

Sneakup and the Totentanz: All Our Relations Confronting the Dance of Death

Ahasiw Maskegon-Iskwew, 2005

Expressions of animism¹ are the most striking features of indigenous² languages world-wide. Animism is not referenced by simply the etymology³ of individual words and concepts - it goes to the linguistic roots where whole classes of thought and action are structured on animistic world views. Every well-crafted statement in indigenous language is then an expression of an intimate relationship with the natural world - especially when examining contemporary concepts that attempt to ignore or debase this relationship. It is important to note that the animist expression *All My Relations* places the individual in a humble position of inter-dependance within family (past, present and future), community, and the animosphere. Where communities have had their languages weakened, this understanding remains in family relations, self perception, and concepts of ethics, justice and creativity.

Totentanz, or the Dance of Death, has a long history in Europe – going back to the times of the Black Plague and perhaps even into the lost history of European animism. It's contemporary form comes to us from the expressionists of World War I and carries with it their anguished experiences of imperialism, colonialism, genocide and war. The Totentanz is also about spiritual loss faced by societies forced to chose between brutal antagonists that each offered a form of soulless utopia. The forces of the last five hundred years that have led to the social, spiritual and ecological crisis of this millenium were directly confronted by the expressionists and, in performance, through the Totentanz.

¹ Animism: The belief that all objects, and the universe itself, possess and are animated (given being) by souls. Often associated with Aristotle who held that all living things had a soul, or psyche, which was what made them alive. The vegetative soul was the capacity for nourishment and reproduction. The animal soul included these but in addition the capacities of sensation and movement. Humans had all the foregoing plus the capacity to reason. The idea of animism is rejected by those who support a mechanistic view of science. In the 20th century James Lovelock's Gaia - embodying the idea that the ecosystem as a whole can be viewed as a quasi-living thing - can be seen as an attempt to resuscitate animism, but this time with a scientific 'spin' on it. *Minerva Dictionary of Concepts*, owned by John Clarke and maintained by Jonathan Irving, Kingston University.

http://www.kingston.ac.uk/~gr_s005/dictionary/concepts/a/Animism.html

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² The term indigenous is used to refer to the highly diverse international group of cultures who have a pre-colonial history of animist spirituality, usually but non necessarily in tribal non-agrarian contexts. The term Aboriginal refers primarily to peoples with a pre-colonial history in North, South and Central America; Australia; New Zealand; and Hawaii who participate in political action under that term. Further information on indigenous issues can be found at the website for the UN Permanent Forum on Indigengous Issues:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/index.html>

and in the publication *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Diversity*, ed. Darrell Addison Posey, 2000.

Published by Intermediate Technology Publications on behalf of United Nations Environment Programme.

p. 3-4, 'Who are indigenous and traditional peoples?'

<http://www.unep.org/Biodiversity/>

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³ et y mol o gy n.

1. The origin and historical development of a linguistic form as shown by determining its basic elements, earliest known use, and changes in form and meaning, tracing its transmission from one language to another, identifying its cognates in other languages, and reconstructing its ancestral form where possible.

2. The branch of linguistics that deals with etymologies.

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<http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=etymology>

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The contemporary arts ecology is about staking claims to ownership of public cultural awareness, leadership and education. The Totentanz was an early protagonist of a oppositional creative voice but from within the dominant exclusive imperialism it criticized. The expressionists were some of the earliest arts activists and opened spaces for oppositional voices from outside European narcissism.

The voices of *All Our Relations* are a continually performative expression, existing in a temporo-sphere, a multi-dimensional torus⁴ of time, beings and forces. As dominant cultural narcissism⁵ crumbles, indigenous expression is finding the opportunities to stake claims within the arts ecology according to it's own terms - not as part of art dealership stables or within foreign museological codes, but within innovative forms that give fuller range to the viral⁶ understanding of *All Our Relations* by all cultures in contexts that are also sub-, anti- or post-institutional.

Animism, Language and Translation

Animism is the belief that all natural phenomena have spiritual essences that are subject to very little human intervention and, in most cases, beyond much more than a very limited and contingent understanding by humans. Human spirits are only a small part of this spiritual community, participating in a wide variety of relationships, alliances, conflicts, and temporal⁷ frameworks within it. Human beings, as with most natural phenomena, are themselves inhabited and influenced now-and-then by many spiritual forces including those of their families and communities. In animist cultures these beliefs are pervasive and are reflected intrinsically in the cultural bedrock of language.

