

Tape 6, Side 1: November 20th, 2004

Session 2, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Roger Maaka – Well, thank you for, for allowing me to speak and inviting me into the, into the circle. I've been, while you were talking this morning and what I heard yesterday, had the opportunity yesterday. Most of your personal stories and experiences have resonated very strongly with my personal experience, as well. And also, though, in my position as head of department raises a number of questions for me, and I would just like to sort of go through some of those things in the list that Brenda and Cheryl have put forward, sort of, considering some of those approaches. I for, I guess as a, as an Indigenous person who grew up in their own community and in later life came into this world called academia, I had kept the oral traditions and what we can generally call culture in a different package to my professional life. Partly because I'd never known where, how to share it in a classroom. And even if I really wanted to share it in the classroom, I never had a comfort level talking to a bunch of strangers who don't know my language, don't know my background, and I didn't have, want to go through the ABC's of having to explain all that sorts of stuff before we got down to the heart of it.

However, having said that, it's also my profession to do this as a Native Studies scholar and this field, which we call Native Studies or Indigenous Studies, which is a very new field, and I guess that brings me to one of the first, a first commentary, observation. We shouldn't be surprised that we have a level of confusion because looking, look at yourselves, look around this table, we are really the first generation to tackle this in any serious form. Yes, there have been other Indigenous scholars before us who, but they were a precursor. They were, they were individuals plugging away at different universities around the world. We are now collectively the first group to try and tackle this in a more systematic and a more considerate approach. And there is nothing in front of us. We don't have publications. We don't have academic grandfathers and grandmothers to go back to because we are there. So, we struggle. We struggle with the language—and I don't mean our own mother tongues, but I mean English. So we talk sometimes at cross purposes and we use the word culture when we use, even this morning, using the word accidental and stuff like that.

And one of the tasks, and I don't know if you've experienced it, but I really experienced, the hardest thing that I had to do with my writing is how to put it down on

paper because every time I put a word down, it didn't make a lot of sense. And I found it with the students, as well. They struggle with language. We haven't developed a terminology of our own yet, and so we use borrowed terminology, and sometimes it's a square peg and round hole, it doesn't fit properly. And so we're always re-inventing the way we express things to get the real idea across that we're trying to promote. I'll come back to that when we get to the end because Cheryl and Brenda have asked me to lead this into the conversation [of] how you work from the, the interview, the knowledge, and then you got to put it on paper. So we'll end up back there.

But that's my first sort of opening gambit on, there is, that we shouldn't be surprised and that we're struggling, we're struggling to articulate our ideas clearly. We're not, we're, in our own ways, are pioneers in this field and as immodest as that may sound, it's the realism that people have to face. And I'm on that one, the, that modesty one. I think for most of us it is certainly not done to promote yourself, that's very much a western business type idea, where you write your own letter of application. You put up your own case for promotion and that, and in most of our communities you don't do that. However, even though it's not our, there's another side to that, that I've certainly experienced with my people, is that you're not supposed to go in disguise either. So, if you've written a book, if you've attained a senior degree, if you've attained in a wider world, then they want to know. And why, they want to know, is so that they, you don't disrespect them by them disrespecting you. And I have been taken to task several times by my own elders for not telling them what I've done since I've left home, because they have been embarrassed that they see something in the paper or somewhere else, and they didn't do, under their protocols, what they should do to one of their sons who has done something. So we have to balance our sort of natural inclination to play down our expertise with the fact that the community needs to celebrate our expertise as well, because if we're part of a family, with part of a clan, a tribal group, then we owe it to them to allow them to celebrate on our behalf, even if we don't particularly, personally want that.

The other thing is that we have to have a degree of confidence that we are, we do have a level of expertise. Otherwise we can't serve our people that well. If we haven't got any qualification, if we haven't got any experience, then what are we doing in our jobs? We worked hard to get there, and so we should allow that to take its natural course, and each one of us will do it inside our own cultural frameworks the way that suits both our

personality and our cultural backgrounds. But we shouldn't run away from, run away from that because we have chosen to be in the public stage simply by taking the jobs that we've got. Some of us represent communities, and in some cases we're the first people from our families and our communities to get to this level of education, and we shouldn't shy away from that.

On the issue of accidental—accidental and other words that came up were uncertainty and spirituality—I kind of bring all of those things together myself. It may be by chance that something happens, that we have gone into certain areas, but that chance would never have come along if we hadn't done the homework. If we hadn't somewhere in our lives set that up, so in some ways I believe we do control our own fate. We don't know exactly, and that comes back to the uncertainty, and, of course, this whole idea that the elders never give us direct information, which we tend to **(Unknown word)** because they understand that life is not like that, it's not a set of ABCs and they're going to tell us. Most elders give us guidance and point us to a direction or a doorway, and then we have to have the courage to step through that doorway or follow that guidance, and I think they know from their experience that you can't live someone else's life for you. So they give to their grandchildren and their, and their younger generations directions, guidelines, but it's up to that person individually and up to that generation collectively to then take that and then move on. So we're often in a period of uncertainty.

There's one time, I went back home, our school was a hundred years old and there was a celebration for the school. And my tribe had bought a little house opposite the school, and because none of my family lived back there we rang them up, we got, we got that house. So we all stayed in the house. So we shifted back to that house and it was the day before the reunion was going to start, and it started to rain. And we're sitting in this little house, and my mother looked out the window and said, "Oh, look there's Uncle, Uncle Mick out there. Go and get him it's raining." So I ran outside, and my uncle was—well, my grand-uncle actually—was out and the rain was coming down, and I said, "Come inside, come inside." And he just stood there and he started to chant. And I'm busy trying to drag him inside and he's not moving, and I don't know what the hell the silly old fool's doing, you know. So, anyway, eventually after about half an hour we both got soaking wet and that. I got him inside and it wasn't until about ten years later I thought back on that, and I listened to the words of the chant and I realized that he had been telling me some of my genealogy. Why he

chose that moment, why, and I wasn't, but I wasn't ready to receive it at that particular time. I remembered the words, but it didn't mean anything. All I wanted to do was get out of the rain and get myself out of the rain. And so I guess elders do things which you might describe as accidental or you might describe as miscellaneous, but somewhere, somehow that, why he chose me to tell at that, or that particular time to this day, I don't know. He's long dead. But, that is, that is part of, part of an experience. And I think it is bound up in these notions of our spirituality and uncertainty and things like that. I don't think it's a set of rules that we get, we get from them.

To sort of get to more practical problems, I fully agree that the term friendship, love, commitment are very much a part of this exercise. You don't go into this or you don't stay in it very long if you haven't a commitment, and I guess you've all got horror stories of your own, but one horror story is, I have is, a guy that's a lot older than me, and he was, decided he wanted to know his genealogy, so he rang up one of his elders, in this country place, several hundred miles away from, he just lived in the city. "Uncle, yeah," he says. "I want to know"—we use the word **(Unknown Maori Word), (Unknown Maori Word, Same as Previous)**, that's my genealogy. And the old man says, "Oh yeah, all right," and he said, "Yeah, look, I'm in a bit of a hurry, can you fax it to me." So, I guess, I don't know, I doubt, he never got anything that guy, but, uh. So the commitment and that, and taking it seriously and all the rest of that, I guess, a part of it.

