

Native Ethics & Principles

The following is a lecture given by Dr. Clare Brant at a workshop on social conditions and services on Mi'kmaw reserves held at Liscombe Lodge, Nova Scotia, in 1982. It was organized by the Union of Nova Scotia Indians, and The Maritime School of Social Work, Dalhousie University. Though now over 30 years old, this piece retains its power as a fascinating and useful perspective on Aboriginal customs and behaviour. Dr. Brant was known for his work on native psychology throughout his distinguished career.

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This is something that has been developed among a group of Native people who are in the field of mental health – some in anthropology, some in psychology, etc., over the past 4 or 5 years. I guess it started with a conversation that Marlene and I had with another Native person in Banff who was supposed to do a presentation. We started thinking about some of the stuff. This stuff should be taught by the elders but it's very difficult to pry specific information, or advice or instruction, out of an elder. In my opinion they're speaking in parables and loose associations and ask you, or expect you, to find your own wisdom. They will validate it for you later if you come and say, "Grandfather, is this the way things are?" They will say, "Yes, my son, that is the way things are," but they won't tell you to begin with.

Anybody who has some experience with psychology may have heard of a psychological test called M.M.P.I. That is a large series of questions to which one answers "yes" or "no", and it measures frequently occurring behaviours in people. With this personality profile you can get a vague idea of the structure of somebody's personality on 10 or 11 different scales.

What I'm presenting here is a Native M.M.P.I. These are frequently occurring behaviours in Native people. They're not listed in order of priority; but the classical ones, the ones which are most written up in different journals, which are the oldest, are the first four: the Ethic of Non-Interference; Anger Must Not Be Shown; the Indian Concept of Time; and the Indian Concept of Sharing. These others are ones which are less prestigious and less well known. But we've had the opportunity to find some documented information on them and to do some talking with other Native groups across Canada. What we've found is that there seem to be universal ethics and principles, with some local variation, so that we've become aware of these. I have become aware of these through interaction with the Iroquoian groups in Ontario and the Cree in Northern Ontario and Northern Quebec. I had an opportunity to check some of it out with people of the Plains Indians and discuss these situations, these principles with them. They say this is true, and then they give you their local variation of these principles.

Well, that's a very long-winded introduction, but I'll just start by describing what they are.

1. The Ethic of Non-Interference

That is the principle that one Indian will never tell another Indian what to do. It is considered rude behaviour to give instructions or orders to another Native person. That's quite different from the white society. Two white men at a cocktail party – say they're standing there side by side – and if one of them announces he wishes to buy a pear tree another white man will immediately suggest that he buy a peach tree instead. The same thing occurs if he says he is going to buy a Ford. Somebody will tell him that he ought to buy a Chev or an Oldsmobile. If he ventures an opinion about music or politics somebody will immediately tell him, in a friendly way of course, what he ought to be listening to, or who he ought to be

voting for. In the white society the one who can out-advise the other is one up, and the loser is expected to take his defeat with good grace. Now in the Indian society, this is not permitted. Advising or instructing, or ordering or persuading, is always considered bad form or behaviour.

We're not sure of the origin of this, or the evolution; but we do know that the original tribal societies relied upon voluntary cooperation for the achievement of group goals, and that the leader was the best qualified and the best hunter, fighter, whatever. Whatever the object was, whatever the group goal was, the most talented and best qualified person, would, through a process of natural selection, be selected to do that job just by evolution of the group. They would choose a leader. There would be no formal election. Once elected or once appointed, or once his leadership evolved, he would rely on voluntary cooperation for the attainment of group goals; whether that was hunting, whether it was a sortie or an attack against some other tribe or another group. This would all evolve on voluntary cooperation.

This ethic of non-interference is still practised today. It's one of the most universal ethics that we don't interfere in a judgmental or demanding way in the activities or affairs of another Indian. To do so is considered rude.