⁴ "The usual torus embedded in three-dimensional space is shaped like a donut, but the concept of the torus is extremely useful in higher dimensional space as well.

In general, tori can also have multiple holes, with the term n-torus used for a torus with n holes. The special case of a 2-torus is sometimes called the double torus, the 3-torus is called the triple torus, and the usual single-holed torus is then simple called "the" or "a" torus.

One of the more common uses of n-dimensional tori is in dynamical systems."

<http://mathworld.wolfram.com/Torus.html> Downloaded January 8, 2005.

⁵ nar cis sism n.

1. Excessive love or admiration of oneself. See Synonyms at conceit.

2. A psychological condition characterized by self-preoccupation, lack of empathy, and unconscious deficits in self-esteem.

3. Erotic pleasure derived from contemplation or admiration of one's own body or self, especially as a fixation on or a regression to an infantile stage of development.

4. The attribute of the human psyche characterized by admiration of oneself but within normal limits.

Ibid.

<http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=narcissist>

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⁶ While this term comes from "viral marketing", I think that memes or ideas for cultural change are also spread like viruses, and like in viral marketing, spreading cultural memes also implies some form of endorsement within the transmission. Use of this term also references the micro and macro understanding of animist praxis in cultural production.

⁷ tem po ral adj.

1. Of, relating to, or limited by time: a temporal dimension; temporal and spatial boundaries.

2. Of or relating to the material world; worldly: the temporal possessions of the Church.

3. Lasting only for a time; not eternal; passing: our temporal existence.

4. Secular or lay; civil: lords temporal and spiritual.

5. Grammar. Expressing time: a temporal adverb.

Ibid.

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<http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=temporal>

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In Nêhiyawêwin⁸ (part of the Algonquian family of languages⁹) for example, nouns and their accompanying pronoun forms are categorized by linguists as having a language gender of either animate or inanimate.

Although differing from one another in numerous ways, all Algonquian languages share basic patterns of inflection. Algonquian words were once described by the linguist Edward Sapir as resembling "tiny imagist poems." Sapir's analogy aptly captures the remarkable flexibility and specificity made possible by Algonquian morphological and syntactic structures. Algonquian languages mark grammatical categories of gender based not on biological sex, but rather on a distinction roughly corresponding to that in nature between living and nonliving entities—categories labeled inanimate and animate by linguists. Animate nouns include persons, animals, spirits, large trees, some fruits, some body parts, feathers, and tails, as well as pipes, snowshoes, and kettles.¹⁰

Any attempt to express global concepts of animism with the English language is threatened with distortion because of the historic development of the cultural roots of European languages, their contemporary persistence, and the unconscious and uncritical acceptance of their influences on perspectives and rationale. The preceding quote is revealing of the judeo-christian scientific materialist roots of the English definition of the "reality" of things and the difficulty of translation and understanding across the cultural chasm between animist and non-animist cultures. A detailed analysis of almost all Nêhiyawêwin expressions reveals them as blasphemy in most Christian contexts, and in many scientific ones as well.

The contemporary world view of animist peoples is complex and profoundly troubled. They give great care and respect to spiritual forces that resonate throughout the animist world, especially in relation to the natural environment through which spirits reveal their presence and make evident their strength and influence. The current rapidly-destructive millenium is very recent in relation to the length of the prehistory of oral language animist cultures (the time before writing and its attendant agrarian-driven crisis). However, the mass-scale environmental change that it has brought is known to have extreme consequences by those who believe that the natural world is a rich and powerful spiritual ecology – necessary to, but not necessarily tolerant toward human survival, culture and identity.¹¹

⁸ "nêhiyawêwin-/NI speaking Cree, the Cree language"

Wolfart, H.C. and Ahenakew, F., The student's dictionary of literary Plains Cree : based on contemporary texts. 1998. Memoir 15, Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics, Winnipeg. P.115.

⁹ "The Algonquian linguistic family encompasses those languages spoken aboriginally and currently in regions stretching from the plains to the eastern seaboard, as far south as present-day North Carolina and as far north as the Canadian Subarctic. Two languages spoken in California, Wiyot and Yurok, have distant linkages to Algonquian as well."

Bragdon, Kathleen. Algonquian Languages, Encyclopedia of North American Indians / Frederick E. Hoxie, editor. Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1996

http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/naind/html/na_001400_algonquianla.htm

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¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ See *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Diversity*, ed. Darrell Addison Posey, 2000. Published by Intermediate Technology Publications on behalf of United Nations Environment Programme. Especially *Introduction: Culture and Nature – The Inextricable Link*.

