

Introduction

As an aspiring writer fresh out of university in 1990, some of my work was published in the first volume of *Gatherings: The En'owkin Journal of First North American Peoples* by Theytus Books. At that time there was an excitement running through the Aboriginal community about the first journal in North America that would publish a current sampling of Aboriginal literature each year. The following year, I was asked to be Managing Editor of Theytus Books. Young and inexperienced, I could not turn down the challenge of working with the first Aboriginal owned press in Canada; and so I found myself Editor of *Gatherings* Volume II in 1991 and Volume III in 1992.

Over the years, after nine volumes of *Gatherings* and publishing and/or editing over 400 Aboriginal authors and over fifty Theytus titles, I have been perplexed over a number of editorial problems pertaining specifically to the publishing of material by and/or about Aboriginal Peoples. Gradually, as more and more problems came up in the course of editing, it became apparent that Theytus Books, as an Aboriginal publisher, needed to establish editorial guidelines on several specific matters in order to set standards and ensure consistency.

Working at Theytus has provided several opportunities to discuss these editorial issues with Aboriginal writers, editors, publishers, many of whom have offered their ideas, opinions and proposed solutions. There have also been several valuable discussions with fiction and non-fiction writers, academics, journalists and editors concerning editorial problems that arise in writing on Aboriginal subject matters. Many of those people have also indicated that a set of editorial guidelines would be of great use to them in their work. Based on those discussions, it became apparent that a set of specific editorial guidelines adhering to Aboriginal cultural, political and literary concerns was not only necessary for Theytus, but would also have a potentially wider application.

This report represents a first attempt to establish a house style for Theytus Books and set of editorial guidelines for Aboriginal literature and writing on Aboriginal subject matters. The primary purposes of the proposed guidelines are to produce material that is consistent and reflects Aboriginal Peoples in an appropriate and respectful manner.

I The Need for an Aboriginal Style Guide

i) An Historical Overview of the Portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples Through Literature

Early writings about Aboriginal Peoples were authored by explorers like Champlain and Cartier in the 1500s and 1600s, missionaries like John McDougall in the 1800s, anthropologists like Diamond Jenness and Franz Boas around the turn of the century, and literary writers such as James Fenimore Cooper and Stephen Leacock in the early to mid 1900s. The vast majority of these writers made reference to Aboriginal Peoples as an inferior vanishing race in a manner which is degrading and offensive to many Aboriginal Peoples, conveying little information about their cultural reality.

In *Indians of Canada*, for example, which was for decades considered to be the authoritative anthropological text, originally published in 1938, Diamond Jenness begins in the first paragraph writing, "When Samuel Champlain in 1603 sailed up the St. Lawrence River and agreed to support the Algonkian Indians at Taboussac against the aggression of the Iroquois, he could not foresee that the petty strife between these two apparently insignificant hordes of savages would one day decide the fate of New France." **(1)**

Much of the literature written by explorers, missionaries and anthropologists provided little insight into the cultural realities of Aboriginal Peoples, yet it influenced the intellectual foundations for European-based society's perception of Aboriginal Peoples as basically primitive and under-developed. It has also been argued further, by Aboriginal intellectuals such as Ward Churchill and John Mohawk, that the common perception was also characterized, consciously or subconsciously, by Darwinian concepts that can be taken to suggest Aboriginal Peoples are located somewhere on an evolutionary scale between primates and homo-sapiens.

Later, imposters such as Grey Owl and Long Lance came to have considerable notoriety lecturing, writing and publishing while masquerading as Aboriginals. Generally, these writers displayed a less condescending and more positive attitude toward Aboriginal Peoples; although their work tended to reinforce the stereotypical image of Aboriginal Peoples as glorified remnants of the past, à la Rousseau's concept of "the Noble Savage." As noted by Robert Berkhofer in his book *The Whiteman's Indian*, "Although each succeeding generation (of writers) presumed its imagery based more upon the Native Americans of observation and report, the Indian of imagination and ideology continued to be derived as much from polemical and creative needs of Whites as from what they heard and read of actual Native Americans or even at times experienced." **(2)** A review of the literature would reveal that high profile Canadian writers, such as Farley Mowat and Stephen Leacock, conveyed many of the perceptions created by explorers and missionaries. Even the charlatan tradition set by Grey Owl and Long Lance is evident in the work of contemporary writers such as Jamake Highwater, Lynn Andrews and Adolf Hungry Wolf.

A more recent development in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s has been a wave of writing by non-Aboriginal academics such as Frank Cassidy, Boyce Richardson, Thomas Berger, Michael Ashe, Sally Weaver, Menno Bolt and Anthony Long. Many of these authors are involved with higher-level academic and government institutions and have established themselves as authoritative "Native Studies experts." The majority of these writers are knowledgeable and supportive of Aboriginal Peoples' political and cultural aspirations, and they must also be credited with some of the increased public awareness in recent years. However, while much of this body of work has observational and analytical value, it cannot express Aboriginal cultures and worldviews, nor can it express Aboriginal Peoples' unique internal perspective on contemporary Aboriginal political and cultural issues. Although this body of work is predominately well-intentioned, some Aboriginal writers such as Howard Adams, Lee Maracle and Leroy Littlebear have stated that it tends to reduce the emotionally, historically and culturally charged issues to dry information laden with legalized and/or academic jargon. As stated by Adams, "Academia is slow to re-examine what has been accepted for centuries... These myths have been so deeply ingrained in the peoples' psyche that even Aboriginals will have to go to great lengths to rid themselves of colonial ideologies." **(3)**

As further observed by the Creek/Cherokee author Ward Churchill, "the current goal of literature concerning Indians is to create them, if not out of the whole cloth, then from only the bare minimum of fact needed to give the resulting fiction a ring of truth." **(4)** Here Churchill expresses a view commonly held by many Aboriginal Peoples — as well as many mainstream historians and academics — that a review of contemporary literature reveals an improvement in the portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples, but also a persistence of subtle inappropriate stereotypes and faulty academic paradigms.

ii) The Aboriginal Voice

The creation and/or expression of culture by Aboriginal Peoples through any traditional medium or any contemporary medium or any combination thereof, constitutes an expression of what can be referred to as the "Aboriginal Voice." Drawing from a blend of traditional and contemporary sources such as oral history, traditional storytelling technique, inanimate, animal and spirit characters from legends, and contemporary existence, literary technique literature, or other mediums such as film or multi-media, the contemporary Aboriginal Voice is a unique mode of cultural expression.

Throughout the past three decades Aboriginal authors have developed and expressed the Aboriginal Voice by creating a body of literature which now stands out as a distinct culturally-based contemporary body of work within the literary canon. This important body of work is the most culturally authentic

literary expression of Aboriginal reality; although it has often been overshadowed by non-Aboriginal writers who continue to develop a separate body of literature focussing on Aboriginal Peoples. At the same time it must be acknowledged that the significance of Aboriginal literature is beginning to be realized by the Canadian literary and publishing establishments, after years of marginalization and lack of understanding and access. (Contemporary Aboriginal Voice will be discussed in greater detail in the final section of this report.)

II Aboriginal Editorial

i) The Need and Relevance of Aboriginal Editorial Guidelines

The paramount purpose of literature focussing on a specific cultural group should be to present the particular culture in a realistic and insightful manner, with the highest possible degree of verisimilitude. As Franz Boas argued in his progressive anthropological concept of “ethnocentrism” this purpose can ultimately only be achieved through a perspective of a culture from the inside. Jacques Derrida calls the ethnocentrism of the European science of writing in the late seventeenth and early eighteen centuries a symptom of the general crisis of European consciousness, and states further that, recognition through assimilation of the Other can be more interestingly traced... in the imperialist constitution of the colonial subject. **(5)** Indeed , the vast majority of the body of literature on Aboriginal Peoples tends to view them as “the Other” and thus fails to achieve an internal cultural perspective. This failure has been a long-standing concern of Aboriginal Peoples and other marginalized groups, and was identified by progressive anthropologists, like Boas, in the mid 20th century and by members of the Canadian literary establishment, such as Atwood, who wrote in 1972, “The Indians and Eskimos have rarely been considered in and for themselves: they are usually made into projections of something in the white Canadian psyche.” **(6)**

Although increased cultural awareness and the concept of ethnocentrism throughout the 1980s and 1990s has led to a marked improvement in the contemporary literature on Aboriginal Peoples, there is still a significant body of literature being produced that contains some of the old stereotypes and perceptions, and lacks respect for Aboriginal perspectives. It is the intention of this report, and the following proposed editorial guidelines, to produce literature that, in as much as possible, is devoid of these general problems, and other specific problems which will be discussed.