Now that's not fully developed or fully illustrated. You heard me talking this afternoon about the dentist; he was surprised that this Indian man would not bring his two children into the dental office for an examination, because that was their choice; whether or not they decided to do that, was entirely up to them. Because this ethic of non-interference is extended to children as well, the child is allowed to make the decision whether or not he goes to school at the age of 6 or 7. The child knows that he is required by law to do so. The child also knows that he is required to do his homework and have his assignments in on time but will not be forced or coerced into doing so by his parents.

Now, I've got a lot of opinions about the ethic of non-interference interfering materially with success in the white school. But there are all kinds of other reasons why there is very little success in the white schools by Indian people, the ethic of non-interference being only one of them. The children go to bed when they wish. They do their homework if and when they wish, and sometimes they even go to school if and when they wish. But I'd just like to leave that for a while and move on. We'll be returning to it as all these other things come into force.

2. The Anger Must Not Be Shown Principle

This also is a very widespread and very widely practised behaviour. It seems to have had its origin again in the Aboriginal society, in which there were shamans and witches about all over the place. And one dared not show one's temper because these shamans and witches could cast a spell on you, put the bothers on you if you insulted or offended them, or showed them your temper. And because they did not always reveal themselves – they were such secret shamans and witches – it was not possible to tell by an ordinary glance who was the good witch and who was the bad witch, etc. And anger was something which provoked them, so that the children were taught from a very early age never to demonstrate any angry behaviour. To not show angry behaviour – that is, to suppress it – is taken by many Native people that it must be repressed. That is to say, it's to be kept out of consciousness completely; that angry behaviour is not merely unworthy and unwise, angry feelings are sinful. Again, when you heard me talk this afternoon, Indians have a lot of things to be angry about and then they have society forbidding them any kind of anger. This gets us into some difficulties. It gives rise to repressed hostility; it gives rise to explosiveness

under the influence of alcohol. The displacement of hostility on to harmless bystanders when the anger comes pouring out, such as the child, the wife, the Frenchman in the bar, etc. The origin of the frustration-deprivation that is giving rise to hostility that the person is experiencing, is usually very far removed. It may be a long way in the past. Psychiatrists are very interested in people's pasts, their histories, their stories. So that the actual origin of the frustration-deprivation giving rise to the anger which must not be shown, may be years ago; and the person who provokes it by stepping on somebody's foot in a bar may get a broken arm, and this sort of thing happens with displacement of this hostility. The attempt at repression or suppression fails – usually 95% of violence is acted out under the influence of alcohol, as you probably know.

The repressed hostility also in the Native psychology gives rise to a high incidence of grief reactions. Native people are susceptible to separation and loss. This is a complicated mechanism that was first written up by Freud in a paper called "Mourning and Melancholia", in 1902, whereby the person with the repressed hostility is particularly susceptible to becoming depressed whenever he has a disappointment or loss or separation. That's a fairly complicated psychological mechanism, and Native people have the same basic psychology as any other group. You can practice psychology or psychiatry in the Australian "bush", the same as you can in Halifax, it's much the same thing. What is different about psychiatry is the sociological set-up which gives rise to the original frustration-deprivation, so that Indians are particularly vulnerable to separation and loss. Forty-four percent of the Native people who consult a psychiatrist are suffering from a grief reaction of one kind or another. Some are reactive depressions to a loss, whether that's a separation of a girlfriend, boyfriend, partner; the death of a parent, child, or sibling. This is compared to about 19% in the white population; if you operate a white clinic, then about 19% of the people will be having a grief reaction. In the Native population it's 44%; and that has also been written up... How that operates, again, is a complicated psychological mechanism. So that this "anger must not be shown" gives rise to the explosiveness under the influence of alcohol and in a high incidence of grief reactions. Another thing that is a consequence of that, is that some 60% of the Native students who do make it to university go home by Christmas because they can't tolerate the loneliness; and separation is the same thing as loss. It's essentially the same thing – you've taken something away from the person. And it makes them angry, which they're not allowed; and the repressed hostility gives rise to depression and grief.

