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SPECIAL SECTION
TWENTY YEARS AFTER KANEHSATÀ:KE: REFLECTIONS, RESPONSES, ANALYSES

Kanehsatà:ke
Canadian Colonial *Aporias*

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Abstract
This paper presents a reflective topical narrative following the research of Irihapeti Ramsden (2003), an Ngai Tahupotiki (Maori) nursing instructor of Aotearoa (New Zealand). It is a reflection on the nature of Indigenous inquiry, or what Irihapeti Ramsden recognized as an often melancholic journey of self-discovery. It has been a continuous struggle for Indigenous scholars to understand how, where, and why the injustices of colonization reduced Indigenous peoples to dependent remnants of the self-reliant and independent nations our stories remember. By connecting ideas like Jacques Derrida's work on Aporias to the intentionality of the Kahswenhtha (Two Row Wampum), my hope is to contextualize one unresolved injustice, the Kanehsatà:ke (Oka) conflict. The symbolism of the Two Row Wampum addresses the possible but also the impossible of a new brotherhood between colonial Canada and its Indigenous peoples. Reconciliation will only be possible when Canada honours Indigenous resistance, resentment and rebellion against European myths of prerogative power. Our ancestors sacrificed a great deal, and we must wipe our tears and open our eyes, listen deeply, clear our throats and raise our voices to bear witness to our ancestors' prayers for enduring hope, liberty and peace.

Steven Koptie is from the Six Nations of the Grand River, and a late comer to academia, returning to graduate school after 35 years of community work in Southern Ontario and the far north. He is dedicated to the idea that Native people have a right to be fully recognized as a distinct peoples, and this means that the question of "Cultural Safety" and recognition of an Indigenous identity guides the community work he does. He has a special place in his heart for children with complex needs, doing battle on their behalf since his early years in the field. He has taken up the cause of implementing "cultural safety" as the only true mechanism for reconciliation and Aboriginal well-being in Canada.

Steven Koptie vient des Six Nations de la Grande Rivière et, arrivé tardivement dans le monde universitaire, suit des études supérieures après 35 ans de travail auprès des communautés dans le sud de l'Ontario et dans le grand nord. Il est dédié à l'idée que les peuples Autochtones ont le droit d'être entièrement reconnu comme des peuples distincts, ce qui veut dire que la question de la « Sécurité Culturelle » et la reconnaissance d'une identité d'Autochtone guident son travail. Il a un place spéciale dans son cœur pour les enfants avec des besoins complexes, luttant pour eux depuis ses premières années sur le terrain. Il a pris la cause de la mise en œuvre de la « Securité culturelle » comme seul vrai mécanisme pour la réconciliation et le bien-être des Autochtones au Canada.

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Résumé
Cette contribution présente un récit réflexif contemporain, dans la lignée des recherches de Irihapeti Ramsden, un formateur Ngai Tahupotiki (Maori) des infirmiers de Aotearoa (la Nouvelle Zélande). C'est une réflexion sur la nature de l'introspection Autochtone ou ce que Irihapeti Ramsden a reconnu comme le voyage, souvent mélancolique, de la découverte de soi. C'est une lutte continue pour les chercheurs Autochtones de comprendre comment, où, et pourquoi les injustices de la colonisation ont réduit les peuples Autochtones à des résidus dépendants des nations autonomes dont nos histoires se souviennent. En faisant le lien entre des travaux comme ceux de Jacques Derrida sur Aporias et l'intentionnalité du Kahswenhtha (Two Row Wampum), mon espoir est de mettre en contexte une injustice non résolue, le conflit de Kanehsatà:ke (Oka). Le symbolisme de Two Row Wampum interroge la possibilité mais aussi l'impossibilité d'une nouvelle fraternité entre le Canada colonial et ses peuples Autochtones. La réconciliation ne serait possible qu'à condition que le Canada rende honneur à la résistance, au ressentiment et à la rébellion des Autochtones contre les mythes européens de l'état d'exception. Nos ancêtres ont fait beaucoup de sacrifices et nous devons essuyer nos larmes et ouvrir nos yeux, écouter profondément, éclaircir et élever nos voix afin de témoigner des prières de nos ancêtres pour l'espoir, la liberté et la paix perpétuelle.