(I) The primary purposes of a Theytus Books’ House Style and an Aboriginal Style Guide are to provide guidelines that will assist editors and publishers to: 1) produce literature reflecting Aboriginal realities as they are perceived by

Aboriginal Peoples; and 2) assist writers to write truthfully and insightfully about Aboriginal Peoples, respecting Aboriginal cultural integrity.

The need for Aboriginal editorial guidelines in many ways parallels the editorial advances that have been made in the late 20th century in writing about African Americans and women, and the development of concepts such as “Black History” and “Herstory.” One predominant assertion made by Aboriginal writers, editors and publishers is that the experience of being an Aboriginal person is profoundly different from that of other people in North America. Many Aboriginal authors have cited cultural appropriation and misrepresentation through literature and lack of respect for Aboriginal cultural protocol as significant problems in Canadian publishing. Aboriginal Peoples have frequently taken the stance that they are best capable and morally empowered to transmit information about themselves. However, whereas it must be acknowledged that there are established genres of writing and reporting on Aboriginal subject matter, Aboriginal Peoples would at least like to have an opportunity to have input into certain aspects of how they are written about.

Aboriginal Peoples, along with various historians, academics and other cultural groups, have argued that it is important for any national and/or cultural group to have input into the documentation of its history, philosophies and reality, as a basic matter of cultural integrity. In some respects, Aboriginal Peoples need to “tell their own story” and/or exercise some authority over how they are represented even more so than other national and cultural groups because of the way in which they have been misrepresented by various disciplines which have presented literature in a manner predominately inconsistent with, and often in opposition to, Aboriginal cultural concerns.

ii) Establishing Culturally Appropriate Editorial Guidelines

The primary purpose of Aboriginal editorial guidelines should be to ensure the highest possible editorial standards, while at the same time developing and employing Aboriginal-based editorial practices and concerns. A culturally-based editorial process may establish and incorporate some specific guidelines which do not necessarily follow established European-based editorial rules and practices. In an Aboriginal style guide certain unique editorial guidelines need to be developed and established in order to respect cultural integrity and complement the emerging distinct Aboriginal literary voice.

(II) Developing and employing unique editorial publishing procedures based on Aboriginal practices, Theytus Books’ House Style encourages publishers to work in partnership with Aboriginal Peoples and authors to ensure that Aboriginal material is expressed with the highest possible level of cultural authenticity, and in a manner which maintains Aboriginal cultural integrity.

Aboriginal writers, editors and publishers find themselves in a situation where, through their work, they are developing and defining an emerging contemporary Aboriginal literary voice. Similar to the situation that Aboriginal authors found themselves in during the 1980s within the literary process, Aboriginal editors and publishers are attempting to establish Aboriginal-culturally based methodology within the editing and publishing process.

Some of the practices that are being considered (or adopted) in editing texts are:

- utilizing principles of the Oral Tradition within the editorial process; respecting, establishing and defining Aboriginal colloquial forms of English (a developing area of study that is termed "Red English");
- incorporating Aboriginal traditional protocol in considering the appropriateness of presenting certain aspects of culture; and,
- consulting and soliciting approval of Elders and traditional leaders in the publishing of sacred cultural material.

More specific examples of how Aboriginal editors and publishers can develop culturally appropriate practices will be discussed throughout this report; although it should be noted that, as a discipline, Aboriginal editorial and publishing methodology is in an early stage of development.

Before this paper begins to propose guidelines on specific editorial issues, it should be stated at the onset that:

(III) Theytus Books' House Style recommends that written materials pertaining to Aboriginal Peoples should follow The Chicago Manual of Style (or the generally accepted style guide for each respective genre of writing) as well as any other applicable guides, such as individual publishing houses' style guides, except in such cases where guidelines conflict with the editorial propositions advanced in Theytus Books' House Style .

Furthermore, in the interest of incorporating Aboriginal cultural and editorial concerns into Aboriginal literature and materials written about Aboriginal Peoples:

(IV) It is the policy of Theytus Books' House Style that the proposed editorial guidelines contained within this report (which are numbered and indented throughout the body of this text) should over-ride other applicable style guides in cases of conflict.

III Adherence to Aboriginal Cultural Protocol

i) Key Aboriginal Cultural Principles

Aboriginal Peoples have a distinct ethos based on a unique identity which stems from their history, cultures and traditions. Aboriginal Peoples also have several responsibilities placed upon them through internal cultural imperatives which include telling the truth, honesty with one another, and mindfulness of any impact on the community. Through consciousness of Aboriginal history and heritage comes the ultimate responsibility of being the link between one's ancestors and future generations cultural precept that has been referred to by Native American writers, such as Leanne Howe, as "the time-space continuum."

It is crucial for those writing about Aboriginal Peoples to have a clear understanding of how Aboriginal Peoples perceive and contextualize their contemporary cultural reality. Aboriginal societies have undergone attempted genocide, colonization, and constant technological revolution, introduced by another society, over the past 500 years. This has coincided almost exactly with the time period that Western Society underwent its "500 years of print culture." Yet, even under these difficult circumstances, Aboriginal Peoples have dealt with the imposition of legislation and institutions, and the introduction of new technologies, surviving with the foundations of their unique cultures intact.

Aboriginal Peoples have adapted into their various unique and distinct contemporary forms by adhering to two important cultural principles: 1) that incorporating new ways of doing things should be carefully considered in consultation with Elders, traditional people and community; and, 2) if it is determined that a new technology or institution goes against fundamental cultural values and/or might lead to negative cultural impact, then it should not be adopted. These principles exist, in one variation or another, in most First Nations and Aboriginal groups dating back to ancient times.

In many cases throughout the contact period, when repressive legislation and institutions were imposed on Aboriginal Peoples, Aboriginal institutions went underground giving the outward appearance that they had been undermined. The re-emergence of various forms of traditional government and spiritual institutions, such as the Potlatch and the Longhouse, are testimony to this phenomenon. In other cases, Aboriginal Peoples found ways to incorporate traditional institutions and aspects of culture into the contemporary context. Although these principles were tested more rigorously with the arrival of Europeans, they also guided First Nations and other Aboriginal groups through century after century in their national and cultural development prior to contact.

The view that new technologies can be adapted into Aboriginal cultures and can support Aboriginal political and social initiatives is consistent with Western theorists such as Lewis Mumford who has stated, "Technology is responsive to the ideological and cultural situation into which it is introduced," and further that, "culture can control the development of its tools." **(7)** Indeed Aboriginal Peoples have always proven to be adept at adapting new technologies into their cultures. Northern Cree hunters, for example, have found that pursuing moose by Skidoo can lead to significantly more successful hunting outings. Meanwhile, at the same time, they still practice such ancient ceremonies as: honouring the animal's spirit in the bush upon killing; praying to and thanking the Creator; hanging the animal's bones over the doorway, and bringing the animal through the doorway backwards so that the animal's spirit can leave frontwards.

The Cree continue to practice ancient ceremonies while hunting for sustenance and, in fact, the Skidoo serves to enhance the cultural practice of hunting in making it more productive and efficient within Cree cultural confines. The way in which the Cree hunters have incorporated the Skidoo as a new technology into their traditional cultures serves as a basic example of Aboriginal cultural adaption which occurs on many more complex levels.

The predominant mainstream perspective has tended to view Aboriginal cultures and the modern world in opposition to one another. Yet Aboriginal Peoples have shown, through their adaptation, that their dynamic cultures do not remain encapsulated in the past, static and resistant to development. It is important for editors and publishers to understand how contemporary Aboriginal Peoples view themselves relative to their cultures and history, because several editorial problems and misrepresentations through literature stem from inappropriate perceptions of cultural positioning. Indeed, a vast amount of writings on Aboriginal Peoples reflects the common mainstream perception that Aboriginal culture is static and must exist in some past state to be authentic. Aboriginal Peoples themselves, however, wish their cultures to be perceived as dynamic in interaction with the modern world, and existing in a continuum between past and future generations of Aboriginal Peoples.