3. The Indian Concept of Time

This is one that personally gets me into most trouble, not only experiencing the concept of Indian time, but explaining it. Time is, to an Indian, something which must be used and enjoyed. One does not move onto something else until one has finished what one is doing. It seems to have had its origin – again I have to say "seems to" because we don't have precise information – in that activities of Indians used to be regulated by the seasons, by the sun, and by the migratory patterns of birds and animals; a changing food supply, absence of electricity and hydro power, so they had to be dependent upon the seasons and nature to supply them with food, with light and all kinds of things. And having learned to live in harmony with nature and relevance to these things, the concept of "doing things when the time is right" came into play – which is still in play today.

Now that doesn't mean, "I'll do it when I bloody well feel like it." It's a little bit more subtle and complicated than that. It means when the time is right. When Aunt Irene comes for New Year's and doesn't go home until Ground Hog Day, it's because she hasn't finished what she's doing yet, she hasn't

said what she wants to say, she hasn't completed the transaction or the interaction, and when she does she may suddenly pick up and leave – POOF! she's gone as if she were offended or angered. It's that she has finished the visit, and then she moves on to something else. The Native person who appears as if he's dragging his feet and actually can appear to white people as being incorrigibly lazy, can react with sudden energy, with a burst of energy, and get all kinds of work done when the time is right; that is to say, will stay up all night and work. The people from Caughnawaga and Tyendinaga are highly esteemed steelworkers in New York and Boston and Chicago, and such places. The Mohawk crews are very highly esteemed for this work, because they will work 16 and 18 hours a day and throw up a structure well within and even below – shorter than the framework of the contract – if the time is right. If the time is not right, and they choose not to go to work they can bankrupt the building project. Native crews, as I said, are very highly esteemed because they eventually do more work than their white counterparts when the time is right. When the time, the seasons, the conditions, the feelings, the manitou, the spirit, and everything are correct, then you proceed; pull out all the stops and get the work done.

This gives rise to a great deal of difficulty at school, as the children will not come in from recess until they've finished what they're doing. The Indian workers often will not show up for work on time but are quite willing to make up the time in overtime by staying late. It drives some white foremen crazy, but particularly white teachers who are trying to get the 'lazy' Indian children to perform for their own concept of time. So anyway we can just leave it at that, and we'll come back to it again.

4. Principle that Everything Is Shared

All the assets and resources of a community or of a family, or of the extended family, are shared and one is supposed to take no more than what one needs from the environment, than one needs to survive. To take more to waste is bad. To take more than one's fair share or more than what one actually needs to survive is considered greedy and wasteful. This is one of the greatest of all the Native ethics and it's universal. It could have had its origin in the need to show hospitality to wandering hunters even though there was not much food in the village. The hunters from another group, another family, or another clan, must be fed in order that they would take food back to their own people. That may have been the origin of it. But the principle is survival of the whole group over individual prosperity and individuality. This is the principle of Marxism, the principle of all socialism, and alleged to be the principle of Christianity as well. The Native people do not use it as a political ideology or as a religion; it is acted out as the way Native people live.

The ethic of sharing has its corollaries, which are equality and democracy. If you go to an Indian village, and I've been into quite a few, you see very few rich people and you see very few poor people. There's a universal sameness about them and this is created by the equality/sharing principle that every Indian is just as good as everybody else. Nobody is given special favours, except the elder: nobody is given special privileges. Everybody is expected to do his share of the work and to share his part of what he has taken from nature to use.

This is in conflict with the white man's principle of individual success and acquisitiveness, and rise to power including wealth, which the Native person is expected to incorporate, and to relinquish the ethic of sharing for the sake of individual prosperity and success.