Key Words
• Derrida • Aporias • Kahswenhtha (Two Row Wampum) • Kanesatàke • Indigenous Inquiry

Mots clés
• Derrida • Aporias • Kahswenhtha (Two Row Wampum) • Kanesatàke • introspection Autochtone

The principles reflected in the Kahswenhtha have always guided the Rotinonshonni in the conduct of their relations with other nations, but the Kahswenhtha was especially created to govern the brotherly relations between the Rotinonshonni and the newcomers-a kinship that would provide mutual aid when necessary. The living principles, if respected, are still capable of ensuring just and peaceful relations between our peoples into the future. They will also ensure a respectful coexistence in the river of life for the Rotinonshonni and the newcomers, as was the original intent.

The Kahswenhtha is a belt of two purple rows of wampum. Three white rows of wampum signify peace, friendship and respect between the parties to the agreement. Two rows of purple wampum symbolize a canoe and a sailing ship moving parallel to each other in the river of life, with the understanding that neither nation is to interfere with the other.

This concept of a relationship reflects a deep spiritual commitment to the integrity of all peoples' identity and right of self-determination. The

> *Kahswenhtha instructs that we must not attempt to steer each other's vessel. These ideas continue to be a fundamental principle in the Rotinonshonni's negotiations with the newcomer's nations (Mary Arquette & Maxine Cole 2004).*

The *Kahswenhtha,* or Two Row Wampum, is an iconic achievement of possibility against impossible historical trajectories such as Manifest Destiny, genocide as nation building, and broken Treaties. The late French philosopher Jacques Derrida's work on *aporias* creates an alternative framework for Indigenous scholars to retrace paths of injustice as they seek truth and reconciliation in Canada. Reynolds (2010) noted that Jacques Derrida looked to the concept of *aporias* as a social, political, economic and spiritual conflict space between people over time. In particular, 'Derrida described the paradoxes that afflict notions like giving, hospitality, forgiving and mourning, and argued that the condition of their possibility is also, and at once, the condition of their impossibility' (Reynolds 2010). Therefore, I would like to offer the concept of *aporias* to explore and express an ever expanding impasse of hurt that continues to impede Canada's modern reconciliation of past colonial wrongs. What resonates in Derrida's philosophy is that the colonial impasses Canada faces can be contextualized in the confusion over giving, hospitality, forgiving and mourning between those who settled Canada and Indigenous survivors. Derrida, in his book *Aporias,* wrote about the concept of *aporia* as being stuck on a path of confusion or trajectory of uncertainty in the present yet feeling helpless to comprehend what has happened in the past:

> I gave in to the word *aporias*, in the plural... the old worn-out Greek term *aporia*, this tired word of philosophy and of logic... It concerns the impossible or the impracticable. (*Diaporeo* is Aristotle's term here; it means 'I'm stuck [*dans l'embarras*], I cannot get out, I'm helpless') (Derrida 1993, 12-13).

Derrida, in a 1998 interview on human rights, locates his own lived experience of loss of identity in which many 'Iroquois' scholars may find solace:

> Perhaps one of the many things which made me sensitive to law is that I belonged to a minority in a colonized country. The Jewish community in Algeria was there long before the French colonizers. So on one hand; Algerian Jews belonged to the colonized people, and on the other they assimilated with the French. During the Nazi occupation, there were no German soldiers in Algeria. There was only the French and the Vichy regime, which produced and enforced laws that were terribly repressive. I was expelled from school. My family lost its citizenship, which is a legal event. Even when you're a child, you understand what it means to lose your citizenship. When you're in such a marginal and

> unsafe and shaky situation, you are more attentive to the question of legal authorization. You are a subject whose identity is threatened, as are your rights. (Rosenfeld and Robins 1998, 2)

In the same interview he addressed his trip to South Africa to lecture and learn on the subject of forgiveness and mercy, which was topical with the simultaneous unfolding of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. The fragile negotiations to move a racist state away from revenge and towards amnesty led to a concept called 'healing away', which was a form of political therapy designed to share the work of mourning in order to share a common destiny (Rosenfeld and Robins 1998, 2). Then Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney was actively engaged in securing the future release of South African leader Nelson Mandela's after twenty-seven years of political imprisonment. Paradoxically Prime Minister Mulroney was politically absent in his own home and native land during the Kanehsatà:ke crisis. He did subsequently establish the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1991 with a twenty-year implementation agenda. That is an unfinished project as is the resolution of the Oka crisis itself.