(V) In accordance with Theytus Books' House Style, as a general rule, when producing materials about Aboriginal Peoples, it is important that writers, editors

and publishers bear in mind that contemporary Aboriginal Peoples clearly view themselves according to the following key principles: 1) they are distinct cultures existing as part of an ongoing continuum through the generations tracing back to their ancient ancestors; 2) they have not been assimilated into mainstream Canadian society and their national and cultural paradigms have not been fundamentally altered or undermined through colonization; and 3) natural cultural change and/or adaptation of new technology or methodology does not mean that Aboriginal Peoples have acquiesced to mainstream Canadian society, or that Aboriginal cultures have been fundamentally altered or undermined.

i) Identification of Common Errors

Aboriginal Cultural Integrity not Respected: There are various ways in which Aboriginal cultural integrity is not respected in the writing and publishing process. Among the most common are as follows:

- 1) Aboriginal intellectual property is written down incorrectly and/or misinterpreted through European-based cultural perspectives;
- 2) Aboriginal intellectual property is claimed by “authors” who are re-telling and/or transcribing previously existing intellectual heritage;
- 3) Aspects of Aboriginal culture that are “owned” by (i.e., are the intellectual property of) particular Elders, families or clans are appropriated (i.e., told without permission and/or claimed by authors);
- 4) Aspects of Aboriginal culture that have specific internal regulations associated with their use (i.e., they can only be told by certain people, in certain ceremonies and/or at certain times of the year) have those regulations broken;
- 5) Traditional stories, legends, ceremonies, dances and/or objects such as masks, that are deemed as sacred and not intended for public domain, are appropriated and presented in books.

Awareness that these practices breach Aboriginal cultural protocol, and extent to which they constitute severe offences within Aboriginal cultural confines, is lacking among the Canadian public and this is often reflected in the publishing industry.

Another common error found in literature is referring to Aboriginal Peoples in the past tense. In the book *First People, First Voices*, edited by Penny Patrone in 1983, the opening paragraph states, “From ancient times the Indians have lived in the lands now known as Canada... They **fed and clothed** themselves off the usually bountiful land, **lived** in harmony with the Great Spirit... They also **sang**

songs, **told** stories, and **passed** traditions on by word of mouth through succeeding generations.” (emphasis added) **(8)**

Apart from the stereotypical view of Aboriginal Peoples portrayed in this text, it contains another major problem commonly found in writing about Aboriginal Peoples; namely, it speaks of them in the past tense. Referring to Aboriginal Peoples in the past tense has the following implications that are considered inappropriate and offensive to many Aboriginal Peoples:

- that they no longer exist as distinct cultures in a ongoing continuum through the generations tracing back to their ancient ancestors;
- that they no longer practice such cultural activities as traditional storytelling, traditional songs and religious beliefs (as per the above quote); and, thus,
- that contemporary Aboriginal Peoples have been assimilated into mainstream Canadian society to the point that they no longer identify with their ancestors, or that Aboriginal cultures have been fundamentally altered or undermined through colonization.

Indeed, as has been discussed previously, some of these implications are cornerstones of the mainstream perception of Aboriginal Peoples. This is perhaps why the “past tense” is still used often in written material on Aboriginal Peoples, particularly within the disciplines of anthropology, archaeology and art history. The above quotation from Penny Petrone is, however, from a book on Aboriginal literature which traces its development from the Oral Tradition up to present-day contemporary Aboriginal literature. In this respect it is ironic that a seasoned academic like Petrone should begin such a book clearly speaking of Aboriginal Peoples in the past tense; although it also serves as an illustration of how ingrained and pervasive the above-mentioned perceptions are. Nonetheless, the “past tense,” along with the baggage of all its implications, is still commonly used in writing about Aboriginal Peoples although its usage has recently become less common with the increase in cultural awareness.

(VI) In accordance with Theytus Books’ House Style, the “past tense” should be avoided in writing about Aboriginal Peoples with the exception of the following circumstances: 1) The writer is referring to an activity and/or event which specifically and exclusively took place in the past; 2) The writer is referring to an Aboriginal cultural activity that is no longer practiced in any shape, form or variation thereof. (As this is rarely the case, the writer should attempt to consult an authoritative member of the particular Aboriginal group for confirmation.); 3) The writer is using a quotation which uses the past tense.

iii) Editorial Solutions

As for adherence to cultural protocol, for the sake of example, the editorial and publishing process employed in the development of *The Kou-skelowh Series*, published by Theytus Books, could be viewed as proper process within Aboriginal cultural confines. The *Kou-skelowh Series* are traditional Okanagan legends that have been translated into English, illustrated and made into children's books. The most recent versions of the series were published by Theytus in 1991. One of the most valuable aspects of the *Kou-skelowh Series* has been how the process of development regarded proper publishing protocol with Aboriginal cultural material.

Firstly in 1981, on behalf of Theytus, Jeannette Armstrong approached the Okanagan Elders Council and asked if some traditional legends could be used in the project. When the Elders gave permission for three legends to be used, Armstrong then condensed the legends and translated them into English. The English versions were then taken back to the Elders Council for examination and edited until they were approved for educational use by Okanagan children.

The Elders Council was then asked if Theytus Books could have permission to publish the legends for sale in the book trade. After lengthy discussions Theytus was granted permission on the grounds that several conditions were met, including that no individual would claim ownership of the legends or benefit from the sales. The Elders Council were also then asked to name the series: *Kou-skelowh*, meaning "we are the people." Consequently, the original *Kou-skelowh Series* was published by Theytus Books in 1984. The series is "authorless" and instead each book contains the caption "An Okanagan Legend." The series is also copyrighted to the Okanagan Tribal Council which also receives royalty payments, as was stipulated by the Elders Council.

The methodology that was used in the *Kou-skelowh Series* could stand as a model in which all possible concerns with cultural protocol were dealt with in a proper manner, as well as a good example of the uniqueness of Aboriginal editorial practice.

(VII) In accordance with Theytus Books' House Style, writers, editors and publishers should make every effort to ensure that Aboriginal cultural protocol, in as much as possible, be adhered to the publication of culturally sensitive Aboriginal materials. An Aboriginal Style Guide should state further that, in cases where culturally sensitive Aboriginal materials are in question, the writers, editors and publishers should make every effort to consult a authoritative member or institution of the particular Aboriginal group for confirmation.

IV Terminology

i) The Development of Terminology

Just as words such as “negro” in reference to African Americans, and “man” or “mankind” in reference to human civilization, have gradually fallen out of usage with the general recognition of their political incorrectness and offensive nature to specific cultural and gender groups, there are many like terms commonly pertaining to Aboriginal Peoples that need to be considered.

(VIII) An Aboriginal Style Guide should review a comprehensive listing of questionable culturally inappropriate terminology that is commonly used to describe Aboriginal Peoples.

This section will review and analyze examples of questionable culturally inappropriate terminology that is commonly used to describe Aboriginal Peoples in explorer/missionary, scholarly writing especially in the disciplines of anthropology/archeology, and in kitsch terminology. Writing in each of these areas or genres borrows terminology from the others, and, in some cases, the common use of terms in a particular area have become accepted across the board.

The examples of terminology reviewed have been placed within the category in which they were first used. Terminology which is difficult to fit into any area is dealt with under “Other Common Inappropriate Specific Terms.” Suggested alternatives to many of these terms are recommended in the following section “Proposed Appropriate Terms.” It is also important to note that while many of these terms may be inappropriate and/or problematic, they are often still used (even by Aboriginal Peoples). Many such terms retain an ambiguous status as they are used habitually and/or because no alternate terminology has been proposed.

Explorer/Missionary: A number of terms commonly used in reference to Aboriginal Peoples derive from exploration and missionary work. The

connotations of many of these terms are generally heavily biased toward the primary objective of two goals; namely, conquest of territory and conversion of Aboriginal Peoples to Christianity.

Barbarism: This term was first used in explorer logs to denote Aboriginal Peoples as lacking in cultural refinement. The term carries connotations of “violent and unstructured peoples” with little or no social organization and has evolutionary connotations. The term is obviously inappropriate to describe the hundreds of complex Aboriginal societies and political institutions that adhered to such concepts as democracy and gender equality.

(un)Civilized: This term traces in the literature back to explorer and missionary logs (and was later adopted by anthropology and Canadian government bureaucratic and legislative text). The term is also evolutionary in nature and carries connotations of “violent unstructured peoples” with little or no social organization, who are far less refined than European-based societies - or even unrefined. In the missionary context, the term also carries a connotation of a people who are “un-Christian” and therefore backward, evil, and in need of conversion.