The Natives so far have not been willing to do that. They have not been willing to give up the sharing principle for their individual success and prosperity. In my visits to these remote villages I often see young people whose intelligence is superior to my own. I used to think and sometimes say, in my interfering way, "Why don't you get a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and become a prophet to your people, your race – do something for your people and for yourself." At which time the person becomes confused and leaves the appointment, and never comes near you again. I think I've stopped doing that – encouraging the individual success of the members of the community – because the community as a whole has to be elevated. You have to elevate the political awareness, the economic development of the entire community. You do not pluck and pick nice looking or intelligent or able individuals from that society and take them out into the white world and get them educated. One does not do that really. First of all the Native people won't allow it. They will sit on their young talented people and refuse to let them go, discourage them with envy and hatred, despise them when they come back, etc. Because what has happened in the past was that anybody who was good looking, anybody who had a talent, anybody who had anything on the ball, anybody who had better than grade 12 education, was taken away from the reserve system, placed in the white society and they would disappear without a ripple. They would often marry white and sometimes become ashamed of their origin, never return home, never send any of their prosperity back, or their knowledge or their wisdom back to the village, and they were essentially lost. Now what would happen to the city of Halifax if anybody who was good looking, had a better than grade 12 education, who had anything on the ball at all, in terms of trade or talent, were taken from there and moved to Montreal? And what would happen if that occurred over a period of 450 years? What would happen to the city of Halifax if you took all the talented, beautiful people away? This is what has consistently happened to the Native reserves and to the Native people over a period of 450 years; and the fact we have survived at all is an indication to me that it has pretty good stuff to begin with – when all of our talented young people have been taken from us.

There has been some slowing down in that process and I am glad to report that I have stopped encouraging it. The democracy is something which goes along with the sharing equally. It's all mixed up together. Native people can make decisions by a process of consensus. If you have ever been to a band meeting you will know what that's like. An issue is brought up and then one goes around the table, and each person says his piece and gives his opinion; he's allowed as much time as he wants, says anything he wants no matter how irrelevant it may be at the time; no matter how unsophisticated what he has to say may be, he's allowed to have his say and this takes time. Then they arrive at a decision by consensus of what everybody wishes. Now this again is quite different from the white man's system; and there are two essential basics of the white man's system for decision making. One is the Socratic method, whereby the crown attorney asks the witness a series of questions to which the witness must agree, and then at the end of that the crown attorney draws a conclusion which has nothing to do with what the witness wished to say in the first place. He says, "whereas you have said" and "in as much as you have admitted", "therefore I submit" and then he presents something to the judge and the judge is expected to say, "Well, yes, you're quite right; that all makes sense". In spite of the fact that the questions did not have anything to do with what the witness wanted to say.

Another method that the white person uses is the adversarial method whereby one person – again you use the courtroom situation; the crown attorney gets up and says, "Guilty" and then he starts this long list of evidence why this person should be locked away. The defence attorney gets up, shoots holes through all those arguments, and then they continue the process of accusation, defence, rebuttal, etc.,

until one of them makes an error in logic and is therefore ridiculed, discredited. His client goes down the pipe with him when he makes an error in logic or collapses from exhaustion after a long period of time. So the Indian people when they go through this process of decision making – and it happens in parliament as well – they cannot understand this process of decision making because it seems to have nothing to do with what the people actually want to have happen. I can get quite long-winded on that subject of Native politics, but this is one of the limitations that Native politicians have as they do not understand the white man's method, and the white man does not understand the Indian's method. If he comes in with some idea that he wants to push through Council he usually uses the Socratic method of getting them to admit it, and then he feels they've agreed with him, they thought it was a good idea, they've even told him it was a good idea; and he goes out of the door and the band council says they do not want to do it even though he has seemed to have gotten what he wanted. Or if the chief does not agree with him, he will engage in an adversarial kind of situation which he will win because the white people are good at this – they have studied it. They have been taught it in their nursery. And again when he leaves the Indians proceed to do as they wish, even though they've seemed to have been talked into something and lost all the arguments. They proceed to do what they feel is right.