Taking responsibility to re-collect lost meta-narratives that can enliven the magnificence of culturally formed expressions of governance, like the Two Row Wampum, is a worthwhile undertaking for Indigenous writers. It will help restore to prominence the rich archives of Indigenous wisdom future generations require for recovering and reclaiming a natural sovereignty. Derrida uses his words to unmask and deconstruct historical mistakes. His writings can encourage Indigenous scholars and writers and legitimize the enduring hope inherent within those timeless narratives. Indigenous writer Lee Maracle (2009) challenges Indigenous writers to re-create representations of 'places we would all want to stand under' as we remember, honour and thank seven generations past and prepare places for seven generations forward. Derrida recognizes the power of connection, and the Two Row Wampum clearly stands the test of time and relevance. He states that writing is a unique language because 'of its ability to function in the absence of the original sender and receiver, and acknowledges that one writes in order to communicate something to those who are absent' (quoted in Blair 2007, 153), thereby leaving a path of discovery.

This author is a mature Indigenous scholar on a 'melancholic journey of self-discovery', a concept borrowed from Dr. Irihapeti Ramsden who belonged to the people of Ngai Tahupotiki and Rangitane, or if

expressed in colonial identity markers, a Maori woman of Aotearoa, New Zealand. It was a journey of renewed hope doing graduate research on her efforts to bring to fruition the concept of 'cultural safety' in her homeland. This is a public narrative long overdue in Canada as well (Koptie, 2009). Irihapeti Ramsden encouraged her nursing students to seek reflective topic autobiographical narratives to revise, retell and help them to recover from colonial misconceptions and misunderstandings. This paper will present reflective topical work around the 1990 Kanehsatà:ke crisis near Montréal as we consider the twentieth anniversary of this impasse.

After a thirty-year career of First Nations community development work, I made my way through graduate school in an attempt to understand the colonial trajectory unleashed on First Nations within our home and native land now known as Canada. My work had taken me into arenas of community development, land claims research, mental health, suicide, child welfare, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and addictions research. Success for most Indigenous students mostly precludes the idea of graduate studies and inherent opportunities to expand a critical analysis for developing leadership skills in a modern context. I believe that First Nations peoples, whether fighting the legacy of colonialism or accessing advanced education for personal, familial and community sharing still face barriers to participation in academia.

We are however, called loudly to contribute to twenty-first century demands for collaboration and engagement with our external 'host' world. Paradoxically, we are frozen out of leadership opportunities in our home communities when we lack the traditional knowledge required to assist in restoration of traditional knowledge lost during the colonial siege our ancestors endured. The exclusion of Indigenous scholars at the graduate level also prevents future non-Aboriginal leaders from having an opportunity to engage and know the very people who will sit and negotiate the new relationship demanded of Canada and its Indigenous population. An exploration of how Canadian reserves, which represent bounded artificial communities in contrast to the healthy territories that were surrendered to make way for the settlement of Canada, will be 'privatized' is a current and 'politically hot' example of that tenuous relationship (Flanagan 2010). Aboriginal people however, are not going to conveniently disappear into the Canadian body politic, therefore, Canada and academia must reconcile the damages done by broken Treaties, residential school atrocities, and the mismanagement of Canada's natural wealth (Saul 2009). Kanehsatà:ke, like many other conflicts, was an opportunity for reconciliation. Canada has not been able to confront the

acts of resistance and refusal that tragic events like Kanehsatà:ke represent. However, colonial inertia has managed to stifle traditional resilience and the survival the Two Row Wampum foretold of and the people of the pines at Kanehsatà:ke honoured. Mohawk people still have serious grievances in every one of our territories; conflicts include construction and flooding from the St. Lawrence Seaway in the mid-fifties, and today at Six Nations they are struggling with the ongoing Caledonia crisis in an effort to restore self-determination and the right to survive as distinct peoples.

Kanehsatà:ke in 2010 clearly stands as one of the major sparks that ignited a long overdue Indigenously-informed Shakespearean narrative similar to Hamlet's existential crisis. It began with a common pathos throughout Indigenous communities globally. There is the same sense of 'madness' and being 'out of joint' in their resisting, resenting, and rebelling against the colonial experience. Communities have in essence been frozen in time, and unable to mobilize their collective conscience to properly represent their natural desire for sovereignty.

