

**We are the People, the Land, and the Enemy. All Creator's Children In an Age of  
Prophecy and Sorrow, Issues of Turtle Island)**

Ignoring First Peoples traditional values, outside of western euro centric thought or convention is an insult to Aboriginal people and will be read as such. With cultural protocol, it's important to give acknowledgement to the traditional owners of the territory and to ask permission to enter ones territory. This involves entrance to land, reserve system, performance events, ceremonial or cultural events which bring the community together. Dialogue is important in clarifying cultural differences and similarities, assumptions, opinions, oral history, and the written information depicting Aboriginal First people. From basic lexicons like the word "Indian" to "aboriginal", "indigenous", "First Nations" or First People, the semantics of Native people is a curious one, whereas bastardization and popular culture has tended to confuse the meaning and issues of our people. I learned much about the issues presented in your course through re-discovering the value of my self esteem, my "Indian" identity and my development as a young native man growing as a student to student artist to where I am today as a result of hard work, discipline, and my life experiences. This includes Simon Fraser University learning about cultural politics through the arts, and through the former **Native Indian Youth Advisory society** initiative, **Spirit Song Native Indian Theatre Company**. Originally started by Margo Kane, she was the first artistic director of Spirit Song with their first major full length production of **Surviving, 1983** The play addressed all issues of assimilation, cultural genocide and colonialism, The theatre company was at the forefront of Indigenous learning for young artists at the time due to its rendering of native oral stories

into short theatre plays, The Bride of Evening Star, How the Raven Stole Daylight from Seagull, The Transformers, and How Coyote Stole Daylight from Grizzly Bear (84). Such works taught important values pertaining to indigenous life and customs. Perhaps not in such concrete terms as in your aforementioned course topics, but with the emotions and tears of first nation actors who told personal tragic and forlorn stories of being an Indian in Canadian society. With the settler mentality, I can only mention the buffoons and racists out there today, where two different vehicles chased me down last July because I started crossing on a walk light and cut their vehicles off while they were running a red light. Both incidents, I was told to head back to the reserve, grab your Lysol and leave. The second incident was sadder because it was a young couple with a young boy in the back, so what is being passed down to him? At both times I was well dressed and heading to business dealings. We have many relatives who experienced the tragedy of Residential School, and are not here today. How do we keep their memories alive? It has been sad with the Residential School agreement. with respect to the common experience payment and the deaths and tragic scenarios which arose from the take it or leave scenario of the August 20<sup>th</sup> 2007 Opt out deadline of The CEP. This sadness swelled to anger with the government's unbelievable independent assessment process (IAP). Yet there is hope even with the stuttering formation of the Residential School Commission. They produced a strong cultural event this year, which allow survivors and others to present their personal narrative. Such public pronouncements were excellent for providing closure for residential school survivors. We must give credit to the current commissioners to continue the good work, but it is expensive, with budget shortfalls. Others saw it as an over budgeted dog and pony show to show the masses that the

government is addressing the issues of residential schools. **The Witness Program** was a great experience of working with respect to traditional ecological knowledge of the Salish community of healers, elders and artists. Nancy Black, a local BC Non-native woman was instrumental in working with the **Witness programs** as was Chief Ian Campbell. I was involved by coordinating the inclusion of aboriginal artists, poets, musicians and performers for the **Pitt Gallery's Full Moon Slam** series at the **Witness program** at **Roundhouse Community Centre** in Vancouver. Artists such as Gunargie O'Sullivan, Fran Beazer, and late Brenda Haggard performed original first nation's songs written by Ms. O'Sullivan such as **Aboriginal Original**, and **Oh Ma, Oh Pa**. With the notion of "terra nullius" I read Boyce Richardson's book **People of Terra Nullius**. It was a continuous aspect of my ten year learning experience as a student artist after I graduated from **SFU** 1989. I picked up the book in Montreal 1994 after I completed the Lead role of Eddy LaRoche in **Lux Film** production of **Windigo**. As the lead actor, I did not feel worthy of performing such a visible role in Robert Morin's film, because of the unworthiness that was given to Indian children during the assimilation years of Canadian History. Only after approaching William Commanda of the Anishinabe People in Maniwaki Quebec with Tobacco, some carrots, and butter, (he asked me to go get the food for his companion); I learned about the importance of listening. My first sweat, first connecting to my ancestors after 33 and half years of being away from the traditional values of my cultural history. Commanda spoke of the white man seeing the empty land. We were the woods people guide by the little people, giving tools to live and survive; passed down since the Christian beginning of time. How we were here on Turtle Island because of our connection to the wampum belt, the sky people, and the Pleiades. With