5. The Attitude to Gratitude

Gratitude among Native people is very rarely shown; it's very rarely verbalized. One is not rewarded for being a good teacher, doctor, farmer, fisherman, hunter, because that is what you are supposed to be. If you are trained to be a nurse you should be a good one. To be less than perfect would be a bad thing for you to be. You would not be developing the best part. So that if you do a good job, that's fine, you are not going to be thanked for it. To be thanked for it would be superfluous because doing a good job has its own intrinsic reward. Our people have a lot of difficulty accepting gratitude, but that's another ball game. The white people who work with us though, sometimes in helping situations – especially the ones who go to remote villages and suffer some sacrifice for working with Native people – the white people need a great deal of praise, reward, and reinforcement for what they do and when it's not forthcoming they often turn on us and say, "You ungrateful savages! I've done so much for you. Why aren't you giving me a gold watch? I've been here for two years and not one of you has thanked me for what I did." This gives rise to difficulty with kids in school when the kids are praised by their teachers. They will often deliberately screw up the next day so that they get away from this gratitude. They know that they have not done a good job and to be told in front of the rest of the class that they have, is being lied to and humiliated for having their work pointed out to them.

Gratitude eventually is shown at the end of a long life. If one keeps one's nose clean and does a good job, and one is perceived and regarded as a wise and venerable person, this is the greatest reward of all. As I say, this attitude to gratitude – we do not have much trouble with that amongst ourselves except that excellence is expected. It is not something which you aspire to. It is something which is expected all the time, so that Native people have a great deal of difficulty trying new things. They have a great deal of anxiety about making mistakes and holding themselves up to public scrutiny and ridicule, and teasing. So they feel that whenever they do something it must be absolutely perfect. Sometimes they dawdle about getting started; sometimes fiddle with audio equipment for a couple of hours until it is exactly right. This is not only to do with time, but wanting to do an absolutely perfect job all the time. And to have that demand on one's self, and to project that demand onto the community, and to perceive that one must do

well all the time, every day, every minute, this is an enormous amount of stress an Indian is subjected to, particularly in the white society. The white people are not nearly so shy about trying new things, and making mistakes and making fools of themselves, as Indian people are. They seem to be utterly shameless in this regard about getting up and making speeches which are not well thought out, or statements which don't hang together or make any kind of sense whatsoever. Whereas the Indian person is very careful about what he says, because excellence is expected, so you see how loose it can get when you start speaking about gratitude.

6. The Sixth Principle Is Protocol

Now that is a word I've chosen to summarize; ceremony, manners, way of doing things, strictness. It might seem to a casual observer that the Indian society is rather loose and unstructured, and there are not many rules of etiquette or behaviour. This is not the case at all. It is one of the most highly structured and demanding sets of manners or social behaviour that I have ever seen. We have specific rules about how to behave and they are local to each group and each tribe.

I won't describe what they are for you, because they are for your village, for your own group. And you have to be very careful about following the prescribed rules and regulations of your own group. They are never stated. They are never told to you directly, because to do so would violate the ethic of non-interference. So the white person who interacts with us hardly ever opens his mouth – and I have noticed too that a Mohawk hardly ever opens his mouth – without breaking some rule of Mi'kmaq etiquette and decorum, and we have to be forgiven for it. The Indian cannot be told – the white person and the mouthy Mohawk who breaks your rules of etiquette and decorum and behaviour – you can't tell us what we are doing is wrong; because to tell us what we are doing is wrong would be to interfere with our right to behave as we see fit. So it creates a double bind – you cannot tell us.

So these rules of behaviour and etiquette, etc., are not articulated among the Indian people. One never goes up to somebody and says, "You're doing this and that's not proper, etc." One is never told that. I'll see if I can give you some examples of that. Among the Cree people who are hunters and gatherers and who never really – this will make sense, I'll tell you a story – they never really invented methods of food preservation. I used to spend my summers in Moose Factory; that's on James Bay and there's a little hospital there. I was there when I was a student. Now in those days there was no electricity in the village, therefore no refrigeration and no food preservation techniques. So when a moose was shot everybody in the village would share. The moose would be skinned, gutted, and laid on the floor in the kitchen. All the people would come in with their pots and they would carve a roast off and then go away. The proper behaviour in that situation was to eat as much as you possibly could. So you would have six or seven meals a day of roast moose, moose steak, fried moose, baked moose, moose tongue, boiled moose, etc. You would completely 'pig out' on this. At the end of three days there was nothing left of the moose but the antlers and the hooves, because the hide had been tanned and the intestines had been eaten by the dogs, and the bones had been cracked open for the marrow, broken up, and the dogs had eaten those. The proper behaviour in that situation among the Cree of Moose Factory was to eat – the hunter would walk among us as we were pigging out and we would say – not verbally because gratitude is not verbalized – we would show our gratitude for his effort by eating the whole thing up in a couple of days. Then the Cree people would not have meat – perhaps would not have meat for another three or four weeks – and not