> Thus conscience does make cowards of us all; and thus the native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought, and enterprises of great pith and moment with this regard their currents turn awry, and lose the name of action. (Shakespeare 1974, 3.1:91-96)

Works like *Hamlet* remain timeless representations of humanities ability to frame tragic human experience for future contemplation. Derrida's writings offer a precious 'deconstruction' or 'a thinking of mediation, of non-immediacy, and, consequently, of the trust one must have in truth, a trust that always rests on the already there… the "justice to come" from historical dilemmas' (Payne 2002). A melancholic soliloquy from *Hamlet* can offer a wonderful meta-narrative similar to those Derrida examined as *aporias* (1993). He saw the expression of a problematic relationship that tests the 'limits of truth' as an opportunity to explore and express an ever-expanding impasse of hurt. This becomes an excellent place for Indigenous scholars to explore the impasse that has long impeded Canada's modern reconciliation of past colonial wrongs, especially exceptional wrongs like the Kanehsatà:ke crisis. Many literary reviewers seek to understand the suicidal nature of Hamlet's dilemma. The people trapped in the alcohol treatment centre at Kanehsatà:ke became inhabitants of an ironic sanctuary. They also accepted the possibility of death to obtain a tragic justice. Hamlet's struggle to survive the sense of 'being out of joint' in time and place and facing the quandary of confusion, speaks to a common

experience I have witnessed. I, too, am haunted like Hamlet, to do justice to the 'spectres' of youth suicide in Aboriginal communities throughout Canada. Much of my own northern community work revolved around the issue of the suicides of First Nation youth. The definition of this phenomenon as a 'spectre or as a ghostly presence or apparition' makes the unpleasant prospect of being out of joint with the place and time of their existence become a frightful reality. The idea of a threat is a useful descriptive concept when we gaze upon the existence of Indigenous survivors of intergenerational historic trauma (Wesley-Esquimaux, 2009). In *Spectres of Marx,* Jacques Derrida examined the tragic consequences of inherently contradictory principles in the existing political and legal order that often lead to conflict and injustices like the living conditions that in turn can create suicidal human beings (Berg-Sorensen, 2000). Hamlet's painful cry, 'the time is out of joint: Oh cursed sight that I was born to set it right', is one that also paradoxically echoes in the uncomfortable silence on too many Indian reserves throughout Canada. In the angst of the despair of navigating anger and hope for transformative change in myself, my family, my community and my nation I have made that same agonizing plea.

Herein lies the either/or quandary that this generation of Indigenous scholars and cultural interpreters face in engaging two parallel existences as the colonized, but those responsible for defining pathways to de-colonization. The expectations for balancing healing and the alleviation of guilt, shame and confusion of colonization against demands for resistance and rebellion, against the dismissive citizens of colonial states like Canada can be over-whelming (Lear 2006). The complacency that breeds a wilful ignorance allows those who benefitted the most from Canada's tragic history to avoid the truths that actually need to be confronted for collective healing. When Indigenous scholars explore and express the missing truths we are constantly challenged to reduce our ideas to fragments of a world-view we are just re-locating, recovering, and re-enlivening. Finding possible/impossible corresponding philosophies like Derrida's *aporias* may assist in articulating the parallelisms necessary to a collective endorsement of Indigenous world-views. This form of blended research becomes an integral part of generational self-discovery now so vital to determining alternative paths for collective healing that become invitational across the boundaries of race, class and gender. Non-Indigenous scholars must demonstrate patience and tolerance because these new cultural path-finders require a great deal of 'cultural safety' (Koptie, 2009).

Location, Located, Locating

There are many 'inconvenient truths' about Great Lakes regional, historical, political, economic and social realities. The Great Lakes occupants were self-supporting, self-sustaining and vibrant communities long before Europeans came to 'settle' and 'civilize' this land. Kanehsatà:ke was not the first major conflict over territory. Austin *et al* (2008) outlined in their paper, 'The Vital Connection: Reclaiming Great Lakes Economic Leadership in the Bi-National US-Canadian Region', how the exploitation of the Great Lakes bounty, opened by the 'discovery' of the area by European explorers, is a rather simplistic rendering that typifies historical misconceptions and omissions and place Indigenous people in minor roles. The exclusion of meta-narratives such as the Six Nations Great Law and the nation to nation treaty relationship which the Two-Row Wampum treaty maintains are problematic. The exclusion represents the mythology of progress and civilization coming to the rescue of 'savages.' We must remind all citizens of Turtle Island, or North America, that the simmering discontent of Indigenous peoples over colonial wrongs remains strong and mostly unresolved. Missing from ongoing discourse is a realization of lost potential by the exclusion of Indigenous voices in the story; past, present, and future in the Great Lakes region. The region supports the people of Ontario, Quebec, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Each of those jurisdictions remains a home to Indigenous groups who share a common experience of dispossession and marginalization within their home-lands. They have been left with mere remnants of wealth and resources in what has become an ecologically un-sustainability in an area. This region, containing 36 percent of the populations of the United States and Canada, comprises the second-largest economy on the planet, behind the entirety of the Unites States itself (Austin *et al* 2008, 7). How can such exclusions continue to be justified? Where is the sharing of this bounty with Indigenous peoples? Their economies were destroyed under the guise of settlement of this largesse long before market economies insured exclusion and a crushing, and seemingly inescapable poverty.