<http://www.unep.org/Biodiversity/>

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It is ironic that human survival, physical evolution and cultural development over at least the past three hundred and fifty thousand years have taken place under the protection and guidance of animist spirituality, research and methodology.¹² Most animist oral histories tell of whole communities who chose the wrong leader, the wrong path or the wrong method and paid a lethal price. The past eight thousand years of anti-animist agriculture, metals and writing – intensified geometrically during our recent blip of a post-industrial century – are proving to be similarly lethal choices for the environment. Perhaps for the future of the relatively short homo sapiens moment too.

Animism versus Anthropomorphism

The definitions of animism and anthropomorphism¹³ are often intertwined and equated – an error that creates confusion about animism. Clarifying their critical differences and examining contemporary anthropomorphism provides important insights into the prejudices faced by animist cultures. These prejudices are also reflected in the antagonistic relationships non-animist cultures have with the natural world.

Non-animist cultures relegate anthropomorphism and animism together to the fringe territory of validation because they both refer to the non-human. Even though working in reverse directions conceptually, they both have the potential to take focus away from the anthropocentric¹⁴ narcissist object.

Anthropomorphism is common in the contemporary mass media, literature and politics. It is a common act of narcissistic cultures to attribute their own characteristics onto others, both human and non-human, to avoid a deep understanding of difference that may threaten their own delusions. The rules of this process are firmly embedded in and propagated by their languages.

¹² In recent years, remarkable new evidence has been found in Africa for the earliest use of pigment, dating to between 200,000 and 350,000 years ago. The use of pigment for body-painting or drawing suggests a 'symbolic' awareness which has long been regarded as one of the hallmarks of modernity. ... Pigment use among living hunter-gatherers is usually associated with art - including body painting - and ritual. The making of art and the practice of ritual are fully modern behaviours and reflect our ability to create symbols and layers of meaning through language. Barham, Larry. From art and tools came human origins. *British Archaeology*, No. 42, March 1999, ed. Denison, Simon.

<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/ba/ba42/ba42feat.html#barham>

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¹³ Anthropomorphism, also referred to as personification or prosopopeia, is the attribution of human characteristics to inanimate objects, animals, forces of nature, and others. ... Using anthropomorphized caricatures or projecting human qualities on conceptual entities or inanimate objects in reasoning is known as committing a pathetic fallacy.

Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthropomorphism>

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¹⁴ anthropocentric adj.

1. Regarding humans as the central element of the universe.

2. Interpreting reality exclusively in terms of human values and experience.

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<http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=anthropocentric>

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In a wide-ranging and rigorous discussion of anthropomorphism in her article 'Marking Territories'¹⁵, Clair Molloy provides a description of the reactions to anthropomorphism that demonstrate the amount and degree of both historical and contemporary antagonism and dismissal that it generates. Animism provokes the same and worse because while animism seems to be similar, it has significant differences from the anthropocentric operation described by anthropomorphism that make it much more threatening.

Molloy lists the general Western analytic descriptions of anthropomorphism. It is considered erroneous, primitive or 'unscientific', belonging to childrens' narratives and therefore immature. She also examines the work of analysts in the fields of philosophy, anthropology, psychology, biology and behaviourism who quote reactions to anthropomorphism as a '*systemic categorical mistake*', "*an obvious, major error*", and '*a form of intellectual laziness*'. She describes the breadth of the political implications of these definitions:

Anthropomorphism breaches contemporary Western ontological¹⁶ security and 'specieist'¹⁷ determinations of boundaries between human and nonhuman animals whilst retaining overtones of childishness, primitive animism and a lack of cultural sophistication. Fisher (1990) elaborates on the careful avoidance and embarrassment attached to the anthropomorphic statement and the obligation to evade any allegation of attributing cognitive or emotional states to nonhuman animals claiming 'Even those who favor animal rights try to avoid being accused of it' (Fisher in Bekoff and Jamieson, 1990, p.96). In other words, it is implied, and on occasion made explicit, that anthropomorphism invalidates the political legitimacy of certain social groups.