Discovery: This term when used to describe the European arrival in the Americas, and various other lands occupied by Aboriginal Peoples, literally implies that Aboriginal Peoples did not exist as social beings with the capacity to occupy territory. The legal counterpart to discovery is *Terra Nullius* (generally meaning unoccupied lands), which along with its various legal implications, has been argued in hundreds of court cases over the years. However, it has more recently been struck down in various key Aboriginal Rights cases by The Supreme Court of Canada. Although the term discovery is obviously erroneous and ethnocentric, it is still commonly used in anthropological and historical texts.

Heathen/Pagan: These two like terms have the denotation that Aboriginal Peoples are non-Christian/non-Hebrew and a connotation that their religions are therefore unenlightened lacking in spiritual, cultural and moral code. As these terms were applied to Aboriginal Peoples originally by missionaries, they also have a connotation that Aboriginal religions are morally corrupt. Indeed, it was this connotation that provided the justification for such oppressive legislation as the outlaw of the Potlatch in Canada and the prohibition of “Indian dancing” in the City of Chicago. Although these terms are common in missionary and explorer logs, as well as early Canadian Government documents and legislation, they have now largely fallen out of use.

Pre-history: This term can be taken to imply that Aboriginal Peoples were not making and documenting history until they came into contact with Europeans and hence writing. Defenders of the term have argued that oral history does not

constitute a legitimate documentation of history. However, even this argument is now contradicted by the Supreme Court of Canada's acceptance of "oral evidence" in the Delgamuukw judgement and other key Aboriginal Rights cases. Although this term is also erroneous and ethnocentric in that it does not acknowledge oral history, it is still commonly used in anthropological, historical and art history texts. Due to the problematic nature of the term, "pre-contact" is a more appropriate alternative and is used by an increasing number of historians and various other authors.

Ritual(istic): The term was first used by missionaries in reference to Aboriginal religious ceremonies, such as the Potlatch, the Sundance and the Sweatlodge. The term implies that Aboriginal religions are not legitimate religions but rather more cult-like, thus implying an element of evil. The term is judgemental, Christian-centric and inappropriate to describe religious ceremonies that are recently becoming more widely appreciated by sectors of the general population.

Anthropology/Archaeology: An entire lexicon of terminology commonly used in reference to Aboriginal Peoples came out of the discipline of anthropology, and to a lesser extent archaeology. An underlying precept of both disciplines is that they tend to view Aboriginal Peoples as remnants of the past, and many of the terms tend to denigrate and de-humanize Aboriginal Peoples. While archaeology focuses on ancient human antiquities, anthropology proposes to be the study of humankind. As the discipline has been applied to Aboriginal Peoples it has further perceived them as "primitive" societies that should be documented before they inevitably develop into modern western-based peoples (i.e., "the vanishing race"). These precepts go against the previously mentioned Aboriginal cultural principle that Aboriginal Peoples are vibrant evolving cultures based on ancient fundamentals.

Artifact: This term is commonly used in anthropology, archaeology and art history to refer to artwork and functional objects produced by Aboriginal Peoples. According to The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English Sixth Edition (hereafter referred to as "Oxford"), a "product of prehistoric or aboriginal art as distinct from similar object naturally produced." The term can be taken to imply that there is a differentiation in hierarchy between Aboriginal Peoples art and other art forms. The term causes confusion around issues of the artistic merit of works from different cultures. It can also be problematic in that it can be interpreted to have a connotation that ancient Aboriginal artwork are remnants of the past and disassociated from the contemporary members of the Aboriginal group.

Band: According to Oxford, this term, as it is applied to Aboriginal Peoples, is defined as "a number of people bound together for any common purpose." This definition of the term does not denote any political, national or societal

structure, or any historical and cultural elements, and thus implies an unstructured, basic grouping of people. It is therefore inappropriate to apply to ancient national groups with rich cultural and historical traditions. Regardless, the term is commonly used to describe Aboriginal groups in anthropology and was adopted and is still used by the Canadian Government, specifically The Department of Indian Affairs. Despite its problems, the term must in some cases be used because it is established in the Indian Act as the administrative body of a reserve and the collective as a whole.

Folklore: This term is commonly used in anthropology, archaeology and art history to refer to the traditional cultural practices of Aboriginal Peoples, the common people or “folk” as well as other predominantly non-Western groups. The term can be taken to imply that there is a differentiation and hierarchy between Aboriginal Peoples cultural practices and those of Western cultures, especially Western “high culture.” Due to the problematic nature of the term, “cultural practice” might be a more appropriate alternative.

Tribe(al): This term is commonly used in anthropology and archaeology. According to Oxford, “a group of primitive families under a recognized chief.” The term carries less degrading connotations when applied to ancient Romans or Israelites, revealing a cultural and historical bias, and making use of the term more problematic. Although the term has gradually fallen out of usage in the literature in Canada, it is still used in certain specific instances, such as the term “Tribal Police” to describe a reserve policing unit. It should also be noted that the term is still commonly used in the United States — even among the Aboriginal Peoples. It therefore retains somewhat of an ambiguous status.

Kitsch Terminology: An entire lexicon of terminology commonly used in reference to Aboriginal Peoples can be traced back to American and Canadian kitsch literature and film making. This particular set of terminology is generally marked by vagueness, meaninglessness and overt racism, and is thus often extremely offensive to Aboriginal Peoples. Some examples are:

Brave: An Aboriginal man.

Buck: A young Aboriginal man.

Peace Pipe: A mythical Aboriginal pipe and ceremony, which may or may not be referring to an authentic practice commonly referred to by Aboriginal Peoples as the Sacred Pipe (Ceremony).

Redman: An individual Aboriginal man or Aboriginal Peoples of the Western Hemisphere as a whole.

Squaw: An Aboriginal woman.

Tomtom: An Aboriginal drum.

Tomahawk: A mythical Aboriginal axe-type weapon.

War/Rain Dance: A mythical Aboriginal dance supposedly done before going to war or to bring rain, which may or may not be referring to an authentic practice of spiritual dancing done by Aboriginal Peoples to show reverence to and ask help from the Creator.

ii) Other Common Inappropriate Specific Terms

As stated previously, terminology which is difficult to place within the three above categories is dealt with under this section.

Eskimo: This term came into use in the 17th century to describe the Aboriginal Peoples who traditionally inhabit the Arctic regions of Canada, Greenland and Siberia. The term is rooted in the explorer lexicon. In fact, although they are of a homogenous cultural group, certain groupings have been referred to in literature according to explorers who first encountered them, such as the so-called "MacKenzie Eskimos" in the mideastern Canadian Arctic. Beginning in the early 1960s, following accepted practice and as a general rule, "the term Inuit replaces the term Eskimo," **(9)** thus bringing the terminology in line with what the Inuit have always called themselves. This was in fact one of the earliest examples of an Aboriginal group in Canada changing the terminology with which they refer to themselves.

Indian: This term was commonly used to describe the hundreds of distinct nations of Aboriginal Peoples throughout North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. It traces back to the explorer tradition and was coined by Columbus as he was "looking for Asia... (he was) going to find India... And so (he) looked at the first peoples... on the shores and said, these must be Indians." **(10)** The term therefore was a misnomer from the start; although it was widely used by explorers and missionaries throughout the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, and was also commonly used in early anthropological texts, Canadian Federal Government documents and through Canadian and American mainstream society up the present day. However, following accepted practice and as a general rule, "the term First Nation replaces the term Indian." **(11)**

Land Claim: This term was originally used by Aboriginal Peoples in the late 1960s to describe their right to ownership over and/or compensation for lands they traditionally occupied. Largely due to the increased recognition of Aboriginal Peoples title to traditional lands by the Supreme Court of British Columbia in the Calder Case and the James Bay Cree Court injunction, both in

1973, The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) adopted the term and applied it to its Land Claims Policy in 1974. As the DIAND policy did not fully recognize Aboriginal Title to land, the term began to fall out of usage for Aboriginal Peoples gradually in the early 1980s - except when referring to the DIAND policy. The word "claim" in the term is also problematic for Aboriginal Peoples because it implies that they must apply to obtain ownership over land, not that they have inherent ownership. Due to the problematic nature of the term, "Aboriginal Title" might be a more appropriate alternative.