During the long summer of 1990, while acting as a consultant to the Toronto Board of Education, I was called on to assist teachers in explaining to school children the traumatic images that the media was using to define that uprising. Very little public education was done to provide Canadians with a contextual framework or an Aboriginal perspective on the events unfolding at Kanehsatà:ke. Later, I was employed full-time as a mental

health worker at the Toronto East General Hospital in one of Canada's first programs designed to cope with the high suicide rates amongst Canada's Indigenous peoples. Dr. Harvey Armstrong, one of Canada's heroes in bringing this phenomenon into the public domain, would remind Canadians that during the turmoil that held the country's attention in the summer of 1990, seventy Aboriginal youth chose to end their lives. The quiet despair of their daily lives in other parts of 'Indian Country' had become unbearable (personal communication, September 1990). Canadians could not understand why there was so much fuss over an empty field or forest that could have been developed for a golf course. The public media chose to not illuminate the 280 years of conflict that preceded the stand in the pines by the Haudenosaunee people as they fought to protect and preserve their burial grounds.

Deconstruction of Colonial Lies

The 'Grand Narrative' of *terra nullius*, empty un-owned lands up for imperial settlement and lands up for plunder, has no rationale except in the mind of a colonizer. Yet, this historic reality is upheld through Victorian Age legal dogma and flows through impositions like the 1763 Royal Proclamation, the 1867 British North America Act, and the 1876 Indian Act. These legislative acts have managed Indians and their traditional lands for centuries through mythical prerogative power as conceived by men like John Locke (Arnold 2007).

In 1969, Vine Deloria, Jr wrote what became an Indigenous peoples' activist manifesto, *Custer Died for Your Sins.* Deloria was raised in the National Episcopal Church of America. His father, Vine Deloria, Sr, was an archdeacon and missionary on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in South Dakota. During its July 2009 76th General Convention in Anaheim, California the Church passed a groundbreaking landmark resolution repudiating the validity of the Christian Doctrine of Discovery. The Onondaga First Nation woman Tonya Gonnella Frichner, an attorney and founder of the American Indian Law Alliance and North American Representative to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, submitted a report at the Ninth Session 19-30 April 2010 entitled 'Impact on Indigenous Peoples of the International Legal construct known as the Doctrine of Discovery, which has served as the Foundation of the Violation of their Human Rights'. All Indigenous scholars must join in the remarkable efforts globally being undertaken to demystify the

dehumanization through 'Doctrine' that continues to haunt mankind. Her summary of that important paper begins with:

> This preliminary study establishes that the Doctrine of Discovery has been institutionalized in law and policy, on national and international levels, and lies at the root of the violations of indigenous peoples' human rights, both individual and collective. This has resulted in state claims to and the mass appropriations of the lands, territories, and resources of indigenous peoples. Both the Doctrine of Discovery and a holistic structure that we term the Framework of Dominance have resulted in centuries of virtually unlimited resource extraction from the traditional territories of indigenous peoples. This, in turn, has resulted in the dispossession and impoverishment of indigenous peoples, and the host of problems that they face today on a daily basis (Frichner 2010, 1).

It was this doctrine like this that led to the colonizing dispossession of the lands of Indigenous peoples around the planet. The Episcopal Church of America called on Queen Elizabeth II to 'disavow, and repudiate publicly, the validity of the Christian Doctrine of Discovery':

> Even if these dramatic events never take place, however, the Episcopal Church has taken a valuable and courageous step by focusing Americans and the world on how European Christians used international law to dominate indigenous peoples and to dispossess them of their lands and assets. Will other Christian churches and the international community have the same courage to look at the foundations, histories and laws that helped create European domination of indigenous peoples? (Miller 2009, 3)

Miller has posed through actions like this, a long overdue paradigm shift to re-tell, review and re-negotiate notions of prerogative power myths (Arnold 2007) that permeate so many social structures of race, culture, gender and religion.