Animism is the reverse of anthropomorphism. Instead of attributing human characteristics to non-human aspects of the world, animists seek to learn and be guided by non-human methods of agency, sustainability and complex rhythm. Animist research traverses the complexities of multiple ecologies – from the micro- to the macroscopic and sustains rich connections with them. As well as examining

¹⁵ *Marking Territories*, Claire Molloy, 2001, Note #5, in *Limen: Journal for Theory and Practice of Liminal Phenomena*, vol. 1. http://limen.mi2.hr/limen1-2001/clair_molloy.html
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¹⁶ on to log i cal

1. Of or relating to ontology.

2. Of or relating to essence or the nature of being.

3. Of or relating to the argument for the existence of God holding that the existence of the concept of God entails the existence of God.

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<http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=ontological>

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¹⁷ "Specieism is now a widely accepted term that articulates a prejudicial attitude toward nonhuman animals in the same way that racism and sexism indicate subordination of particular groups on the basis of race or gender. Richard Ryder (1989) explains 'Using the word 'animal' in opposition to the word 'human' is clearly an expression of prejudice' (p.2). Ryder also explains that the term 'nonhuman animal' is appropriate as it expresses a kinship between 'those of my species and others' (p.2)." *Marking Territories*, Claire Molloy, 2001, Note #5, in *Limen: Journal for Theory and Practice of Liminal Phenomena*, vol. 1. http://limen.mi2.hr/limen1-2001/clair_molloy.html Quoted: Ryder, R. (1989) *Animal Revolution: Changing Attitudes Towards Speciesism*, Blackwell, Oxford.

the interfolding dimensions of time and space, animist thinkers also delve into the vagaries and dangerous potential of the human animal with its tendency toward narcissistic social pathologies. Animists are perhaps most wary of their own human potential.

The Noosphere, Gaia, and the Animasphere

Some preliminary but flawed work toward a provisional (and perhaps unintended) cultural translation of animism has been done around the term *noosphere* which arises from *noogenesis*.

Noogenesis, from the Greek noos = psyche (soul, spirit, thought, mind, consciousness) and genesis = origin (formation, creation, such as "the creation of the world"), is a word which indicates the act of the creation of something psychic.

Noosphere, also from the Greek noos = psyche (soul, spirit, thought, mind, consciousness) and sphere (a body limited by a round surface) , is a word which represents the psychic layer born of Noogenesis which is growing and enveloping our planet above the Biosphere (the mass of living beings which covers the globe).¹⁸

The term noosphere was first popularized by Russian mineralogist and geochemist Vladimir Ivanovich Vernadsky¹⁹ and elaborated by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.²⁰ Teilhard de Chardin was a Sorbonne-educated Jesuit Priest, geologist, paleontologist, philosopher and ardent evolutionist. He identified emergent aspects of the noosphere in academic, scientific and theological communities and in the communications technology of his era. Teilhard de Chardin is also sometimes credited with foreseeing the rise of the internet. The Catholic Church prohibited the publication of his writing in the early 1900s and it was finally released posthumously in the 1950s and 1960s.

Teilhard de Chardin developed a theory of evolution that began with the geosphere and went on to the biosphere, out of which the greatest achievement was human-kind. As a christian visionary futurist, he sought to reconcile the chaotic evidence of evolution with his deity's grand human project. As part of his evolutionary theory, Teilhard de Chardin foresaw the rise of the noosphere, a globe-spanning unified sphere of human consciousness driven by social and spiritual energy and guided by morality and justice. He believed that love was the most important aspect of the noosphere and it would ultimately result in the omega point – the final letter of the Greek alphabet – a point of perfect global unity and love that would signal the return of Christ, the ultimate goal of evolution and the focal point of his christian mythology.

Ronfeldt and Aquilla of the RAND Institute, a policy think-tank for the U.S. Department of Defense, provide a contemporary breakdown of the noosphere into three realms – cyberspace, the infosphere, and the noosphere.²¹ Cyberspace includes all of the information transmission and social connections made possible by

¹⁸ *Is Noogenesis Progressing?* By Maria Luiza Glycerio and Janice B. Paulsen, 2002. <http://www.richmond.edu/~jpaulsen/teilhard/isnoogen.html>

¹⁹ Vladimir I. Vernadsky, Wikipedia, 2003. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_I._Vernadsky

²⁰ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Wikipedia, 2004. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Teilhard_de_Chardin

²¹ *The Emergence of Noopolitik : Toward An American Information Strategy*, John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, 1999, RAND. <http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1033/>

the internet and its associated communications systems. The info-sphere expands to include cyberspace and all of the other information resources and transmissions of the world including libraries, media industries, corporations, institutions and government. The noosphere encompasses and extends these with a global space for shifting collaboration and negotiation for the development of new knowledge and strategy for issues of international justice, peace, human rights, and the environment. Its primary actors are the NGOs (non-governmental organizations), the UN, and universities. Some of them operate from geoculturally-specific strategy positions but all see advantage in targeted, issue-specific and shifting collaboration for strategy and knowledge development within international politics that also carry forward their own specific agendas.