miss it. If I miss my lunch then I'm deprived. But a Cree person can go for long periods of time without eating anything, and without complaining about it.

I have to switch to another situation about the Mohawks. They have been into animal husbandry since the Europeans brought the farm animals from Europe, and they have been into agriculture for about 10,000 years with the development of corn, bean, squash, sweet potato, and all that sort of thing; farming, and animal husbandry and gardening. So that when we have a feast or a banquet, the Mohawk women prepare five or six times as much food as is possible to eat, and as a display of our prosperity and generosity and our sharing. We put all this food all over the tables and load them down to excess; as a display of prosperity, and some say an over-display, it is vulgarly done, overly done, and is craziness. So what happens when the Cree and the Mohawks get together for a bowling banquet put on by the Mohawk people? The Mohawks put out food, five times – six times – as much as is actually needed. And the Cree people think that the polite thing to do is to eat as much as possible, to eat the whole thing up so it doesn't get spoiled. The Cree were having bilious attacks, being trucked away with indigestion. The Mohawk were horrified that these people were eating so much, stuffing and making pigs out of themselves; and each felt that they were doing the correct thing and were horrified at the other one's behaviour. The Cree thought that we were trying to kill them with all this food, and the Mohawks felt that – well, the same thing is true with the liquor when we got together – the Cree felt it was the proper thing to do to finish things. You have to finish the cases of beer, and if it takes until morning then you have to make that sacrifice. You stay up and do it.

But I was telling you this story about these firemen having a liquor license for all these different functions. So at one o'clock what they do is lock all this liquor away, close up the cabinets and they pull the door shut and suggest that everyone goes home. Well! The Cree and Ojibwas say, "What have we done wrong? There's all kinds of food and booze here, why you are kicking us out?" Those are just anecdotes about the protocol, and you can't make generalizations about manners and proper behaviour, and find out what it is for each local village, for each tribal council and that sort of thing, as it literally takes you years to find out what has happened. But in the meantime, you have to do – and Indians, you have to do it, too.

One of the summers when I was at Moose Factory, I invited myself along on a camping trip with these Cree men; this was my first mistake because I should have waited to be invited, but I was afraid the entire summer would pass – it was my first summer there – before I got invited to go up the river with them; I had been canoeing before, so I just proceeded to do things my ways. There was a great deal of silence and tension which I blindly ignored. I thought, well, they're shy, they don't want to talk to me because they're shy. But eventually in the course of the day they suddenly burst into laughter, and my friend Ronnie – now he's a lifelong friend – said, "You're doing everything wrong! You have managed to insult and offend everybody. You've just about killed us a couple of times with your canoeing techniques," and I was horrified. I said, "Well, it's just the way Mohawks do these things." It was a very kind and interested thing for him to do, to tell me I was making a fool of myself. So later on in the weekend we had a few snorts of this and that, and he introduced me to his grandmother and he said, "This is Clare, he's a Mohawk, he's an ignorant savage. He doesn't know how to behave but you must forgive him, he means well." Apropos of that, with this protocol, even as Indians we will break the rules of etiquette and behaviour in each other's tribes as we move in and out. We have to have a sense of innocence about us, that we do not know the rules of etiquette of protocol and behaviour, and you must forgive us. And as I said, the Mohawks are notorious for going and bumbling around, being rude, saying the wrong things and doing all those things.