Messages of this kind are significant as Canadian Indigenous scholars valiantly search for stories of resilience and strength in the historical records of contemporary Canada. It is a quest to demystify the place of 'Indians' in Canada. They are collectively creating pathways of reflective analysis to deconstruct confrontations like Kanehsatà:ke that still remain unresolved and smouldering beneath Canada's façade of political correctness. For anyone directly impacted by the trauma of Kanehsatà:ke , Derrida's thoughts on *aporias* provide a gift of recognition towards reviewing and revising understandings of the possible-impossible puzzle of loss-gain. It is very much a recovery of identity and human dignity that fosters the restoration of pride and morale. Marie Battiste challenges

Canadian academic institutions to take leadership roles in locating those truths and reconciling the gaps in academic and intellectual inquiry of colonial wrongs. Battiste suggested that instead, we create collaboration across cultural divides to:

support the agenda of Indigenous scholarship, which is to transform Eurocentric theory so that it will not only include and properly value Indigenous knowledge, thought, and heritage in all levels of education, curriculum, and professional practice but also develop a cooperative and dignified strategy that will invigorate and animate Indigenous languages, cultures, knowledge, and vision in academic structure (MacKenzie, 2009, 93).

Other authors have suggested a collaborative process as well. Imagine Canadian educators designing a form of citizenship that disabuses its citizens of their ignorance and arrogance, and illuminates the truths behind places like Lower East Vancouver, North Winnipeg or the hundreds of refugee/reserve communities that are increasingly the jaded face of Canadian colonial identity (Snowball 2009). Rauna Kuokkanen probes the lack of Indigenous perspectives, narratives and context that shield citizens of Canada from knowing the Two Row Wampum or the injustices of the Treaty making in Canada:

> The university remains a contested site where not only knowledge but also middle-class, Eurocentric, patriarchal, and (neo) colonial values are produced and reproduced…the academy is one of the main sites for reproducing hegemony. Not surprisingly, then, the studied silence and wilful indifference surrounding the 'indigenous" continues unabated in most academic circles. In the same way that indigenous peoples (and their episteme [worldview]) remain invisible when the nation- states were shaped, indigenous scholarship remains invisible and un-reflected in most academic discourses, including that of some of the most progressive intellectuals (Kuokkanen 2007, 156).

Or, Indigenous voice is given a corner in which to pontificate outside of the respected and endorsed stream of knowledge dissemination and response. The process of integration and inclusion has not yet occurred, and Native Studies remains an exotic beast in the academic milieu. The value of oral discourse and thought transmission remains a tattered second cousin to the written word as gospel and 'proven' scholarship. The political *aporia* promulgated under the guise of 'process' remains an ungainly spectre of unfinished Treaty relationships and historic grievance.

It is a global aberration that Canada whose international identity is framed around peace-making, peace-building and human rights defenders has become a nation of lonely notoriety by not signing onto the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Assembly of First Nations outline of that declaration includes the United Nations introduction statement;

> On September 13, 2007 the UN general Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This followed more than twenty years of discussions within the UN system. Indigenous representatives played key roles in the development of this Declaration.
>
> There are over 370 million Indigenous people in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the pacific. They are among the most impoverished, marginalized and frequently victimized people in the world.
>
> The universal human rights instrument is celebrated globally as a symbol of triumph and hope. Effective implementation of the Declaration would result in significant improvements in the global situation of Indigenous peoples. (Assemby of First Nations 2007, 3)

The reluctance to endorse a global concept of human rights for Indigenous peoples by Canada can be measured through an analogy of 'canoes/ships lost in the rivers' at home and abroad. The loss of good will that has resulted from this denial will require a massive investment in Canada's truth and reconciliation process. At last, 300+ million global Indigenous peoples are being recognized as deserving of the restoration of the lands, lives, and languages that colonization swept away. The declaration is meant to protect the planet from further human catastrophes of genocide, piracy and dispossession.