Unfortunately, we are talking about where there's interfaces with, with universities, and we have deadlines to meet. We have student quotas to, to adhere to. We have research pressures put on us by the funding organizations. They want results, although you don't get more funding, you don't get into doing more, more research. If you don't have students, then someone soon taps on your door and says, "What, how are you, how are you contributing to your department and everything else?" So we can't hide that, we do have, those of us who are inside institutions have those pressures. It is, how do you reconcile the thing that is by its very nature going to take a long time to build trust with groups of people, to meet with them? Literally years, and maybe even a lifetime. It does mean one thing, that you can't rush into communities, grab a bit of information, rush out again, and do that sort of thing, which I do find some people have. Not so much that disrespectful **(Unknown Word)**, but they have a very ambitious idea on what they're going to do. And so they think they're going to interview or sit with dozens of people, where the reality is you'll be lucky if

you get two people in ten years, and if you do that you're very privileged. We have to, we have to make our students and other people, colleagues and others, quite aware of that. That, that is, that is the process. It takes years, and then just because you've made it with one community doesn't mean necessarily you're going to make it with another community either. So you can't rush around the world or even the around the nation visiting all sorts of communities and think you're on the inside or going to be on the inside it. So it's a limiting process, then. There has to be limits. Even within the one language group, within the one cultural group, within the one province, you may only get to two communities in your whole career. That's the reality of it, and I think we have to start spelling out the reality of the limitations of what we can hopefully achieve. If we want to be good at this. If we want to raise the standards of it. If we want to do it in a meaningful way. And then, of course, if we're going to at all bring in the, the local indigenous perspective into what we're doing, because that's what we've been talking about, or you have been talking about, for the last couple of days, is exactly that, the inner understandings of that.

The another thing that has surfaced in your discussions is this, the challenge of looking at oral traditions and the university or the academy or this system. There is an interface, and a lot of times it comes out in terms of dichotomy. This is one thing, this is the other thing, and it's either, which is the best one, position A or position B? Is it, is it, the sort of western scientific approach or is it the Aboriginal holistic approach of the universe, is that, are they the better thing? What I, what I would suggest is that putting them into dichotomy is not very productive. It is understanding that they have different roles and different purposes. One's not neither bad nor good. One's not better than the other, but they are different. And where we want these two things to meet, because it, if it was simply keeping them different, then that's easy. We keep them in isolation, and one of the reasons, of course, that we are the first generation of people doing this is, up until now our peoples have been in isolation. But with the advent of televisions and better communications, there's no community that is isolated from the rest of the world as some of our grandparents were and could live their lives. That's not really an option any longer, so it is about where do these, these two things meet? There will be an in between ground, by which I personally would like to see is where Indigenous endeavour changes the western academy, the western intellectual tradition. Forces them to take our worldview seriously and factor that into every aspect of a searching light, whether you're talking economics or engineering or molecular

biology. Not simply in the area of literature, language, art, history, sociology, but across the whole spectrum.

And you're beginning to see that in some of the environmental sciences. Unfortunately there, though, it is becoming a matter of exploitation that timber companies, mining companies want to go into areas which are populated by Indigenous peoples. The Amazon, the Arctic, and so on, and so it's become very much a race at a very sort of head on in, and of course our people get hauled into the middle of that wanting to be part of progress and yet wanting to hold on. And you saw that with the Mackenzie Valley dispute a couple of years ago, when President Bush was first elected and wanted to put a pipeline from Alaska down into the lower 48, and the Dene people of the Mackenzie Valley were at odds. The traditional hunters didn't want the pipeline. The younger people who wanted employment and progress wanted the pipeline. And so, one of our roles in, our roles in places like this is to assist those people, work their way through this where their communities can embrace modern development but not at the expense of their language, their culture, their environment.

And we sit in places like this to offer some more reflective, rather than reactionary approach to it. So your oral, oral tradition then shifts on further than simply recording the past. Because oral tradition moves on to the skills of interviewing, and interviewing is still the primary way in which we tap into our communities. It's not the documentary or the archival research. So it may not simply be about how the old people understood the environment, but how younger generations now understand their present position. And this is an area which leads to many of us to an area of discomfort because we are in the area of, of contemporary politics and how communities make their decisions. And we have to consider very carefully what role we want to play in that. But this is a natural progression from where you are now because we are talking about orality and, and how people express their views and how those views are recorded, taken on board and then put. And you've already spoken because a lot of the stuff you've used has already ended up in court cases, in treaty claims and the like. It hasn't simply been the recording of tradition.

The, one of the thing things on the list is the issue of language, and we've already talked, spoken about it in one dimension and the dimension is that the elder has, has their worldview, their knowledge and their means of transmission is through their, their mother tongue, through their, their own language. Well, we're in the twenty-first century now, and in

an area of severe language loss. This is well-recorded and that, so we then have to consider there be generations of our people, our own people, let alone outsiders who are not competent in our language, languages. And then how do we work there? Brenda mentioned it earlier on this morning that, that people speak a creole of maybe two or three languages that's, that's the modern language of that, those communities. And you can see, and I've seen in my own communities, quite an irony. I know people who are language experts in the sense of competency in our language, but don't know a hang of a lot about traditional way of life. I know other people who are monolingual in English, and yet have lived a traditional life all their, their whole life. And part of the reason is that they have lived in, in, the only schooling they got was at a English school and they spent most of their time in the bush fishing and doing these things. But they've never been to university where they've been able to take a language course or something like that, and yet if you want to know how those traditional hunting practices go, then you go and talk to these people. You don't go and talk to the language expert, because they have lived it all of their life. And I have several cousins in this position who don't speak our language, and yet still follow an annual hunting cycle of, of birds that they have, and they carry with them the traditional knowledge. So we're entering, I suspect, in most parts of, particularly isolated Canada, you haven't struck that yet but I, you will in the future. And you'll get, you'll get kids that have, haven't come into town or gone into positions where they've been, where they've been exposed to language classes and opportunities and stuff like that, but they have remained with people who haven't bothered because they think this is the modern world. And even though they might be bilingual, they've passed on all their instruction in English or French with a few local terminology, names, terminology of their own. Then we have to then factor that into this pursuit of, of, of recording and collecting oral tradition, and this whole practice or orality. I guess we're, we're talking, starting to talk about. Already struggling with words to, to know what we're looking at. We've gone beyond oral history, oral traditions. So I guess we—it's just dawned on me as we're talking that we're moving on to some notion that orality may actually be a field of its own as understood by Indigenous peoples because it's still a prime vehicle by which Indigenous people express, express their world view.

So those, those issues that need to be discussed if we're to, if we're to crank this up we're going to move into another level. If the next generation of people that take our place are going to do this better, are going to do this, sort of, with more sophistication than us,

maybe stumbling onto things and learning by our own mistakes, that we are going to raise the level. I am all about that, just raising the level of Indigenous participation in the western education systems, you know., where the area is in sort of an exotic amusement level at the moment. Winona made mention about not being taken seriously by colleagues and that, then we have to crank this up a notch and move it, move it up another level. So we then, I guess we're moving onto ideas of understanding this and possibly systemizing it so we can pass it on to other groups or people who may read what we write or attend our classes and so on. And so, finally then, bringing back to the whole position of, of the paper we have. The step of taking this information, this knowledge onto the printed page and, and retaining as much as we can, the essence of what we've learned.