Native: This term was one of the most common used to describe Aboriginal Peoples in Canada, and other parts of the world, throughout the colonial period through to the 1980s. Although it is still used in various federal and provincial government bureaucratic language, and certain academic circles, it has since fallen out of wide usage. It is worth noting, however, that the term is still widely used in the United States (i.e., Native American). The term is problematic because of possible confusion with its wider definition of "local inhabitant or life form" and because it does not denote that there are many distinct Aboriginal groups.

Primitive: This term was also commonly used to describe Aboriginal Peoples by explorers and missionaries throughout the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, and was also commonly used in anthropological texts and in early Canadian Federal Government documents and letters. According to Oxford, primitive is defined as, "1. early, ancient...old-fashioned, undeveloped, uncultured, at an early stage of civilization." Not unlike "savage," the term began to gradually fade out of common usage around the 1940s to the point that it is now generally considered as unacceptable. The term obviously is degrading and inappropriate and carries evolutionary connotations.

Savage: This term was commonly used to describe Aboriginal Peoples by explorers and missionaries throughout the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, and was also commonly used in early anthropological texts as late as the 19th century. The term is also commonly used in Canadian Federal Government documents and letters concerning "Indian Affairs" up to the early 20th century. According to the Oxford Dictionary savage is defined as "1. uncivilized, in a primitive state... 2. fierce, cruel... furious, angry out of temper 3. uncultivated, wild". Around the 1940s the term began to gradually fade out of common usage to the point that it is now generally considered as unacceptable. The term obviously is degrading and not appropriate to describe complex Indigenous societies that exist throughout the world. It also has evolutionary connotations.

Self-Government: This term was originally conceptualized and used by Aboriginal Peoples in the late 1970s to describe their right to govern their own affairs. DIAND adopted the term and applied it to its Community Based Self

Government Policy in 1984. As the DIAND policy was more of a municipal government model and did not fully recognize governmental powers to the extent that most Aboriginal Peoples were asserting, the term began to fall out of usage for Aboriginal Peoples gradually in the late 1980s - except when referring to the DIAND policy. Due to the problematic nature of the term, "Self-Determination" might be a more appropriate alternative.

(IX) In accordance with Theytus Books' House Style, an Aboriginal Style Guide should provide a comprehensive listing of inappropriate terminology commonly used in reference to Aboriginal Peoples, and state that these terms should be avoided and replaced with the suggested alternatives (an/or the following listed appropriate terms), except under the following circumstances: 1) the text is referring specifically to the term and/or discussing the term; 2) the text is referring to a proper name or the name of an institution or document that contains the term; or 3) the text is referring to a quotation that contains the term.

iii) Proposed Appropriate Terms

This section will provide a review of a sampling of appropriate terminology as applied to Aboriginal Peoples and a discussion of definition, connotations, and appropriateness. In addition, some of the following terms will be identified for recommended use instead of some inappropriate terms reviewed in the previous sections. (This section was partially informed by the paper *Terminology: Based on Facts, Terms, Theories and Practices*, prepared by the Assembly of First Nations 1985)

Aboriginal: This term which is defined by Oxford as "indigenous, existing on the land at the dawn of history, or before the arrival of colonists," has become one of the terms considered most appropriate to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada to describe themselves. It is the term used in the Canadian Constitution and in all court cases and legal text. It is also gradually becoming being adopted by Canadian federal and provincial government departments, journalists and writers of various other genres. One minor criticism of the term is that it can cause confusion with the Aborigine Peoples from Australia. It is also worth noting that the term is rarely used in the United States. Nonetheless, the term is acceptable to Aboriginal Peoples and should replace other terms such as "Native" and "Indian."

Aboriginal Right: An Inherent and original right possessed individually by an Aboriginal person or collectively by Aboriginal Peoples.

Aboriginal Title: The term denotes the Aboriginal Right to ownership of property possessed individually by an Aboriginal person or collectively by Aboriginal Peoples, including ownership and jurisdiction over land and resources.

Aboriginal Peoples: This term is gradually becoming considered one of the most appropriate to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada to describe themselves as a collective. It is generally considered by most Aboriginal Peoples to be preferred over Aboriginal, Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal People, because it recognizes a distinction between different Aboriginal groups. That is, it implies that they can be referred to as a collective, while, at the same time, they are not one homogenous group.

The Creator: This term has become widely accepted by Aboriginal Peoples to describe the supreme being who made the world and all life, and placed peoples on specific territories, and gave them laws to live by. Also the divine figure who is worshipped in various religions and ceremonies. The term has become the most widely accepted English term by Aboriginal Peoples and is generally preferred over, and should replace, other terms such as “God” and “The Great Spirit.”

First Nation(s): This term was originally coined by Aboriginal Peoples in the late 1970s partly as an alternative to inappropriate terms like “Native” and “Indian” which were in common usage at the time. It was adopted by the national political organization, The Assembly of First Nations (previously The National Indian Brotherhood), in the early 1980s and has been commonly used by Aboriginal Peoples to describe themselves since. The term has strong political connotations, and recognizes distinctions between Aboriginal groups, in that it refers to Aboriginal Peoples as separate nations who occupied territory prior to the arrival of Europeans. In the 1990s the term has gradually become adopted for usage by the general Canadian population. The term also has a double meaning in that it is sometimes used to describe a band and/or reserve (i.e., “The Westbank First Nation,” which is actually a small portion of the Okanagan Nation). Critics of the term, such as the Metis leader, Howard Adams, have pointed out that the term does not include Metis and Inuit people and that the word “first” can be interpreted as elitist. It is also worth noting that the term is not used in reference to Aboriginal Peoples in the United States, where it is in fact sometimes used to distinguish between Aboriginal Peoples on either side of the border. (That is to say that a Native American saying, “welcome to all the First Nations people here,” would mean, “welcome to all the Aboriginal Peoples from Canada here.”) Nonetheless, the term is acceptable to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada and should replace other terms such as “Native” and “Indian”.

First Peoples: This term is rarely used by Aboriginal Peoples to describe themselves, although it is also not considered particularly offensive or problematic. It recognizes that Aboriginal Peoples are distinct groups, without carrying the heavy political connotations of the term “First Nations.” It is not widely used in the literature; however, it is the current official term used by The

Canada Council and the National Museum of Civilization. Perhaps The Canada Council's 1999 decision to replace the term with "Aboriginal" can be taken as an indication that it may gradually fall out of usage.

Indigenous: This term is not commonly used by Aboriginal Peoples in Canada to describe themselves, although it is also not considered offensive. This term, however, is most commonly used by Aboriginal Peoples, and others, to describe Aboriginal Peoples throughout the world as a collective. It is the terminology adopted by the United Nations and the single term used throughout UN literature and documents such as The Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As with "native," it can be interpreted as somewhat problematic because of possible confusion with its wider Oxford definition, "produced naturally by a region, belonging naturally."

Inuit: The term now widely accepted to describe the Aboriginal Peoples who traditionally inhabit the arctic regions of Canada, Greenland and Siberia. The term should replace "Eskimo." It is also worth noting that the singular form of the term is "**Inuk**".

Nation: This term has become widely accepted by Aboriginal Peoples to describe separate Aboriginal groups as political entities. Institutions such as The Crown, various federal and provincial departments and the UN, and various individuals, have argued against the application of this term to Aboriginal Peoples. However, Aboriginal Peoples and their various legal councils have generally contended and asserted that Aboriginal Peoples meet the UN four fundamental requirements of nationhood: 1) a permanent population, 2) a definite occupied territory, 3) a government, and 4) the ability to enter into relation with other nations.

Self-determination: In International Law, this term is referred to as "The Divine Right of People" which was born out the French Revolution. The term denotes the right of peoples to choose freely how they would be governed. As the term "self-government" was adopted by DIAND in 1984 and applied to a specific legislation, the term "self-determination" since gradually become more widely used by most Aboriginal Peoples to describe the concept. Therefore, to avoid this potential confusion, it is recommended that the term should replace "self-government" unless it is referring to the specific legislation.

(X) In accordance with Theytus Books' House Style, an Aboriginal Style Guide should provide a comprehensive listing of appropriate terminology commonly used in reference to Aboriginal Peoples, and state that these terms should be used and replace the stated inappropriate terms, except under the following circumstances: 1) the text is referring specifically to the term and/or discussing the term; 2) the text is referring to a proper name or the name of an institution or

document that contains the term; or 3) the text is referring to a quotation that contains the term.

iv) The Naming of Aboriginal Groups

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in North America, all Aboriginal nations had names to identify themselves which, in the vast majority of cases, were a translation of a variation of the words “the people” in their own language. During the colonial period in North America, the majority of Aboriginal national groups in Canada were named by explorers and/or missionaries. As many Aboriginal Peoples did not speak English or have access to mainstream colonial society these “coined terms” for specific Aboriginal Groups came into widespread usage in English - despite the fact that Aboriginal groups themselves maintained their own terminology.