respect to section 35 on Aboriginal rights, as a Métis person, I have distanced myself from such legislative racism, because as a survivor of the 60s scoop, I was apprehended as an Indian, classified as a Indian, and physically and sexually abused as an Indian, after being positioned as a ward of the Queen. As a result of my history, I did not want to be under the thumb of the Federal and provincial governments ever again. Give what is Caesar to Caesar and give what is Gods to god. Regarding the Delgamuukw Decision, I had the pleasure of working as a dancer and writer for **The Karen Jamieson Dance Company** and with the late Gitxsan Elder Ken Harris and his family regarding the notion of **Gawa Gyani**. Gawa Gyani translates as “a just place to resolve conflict” and was a cross cultural collaboration between native and non-native artists. Ken Harris sharing his long standing connection to the 10,000 years of history in North West Territory of British Columbia. I must also mention Gitxsan artist Neil Benson who I collaborated with in 1990 with my multi media event **NDNs and Dogs**, which was shown at the **International Pitt Gallery**, **The 1992 Earth Voice Festival** and **the 1994 Multicultural and Native Youth conference** produced by **Spirit Song Theatre Company**. I studied the poems and plays of Mr. Benson and all my writings of the time and created a distinct performance script which incorporated Neil’s and my writings for a new creative multi media event. With Neil’s work as a Gitxsan writer, he had to translate his works from Gitxsan to English which created a different rhythm and style as a writer in relation to my very westernized writing style due to my assimilated experience. I will conclude that work by quoting Neil saying “colonialism is the dirtiest word in the English language”. At all times working with the Gitxsan colleagues, they never acknowledged Chief Justice Allan McEachern court decision due to their longstanding place in their territory?

Mapping; with the re-documentation of migratory fishing and hunting territories, we can assert our rightful place as caretakers of this land by comparing modern systems of mapping to the oral depiction of territorial boundaries which at times overlap due to historical treaties between tribes, clan marriages and hereditary clan relationships. Unfortunately any notion of oral mapping has been tainted by the modern world with respect to urban and rural economic development, capital buyouts, sellouts, Department of Indian Affairs legislation, and the desire to find balance in today's multicultural society of Indigenous People, euro-Canadian descendants and the new immigrants of cultural diverse backgrounds. We must acknowledge the legality and ownership of kinship, traditional social organization, [and the] Hereditary systems, give credit to our former activists, leaders and other personnel who fought against the racist policies of Canadian history. People like the late George Manuel, Chief Dan George, Joe Matthias and many others. Recognize our new leaders, activists, artists and learn and understand the onset of new technologies and its affect on the contemporarity of society today. So we can encourage all people to realize their potential in life instead of settling with life. Tsimshian lawyer Calvin Helin defines this settling with life in his book **Dancing with Dependency**, where we get caught up with depending on government welfare programs, grants, and limited by the DIA. Yes, the treaty system insures the government has a fiduciary duty to our people, yet the masses simply do not understand this treaty relationship. We can become self-reliant; we do go to the courts to remind the government of this relation ship. We must increase this point of view through education and political change. We must embrace our oral history, Transform traditional and modern interpretations of history into secure forms which passes on the oral stories

through the caring of their body, mind and spirit as well as other forms which will outlast the conveniences of modern life and stand the test of time as some of our petroglyphs do today across Turtle Island. The meaning of land and territory; what does that mean? Ultimately it mean the demise of our human forms, the passing on of our memories to remaining family members, and the re-creation of traditional political forms, art works, masks, pole-carving, songs, dances from pre-contact. As well create new governing systems, new cultural forms based on the history of contact, colonial diseases, genocidal abuse and containment and the residential and apprehension experiences of inter-generations. Show how we can reach beyond the pathos of modern life to the glory of being alive and grateful for the ability to help less fortunate through our work and our humility. If anything, our ancestors have left us that reasoning through their rock carvings and pictorial renderings of their existence. Still heretoday in contrast to our short attention span today on the images of pop culture and its instant and immediate gratification of our desires. The Stein Valley rock art reminds me of my work as a young performer for The Margo Kane Ensemble at the **Tsawwassen. Stein Festival** of 1991, and when I collaborated with fellow students on the dual screen narrative **Take It Easy When You Talk About Me**. The notion of petroglyphs arose as we talk about creating a film that did not normally show stereotype images of native people. The Director Peter Webb and I liked the idea of a native scientist studying rock carvings thru the aid of his computer. In doing so, the scientist copies rock carvings with charcoal drawings, and begins to hear indigenous sounds. He interpolates the tracings in his computer and the strange occurrences continue as he studies the traditional forms. We created the work through 16mm film, Front screen re-photography, private footage and B rolls. Fellow

students helped capture sound, plan the production and Chris Brougham created the computer graphics of the early work. In hindsight, I would have perhaps collaborated differently on the work, secured more cultural authenticity regarding the soundtrack, re-photographed images, and respecting the territory. As student filmmakers, we just used what ever we wanted, no questions asked. As we come across your program pertaining to the Tlingit[s], I mention the recent Supreme Court decision denying the Yukon Indigenous people their land claim case. Also the criminalization of Tlingt man John Graham in the USA. Canada took a back seat in preventing the extradition of John Graham to the US for the accusational charge of killing of Anna May Acquash of the Micmac people. It is a very complex case due to complicity and duplicity of witnesses and affidavit. God bless the soul of Anna Mae My latest film development project *Wissakadewnini* will tell the story of my late dad Alfred Gene Morin and Irene Whitford, which will examine the notion of charms (bad medicine) a part of our Metis history and the songs, language of a culture taken away. A bitter sweet love story involving their early romance, the love of music and the bad medicine practiced on his family. Such actions resulting in my dad's demise and the apprehension of his family June 1958. I seen it as a retention and recovery project of our family history, our language, culture, and an undoing of the bad medicine practiced on our family in the 50s. Told to me in a dream I had in Hinton 1996, as I traveled in search of my reason for existence. A confusing time of my life. With respect to the Archeology of BC First Nation people, we must resolve the current land claim disputes in British Columbia and empower our young people to take up the torch of aboriginal rights on this continent, by protecting ancient sites, territorial grounds and other historical factors of our history. We must stop