This is actually quite a difficult task. The written word and the spoken word are different. One is not a copy of the other. In the, my people were given written literacy a long time ago, in the 1830's. And our people became literate within about twenty years of that happening, so by the 1850's, which means people like my great grandparents were literate, written, with written literacy but in Maori, and a lot of that still survives. It's the largest body of Indigenous writing in the world because of that. And these are people who knew no English, who were the first generation who were converted to Christianity. So this is the, these are people who had not been widely influenced by westernization at all. What you get in there is a, is people writing like they spoke. So they write speeches, they don't write essays. And you can see it, and you can see it it's an oral, it's something, they hadn't developed the written tradition. Unfortunately, we have lost that, and we've got to the stage where the written and the oral are two different things. And in the, in the treaty claims that I was involved in, what the people asked us when we were putting together—our reports based on the evidence that they had produced and that the Crown had produced—is, “Please don't write us out of the evidence. Keep us in there. Keep our voice in there.” And as a group we spent many hours debating this. How do you keep, how do you keep the people's voice inside a report? A report that is actually a legal document that's going to go to cabinet and be decided, make a decision on, on a legal issue. But, they said, we didn't give you this oral history, this tradition for you to then write it out, write us out of it. And so it becomes a, it takes a very skilled writer and not all of us have that ability to do that. And I guess we can discuss techniques about doing this.

In my own writing, I try and do it by using as many quotes as I can. I've been criticized by other colleagues and others for doing this, but I see it as their voice. So, actually say and put down the words, either in my own language or then translate it into English or just in English, what that person said to me. Not so much what they said to me but how they explained what it was. So I, I put it in quote marks and then do it that way. I don't know, hopefully we'll discuss the different ways of, of not turning it into a dry report which cuts the people out, that cuts the people's story out. Which of course is what the, the western academy has been accused of for, for many years. And I think if you read back on historical stuff, you do see that. That one way might be, what do we think individually from our own community perspective is important? If I read a historical document now of my own people, and they'll say something like, "Oh well, this, this chief got up and said this, this and this." Well, that doesn't mean anything to me, but if they said the name of the person and what the person looked like, and then I would have known. Hey, that might have been my ancestor that said that. I don't know. All I know on a piece of paper is that chief said this or a woman stood up and disagreed with. So, from our, my people's point of view it's, it's who is it. Not so much what did they say, but who said it. And what were the circumstances so that, that would make that document live to me? And I'd, I'd find that—and I'm using my own background here—is linking that ancestral figure, where they signed the treaty or they did something else, to the modern day family because names change and through all sorts of reasons, through christening, through marriage or all sorts of ways, our names have changed. And as an outsider looking at a lot of the stuff around here that, I know in the Plains Cree communities, um, or everybody has their own Cree name, but I only know them as John Smith or William McAlister or something like that. It doesn't mean anything to me as an Indigenous person if I read that on a document. So to make it live would be some kind of idea of who this person is in their own communities.

And I think that becomes more important as the, as you experience language loss. At the moment we have a lot of people who speak the language here, but there are generations who don't and so just having a French or English name without any kind of view of who they are in the community. Future generation will not get the benefit of that. We, the living generation, we might know now or you might know now, but if the idea of this is to not have people curse us in a hundred years time, by saying, "Why didn't they put more information down, why didn't they give us that or to write or"—the other side—"write the

Indigenous point of view into this?” Keep the drama, the humor, the living essence onto the written word then we have, too, I guess. Share, discuss techniques, and ways of doing this and experiences in this. Thanks.

Cheryl Troupe – Okay, thanks Roger. I think we’re going to, Dick might want to just touch on some of the things that he had in his handout that he gave everyone. There were a few questions there that I think he wanted to address.

Dick Preston – Well, what Roger’s just said has got me to thinking about the next draft of this, and, at the same time, maybe I will just go over a few things. Here, as I said earlier, I was doing this as kind of a caution to myself for getting excited about having the book out and being pleased that the book seemed to be of interest to the Cree school board and to others. And so I thought, *Well, well and good but what does it not convey? And how can that be improved?* And so, what it doesn’t convey, basically, I guess, what Roger was talking about, keeping the drama, the humour, the essence. That comes through sometimes in the stories themselves.

I am not a skilled writer, I am a laborious writer. As a little cartoon I have in my office says, “Writing is easy. You just put the paper in the typewriter and wait till the blood runs down your forehead.” And so I was trying to think as Roger was talking, *Who does that now? Who does this kind of thing?* Well, Tomson does it for one I thing. Tomson Highway. And I think there’re other people, too, who get sense of the immediacy of events—maybe that’s the wrong word, but I’ll try it and see how it flies—into what their writing. When, when I was sitting in John’s room in my favorite perch on a little metal chest next to his table and he was telling stories, I was looking into the eyes of an old man who, this wasn’t just a performance in a kind of a stage, or television thing, but it was a performance. He was conveying memories, his and other people’s memories, with a kind of, of vividness so that although I couldn’t understand his words and had to rely on what an interpreter said, I could still be deeply affected by the music in his voice, by the words as I got them in English. And that’s not in the book. And that’s a shame. That’s a loss. And how do we get that? Well, okay. Videos, I suppose. That’s some help. A genius for writing, which is why I think of Tomson because I think he is a genius. And what are we aiming towards when we’re trying to do that? So, okay. There is a, I’m going to skip over the spirit, the code, and critical

interpretation, that was kind of an intellectual mountain climb that would take too long to, to deal with, and I'm not even sure I know how to do it anyway. But it was an opener at any rate.

What happens when you make a permanent record of inspired speech? Well, the words come out and the inspiration lingers. Some of it may come through. As I mentioned earlier, and this is not just John Blackned or just Cree, I'm a Quaker, as I mentioned before, and our worship involves a lot of silence. And occasionally somebody who feels truly inspired to speak will stand up and speak. If you write that down—*Oh, that was good!*—you know, so you write it down and you look at it the next day, it's not the same. It's like telling somebody your vision—when you tell it, it's not the same. And so, this is the essence that I think that you're speaking of, and it's certainly something that I have personally experienced enough of first-hand to see it as a wonderful thing and something of great value to be, to be handed down, and I don't think that a film or a video. I have relatively little of that, and unfortunately when I did have some very expensive, fast film in a movie camera, John elected to tell a really obscene story, so I'm not sure what to do with that one. But I've still got it and will think about that.

John Murdoch – Well, there's the John that you left behind when you went home with these stories, too, I mean. I saw you in John's life that a way that Mark and Eddie could never be, you know., they weren't as fascinated with his stories, you know. His sons were not as fascinated with his stories, and I used those stories in a classroom, getting people who, you know, who would otherwise be acting out to try learning how to read with more reverence than they felt for the other material, you know. Like Dick and Jane and that sort of thing. So I really think it, it still is an event. Unfortunately, what happens is when you're in the compartment, which is focused on collecting, it's to the exclusion of all the other meanings of those stories. Like, I used to see John everyday, and his life was pretty dull without Dick Preston coming along and recording the stories. And I know the students that had those stories in the classrooms in the school, their lives were very dull without those stories. And maybe, you know, maybe a film sort of in a, in a graphic way demonstrates the potential of the stories. But I think, Dick, in one person's excitement and using it where you need excitement in other parts of, other parts of people's lives. As a classroom teacher, I needed the kids' sense of excitement in order to hold their attention for the time I [was]

supposed to be keeping them enthralled with reading, and it was a lot easier to do with John's stories.