It was Greg Johnson who met me out here by the car. He started to say something, and I put my foot in my mouth in about 3 minutes, and he said, "You must be Mohawk." Then I said yes, I am, and he proceeded to say, "Well, I know so-and-so from your reserve". And I said, "Oh, yes, those are the people into that crackpot religion Bahai or something," and he said he was Bahai. He was willing to forgive me for that outrageous bumbling. As white people you must not go into a situation and think what you are doing is correct. You must have a sense of innocence, and believe and know that you are going to break all the rules of etiquette and decorum, and you must be forgiven. But if you mean well, if you don't interfere, and share, and don't show your temper, then you will be forgiven for this lack of correct protocol.

7. Now the Teaching; Shaping Vs. Modelling

This is a more technical kind of thing. The white people use this method of teaching their children – it's called 'shaping'. Whereas the Indians use 'modelling'. Shaping is B.F. Skinner's 'Operant Conditioning', if you want to look into that one. Say a white person is teaching a white kid how to dress – he uses the shaping method, one way being "rewarding successive approximations" of the behaviour he wants. Some are really complicated; for instance, if a white woman wants to teach her kid how to dress, she puts his sock on halfway and encourages him to pull it up, finishes dressing him and says he's a good boy having done that much. The next day he learns to pull the whole sock on, then the other sock. Now that process takes about six weeks. But the white mother who does not have all that much to do can take that time to do that sort of thing every morning to teach her kid how to dress. So in this group that we ran, with these young Native people in London, we started to sniff this out, and there is nothing random about this, as a matter of fact. I asked Mary, a Native person, how she taught her kid to dress and she said, "I didn't, he just did it." And I said, "Well, what do you mean?" It came to me that she did it until he was four or five years old, and then one day when the kid felt competent, he took over and did it himself. He did it then ever after, unless he was sick or regressed in some way.

Then we asked Josh, a reknowned hunter, how his father taught him to hunt. He said, "He didn't teach me." Well, that's ridiculous, everybody has to be taught everything. We are not born with this information. But Josh went on the hunting party and carried ever more of the packs on his back, and stood behind them and held a .22. One day when he was about 14 years, he got into a canoe, and a loaded gun was where he usually sat. He knew at that point it was his turn to make the kill, that this was 'the day' that he was to become a man. He was enormously frightened but did make the kill correctly, appropriately through the process of 'modelling'. Now Mary modelled how to dress for years. Then one day the kid took over and did it when he felt confident. The people and father in the hunting modelled hunting behaviour, and then suddenly, "Okay, you're ready to do it, and you can do it forever."

Now because of what I said about graitude, with this teaching by modelling people are expected to do it perfectly the first time they set their hands to it. Excellence is expected. They are normally anxious that they are going to be teased or make mistakes, but they usually get through. It has an adaptive function in that the modelled behaviour is essentially an over-learned behaviour and it's adaptive. You don't kill a moose with one shot – he would probably stomp you to death. You don't sew your husband's parka airtight – and if it comes apart in a blizzard you're very likely to end up a widow. The things which were

modelled were the things that were very, very important. Now there are children who received no instruction – if you're Indian – from your parents. They showed you how to do things, they didn't tell you. They showed you and they said at some point, "You make the doughnuts. You roll out the bread for the doughnuts" – just do it after being shown many times. Our young people are subjected to modelling for six years and then placed in a teaching situation in school where they are over-stimulated, anxious, and all kinds of demands are made on them through this different method of teaching – the "shaping". They are usually so anxious that they escape as soon as they can. This is the frustration – deprivation that I was talking about this morning. They get the hell out of there as soon as they possibly can, as soon as they are sixteen, or even sooner. This is only one of the things which make them leave. There are many others.

I've been having some collaboration with a professor of education, and he says that modelling is the best way to teach people. But shaping is the method that has to be used because there is so much information that has to be imparted in the system that you cannot use modelling. I suppose that the ultimate method would be for the teacher to go up to the blackboard and do algebraic equations for 7 or 8 months and invite one of the kids to come join him and do one with him. and maybe if one of the kids got interested, or knew how to do it, he could start solving the algebraic equation. But that's not going to happen in the school system. There's just not enough time.