on-going urban development, less is more. Practices and re-educate through other forms of media other than mass media, which perpetuate the status quo in favour of what is defined as normal today, the current existing system with all its inequities, pitfalls and consumeristic and monetary rewards. With respect to the ideas of Dr. Taiaiake Alfred on sovereignty and governance, I agree with him on many of his ideas and do mention him briefly in my essay **NDNs IN the Age of Terror**, but the stark reality of colonialism demands that we get out from under the skirt of the Monarchy. Declare our sovereignty as a people nation to nation. If it involves another Oka incident, Gustafsen Lake Standoff, or another Ipperwash incident, so be it. With governance, whether home rule government works as in Nunavut and Greenland, I have many talks with my wonderful Inuit ex-wife from Greenland about the issues of the Inuits as they had home rule government since 1979. In their case, the Inuit have control of their society, government and cultural development, but Denmark still controls the monetary system and owns the resource below their feet. With Nunavut and the Nissga settlements, some people agree and some people disagree. Unfortunately we can not please everyone and we all must be willing to compromise for the common good. I applaud each and every one of you in your desire to learn and study the intricate relations of native and non-native relations and how it relates to us in this new age of insecurity and containment. Today, we are curtailed with the leftover hopes and dreams of a mechanical age and abased with the transcendental visions of binary mathematical equations and computations. Much has changed since the Indian wars. Global politics of Terror since September 11 plays on the emotions of uncertainty, doubt, and fear in the same way that the old historical systems used fears to create distrust between Native and Non-Native communities. However, the instilling of

fear is still used to enforce those old historical positioning with new methods of control through thermal imaging, bio-metrics, and the invasion and capturing of our bodily fluids; all to protect our way of life, to suppress free will, religious momentum, and define the freedom and unfreedom of the individual in capitalist societies. From the moment INSET (Intergrated National Security Enforcement Team) officers broke down the door of a first nations family on Vancouver Island in October 2,002 and accused them of being part of a terrorist organization, we must be vigilant in the protection of our rights and freedoms as this continent's first people. We must be watchful of the US's Patriot I and II acts, and Canada's Anti-terrorism legislation and the Security of Information Acts, as indigenous people we have an historical right to cross the US/Canada border without infringement or impediment of movement. These ideological positions have been reproduced, through the mechanical reproductions of laws, currency, art, and propagated history. From either authentic or counterfeit reproductions, we have to manufacture a new literacy in ways of seeing and living. We must find balance with the natural world, the winged creatures, the ones of the sea, and the four legged animals if we are to continue living on Mother Earth. Finding that oneness with The Great Spirit in and around us. Praying meditating, turning off this technology I am using now and learn to touch and feel our spirit through sound and flesh, face to face. Yet we are up against a world constructed by individuals and traditional religious independence, or fanaticism, depending on the definer of truth within media forms. As a media artist, I strived to understand, what is killing our people to understand our people's pain and the worthlessness bestowed on the Indian. To seek the truth and light of my creator helped to prevent this unworthiness from destroying me from the time I was ripped away from my

siblings and parents, to surviving sixteen foster homes by the time I was four, to the time I was raped as a child. We can not get rid of our forlorn memories of residential schools, adoptions and the assimilation policies of history, but we can learn life skills to manage our cultural baggage. As a Métis filmmaker, it is important to improve our worldview with continuous education so that we can all live together in harmony, not distrust. Canada's First People have been signified as terrorists, militants, saboteurs, provocateurs, and radicals at Gustafson lake compound. Today, we are invaded with racist commentary regarding Indigenous news stories, unwanted viruses, pornography, and fantastical terror and death images from all forms of conventions. World consciousness has become de-personalized and electrified through the Internet with no form of control or reasoning. Everything is put out there for consumption, not thinking of the overall repercussions of their words and actions. Everyone justifies themselves in relation to media forms, not historical forms. Race politics has transformed thru the language of blood defining our present day of chaos and discontent. With this new millennium we must utilize endurance, perseverance, assertiveness, entrepreneurial skills, a sound and realistic education, to bring closure to the ideological differences between Native and Non-Native discourses. We must continue to develop our work even though we "can't understand our closest thoughts, but are told to understand the thought of others"

O'Siem, Gila Kesla, Hy hy Miigweech, merci beaucoup, Aho, all my relations.