Dick Preston – Yup, what I'd like to do is to find a way to convey that excitement in printed words because that's, I think, printed English words, and to a very limited extent, I think I got some of that into the book. I have done it. My wife used to work with special needs kids, and she got me to come and tell these kids stories, and she said, "Don't worry if fights break out and stuff. These are kids with, with sort of unpredictable quality." Well, the room was chock full of three classes of kids and a bunch of teachers who were, and they were all fascinated by the stories, okay. The stories have their own magic. I can perform at that level successfully and get some of that across for little kids. Performing for older children, for adults, and so on is something that some people in the acting business do extremely well.

If Louie Bird was here, he could do it for you with Cree stories. He's good and at least he grabs me. And, you know, I can swap. I have swapped versions with Louie. I would never do it in public. Over a kitchen table, sure. But he's a storyteller, and so—and storyteller is not casual skill, if skill is even the right word for it. Okay, so halfway down the second page of this, he said, rushing on, is a little squib I wrote after reading some papers by a man I have not met, but with whom I am very impressed, Barry Tolkien. And I, I've cleared this with him. I know him only by e-mail, but since I wrote this thing I thought it was only a matter of reasonable respect to make sure that he thought I was giving him fair representation. And he was pleased. And so here it is.

Here's a guy who has put basically a career into working with Navaho stories and even in one particular story. One trickster story, and taking it through a series of stages, and reaching about as far as he could with an aid of a graduate student who was truly fluent in Navaho, although Tolkien himself has some ability. And so here's a case where he's able to, to put what, for a lack of better words, I would call poetic beauty. And to a story translated out of Navaho and into English, not only the language but also the images, the intentions, the humor, the spirituality. So that when you read it you laugh at the right places and you get a visual image of, of coyote barreling through the camp site at high speed heading towards failure, but he doesn't know it. And it's comical and so on. So this is a kind of example, I guess, of what I'm talking about. I put an esoteric reference at the bottom of that page. Tom

Stoppard cautions us that the script is a pale shadow of the performance. Well, he should know. He writes plays and very good plays. And this was a talk that he gave at McMaster's some years ago. Think of, of, oh I don't know, a Mozart piano concerto. You can look at the score and if you're a very skilled musician, maybe you can hear some of that in your mind, and maybe even more than your mind. But it's a pale image of a performance. So how do we get stories from a performance in, not just in Cree, but in old Cree, into English and have it be a performance that has that kind of, of dramatic, in a deep sense of dramatic, impact? Seems like that's the goal, and so these are just some thoughts I've had. It's something I'll go home and worry about some more. And if I can have any thoughts from you on this, I would be very grateful. Now or later, and if it's now just in a few minutes. Scope please, John.

John Murdoch – That's what Andy and I used to do with your stories that John had told you.

Dick Preston – Ohhh.

John Murdoch – I was principal of the school, and Andy was the Native language instructor, and we'd take the literal translations that Gertie did off the tape—Gertie is Andy's younger sister—and talk, lots of talk. And then I'd, I'd, you know, basically, we were working from a geography in our head, you know. If we were in the bushes watching the story unfold, what would we see? And translate that into English the way a person might speak that story in English. And then I'd write something out, and then Andy would translate it into syllabics in Cree, and I'd read that through. And then she dropped what she wasn't comfortable with, and that's how they ended up. And then I would translate from Cree back into English, and then we'd got our English version. But that's what was going on behind your back in Waskaganish.

Brenda Macdougall – I know that Winona and Ida, when they were doing their thesis and dissertations, struggled a lot with these things as well. Didn't mean to cut you off, Winona.

Winona Wheeler – Well, I was just thinking about what you said, Dr. Preston, because when I read your book, I feel it.

Dick Preston – Oh?

Winona Wheeler – And I think there is as much responsibility on the reader to come prepared to read as there is upon a listener or a student coming to meet with their teacher. And I think that's—we beat ourselves up a lot because we feel so incompetent in the world of literature, in our abilities to write, and sometimes we feel schizophrenic, but each and every one of us, if you've read our works, have addressed these questions and have found our own ways to, to, you know, approach, approach them. And we're constantly, I think, experimenting because literature allows you to experiment. Orality doesn't so much. And so I'm not beating myself up so much anymore about my inability to capture in the written form the nuances and the flavor and the full context and the character of the oral. Because I can, I can have some expectation of my reader. I don't think we should be breast-feeding. They should be coming to, prepared to read. And I think that if we provide that impetus, that encouragement to students, and to each other, to, to not come as a blank slate and expect to be entertained. But to bring your mind and to bring your heart and to bring that full package of your experience to that reading experience, and you'll get a tremendous amount out of it. And I can read anything over the course of twenty years, twenty-five times, and get something more out of it. Or something different out of it each time I read it. Umm.

So, yes, we struggle with that, but I'm not so sure that it should be such an overwhelming, prohibitive, overly complex kind of rock we put in our own paths. We do the best that we can with what we've got. And we're always striving, at least I'm always striving, to write better. Well what does that mean? You know, I can write better for the academic journal. I'm learning how to write better for *Eagle Feather News*, you know. I mean, every audience you go to, you, you have to, to adjust your writing, and to be, expect yourself, perfection of yourself in all of the realms that you [are] required to communicate in is, I think, setting ourselves up for failure and a slap across the head. And I've read the *Atlas*, you know, and it's a beautiful, beautiful thing. And I've read Maria Campbell's wonderful books. I mean some of the books I've read on and off over the years, many times. And I know what chapters in *Half-Breed* helped me get through rough times, you know. And when I need

inspiration and creative energies, I know what stories of the *Road Allowance People* will do for me, you know.

So, I think we have a lot to learn from each other by what we've already done, but we have to take responsibility to be, I think, mature and responsible readers. And I can find, maybe, something in your writing that you didn't intend to be there, and maybe you can find something in mine, and you can teach me more about what I've, you know, taken. You can take me to a deeper depth of my own experience by sharing with me what you got out of it that I might have missed. And I think that's one of the beauties of writing, is that even though in the western paradigm, once it's on paper it's considered to be a final product, [but] it's not a final product, and I think that's where our difficulty is. It's like, [a] story over time, it adjusts and changes. And it, it's you know, certain parts are left out or certain parts that have been left out before are added, depending on the context of the telling. I think the same thing is true of writing. We are forcing ourselves to fit into the western notion of literature and literacy. We are hampering ourselves. Why can't I write six editions of the book with new understandings and interpretations and ways of presenting it each time as I myself grow and develop?

Maria Campbell – Or even from six different ways because you think about one story. All of us could get the story in the community, and I'm a storyteller, so the way that I would put it or tell it would be different from a historian or, you know, because there are all those kinds of people. There are people that do healing that tell the same story and they come at it in a different way. One of the things that I find, I think, that's happening is, it's almost like we have to, we have to document these stories the same way in order for them to be accepted outside. And that, that always kind of frightens me because it takes away the diversity of the way that those, those stories are used or the way that those teachings are used in the community.