These coined terms were derived in a number of ways, the most common of which were as follows:

- 1) explorers and/or missionaries gave the Aboriginal group a name with associated the first European to encounter them (i.e., Thompson Indians, McKenzie Eskimos);
- 2) explorers and/or missionaries gave the Aboriginal group an arbitrary English-based name based on some observation about the Aboriginal group (i.e., Blackfoot, Flathead);
- 3) explorers and/or missionaries gave the Aboriginal group an anglicised name based on a word they heard in the Aboriginal group’s language (i.e., Kwagiulth, Navajo, Salish, Nootka);
- 4) explorers and/or missionaries gave the Aboriginal group an anglicised name based on a word they heard in the another Aboriginal groups’ language describing the group (i.e., Ojibway, based on what they were called by the Cree);
- 5) explorers and/or missionaries gave the Aboriginal group an name based on a reasonable approximation of the word the Aboriginal group use to identify themselves in their own language (ie. Haida, Dene, Okanagan).

Although the latter method (#5) was of course the most appropriate manner of naming, and the most appropriate in as far Aboriginal Peoples are concerned, it was, however, the most rare. As it turned out during the later colonial period in Canada, as generations of Aboriginal children were systematically denied access to their languages through the residential school system and introduced to English, most Aboriginal Peoples acquiesced to the terminology which had

become established. This general trend, however, began to overturn for many Aboriginal groups beginning in the early 1980s when many of them began to re-establish their original names. As this process often involved an awkward anglicization, several variations on spelling were often used. For the purposes of illustration, what follows are some case studies:

Anishnawbe: The Anishnawbe people were named “Ojibway” during the colonial period based on an anglicization of the word the Cree used to describe them. Although they are a single national group, different groupings of the nation have also been termed “Chippewa,” and “Assiniboine.” In the 1980s the group began to insist on being called by their original name, Nishnawbe, which means “the people” in their language. Throughout the 1980s common spellings varied: “Nishnabwe,” “Anishnabay,” “Anishinabek,” “Anishinabe,” “Nishnawbay.” In the 1990s they have generally agreed that the spelling “Anishnawbe” is a closer approximation of a phonetic English spelling.

Kwagiulth: The Kwagiulth people were termed “Kwakiutl” in the early 1800s by the Anthropologist Franz Boas who produced a vast body of literature about them. Then, in the 1980s, they generally agreed that the spelling “Kwagiulth” is a closer approximation of a phonetic English spelling.

Other Aboriginal groups who have re-established their original names include: Lakota (formerly referred to as Sioux), Haudenosaunee (formerly referred to as Iroquois), Migikau (formerly referred to as Micmac) and Innu (formerly referred to as Sioux Montagnais).

v) Appropriate Terminology and Spelling

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples approached the editorial problems associated with group name as follows: “Often more than one spelling is considered acceptable for these nations. We try to use the name preferred by particular nations and communities, many of which now use their traditional names. Where necessary, we add the more familiar generic name in parenthesis - for example, Siksika (Blackfoot).” **(12)** This may be an appropriate solution for a bureaucratic document intended to be understood by a wide range of people, but it would be too awkward for the purposes of literary, journalistic and various other genres of writing. A more appropriate solution would be to use the most current term and spelling preferred by the Aboriginal group.

(XI) In accordance with Theytus Books’ House Style, an Aboriginal Style Guide should provide a comprehensive listing and history of the terminology used to describe all major Aboriginal groups in Canada, and state that the name and the most current spelling generally accepted by the group should be used, with the following exceptions: 1) the text is referring specifically to another term that

has been used to describe an Aboriginal Group; 2) the text is referring to a proper name or the name of an institution or document that contains another term that has been used to describe an Aboriginal Group; or 3) the text is referring to a quotation that contains another term that has been used to describe an Aboriginal Group.

V Aboriginal Words

i) Aboriginal Words Adopted by the English Language

Place Names: A multitude of place names throughout Canada are from Aboriginal languages and have since been adopted into the English language. For the purposes of example, the following provides a small fraction:

Canada: Derived from an Haudenosaunee word , *ken-a-tah*, meaning “a cluster of dwellings.”

Kamloops: Derived from a Salish word meaning, “a meeting of the waters.”

Kelowna: Derived from an Okanagan word meaning, “grizzly bear.”

Manitoba: Derived from a Cree word, *manitou*, meaning “the Creator.”

Niagara: Derived from a Huron word meaning, “thunder of waters.”

Ontario: Derived from a Huron word, *oiutario*, meaning, “beautiful sparkling water.”

Petawawa: Derived from an Algonquin word meaning, “where one hears water far away.”

Quebec: Derived from an Algonquin word, *kebec*, meaning, “where the water narrows.”

Saskatchewan: Derived from a Cree word, *kisiskatchewan*, meaning “swift flowing river.”

Yukon: Derived from an Athapaskan word, *diuke-on*, meaning “clear water.”

Other place names derived from Aboriginal language words include: Deseronto, Chilliwack, Lillooet, Mississauga, Restigouche, Shawinigan, and Temiscaming. **(13)**

Augmenting the English Vocabulary: Aside from place names, various other Aboriginal language words have been adopted into the English language. Again, for the purposes of example, the following will provide a small fraction:

Canoe: Derived from a Carib word, *canoa*, meaning “a small paddle boat.”

Hammock: Derived from an Arawak word, *hamaca*, meaning “a swinging bed.”

Kayak: Derived from an Inuit word.

Other terms derived from Aboriginal language words adopted by the English language include: Toboggan, Caribou, Coyote, Raccoon, Cocoa, Squash, Tomato and Tobacco. **(14)**

(XII) An Aboriginal Style Guide should provide a comprehensive listing of the over two hundred Aboriginal Language words that have been adopted into the English Language.

It is also worth noting that many such words also represent functional objects and foods which Aboriginal Peoples have introduced to Western society. This would also serve to alert writers, editors, and publishers to the contribution Aboriginal Peoples have made to Western culture and the English language. This section is also a necessary part of an Aboriginal Style Guide because these adopted words will have to be distinguished from the usage “other” Aboriginal language words. (This will be discussed in a succeeding section.)

ii) Aboriginal Language Word Usage

The Chicago Manual of Style establishes the guideline that foreign language words used in an English context should be italicized: “isolated words and phrases in a foreign language be set in italics if they are likely to be unfamiliar to readers. **(15)** Yet much of the literature does not italicize Aboriginal language when they are used in the context of an English text. For example “A Thanksgiving Address” by Allen Gabriel, which begins volume one of the *Report*

of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, reads as follows, “We are reminded every day, as you share the sky with Karakwa, of the balance that must be maintained between the roles of male and female.... Finally, Sonkwaiaitison, we ask that you give us courage...” (16) The lack of italicization of the Aboriginal Language words “Karakwa” and “Sonwaiaitison” in this text, and the many other occurrences of this that can be found in English text, could be interpreted as an indication that Aboriginal Languages are afforded an ambiguous status, when in fact they should be regarded among the many languages spoken throughout the world.

XIII) In accordance with Theytus Books’ House Style, Aboriginal Language words used within English text should be italicized, with the exception of the following: 1) Aboriginal language words that have been adopted into English, and, 2) people who have been given Aboriginal Language words as proper names, and, 3) Aboriginal group names which are derived from Aboriginal languages but are the primary name for the group and, therefore, must be used to describe the group in English.

For the purposes of clarification, note the following examples:

1) “The canoe, kayak, hammock and igloo are examples of ancient Aboriginal design and engineering that have stood the test of time.”

(i.e., “canoe,” kayak,” hammock,” and “igloo” are not italicized because they are Aboriginal Language words that have been adopted in the English language.)

2) “My daughter’s name is Nimkish.”

(i.e., “Nimkish” is not italicized because it is an Aboriginal Language word that has been given to an individual as their proper name.)

3) “Drew is one of the most popular Anishnawbe playwrights in Canada.”

(i.e., “Anishnawbe” is not italicized because it is an Aboriginal group name which is derived from an Aboriginal language but is the primary name for the group and, therefore, is used to describe the group in English.