Yet, Canadian media continue to fixate on portrayals of pathology among Indigenous peoples and communities, and regularly point out that Canada's 1.5 million Aboriginal people are a strain and stain on Canadian identity and economy. Is the underlying purpose of this media voice to raise collective contempt, guilt or empathy, or demands for change? Is the portrayal of Indigenous poverty and suffering being used to maintain domination over lands and resources for the Canadian state, the same resources required to create sustainable economies and end poverty in First Nations territories? Canadian educational institutions at all levels, along with general public discourse, rarely address the reality that 32 million other Canadians have had their minds *shielded* from this country's atrocious colonial history (CRE 2009). The citizens of Canada like most colonial states expect the government to 'do something about the

Aboriginal problem' (Morrissey 2006, 347). Morrissey laments the abandonment of real social justice for Indigenous peoples and 'its replacement by a politics of reductionism in which the marginalization of Indigenous people is explained largely in terms of the individual, familial or community pathologies of Indigenous peoples themselves, (348). He questions reconciliation processes that lack specific plans to overcome injustices and merely stand as further management of Indigenous disadvantage. We live in a world where a majority of the planet's six billion people are desperately seeking the kind of good life that Canada affords to its tiny population. It is an inexcusable image for a country to dismiss its responsibility for its history that sanctions injustice, while blaming the victims for their unwillingness to be helped (Morrissey 2006, 352). Canadians cherish their multicultural diversity as a model of good will. North Winnipeg and downtown east Vancouver belies this simplistic facade. Too often the question is what can be done *to* or *for* Indians to fix them? Rarely is long-term real restorative collaboration *with* Indigenous people to alleviate colonial poverty and 'inferiorizied' communities undertaken.

The ratification on 13 September 2007 of the United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was the highlight of a twenty year restorative and recovery project to give prominence to the inherent rights of 370 million Indigenous peoples. The present struggle to escape the colonial dominance of Indigenous peoples during the eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth and now the twenty-first century represents a return to natural sovereignty (Longboat 2009). The Declaration recognized the rights of all Indigenous peoples to 'maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions and to pursue their developments in keeping with their own needs and aspirations' (UNPFII 2007). A statement by Indigenous Representatives from the North American Region raised the hope for reconciliation and collective healing:

> The tragic and brutal story of what happened to us, especially at the hands of the governments, is well known…. But today, with the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the United Nations General Assembly, we see the opportunity for a new beginning, for another kind of relationship with the states in North America and indeed throughout the world. (UNPFII 2007)

What resonates in Derrida's philosophy, for this author, is that the colonial impasses Canada faces can be contextualized within existing

confusion over giving, hospitality, forgiving and mourning between those who settled Canada and Indigenous survivors of that history. Derrida wrote about the concept of *aporia* as being stuck on a path of confusion or in a trajectory of uncertainty in the present, yet feeling helpless to comprehend what has happened after nothing happened (Koptie, 2009). Hurst suggests:

for Derrida what is finally at stake in the "plural logic of the aporia" is the experience of what happens when, in trying to determine certain notions as practical concepts, we find ourselves facing a kind of paralysis (for example the double bind, dilemma, the undecidable, or the performative contradiction). (Hurst, 2006:107)

The Two Row Wampum also expressed the complexity of hospitality, promoting peace, friendship and respect as necessary to maintain independence yet provide opportunities for interdependency. It was meant to be a lasting symbolic representation of the duty to honour human social, political, economic and spiritual relations with parallelism to allow peace, friendship and respect to act as intermediates' in natural conflicts. Many Indigenous protocols offered mechanisms to address differences and wrongs requiring diplomacy. The Two Row Wampum reflects the perseverance of historic memory and the protocols necessary to maintaining good will across time.

The Two Row Wampum is unique in its simplicity and remembrance of expressions of good will and of separateness and it remains interdependent only when necessary. Something happened over time to replace peace, friendship and respect between old world and new world canoes to bring greed, suffering, devastation and dispossession to expressions of hospitality between those mutual allies of peace, friendship and respect. I suggest that Indigenous scholars globally look to Treaty making inconsistencies and incongruence's as the historic roots of what happened to the parallelism conceived in the Two Row Wampum. It anticipated the need for the declaration of preserving shared interests through reciprocity and interdependency while preserving independence and self-determination. All human relationships might follow that ideal. All Canadians remain trapped in restrictive Treaty relations that failed to honour the intentionality of all parties who participated to keep the peace and good behaviours of peoples with divergent interests in the settlement of the territory commonly referred to as Canada. Friendships became colonial predatory circuses (Koptie 2009); brotherhood was replaced by competitive, opportunistic conniving for advantage and respect diminished into indifference.