Winona Wheeler – One of the things when I was writing my dissertation—Maria kind of called me schizophrenic sometimes because there would be me, the youthful inquisitive student overwhelmed and awed, and then me, the academic, the scholarly authority, and it, I was in and out of my own text all the way through. I had a deadline, you know. I couldn't bring all my parts together to, to write it in a way that would please me because, because of

the nature of the dissertation process. And when I go over it, I've read it once since I wrote it and, and I see where Maria saw me in and out of my text. I can see where I was there 100% of myself, body, spirit, and soul. And then I can see where I [was] standing outside of myself, and being the, the observer, and the analytical force. Umm, but it served its purpose, you know. I met the deadline. I demonstrated my skills. I got my paper. And Ida went through the same thing. Remember we were kind of schizophrenic? Like where are we right now? But in the end it was us creating that for ourselves. In the end, it was us creating those dichotomies. And falling into them. And we hadn't had the time or, I think, the luxury of being able to create our own space in the middle. But the reality is if I read Ida's thesis I know her. And I come to that reading with my own bundles of experiences and understanding of her as a person and the work she does now, and where she was at when she wrote it, and I get a lot out of that. And I think just like learning from personal relationships and learning from interviews we have to take our learning from reading with the same level of seriousness to get to know the writer and to get as much of the context as possible.

And I, I also, I disagree with our learned friend here. I don't believe we are the first generation trying to do what we're doing. In fact, in my dissertation I addressed the fact that I, I, there was many academic elders before us. Each generation working within the confines that they had to work in and under the pressures that they, that were endemic of their times, and we spent much time talking about people like William Wipple Warren. People like Edgar umm, Ahenakew, Edward Ahenakew. And others who wrote before us and who studied, who thought in English and in Cree. Who brought with them both western and Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. And we read them now and we learn so much from them. And they were actually way ahead of our predecessors who, who were emerging with Ph.D.'s in universities in the 60s, 70s and 80s. They were way ahead of them because, even though they were working under very tight ...

Maria Campbell – They were working in, where there were policies imposed on them, where they couldn't talk about spirituality or religion. They couldn't talk about, there was just all kinds of things they couldn't talk about. And Edward Ahenakew in particular.

Tape 6, Side 2: November 20th, 2004

Session 2, 1:00pm – 3:00 pm

Maria Campbell –... where is this old man coming from, he's crazy and he's totally full of contradictions. And then when, when I read it again, I started to see what he was doing because I would think, *Why would somebody who's an Anglican minister who speaks English fluently and is very articulate, why would he be using Cree words in here when he doesn't need to?* And, and so I started to translate the sentence, the total sentence using that word that he would use, and then I realized, *My god, he's telling me something here.* But he had to do that in order to be able to, to get past the Indian Agent and his bishop and, and what he was doing was he was passing, he was passing stuff on to another generation, and probably hoping that somebody would ...

Winona Wheeler – Pick it up.

Maria Campbell - Somebody like me would be sitting there saying, “What’s wrong with this crazy old man? Why is he using these words?” And because he was the person who taught me the most in, by his writing, then, then you know all of the writings that I, literature that I read. When I started to read his [work] I realized how important it was to, to understand it as a person who’s teaching literature to, to make sure that the students had a good understanding of the time that that story was written, and what was happening all around the, the writer. I had never done that before. I mean, I did in a small way, but never in the way that I did with him.

Winona Wheeler – But when people first read Edward Ahenakew’s work, they kind of flipped it off, you know—silly little stories and then this goofy Old Keyam story about this goofy old guy. They just kind of flipped it off. But what it is, it’s, it’s a potent and subversive piece. It’s a scathing critique on policies and, and behaviours of the time period both on the part of the government and the churches, but also a scathing critique of our own people. I mean, here is a man at that very early stage who, who observed internalized colonialism. Saw it for what it was and critiqued it. Way ahead of his time. Now, if you didn’t go into reading his book with some preparation, with sets of questions and with some context and shared

experience with that writer, you wouldn't have got that out of there. You would have flipped it off.

Maria Campbell – And most people still don't get it today. It's very difficult to use that book in the classroom even with Aboriginal students because they don't want to. You have to face a lot of things about yourself to read him if you're, because he's from, from here. He talks about things that we still deal with everyday and we do. But the other thing that he does is we don't have a warrior society anymore in, in the prairie. And nobody even talks about it. When we talk about self-government, people talk about everything but the role of men in the community, and what Edward Ahenakew has in the first part of his book is, he got all of the laws of, of that society in those stories. And they're just, some of the stories are maybe three paragraphs. But all of those things, and, and that society was wiped out in, in, well 1870s, you know. They broke the staff and said there wasn't going to be anymore. And he found the old man that was a war chief and he, he recorded his stories. I'm sure they knew what they were doing because this was a community when they couldn't even leave the community to go and visit with each other, these, these old men. And he records them.

But it, again, that was, you know, reading, you know what is, what is this all, you know what is this story about over and over again. And then, I don't know what happened. One day they were really clear that he's, he's giving people direction and, and even the role of men and women in our community because people tend to think that, that Cree societies, or Cree speaking societies, are patriarchal, you know. The way that he writes Old Keyam is totally, he, he, he tells you that men have no business talking about women's things and he can't do it. But he, he ends up creating a wife for old Keyam so that, because it's, it's a piece of fiction, so that he can give, he can pass on those, those, you know, the role of women, and then the same time tell us what, you know, why we're doing this to each other. Why we've, we've taken a role, taken away that role within the community. But, like I said, it's not, it's not easy to teach because nobody really wants to read him for the same reason that I didn't want to read him the first time. It was an old man that he, he was, he was a mentor of Edward Ahenakew's who told me to read the book, wanted me to read it when it came out, and I didn't want to insult him to tell him that I thought it was, the old man was a sell out, because that's how he appears.

John Murdoch – It didn't matter to the kids in Waskaganish that they knew John Blackned. A lot of the kids—well, typical me teaching them in English—is that I talk in English and the kids talk to me in Cree or they don't talk at all. And when they talked about the stories, they talked about my grandfather's stories. So I, it was, highly relevant that they brought with them an identification with the storyteller and I suspect that was the main reason why they were willing to give the stories a chance at all.

Maria Campbell – But I, you know, I, excuse me, but I, but I know what Roger's saying and it's important for us to find ways to, umm. Roger, Richard, it's important for us to do that but I really think that it's important for us to remember that in the community we have historians, we have, we have different types of healers just like we have different types of doctors and, and one story can be, you know, told in different ways. When I did *Road Allowance People* I didn't, I couldn't do it the way that the old men told me those stories. I had to, it was important to be able to, to put them into a context—thank you to Edward Ahenakew. But I didn't know how to do that without a whole lot of words and I was interested in the story. I wasn't interested in writing the history and doing that first. Besides, I didn't have the time to go out and do that. So what I tried to do was, was to do it through language. How I used English—going back to what the old man said about where are you standing: are you standing in an English place or a Cree place? And the only way I could do that was to speak in what people used to refer to the way we talked—they said we talked village English. I never really knew what they were talking about. But by using that language I think that I was able to, to, to give that, to take the history along with that story and, and make, make it come alive. But that doesn't mean that my brother could tell the story the same way because—he's also, you know, a writer—because he, he, he uses stories differently from the way that I do. And I say use because that's what, that's what those are meant to do. They're meant to be used in, in many different ways, whether it's teaching or healing or, or whatever, or giving somebody direction or, or whatever. I guess one of the things that, like I said again, that I fear sometimes is that we'll end up, we'll end up all doing it the same way, and if we do it the same way, if we come up with a format, too much of a format, then, then it'll lose, it'll end up being the, the, the gatekeeper will be one group of, of people instead of, you know, the stories belong to all of us and we all have different ways of using them. Or different ways of, of telling them. And, yeah, your stories work for me, you know. There