4) “John Young is my *Mishom*. ” (grandfather in Cree)

(i.e., “Mishom” is italicized because it is an Aboriginal language word being used in the context of an English language sentence, and can not be applied to any of the above noted exceptions.)

VI Capitalization

i) Issues Around Capitalization

The general problems around capitalization stem from mainstream society's apparent difficulty in regarding Aboriginal Peoples as having legitimate national, governmental, social, spiritual and religious institutions. As English became the most common language spoken by the greatest number of Aboriginal Peoples - either by the encroachment of the dominant culture and/or by enforcement through the residential school system - most Aboriginal institutions were translated into English.

This included national and governmental institutions, such as the Longhouse, traditional chieftainships, clan systems and Warrior Societies. The same was the case for spiritual and religious institutions such as the Potlatch, The Sacred Pipe Ceremony, Medicine Man, Sweatlodge, Vision Quest, The Seven Fires, as well as the names of Aboriginal religions such as Midawin.

i) Establishment of Rules and Guidelines

These terms for Aboriginal institutions translated into English must be afforded the same editorial guidelines as their counterpart institutions in European-based societies. That is, for example, "Longhouse" should be capitalized just as "Parliament" is capitalized, and "Midawin" should be capitalized just as "Christianity" is capitalized. Likewise Aboriginal cultural icons, such as the Haudenosaunee prophet, Handsome Lake, should also be capitalized. In addition, terms that refer to paramount legal and political concepts such as "Aboriginal Title" and "Aboriginal Rights" should also be capitalized.

In addition, terms that refer to Aboriginal Peoples as groups should also be capitalized because they refer to a distinct cultural group of people who assert nationalistic rights and aspirations. Therefore, the following terms should always be capitalized: Aboriginal (Peoples), Native (Peoples), First Nation, Indigenous (Peoples).

The fact that there has been a marked inconsistency in capitalizing or not capitalizing these terms in the past, and a general recent trend toward capitalizing, are also good reasons to standardize capitalization in these instances.

XIV) In accordance with Theytus Books' House Style, terms for Aboriginal national, governmental, social, spiritual and religious institutions, as well as Aboriginal cultural icons, terms that refer to paramount legal and political concepts, and any terms referring to Aboriginal Peoples as a group or groups, should be capitalized.

VII The Development of “Red English”

I) The Development and Politics of Aboriginal Colloquial English

As early as the late 19th century, so-called “Indian humorists” in the United States, such as the Creek author Alexander Posey, began writing in a form of Aboriginal colloquial English which was then referred to as *Este Charte*. An American writer of the time made note of the *Este Charte* utilized by Creek writers and made the statement, “To write or speak ‘correctly broken English’ is almost impossible for anyone who isn’t born with it.” **(17)** Later, in the late 1960s, as Native American academics such as Daniel Littlefield began to trace the development of Aboriginal colloquial English right up to contemporary Creek authors such as Louis Littlecoon Oliver and Joy Harjo, the term “Red English” was created. **(18)**

In his 1979 book *American Words* the Native American author Jack Forbes wrote, “We can find ways to Indigenize this language.” **(19)**

Today “Red English” is sometimes referred to as “Rez English” in Canada and is commonly utilized as a literary technique by several high profile Aboriginal writers such as Jeannette Armstrong, Lee Maracle, Louise Halfe and Maria Campbell. Jeannette Armstrong’s Canadian Bestseller novel *Slash*, for example, begins as follows: “School started that morning with old Horseface hollering at everybody to line up. Boy, it was cold. My ears hurting. I shoulda took my toque, I guess.” **(20)**

The renowned Metis author Maria Campbell takes the phenomenon of Aboriginal colloquial English to an extreme in her most recent book, *Stories of the Road Allowance People*, where she writes, for example:

“Dah stories der not bad you know
jus crazy
Nobody knows for shore what hees true

I don tink nobody he care eeder
Dey jus tell dah stories cause Crow
he makes damn good storytelling
Some mans der like dat you know.” (21)

Stories of the Road Allowance People is indeed one of the most extreme examples of Aboriginal colloquial English published to date. In her introduction Maria Campbell writes, ”I am a young and inexperienced storyteller compared to the people who teach me. And although I speak my language I had to relearn it, to decolonize it, or at least begin the process of decolonization... I give them (the stories) to you in the dialect and rhythm of my village and my father’s generation. “ (22)

In the foreword to *Stories of the Road Allowance People* Ron Marken points out that academics like J.A. Cuddon, have missed the point of cultural colloquial English and made statements such as, “Poetry belonging to this tradition is composed orally... As a rule it is a product of illiterate or semi-literate societies.” (23) On the contrary, Marken argues, “The accents and grammar you will hear in this book are uncommon, but do not mistake them for unsophistication... These stories and poems have come through a long journey to be with us from *Mitchif* through literal translations through the Queen’s Imperial English and back to the earth in village English... Our European concepts of “voice” are hedged with assumptions and undermined with problems. Voice equals speech.” (24)

Aboriginal colloquial English, in its various forms, is a cultural expression of how Aboriginal Peoples speak informally amongst themselves and communicate within their communities. As such it should receive a similar linguistic recognition/legitimacy recently being afforded to various forms of African American colloquial speech and the various form of patois developed in the Caribbean and around the world.

(XV) An Aboriginal Style Guide should include a comprehensive study and explanation of the precepts behind Aboriginal colloquial English. In accordance with Theytus Books’ House Style, Aboriginal colloquial English should be viewed as a legitimate literary device and not be edited into “proper” English.

VIII The Salience of Aboriginal Literature

i) The Role and Principles of Aboriginal Literature

The many vast pools of information held by each individual First Nation or distinct Aboriginal group have been transmitted over centuries through the Oral Tradition and comprise unique bodies of knowledge with distinct cultural content. The Oral Tradition has often worked in conjunction with some physical methods of documentation such as dramatic productions, dance performances, petroglyphs and artifacts such as birch bark scrolls, totem poles, wampum belts and masks.

Thus, according to Aboriginal tradition, the Oral Tradition is the primary mode of information transmission and documentation, and the Aboriginal Voice is the mode of expression. Measuring this up against European concepts, in as much as it is possible, it could be said that the Oral Tradition is traditional Aboriginal publishing, and the contemporary Aboriginal Voice is Aboriginal literature. The value of Aboriginal storytelling and the words of the Elders - even when spoken in the English language - are also important aspects of the Aboriginal Voice.

Although much of it still remains unwritten, Aboriginal Voice contains highly meaningful and symbolic "worlds" populated with fantastic, inanimate, animal, human and spirit characters who act out some of the most fascinating tales in world literature today. The body of natural scientific knowledge encompassed in the Aboriginal Voice also contains valuable paradigms, teachings and information that can benefit all of the world family of nations. Indeed, sectors of the scientific and academic establishment have recently come to the realization that Aboriginal knowledge is an integral part of the key to human survival.

i) The Salience of Aboriginal Literature

Nishnawbe author Kim Blaeser has pointed out several characteristics of contemporary Aboriginal literature: it gives authority to the voices of all people involved in the story, instead of a monological voice speaking out as if it had ultimate authority; it gives authority to the voices of animals and messages given by spirits and natural phenomenon; it stretches across large spaces in time, ranging from ancient times to present to the future, displaying the Aboriginal concept that all time is closely connected and that actions can transcend time.

(25)

Over the past three decades Aboriginal authors expressed and developed the Aboriginal Voice establishing contemporary Aboriginal literature as a new literary form. Lee Maracle's novel *Sundogs*, for example, is presented in a style the author calls "Contemporary Aboriginal Voice," written cover to cover with no chapter breaks and often jumping out of the storyline on a tangent, the

relevance of which does not necessarily become immediately apparent. This is similar to the oratory style of an Elder speaking in a storytelling or ceremonial setting. Jeannette Armstrong shocked some of those preoccupied with gender politics by writing *Slash*. In what was seen by some as ironic, this first novel by a First Nations woman in Canada was written from a first person male perspective. This, she later explained, was based partly on Aboriginal cultural beliefs that each gender is capable of assuming the characteristics of the other. **(26)** Another example is the way in which Tomson Highway's plays *Rez Sisters*, *The Sage the Dancer and the Fool* and *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*, and his first novel, *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, have astounded the drama and literary establishments with their ability to go from the metaphysical domain to the domain of reality and even feature characters transcending domains.