The concept of the noosphere is a good starting point to strengthen, strategize and engage civil society in the ecology of imperialist resistance and sustainable diversity but it is critically handicapped when applied to unifying and understanding the Indigenous global mind. This handicap is a distortion that lies at the heart of the imperialist project, almost completely permeates the infosphere, and is made evident in the hierarchies and silences of cyberspace.

This handicap can be seen in the concept of Gaia²² that failed in its attempt to rehabilitate what is, in essence an amputation of Indigenous spirituality and philosophy from the rest of the world. It did not reflect the diversity and cultural specificities of Indigenous concepts of animism and retreated from its spiritual origin and potential. It became instead a lay umbrella term for eco-sciences and the ecological movement.

This failure is also reflected in the origins of the idea of the noosphere. Its roots arose from de Chardin's attempt to create an speciocentric alliance between christianity and scientific materialism – the foundations of western colonialism, imperialism and globalization.

There is an appropriate place for the noosphere and its constituents, but it is within an interconnected anti-speciocentric constellation of the cosmosphere (astronomic and electromagnetic realms), the geosphere, the atmosphere, the hydrosphere, the biosphere and the temporo-sphere. All of these are constituents of the Indigengous animasphere²³, each with diverse and overlapping delegates shaping world views among Indigenous cultures and that form the foundations of their languages and identities. The concept of the animasphere nourishes strong networks of knowledge, strategy and life-ways that give Indigenous youth resources to engage with global encroachment from positions of safety, cultural autonomy, creative celebration, critical awareness and culture-affirming sustainable productivity.

Identity and Creativity in the Animasphere

²² The Gaia Hypothesis proposes that our planet functions as a single organism that maintains conditions necessary for its survival. Formulated by James Lovelock in the mid-1960s and published in a book in 1979, this controversial idea has spawned several interesting ideas and many new areas of research. While this hypothesis is by no means substantiated, it provides many useful lessons about the interaction of physical, chemical, geological, and biological processes on Earth. *The Gaia Hypothesis*, Sean Chamberlin (nd). <http://www.oceansonline.com/gaiaho.htm> Downloaded September 5, 2004.

²³ The term 'animosphere' is related to the design demonstration portfolio website 'AnimaSphere' by Kiven at <http://www.geocities.com/kiven96/dragonballz/>

Within the contemporary arts (as within contemporary culture in general) Aboriginal languages play a limited role – if any at all. While many people are working to change this situation, any significant recognition and incorporation of Aboriginal languages and their underlying concepts within contemporary culture is likely to be the achievement of future generations. Instead, the philosophical foundations that these languages represent are entering the wider contemporary sphere through the works of Aboriginal artists.

To create a space for the recognition of Aboriginal culture, Aboriginal artists engage in an ongoing critical analysis project that questions and reshapes prevailing assumptions that are antagonistic to the presence and understanding of animism and animist cultures. The presence of animist concepts at all levels of Aboriginal languages is a primary indicator of difference from, and opposition to mass-scale contemporary culture that still labels animist peoples as 'primitive' and 'fearsome'.²⁴

There are cultural conflicts at work in the mainly solitary act of creating and presenting performance art in an Aboriginal context. They revolve around the construction of identity, both personal and cultural. Aboriginal artists must continually renegotiate the shape of their relationships with the creative process and their roles within the arts ecology.

A conflict that reveals an essential component of animist culture is 'flash': action intended to draw the concentrated attention of others. Careless, misused or misunderstood flash can draw negative repercussions to the health, safety and wellbeing of ones-self, extended family or community – not necessarily from the immediate witnesses or audience but also from the larger supernatural, natural and social realms. This makes the practice of performance art resonate with dangers far beyond the sphere of reactions that may occur from actors and ideologies that compose the contemporary arts ecology, economy and politics.