some stories, when I'm reading them, you know, when I'm looking at stories that are written because I'm really interested in, in how, how things are documented. And, and like Roger, I, I want to use—and this is really good hearing my department head say that because I'm been struggling with re-writing a thesis—I think about three of four times for that simple reason. All of the material that I'm using is, is stories that I end up with pages and pages of, of quotes, but I, well, it looks like quotes. I have to quote them but I have to use them. I can't, you know, I've been told to cut them down. I try to cut them down and then I lose everything. And how do you, you know? I went over that and I'm slowly, as a result of the conversations that I've had with, with, you know, with Roger, letting go all of that and just, okay, I'm just going to tell Brenda about this or I'm going to tell Winona about it and I'm, and I'm going to pass on those stories (**Unknown Word**). And I'm finding that it's more comfortable that way. And the voice, even if it's me speaking, the voice that I'm trying to, which is my father's voice with these maps. His voice is coming through, you know. I mean he's taking over, it's, it's his story even if I'm talking. But it's really difficult and I get really intimidated when I. So, every time a new book comes out I go buy it because I think, *Well, maybe this person will have the clue that will make this easy*. It's, and again, you know, like Winona said, that's work in the *Atlas* was the, I, you know, I could hear the old people talking. You can hear them.

Winona Wheeler – Well, maybe we wouldn't have heard them if our hearts weren't there.

Maria Campbell – Yeah, but people whose hearts aren't there are not reading it anyway, I don't think.

Winona Wheeler – Some of them have to because it's required reading and stuff.

Maria Campbell – Well, Edward Ahenakew was required reading.

(Start Time: 15.0m) Winona Wheeler – And did you see the drawn faces when, you know.

John Murdoch – Did you buy the *Coles Notes*?

Winona Wheeler – Yeah, *Coles Notes* on Edward Ahenakew and the *Sto:lo Atlas*.

Dick Preston – Am I out of my mind to wish that you had written the context for what Ahenakew was really saying? That doesn't exist does it?

Maria Campbell – No, it doesn't exist, and I tried writing it but I think it would be grossly unfair for me to do that. Because what he's telling me might not be what he's telling her, but it's up to me to tell her, "Look at it, it's coded, you ..."

Winona Wheeler – "Get down there and read it deep."

Maria Campbell – You read it and I, I do that with the people that I, that I work with.

(Start Time: 15.6m) Winona Wheeler – One day we'll write down what she's telling us so that ...

Maria Campbell – But I wouldn't know how to put it into, into that anyways, other than to say, you know, this guy's got some pretty powerful things. And I have suggested that, you know, to different leaders that they really need to read that when they're talking about self-government and, and you know, and being self—what is the other word—self-government, self-determine. Because he's got all of that in these little stories. I remember I wept the first time I realized what he was doing. I thought this is, this is, this is what men need and they're not finding it. But you, you know as a woman you can't go and tell them, at least not Cree men anyway.

Winona Wheeler – Oh, you can try.

Ida Moore – And when you're out there getting the stories, you don't always know to that, why, you know. Because I remember when I was doing my research, this old lady, I thought, she was, she was sent to me by her granddaughter. I mean, I was sent to her by her granddaughter. And she told me the story about moths when she was a young woman and I thought like, and she wouldn't let me, ah, tape record her or anything. I had to sit and listen

to the story. I couldn't write nothing. I had to sit and listen to her stories. And the first story she told me was about moths. And, and her experience with using moths in, with her babies. And like it was a hilarious story but at the end of it I thought why did she tell me this story? Like and, and, when a couple of years later, it dawned on me. It's like, watch, watch how you use things. You've got to, you have to know how you, how you're using things. You don't just grab things and use it. You have to know what, you have to have that background.

Winona Wheeler – (inaudible at start) ... Maria tweaked me about Edward Ahenakew, and I had to pull it out and read it again. I was writing a dissertation. I thought, *Okay I'm writing a dissertation, it's an academic enterprise. I'm dealing with oral history and I'm, and here's a text where the oral was transformed and represented in the written text.* So I went looking for tools and I found some fun stuff in narratology. Umm. In the intended reader, the real reader, and the narrator, and the narratee, and the texts. I had a good time playing with it. And it was fun. And even with those western analytic tools I was quite blown away by the new stuff I got out of Edward Ahenakew. All sorts of tools and all sorts of insights. And I think if we all take different sets of tools to these, these readings, or these stories, whether they're oral or written, and we all come out of it with such unique insight. And that's one of the things that we had hoped to do sometime, was to throw the text on the table and get a bunch of people to come at it with their different realms of experience and different sets of tools, you know. I mean, how a literary critic would come at Edward Ahenakew. Looking for knowledge and teachings and understanding from how a historian, or, you know, an ethno-botanist would come to it. Everybody comes with their own skills and insights and questions. And it's a tremendous teaching tool, and I think every single text ever written can teach so many different things to many different people, but if we look at it like it's a dead artifact already, we've killed it.

Dick Preston – And if we just read it our own way and don't share that with others who read it their way, we've almost killed it.

John Murdoch – Have you come across James Settee or Henry Bud or Sam **Izeroff (Unknown Spelling)** or any of these guys? Because Edward Ahenakew seems like one of

the guys when you check these guys out. They were all submitting manuscripts to the Geological Survey of Canada, ethnographic division.

Winona Wheeler – Because they were all starving to death and they were trying to make some extra money on the side.

Maria Campbell – Sometimes I think that the meaning as a Cree/Metis person, for me anyway—I think that we live real privileged lives in Canada today, you know, most of us, because we have, everything is here for us, you know. We have, we can talk to each other. We can go and talk to, to people in other departments. When I think about somebody like Edward Ahenakew, you know, who couldn't have nobody to talk to. He was, he was the first Aboriginal, you know, Cree national leader. At the same time he was studying medicine because his people were dying. At the same time, he was covering miles as a minister, trying to minister to people, you know. When you think of everything he was doing, and he was on a pass system. He wasn't allowed to talk about spirituality. He had to become an Anglican minister in order to get a university education, you know. I can't even begin to imagine what it would be like for me to try and write in those conditions or to do research, and he did all of that. And still, he put out a newsletter for forty some years, you know, in syllabics. Goodness knows, I don't read syllabics, but there must be stuff in there that, you know, that somebody could look and see what else he's saying to us besides giving us Anglican news. But I think we're too privileged, you know, people. We talk so much about what a bad time we have as, as Aboriginal people. We're really lucky. We're well off. We're rich. And as a result of that, we're lazy, and we're not, we don't do the work like we should. Maybe, you know, we need to suffer some more.

Unknown – Well, you can.

Maria Campbell – No, I don't want to.

Dick Preston – I think I was beating myself up.

John Murdoch – Well, I was writing the **(Unknown Words)** collection in the public archives. And I suspect that's how he financed a lot of his survival. Him and Henry Budd and James Settee. They used to send, mostly **(Unknown Word)** stories to R.T. Bell. And then he end, forwarding them to Boaz and these other guys that R.T. Bell met up with.