Derrida explored the model for political relationship as friendship. Two separate 'brothers' in parallel journeys, with a respect for oppositional interdependency. Derrida calls for transformative politics,

> away from the brotherhood of men to the stranger, foreigner, immigrant, as figures of the other (but for a generalized other who need not be literally foreign). The exemplary relationship for thinking this new kind of democracy is not friendship but hospitality: flows through the host/guest relationship (Derrida 1997: 155).

This may become a paradoxical reality where the truths about the historical events that led to the crisis at Kanehsatà:ke are re-vised and re-presented for Canadians. Re-education is long overdue in devising a healing journey of truth and reconciliation, establishing new path-ways of unity out of the confusing disunity that resulted from silenced victims of British, French and other European colonial excesses that created the situation at Kanehsatà:ke. Problems are tied to events and from studying Derrida's thoughts on *aporias* one begins a quest to create new narratives to deconstruct difficulties. Even when there is seemingly no way out of a deep sense of helplessness and possibly hopelessness, all part of the despair far too many Indigenous peoples experience through colonial living;

John Ralston Saul requests a paradigm shift in conceptualizing who we are as Canadians and our common destiny:

> What I argued in *A Fair Country* is that most Canadians are confused by what they actually mean when they write or speak. Why? It is because they remain chained to Euro-US meanings, as if Canada were a culture inspired by and derived from Britain, France, and the United States and from European ideas of philosophy, politics, and law in general. There is influence of course, but if this approach does not ease and strengthen in the way we deal with ourselves and with others, then that influence cannot be as profound as we think. It is a more meaningful interpretation to see ourselves as a civilization inspired by Aboriginal world views. The way we act at our best makes sense when traced to Aboriginal language, meaning, and concepts coming out of the shared experiences of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries. Again, as Georges Erasmus puts it: 'This is how Canada came to be a 'peaceable kingdom', not one of violence and conquest'. For me, this explains the instinctive, positive reaction I have continually heard when I evoke the concept of inspiration based on Aboriginal world views for the whole civilization, whether from old-stock immigrants or new arrivals. (Saul 2009, 315)

Ward Churchill, in the bluntness he is well known, for highlights the resistance to engage in a collective healing of historic wounds from the colonial experience that each new Oka continues to represent. He wrote an article for the *briarpatch* magazine entitled 'Healing begins when the wounding stops: Residential Schools and the prospects for "truth and reconciliation" in Canada':

> Native people and societies are not 'sick', we're wounded. There is a huge difference between being sick and being wounded. Don't talk to me about 'reconciling' with somebody who's stuck a knife in my guts and is still twisting it. 'Heal?' Forgive and forget? Under those circumstances? Get real. The only way that's going to happen is if you remove your knife from my belly, accept responsibility for the effects of what you've done-or what you've allowed to be done in your name-and start making consequential, meaningful amends (Churchill 2008).

This paper moves towards a conclusion with that quote and invites the reader back to the eternal hope of the *Kahswentha*, the Two Row Wampum, as a model for restoring and preserving peace, friendship and respect, as well as, a path-way through the current Canadian colonial *aporia.* Canada, even with its tragic past, has every possible resource ever required to fulfill opportunities for the greatness we collectively inherited from our ancestors. The good, the bad, and the ugly that events like Kanehsatà:ke tragically re-call are shared conflicts requiring joint mourning. Indigenous Canadians have a fundamental human right to garner what-ever assistance is required to meet the challenges of recovery and survival. As a new Indigenous scholar, I hope to find allies to help build understanding around the valuable lessons yet to be discovered in Jacques Derrida's writings. The fellowship of rigorous academic research is for Indigenous scholars a glorious adaptation of the brotherhood our ancestors longed for and we must succeed in changing the face of Aboriginal Canada by finding a voice that honours our past, present and future. We are seeking self-discovery of who our ancestors hoped would endure to fight another day. It is a good day to be Indigenous and to lift our hearts from the ground. We are engaged in a struggle to restore the reverence of life which governed all Creation. Our ancestors sacrificed a great deal, and we must wipe our tears, open our eyes, listen deeply, clear our throats, and raise our strong voices to bear witness to our ancestors' prayers.

Kanehsatà:ke made us believe that peace, friendship and respect is lost. Let us all hope it can be re-located in Canada, land of the Kahswenhtha.

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