These examples all illustrate how Aboriginal philosophy and traditions are being brought into contemporary literature, thus contributing to the ongoing development of the contemporary Aboriginal Voice.

Aboriginal literature has had to struggle through a number of impeding factors, including cultural and language barriers, the residential school system, ethnocentrism in the academic establishment, competition from non-Aboriginal authors, estrangement in the publishing industry, and a lack of Aboriginal controlled editing and publishing. Under these conditions it is not surprising that in the Canadian publishing industry Aboriginal literature has gone from being virtually non-existent to currently being relegated a marginal position. An important *raison d'etre* for An Aboriginal Style Guide should be to support and promote the Aboriginal Voice.

Aboriginal-controlled editing and publishing is a solution to many of the problems which have held back and continue to hold back Aboriginal Peoples in the publishing industry. It could eliminate many of the problems that have been discussed in the body of this report, and incorporate cultural sensitivity. Furthermore it has the potential to make writing and publishing a cohesive and fluid process under the influence of Aboriginal Peoples, so that the writer does not have to go through an alienating process to get published. Most of all, Aboriginal editorial produces the highest possible level of cultural integrity and the most authentic expression of the Aboriginal Voice within the parameters of the contemporary publishing industry.

Despite all it has to offer, Aboriginal literature continues to be discriminated against in the Canadian publishing industry. Generally, larger Canadian publishing houses will publish a novel by a recognized author like W.P. Kinsella, which mocks life on the Hobbema Reserve, before they will publish books by Aboriginal authors. Lee Maracle, the most highly published Aboriginal author in Canada today, has published all her books through small independent presses or the Aboriginal and feminist small presses. Though Aboriginal literature is

slowly achieving recognition, as recently as 1992 the largest publishing house in Western Canada came out with a fall catalogue that listed five titles about Aboriginal peoples written by non-Aboriginal authors in its front list - and no books written by Aboriginal authors. Perhaps it should come as no surprise, but regarding Aboriginal subject material publishers and booksellers are more concerned with low risk profit-making ventures than with the nature and authenticity of the material.

(XVI) An Aboriginal Style Guide should include a comprehensive discussion of the precepts behind Aboriginal literature in order to give editors and publishers a sense that it encompasses a wide range of literary approaches, thus empowering the agenda of achieving appropriate recognition of its uniqueness.

CONCLUSIONS

As discussed at the onset, the editorial guidelines proposed in this report represent a first attempt to establish a house style for Theytus Books and a set of editorial guidelines for Aboriginal literature and writing on Aboriginal subject matters. It is hoped that these proposed guidelines will achieve the objective of producing material that is consistent and reflects Aboriginal Peoples in an appropriate and respectful manner, and that other editors, writers and publishers will be promoted to add to an ongoing discussion which will lead an improved and more comprehensive set of guidelines in the future.

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APPENDIX I

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

(I) The primary purposes of a Theytus Books' House Style and an Aboriginal Style Guide are to provide guidelines that will assist editors and publishers to: 1) produce literature reflecting Aboriginal realities as they are perceived by Aboriginal Peoples; and 2) assist writers to write truthfully and insightfully about Aboriginal Peoples, respecting Aboriginal cultural integrity.

(II) Developing and employing unique editorial publishing procedures based on Aboriginal practices, Theytus Books' House Style encourages publishers to work in partnership with Aboriginal Peoples and authors to ensure that Aboriginal material is expressed with the highest possible level of cultural authenticity, and in a manner which maintains Aboriginal cultural integrity.

(III) Theytus Books' House Style recommends that written materials pertaining to Aboriginal Peoples should follow The Chicago Manual of Style (or the generally

accepted style guide for each respective genre of writing) as well as any other applicable guides, such as individual publishing houses' style guides, except in such cases where guidelines conflict with the editorial propositions advanced in Theytus Books' House Style.

(IV) It is the policy of Theytus Books' House Style that the proposed editorial guidelines contained within this report (which are numbered and indented throughout the body of this text) should over-ride other applicable style guides in cases of conflict.

(V) In accordance with Theytus Books' House Style, as a general rule, when producing materials about Aboriginal Peoples, it is important that writers, editors and publishers bear in mind that contemporary Aboriginal Peoples clearly view themselves according to the following key principles: 1) they are distinct cultures existing as part of an ongoing continuum through the generations tracing back to their ancient ancestors; 2) they have not been assimilated into mainstream Canadian society and their national and cultural paradigms have not been fundamentally altered or undermined through colonization; and 3) natural cultural change and/or adaptation of new technology or methodology does not mean that Aboriginal Peoples have acquiesced to mainstream Canadian society, or that Aboriginal cultures have been fundamentally altered or undermined.

(VI) In accordance with Theytus Books' House Style, the "past tense" should be avoided in writing about Aboriginal Peoples with the exception of the following circumstances: 1) The writer is referring to an activity and/or event which specifically and exclusively took place in the past; 2) The writer is referring to an Aboriginal cultural activity that is no longer practiced in any shape, form or variation thereof. (As this is rarely the case, the writer should attempt to consult an authoritative member of the particular Aboriginal group for confirmation.); 3) The writer is using a quotation which uses the past tense.

(VII) In accordance with Theytus Books' House Style, writers, editors and publishers should make every effort to ensure that Aboriginal cultural protocol, in as much as possible, be adhered to the publication of culturally sensitive Aboriginal materials. An Aboriginal Style Guide should state further that, in cases where culturally sensitive Aboriginal materials are in question, the writers, editors and publishers should make every effort to consult an authoritative member or institution of the particular Aboriginal group for confirmation.

(VIII) An Aboriginal Style Guide should review a comprehensive listing of questionable culturally inappropriate terminology that is commonly used to describe Aboriginal Peoples.

(IX) In accordance with Theytus Books' House Style, an Aboriginal Style Guide should provide a comprehensive listing of inappropriate terminology commonly used in reference to Aboriginal Peoples, and state that these terms should be avoided and replaced with the following listed appropriate terms, except under the following circumstances: 1) the text is referring specifically to the term and/or discussing the term; 2) the text is referring to a proper name or the name

of an institution or document that contains the term; or 3) the text is referring to a quotation that contains the term.

(X) In accordance with Theytus Books' House Style, an Aboriginal Style Guide should provide a comprehensive listing of appropriate terminology commonly used in reference to Aboriginal Peoples, and state that these terms should be used and replace the stated inappropriate terms, except under the following circumstances: 1) the text is referring specifically to the term and/or discussing the term; 2) the text is referring to a proper name or the name of an institution or document that contains the term; or 3) the text is referring to a quotation that contains the term.

(XI) In accordance with Theytus Books' House Style, an Aboriginal Style Guide should provide a comprehensive listing and history of the terminology used to describe all major Aboriginal groups in Canada, and state that the name and the most current spelling generally accepted by the group should be used, with the following exceptions: 1) the text is referring specifically to another term that has been used to describe an Aboriginal Group; 2) the text is referring to a proper name or the name of an institution or document that contains another term that has been used to describe an Aboriginal Group; or 3) the text is referring to a quotation that contains another term that has been used to describe an Aboriginal Group.

(XII) An Aboriginal Style Guide should provide a comprehensive listing of the over 200 Aboriginal Language words that have been adopted into the English Language.

(XIII) In accordance with Theytus Books' House Style, Aboriginal Language words used within English text should be italicized, with the exception of the following: 1) Aboriginal language words that have been adopted into English, and, 2) people who have been given Aboriginal Language words as proper names, and, 3) Aboriginal group names which are derived from Aboriginal languages but are the primary name for the group and, therefore, must be used to describe the group in English.

(XIV) In accordance with Theytus Books' House Style, terms for Aboriginal national, governmental, social, spiritual and religious institutions, as well as Aboriginal cultural icons, terms that refer to paramount legal and political concepts, and any terms referring to Aboriginal Peoples as a group or groups, should be capitalized.

(XV) An Aboriginal Style Guide should include a comprehensive study and explanation of the precepts behind Aboriginal colloquial English. In accordance with Theytus Books' House Style, Aboriginal colloquial English should be viewed as a legitimate literary device and not be edited into "proper" English.

(XVI) An Aboriginal Style Guide should include a comprehensive discussion of the precepts behind Aboriginal literature in order to give editors and publishers a sense that it encompasses a wide range of literary approaches, thus empowering the agenda of achieving appropriate recognition of its uniqueness.