Cheryl Troupe – I think that something we were talking about earlier, that we wanted to touch on, was this idea of referencing, and what Keith brought up—how do you reference those types of things? So maybe we can throw it open to that and see, see what kind of response there is.

Unknown – How do you reference grandfather?

Cheryl Troupe – Yeah.

Winona Wheeler – Footnoting a dream is a little bit different, isn't it?

John Murdoch – Sub footnotes.

Keith Carlson – Makes you think about the way that, you know, we don't, I guess we don't want to reify in the, we don't want to reify Aboriginal culture as being pre-contact somehow. That's real and post-contact isn't anymore. As though, you know, that's, we don't do that anymore. And I think the same with academia. It changes as well, it's adaptive. I think despite all the problems it has, for all of us doing Indigenous issues, universities as big lumbering bureaucracies have also been very adaptive. You think of the changes, you know, from hearing what Winona was talking about when she was doing her master's degree or her whatever. It's the first person trying to do this, and you couldn't bring in. It's come a long way in a short time, given the inertia and inherent conservatism of this place. And part of it, I think, is going back and into our disciplines of Native Studies and history and anthropology and, and, and, and asking, strongly suggesting perhaps is a better way than just asking, because often you get a no and you can't stop there. That the discipline adjust itself to, to take into account other ways of knowing, and if you think about it that's really what the academy is supposed to be all about. Every grant we apply for asks, "How will this

contribute to the advancement of knowledge?” And part of contributing to the advancement of knowledge is contributing to the change in the way we understand what knowledge is. We need a new type of footnote, right, that’s going to work for Native Studies. We, we need that. And that requires us as historians, say, to examine why we look at oral sources, and oral sources that, and we have these assumptions. We think an oral source is such and such. Like in my mind when I started, you know, it’s an old man or old woman with a child on their knee passing this down and how, gee, it doesn’t work that way. And you find out that you’re, you start to get lost. And I think of something my grandfather said when I was, I guess in my early teens, and you’re at that age where your, you know, things aren’t going right and you’re frustrated with the world. It’s not changing fast, you know, like we are now today right as scholars. Things aren’t right, we’re all ...

Winona Wheeler – Except with too many hormones going ... **(Inaudible due to laughter)**

Keith Carlson – But we’re, you know, you get stuck in an adolescence, and when you’re really in adolescence you’re frustrated. Everything is going too slow and the old people don’t know, you know. Your mom is telling you to come in when you’re not supposed to. And, and you’re feeling frustrated, and I remember talking to my grandfather who I was always able to talk to. And he said, “Well, you know, sometimes you really think you’re lost,” he said. “And you just stop for a minute and look around and there you are.” You know, I didn’t really get it at the time, but, but I think that’s what we’re doing in many ways here, too. You feel lost because Native Studies is falling between disciplines and so it’s not, it doesn’t have the institutional, infrastructural support that a classic discipline has. And so it has to justify itself as, “Oh, we are a discipline. Oh, or we’re something different than a discipline, we’re new. We’re.” But, but, all the criteria that are used are these old ones. And then suddenly you look around and you say, “Oh gosh, it’s been a generation or two and we’ve been doing it.” There’re people ahead of us doing it. It’s actually there. There is a, there is a historiography. There is a, an intellectual tradition stretching back and, and we find these traditions and, and we—and one of the neat things I think about Native Studies is that it’s, it’s genuinely dancing around other disciplines, you know. It’s doing the tango here, and then it comes over and starts to waltz here, and then it’s over ...

Winona Wheeler – ... does a mean Red River jig (**inaudible due to laughter**).

Keith Carlson – But that, that's a healthy thing. It's, it's not simply being multi-lingual, but being able to know more than one dance step. And knowing that when you're dancing in the certain type, when you're doing the polka, that there're certain steps you have to do or the person you are dancing with is going to get sore toes. And, and, but that doesn't mean you can't help them, the Metis, fiddle music. How is the, the women, the other night described it was.

Brenda Macdougall – Crooked music.

Cheryl Troupe – That he lets his fiddle do the talking.

Keith Carlson – No, no, but his wife was saying it's crooked, it's crooked music, and the little bit that I've read on Métis music is this idea that there's this other beat right, that comes in.

Maria Campbell – It's got an extra beat.

Keith Carlson – Yeah, this extra beat. I mean that's such a great metaphor, it strikes me, for Native Studies in so many ways. That there's this extra beat, and from the outside you can appreciate it as beautiful. But I could, I was watching his wife play the guitar, I play a little guitar, and I was watching how she strummed and the chords she was using. I thought, *Oh, those chords are simple I could do it, if I hear this*. But the strumming technique, it was the rhythm part that was different than the way I've seen done before. And I thought that's what I would need to do before I could even begin to understand what that gentleman meant with his fiddle, was that different rhythm that's conveying those same notes on an instrument that is European in origin but somehow is talking in a different way. And I think what's I need to do with my footnotes. I need to work out a way that is respectful to the historical discipline and to Bob Joe and Wesley Sam, the people who are transmitting that knowledge to me in a different way. So I don't need to hide that it was a dream, because that's not right. That's not

right to them and it's dishonest, in a way. But the academy has to somehow accommodate a new form of footnoting and ...

Winona Wheeler – But you see the only reason why Indigenous Studies is dancing around is because we haven't got it together, we haven't got the faith enough in our own foundation. And that foundation that differentiates us from those other disciplines is deep, deep, deep. And many of us can't get there yet. And the biggest, biggest differentiating factor is, is that, other ways of knowing is the package. But it's not other to me, so why am I calling it other ways of knowing? So that's the first question. The second thing is, is that our objective is not to study a subject for the purpose of understanding that subject. The objective of Indigenous Studies should be to learn to transform our own minds. So it's a difference between studying something for its esoteric value or its, its interest and for curiosity reasons and studying something that will change our lives. Something to live by. So it's one thing to interview old people about their worldviews and understandings, the way they do things, and then document it and move on to another subject. And it, from interviewing and working with elders and actually living by those teachings that they're giving you. That's the big difference, and we're not, as a discipline, we're not grounded there yet. We're still studying ourselves as subject and other. We have not internalized the reality that our methodology, the relationship is about transforming ourselves.

Maria Campbell – And the methodology is also, we have winter ceremonies coming, you know, that's, that's part of that whole thing. Or we have something else there has to, a feast that goes with this particular thing.

(Start Time: 29.8m) Winona Wheeler – And it's a very organic and a very natural phenomenon that we're not comfortable with in an institutional environment, so we're not doing it. We're still looking at ourselves as other. We're still calling our classes other, you know, and subjectifying and objectifying our, our history and lives. And we're not actually practicing and living by that which we're studying. And that's the difference between Indigenous Studies and the conventional disciplines. Is that it, it is a revolution, and it's a transformative experience. Or it was intended to be. Okay, hit me now.

John Murdoch – I hear ya. I get into trouble all of the time by not appearing to be objective or distant or was is it. The judgments usually have, they're looking for somebody who's disinterested. Disinterested study. And I've never been able to get my head around disinterested study. I'd rather be obsessed every time.

Winona Wheeler – But it's more than that. It's about understanding at an intellectual level and actually using that knowledge in your real life.

Dick Preston – See, I don't see that as limited to Indigenous Studies. It, it seems to me that that's what I've done, being an anthropologist, not that every anthropologist does, god knows. But that the opportunity is there to try.