8. The Conservation/Withdrawal Reaction

When white people are placed in an anxiety-provoking situation, such as a party – there are all kinds of situations, but one of them is the psychiatric interview. They are taught to react in an anxiety-provoking situation with a great deal of activity and that is usually talking – talk your head off – and that is what they will do.

Whereas an Indian will become less talkative, the more anxious he gets. This slowing down and wanting to understand what the rules and regulations are, what the lay of the land is, what the appropriate behaviour is, what the protocol is, what the rules are; slows down, further and further. The more he slows down the more the white person asks him to talk. The more quiet the Indian becomes the more frantic the white person becomes to get some sort of response out of him. So the white person is sitting there flapping and the Indian is getting quieter and quieter. This has resulted in an enormous number of misdiagnoses among Indian people as far as psychiatric disorder is concerned. In the Moose Factory zone, where I am now the director of psychiatry, there were literally hundreds of people who were labelled schizophrenics. When we reviewed their cases we reduced the number from about 316 to 16 – there were only 16 schizophrenics in the Moose Factory zone. The way that worked was that, under the influence of alcohol and some social occasion, an Indian would do some property damage, insult somebody or do something strange or illegal and then be locked away in prison or the local jail. Then they would get the local psychiatrist or the local doctor to go in because he was being quieter and quieter until it got to the point that he wasn't even moving. He was sitting there staring at the floor. So then the doctor would go and get the Indian person to admit that he had been having hallucinations, and a spirit was guiding him in this behaviour. They would write down "diagnosis of schizophrenia", have the Native person trucked away to the psychiatric hospital, where they did not speak his language and could not understand anything he was saying. He would become even more withdrawn – then they would give him chlorpromazine and injections and shock treatments. Then he'd sort of get the lay of the land – that'd he better stop doing this or he'd be locked in there forever. So then he goes to court, gets a minor fine and he goes back to his

village with the diagnosis of schizophrenia and a box of pills. He is labelled a crazy person by the white doctors who don't know about such things and the rest of the community perceives him as a crackpot for the rest of his life, and he continues to act out that role of how he is perceived. An enormous amount of misdiagnosis occurs on the basis of the conservation-withdrawal reaction. This is a kind of hibernation. You conserve your energy. It has an adaptive function in the bush.

If you or I at this point fell down and broke our leg the only thing we have to do is yell. Somebody's going to get an ambulance and a stretcher and a splint, and they will take you down to the hospital, put a cast on it, give you some morphine so that it doesn't hurt, send you home, and even get you a nurse to look after you when you get home. But in the original bush society if you were by yourself and fell down and broke your leg, you had to look after yourself. You had to conserve your energy, you had to keep your mouth shut, otherwise you were going to attract some predatory animal that would come and bite you or attract an enemy. You had to crawl over and carve yourself a splint and a crutch and get to the village before you perished. So that this quietness, this slowing down, has an adaptive function to figure out the rules. You know that if you are confronted with a wild animal in the forest, one of the adaptive ways is to slow down completely, remain completely motionless and immobile, don't make a noise, don't look frightened, don't do anything.

My only point about this is that you have to be very careful about diagnosing psychiatric disorders in Native people because of this conservation-hibernation they get into. I'd like to do some more work on that. I've asked people in the London area to call me whenever they see one of these withdrawals in Native people so that we can get some chemical tests. You know when there is a hibernating bear – there are some hormones that circulate. We would like to measure some of those things to see what changes are occurring in the hormonal function of the Indian person when they are in this very withdrawn, almost catatonic state. It hasn't been done yet. I'd also like to get an E.E.G. to see if there's any sleep pattern.

9. The Dependence-Independence Ethic

It might seem that because the Indian people live on welfare that they are very dependent people. This is again the furthest thing from the truth. Native people are the most independent minded people I've ever seen. One is expected to look after oneself, take one's own council and not be told what to do by other people; make up your own mind about everything, listen to advice but not follow it very precisely, incorporate it into what you know is right, and go on from there