*When you see a walking-mole, with his short legs and crooked arms and peaked nose, that's a bad sign. That's a "flash." In Indian that's wha-sày. waa-say-sày, waa-sày, it means a flash. wàa-say is a flash of lightning; it's a flash of word; it's a flash of writing. When you get a letter and she makes, or he makes a flash to you, you know what he means. It's a flash, a sharp flash. Flash is wàah-say-sày. waa-sày-nI-mah waa-say-sày. It's made two or three ways. waa-say-màa Ya. You could see a flash. Or you could say a flash. When you have a word flash that means you said something, and it's coming back to you. Then you think to yourself, "I shouldn't-a said that." That's a word flash. waa-say-gíi, waa-say-gíi-way, waa-say-say, is a flash and means that you shouldn't have said this. You're flashed a lot if you're a loud speaker, if you're too loud. That's a flash. It's also like when you pull out money to show off. That's a flash too. Your money is a sin, and that money is supposed to be concealed.*²⁵

²⁴ "Rescuers have yet to reach all of the islands in India's southeastern Andaman and Nicobar Island chain, the home of some of the world's most isolated and primitive civilizations." *Endangered tribes in path of tsunami: Fate of isolated, primitive groups in the balance* MSNBC News, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6763557/> Downloaded January 8, 2005.

"including the fearsome Sentinelese aborigines", *Andaman islands bear brunt of killer tsunamis* Monday, 27 December, 2004, 16:18 Sify News, <http://sify.com/news/fullstory.php?id=13637626> Downloaded January 8, 2005

²⁵ Note #14 of the quoted text: "14. Bragging is one of the least liked qualities among many, and showing off that you have a lot of money is considered much like bragging. Just like you're not supposed to brag, you're not supposed to go around "flashing" money around. The flashing of money is a "sin," not

The potential of flash to cause great disturbance in the Aboriginal artist's concentric and intersecting environments places a greater degree of responsibility on the creation of the performance act in its substance, form, context and intention within all of these environments. Aboriginal artists, to a large extent do not work with elements of casual disposability or a purely playful inconsequentiality without a careful consideration of what any 'flash' can cause. To bear this responsibility takes a great deal of courage and requires opening the creative process to levels of consideration that go beyond the realm of the arts into the animist history and contemporary culture of Aboriginal peoples.

In performance art the presence of the body both of the artist and of the audiences' individual and collective bodies is a general given. The empathic physical transference between performer and audience has been well exploited in dance, theatre, music and film. It is also the foundation of pornography. In performance art the empathic connections can range from sympathetic to antagonistic, from pleasurable to revolting. This empathy goes farther when ritualised aspects of performance attempt to lead audiences into states of awareness not found in everyday secular experience. This can be to realize microscopic awareness of one's own body, its flora, fauna and physical memory, or to expand to macroscopic realizations of vaster connectedness. The form of ritualization can be very pedestrian and mundane or even apparently anti-ritual but the artist's intent is to transmit an experience of altered states that can and do occur in these non-ritual contexts.

Animism, flash and ritual play central roles in the critical stance of the Aboriginal artist toward concepts of authorship and opposition. Within an animist constellation, humility and pride are in orbit around a person's relationship to the animasphere. They determine the levels of filtering and openness one has to its messages and signs – and the quality of negotiations, confrontations and support we can experience within its medicine. The acts of linguistically objectifying and subjectifying, marking something as just an object or as something with a potential being represent these orbital forces and signify the essential differences between animist and humanist cultures.

the money itself, just like bragging about having a nice boat might be considered a "sin," not the mere possession of a nice boat. Not living in accordance with community expectations usually results in some kind of sanction or bad action coming your way. That is, if you "sin," you will be punished. Believers will be warned about this through the messengers and unusual events."

When Everybody Called Me Gah-bay-bi-nayss: "Forever-Flying-Bird": An Ethnographic Biography of Paul Peter Buffalo, ed. Roufs, Tim, 2004.

Chapter 34: Messengers and Unusual Events

<http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/Bufalo/PB34.html>

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See also 'Introduction'. "Mr. Paul Buffalo (*Gah-bah-bi-nays*), in the last twelve of his seventy-seven years, systematically recorded most of his beliefs and left a legacy of approximately 3,500 pages of life history materials. During the twelve years of taping life history materials, Paul Buffalo discussed every aspect of his public and private life, including descriptions of his religious beliefs and herbal medical practices." This 52 chapter website is the effort of anthropologist Dr. Timothy Roufs, U. Minnesota Duluth, to make this material available for research.

<http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/Bufalo/Intro-Temp2.html>

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