Winona Wheeler – Absolutely.

Dick Preston – And I don't know how far I can carry that into academy. And I don't know to the extent—since I've got my mouth going, I'll just blurt you off into space now, to which the freedom from the disciplinary fortresses that Indigenous Studies represents is a kind of model to where universities, or at least departments, like it or not, are heading, because the, the, the defense mechanism of disciplinary boundaries is constantly being disconfirmed by working on real world problems and collaborative contexts. And I don't know where in the hell I was going with that. Except to say that I think that what we call an intellectual enterprise of is intrinsically, including the possibility of being a transformative experience, not only for ourselves, but for others. Has anybody here read Edward Said's representation of the intellectual? Yeah.

Winona Wheeler – Yeah, absolutely. See, an example of that—Maria gave a wonderful presentation at a conference in Toronto, editing on the page was the book came out, the Conference Proceedings, and Maria's paper wasn't in there. But

Maria Campbell – She didn't have the paper.

Winona Wheeler – I taped it. We had a good time. But it was all about the telling of stories and the process of putting these stories onto paper, and there were some phenomenal scholars there from all over who have done a lot of work in story and oral traditions research. And, and I was so excited, we were both so excited because these people had studied under traditional storytellers and learned people. Well as we sat there we were totally blown away by how boring their oral presentations were. Some people who had studied with dynamic, lively storytellers for twenty, thirty years were the cruddiest storytellers we had ever listened to. So what were they learning if they weren't learning the tools and, and the whole package from their teacher? They were merely in it like this, intellectualizing. When you, when you study with somebody, you don't just take a little piece of it. There's a context. And what we expected was some darn good storytelling. And it was boring. Monotonous, monotone, squeaky voices, when we know that the storytellers that they studied under were phenomenal storytellers. See what I mean by, they didn't learn.

John Murdoch – Would you say they succeeded ... **(inaudible)**.

Maria Campbell – So is that what you're talking about?

Winona Wheeler – No, they, they were very emotionally attached, but they didn't learn.

Roger Maaka – I think the, for me the difference with Native Studies and other disciplines and the line you're talking about, is that disciplines are bounded by a long, long history. Most of the standard ones are well over a hundred years plus old, and they've developed their own styles of things, and that includes methodology and theories and philosophies and everything else. Native or Indigenous Studies are bounded by the people. So whatever way the people go, people in terms of community, people in terms of language, people in terms of whatever. Then we have to go that way. So, we borrow, if a methodology helps us that's evolved from psychology, anthropology, history, sociology, unabashedly we say, "Yeah, that will work." Or we kick half of it out because it doesn't work. And it's some of the bad work in Native Studies is when, including Indigenous scholars, have become ideologues. And they say, "Well, I'm a Marxist, so I use Marxist view of this." And to me they screw the whole thing up. When I start reading it, they go, they're great for a certain level, and then they become

hard line in their thinking, and it doesn't seem to work. And so they are not taking Indigenous philosophy, theory, worldview. They're taking a western, or one that evolved in the west, and trying to bring it in and saying, "You've got to look at it this way, otherwise it's not going to work." And I've seen many people fall into that trap. So we have, we are evolving, that all, oh, I don't know, we're extrapolating, but taking what we, our own experiences are from the elders from our backgrounds and saying, "This is a way of looking at these things."

Winona Wheeler – I think it's a difference between being inter-disciplinary—which people are able to wrap their brains around now, but which was cutting edge and revolutionary twenty years ago—and being able trans-disciplinary. And trans-disciplinarity allows us to take a little bit of economics, and take to a little bit of anthropology and use it and abuse it in any way we see fit if it helps us deal with an issue. It's kind of disrespectful trans-disciplinarity, and sometimes we apologize for that and sometimes we don't, depending on the context. But that's the space that we're in and it's not a post-modern space. But it borrows from post-modernism and it takes and it mangles a little bit of this, you know, and it's about creating a unique and free space so that somebody's work in the **Halkamalum (Unknown Spelling)** has a safe place as does somebody's work with the James Bay Cree or the Piapot Cree-Assiniboines. Creating a place where it's, it's okay. And you don't have to defend it, but you see where as a discipline we haven't reached that level of consciousness as a discipline yet, and that's what I think one of the things we're striving.

John Murdoch – That was the difference that I was looking for in making a switch from anthropology to Native Studies, and that's why I chose Leroy Little Bear, you know. Because that's really his, I expect to defend a thesis in terms of what sense it makes with people not with a history of a discipline. And I'm quite pleased with, you know, with the change and the next exciting chapter I really want to be the same, you know. I'm prepared to draw from wherever it makes sense to for any discipline or any structure, but ultimately it's going to have to be defended in terms of what's real with the body of people.

Winona Wheeler – You know, you're talking about footnotes. One of the questions that I had to deal with in my dissertation that Maria helped me through a lot with was that your

sources are human beings, as opposed to books, when you're doing oral history. You can't treat your sources the same way you treat a book. It's really disrespectful. And Ida confronted the same issues, and we had conversations about that. And the only way I found under the, at that moment, you know, when we're under a lot of stress to get this done, was to try to follow the teachings of those people that you got the stories from. Who told you before they started the story where they got the story from. I mean, how hard is that to build that into a text, you know. And so, before I would introduce any materials that I gained through oral history research or any teachings I got from Maria or for, from Smith or from Harold or anybody, I would tell the reader who this person is and what my relationship is with this person. So instead of relegating a human being to a footnote at the bottom of the page at the back of a text, I built them in. The relationship right into the text.

Dick Preston – That's what Roger was talking about.

Winona Wheeler – Yeah, yeah.

Dick Preston – Let us know who it is, what the context was.

Winona Wheeler – And I think that's the only respectful way of doing it. There might be other ways. But I haven't come across any yet. And I've seen people do that without realizing they were doing in that in other writings, you know. But the dream thing, the spiritual stuff, stuff. The spiritual stuff, stuff, that's a little, we're not there yet.

Dick Preston – The problem I think that I see right off with a dream is that if you put down, "John Smith dream," okay, you've lost it right there because the dream is then relegated to the, to the trivial, and so maybe we don't need to use the word dream, or else we need to have the word dream up there where you're talking about who this person is and what the context was and what dreaming is. For that person in that context at that time and what it means then to the person who's reading it now. And also, I'm really going to have to shut up, but—because I keep losing my thread—but also, allowing for it to respectfully include an aspect of mystery. Not trying to pin it down page and chapter and so on. But I'd say, "This is the way it came to him."

Winona Wheeler – Which means expanding the boundaries of knowledge. What constitutes knowledge and what constitutes research methods.

Dick Preston – I think you guys are really lucky to be where you are in Indigenous Studies right now. I think this is a really, it's the stage at which things are getting formulated. You see it as, as not there yet, but when it gets there it's not [going to] be nearly as interesting, I think. So, no, really, it's exciting because it's creating something out of, out of.

John Murdoch – (inaudible) ... sounds Irish.

Dick Preston – Irish?

John Murdoch – You didn't have a hat, you'd be wearing one all the time.

Dick Preston – Well, yeah, some things about us have never changed. What in the hell do you mean?

John Murdoch – All the time I was growing up, somebody told me that life won't be as interesting when you get there.

Dick Preston – Oh, okay.

Cheryl Troupe – I think so, yeah we'll take a break now.