have you been going to that camp?
    e. Are you considered the boss of the camp? Who is the boss? Who makes the decisions about where to set up blinds and hunt?
    f. Who are the people who use this camp besides yourself?
9. When you are at your camp, do you go out to the blind or do you stay at the camp?
10. What are the things that you do when you are out camping?
11. What are done with the geese that are killed?
12. Have you ever hunted at another person's camp?
13. Did you take your children with you when you went to hunt geese?
    a. What are some of the things that you taught your children about geese and hunting geese?
    b. Can you remember a story about your children hunting geese?
    c. Do your children still hunt geese?
14. Are there lots of people who go out on the land who hunt geese?
15. Are there more people out on the land hunting geese today or were there more in the past?
    a. Are there any other people who hunt geese near to this camp?
    b. Have you ever felt crowded while out on the land?
    c. Does this cause any problems for you at your camp?
    d. What are some of the things that people do to make sure that they don't bother other people when they hunt?

Section 2 - Rules for hunting geese

1. How old were you when you began to hunt geese?
2. How did you learn about hunting geese?
3. Can you tell me about when you killed your first goose?

4. What are the things that you do to show geese respect?
5. After a goose was killed, who cleaned the goose and got it ready to eat?
    a. Are there any rules that should be followed when cleaning a goose to show it respect?
6. Are these rules followed by all the Moose Cree or do other people have different rules that they follow?
7. Can you remember a time when someone didn't show respect to geese?
    a. What happens when someone doesn't show respect to geese?
8. Do people still follow these rules to show geese respect?
9. Is it still important for people to show geese respect?

Section 3 - Changes

1. What are some of the differences that you have noticed between how people hunted geese when you were younger and now?
2. Have you noticed any changes in the way that geese behave?
    a. Have you had to change the way you hunt geese because of this?
3. What are some of the ways that having a job has affected the way that you can hunt geese?
4. What are some of the new technologies that people use when they hunt geese and when they prepare and process geese?
    a. What effect have these had on the way that people hunt geese?
5. Are there any new things that people do to show geese respect?

Section 4 - Importance of goose hunting

1. Why are geese and hunting geese important to you?
2. Do you think that it is important to people to continue to hunt geese?
3. What do you think would happen if people stopped going to hunt geese?
4. What are some of the things that prevent people from going out to hunt geese?
5. Are there any stories that the people in Moose Factory tell about goose hunting?
6. Is there anything else that you think is important about geese that you would like to share?

Appendix C
Research Ethics Statement

Research Ethics Statement for *Continuity and Change: Moose Cree Relationships with Geese*

I, Brent Kuefler, promise to conduct this research in accordance with:

- The research ethics of Memorial University as reviewed and passed by the University's Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (http://www.mun.ca/research/researchers/ethics_committee.php).
- The "Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans" (http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/policystatement/policystatement.cfm).
- The standards of inquiry requested by the Moose Cree First Nation (referred to hereafter as MCFN) as long as they meet the ethical requirements of the above agencies and have been submitted to, reviewed and passed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research of Memorial University.

Further, the following principles will guide the research:

Fully Informed Consent

- In seeking fully informed consent, I will clearly identify the objectives of the research, methods of data collection, sponsors and sources of financial support.

Non-participation

- This principle respects the right of individuals to non-participation in the study, and the right of individuals or groups to withdraw their participation at any point during the study at any time with no consequences.

On-going Consultation

- The researcher will be available throughout the period of study to answer any questions and discuss issues or concerns.

Respect

- This principle recognizes the necessity for the researcher to respect the integrity, morality, and spirituality of the culture, traditions, and relationships of the MCFN with the world, and where possible to avoid the imposition of external conceptions and standards. Local protocols will be followed with the guidance of community advisors.

Data

- Subject to requirements of confidentiality, copies of the documents that are produced and/or collected during my study will be housed with the Lands and Resources Secretariat of the MCFN.

Anonymity

- I cannot guarantee complete anonymity for individual participants because copies of the transcripts of individual participants will be housed with the MCFN. However, in all publications stemming from the research, names, other identifying and, or confidential information will not be used, unless specifically requested by the participants. Participants who are holders of specialized knowledge have the right to decide whether they should be specifically credited with their information.

Publications

- Brent Kuefler will be given access to the original data for the purposes of academic analysis and publication.
- The Moose Cree First Nation acknowledges the Brent Kuefler will require the results of the project, in whole or in part, to be included as part of his thesis. Copyright in the thesis shall belong to Brent Kuefler and the right of Brent Kuefler to have the thesis examined is not inhibited.
- With respect to the principle of meaningful consultation, all manuscripts based on the data collected during the "*Continuity and Change: Moose Cree Relationships with Geese*" study pertaining to the MCFN or individual members will be submitted to the Lands and Resources Secretariat of the MCFN for review and comment. The manuscripts and comments will be returned to the author within a period of no more than three months.

Intellectual Property

- The ownership of Intellectual Property which exists prior to commencement of the Project ("Pre-existing Intellectual Property") shall not be altered or transferred or assigned merely by virtue of its use by a party other than the owner (in the case of cultural property the owner refers to the MCFN and in the case of individual participants they will retain sole ownership of their intellectual property) in the Project.
- Intellectual Property created or developed in the course of the Project by Brent Kuefler ("Project Intellectual Property") shall be owned by Brent Kuefler.

Access to Project Data by Individuals/Groups

- Other researchers and consultants involved with the Moose Cree First Nation may seek to access the interview data produced during the "*Continuity and Change: Moose Cree Relationships with Geese*" project. Interested individuals should pursue the following protocol to gain access to the aforementioned data.
    - Obtain permission to gain access from the MCFN. As of October 17, 2007, the appropriate contact person is Lillian Trapper, Land Use Plan Coordinator (phone: (705) 268-3070).
    - Respect the confidentiality of the data. After obtaining permission from the MCFN, I recommend that all individuals wishing to use this data contact (if appropriate) individual participants to obtain their personal consent to use their interview data.
    - Crediting. This data was collected by Brent Kuefler. In accordance with academic protocol, I expect individuals to properly quote the origin of the data (i.e. Brent Kuefler and the Moose Cree First Nation). In some cases, individual participants may prefer to be credited with the expertise they shared in their interviews and I recommend that researchers respect this preference.

Brent Kuefler
Brent Kuefler
(Memorial University)

December 6, 2007
Date

Patricia Faries-Akiwenzie
Patricia Faries-Akiwenzie
(Moose Cree First Nation)

December 7, 2007
Date

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